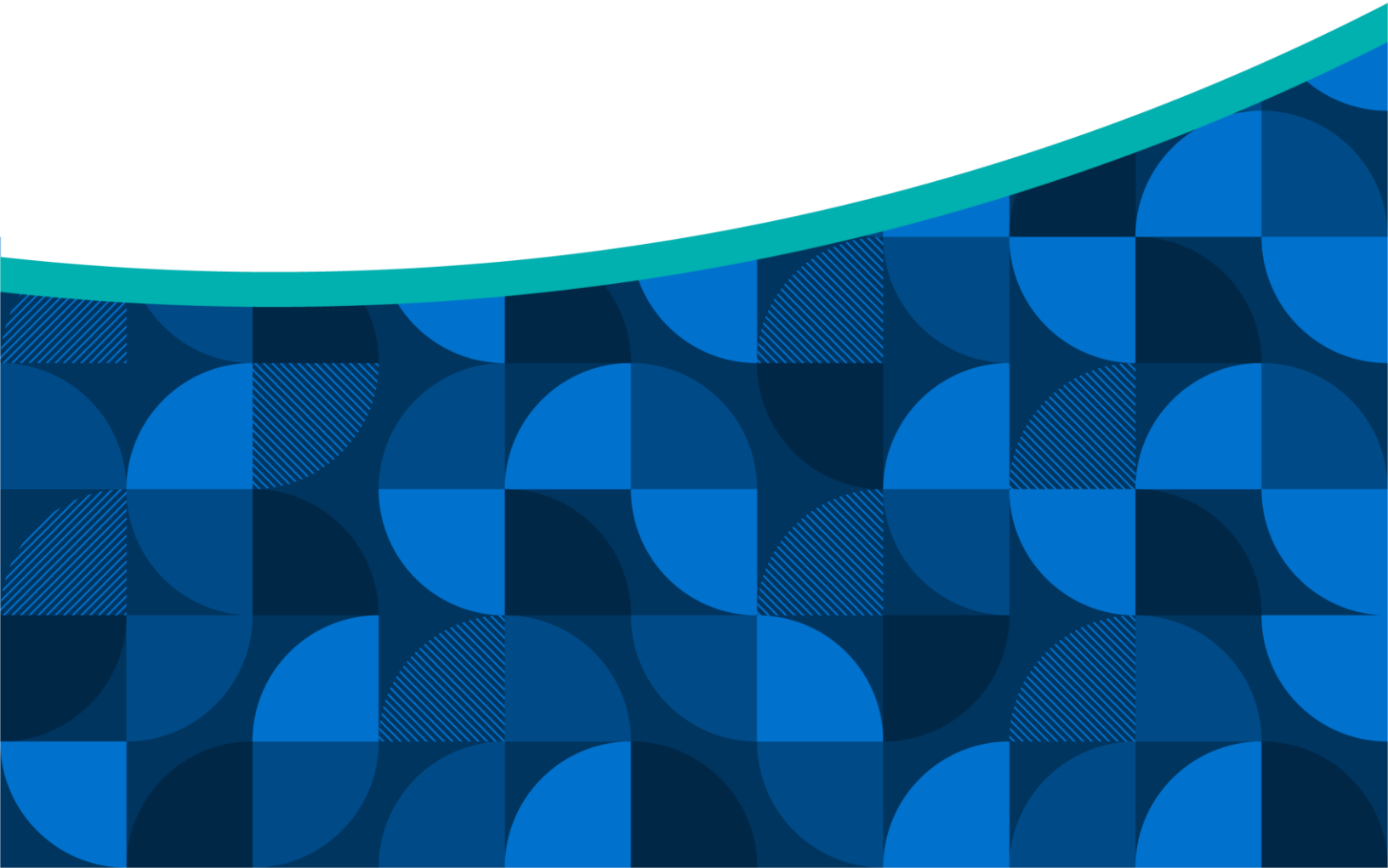# Improving School Discipline Approaches

Safe Resource Toolkit

District Leadership Forum

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These Tools Address the Following Diagnostic Activities:

❑ Teachers and/or staff at my school approach student behavior with a non-punitive mindset that encourages understanding, relationship building, and mediation.

❑ Our school uses alternatives to exclusionary discipline practices (e.g., suspensions and expulsions) except for required cases (e.g., violence, illicit drug use).

❑ Our school shares clear and detailed information with students, families, and community members on the school's discipline policies and procedures, where they can find them, and how the policies and procedures are implemented.

❑ Our school publicly discloses school discipline data (i.e., via school website, state databases).

❑ Our school tracks discipline data (e.g., number of suspensions, expulsions, duration of disciplinary measures) annually that includes the demographic characteristics (e.g., race, sex, disability) of students.

❑ Our school uses analyzed discipline data (e.g., identifies trends, patterns, disparities) annually to ensure student consequences are administered consistently and fairly without regard to race, sex, disability, etc.

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Alternatives to Discipline and Restorative Approaches

Use this section to improve your school's restorative approaches and learn the impact and alternatives to exclusionary discipline.

Exclusionary Discipline Is Often Inequitable

What Is Exclusionary Discipline?

▶ Exclusionary discipline refers to **any action that removes or excludes a student from their typical educational setting**, including in- and out-of-school suspensions and expulsion.

▶ Many schools that use exclusionary discipline have **zero-tolerance policies,** meaning that students who break certain school rules face mandatory penalties such as suspension, expulsion, and/or referral to law enforcement.

Tracking Exclusionary Discipline Data Is Crucial to Promoting Equity

▶ The federal government has required the reporting of different types of school discipline data since 1964 to ensure districts are complying with civil rights laws that protect students from discrimination.

▶ Tracking exclusionary discipline data provides schools with valuable information for proactive decision-making, addressing disparities, evaluating policies, and fostering a safe and inclusive learning environment for all students.

Exclusionary Discipline Disproportionately Impacts Marginalized Student Groups

3x

Black students are suspended and expelled 3x more than white students

25%

Students with disabilities account for 25% of expulsions but only 16% of overall student enrollment

⚠ Students suspended or expelled for a discretionary violation (i.e., incidents in which the student does not legally have to be recommended for expulsion) are nearly **three times more likely** to be involved in the juvenile justice system the following year.

Source: AASA, "School Discipline Data Overview", 2018; ACLU, "School-To-Prison Pipeline Infographic", REL Southwest, "Handout: Alternatives to Exclusionary Discipline", 2022; U.S. Department of Education, "Discipline Discussions: The Impact and Harm of Exclusionary Discipline" 2022; EAB interviews and analysis.

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Equitable Discipline Leads to Positive Outcomes

What Is Equitable Discipline?

▶ Equitable discipline refers to a set of principles and practices that ensure **fair, just, and unbiased disciplinary actions for all students** while considering their diverse backgrounds, experiences, and needs.

▶ The goal of equitable discipline is to **create a safe and inclusive learning environment** where staff take a non-punitive approach to student behavior and discipline is only administered to promote positive behavior, rather than punishing unwanted behavior and instilling a fear of consequences.

Four Benefits of Equitable Discipline

1 **Sustainable Behavior Improvements**

Equitable discipline aims to address the underlying causes of behavior and teaches students problem-solving skills. This approach can lead to more lasting behavioral changes and improvements while also encouraging students' personal growth and life skill development.

2 **Improved Relationships**

Teachers who use equitable discipline tend to have stronger relationships with their students. Students are more likely to trust and respect teachers who consistently treat them fairly and considerately.

3 **Enhanced Inclusivity and Equity**

Equitable discipline helps address disproportionate disciplinary actions against marginalized groups, fostering a fairer and more inclusive environment for all students. When discipline is administered impartially, it sends a clear message that every student is valued and will be held to the same standards.

4 **Reduced Dropout Rates**

Students are less likely to drop out when they feel supported and connected to their school community. Equitable discipline, by promoting fairness, inclusion, and trust, significantly reduces the risk of students leaving school prematurely, thus contributing to a more positive overall school experience.

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How to Improve Equity and Safety in Discipline

Policies and procedures play an important role in communicating the underlying values and guidelines of your school's approach to school discipline. Follow the steps below to align your school's discipline policies to be equitable for all students.

1 **Restrict disproportionate use of exclusionary discipline**

Research shows that suspensions are ineffective, resulting in adverse impacts on students' academic performance, attendance, behavior, and mental health. Instead of immediately resorting to punitive measures, schools can adopt a more rehabilitative approach. Explicitly outline suspension alternatives within your discipline policy, in alignment with your school and district's practices. For consistency, check with other district schools and encourage district leaders to align these approaches.

▶ Read **page 8** for examples of alternatives to exclusionary discipline to include in your discipline policy.

2 **Prioritize prevention in your school's discipline approach**

Student and parent handbooks provide an important opportunity to welcome families and to share information about your school's values and priorities. Ensure your handbook clearly states why prevention is a focus of the school and district's discipline approach.

▶ Review this article from The University of Kansas for more context on the importance of preventative approaches and examples to implement in your school.

3 **Minimize academic penalties for disciplinary concerns**

Ensure students who are excluded from classroom instruction are not penalized academically. Explicitly state in your discipline policy that students must be provided opportunities to earn academic credit for work assigned during their suspension days to minimize these types of academic penalties.

▶ Review Warwick Valley Central School District's "Disciplinary Procedures for Suspension" section of their Disciplinary Policy for an example of how to explicitly state that students will have access to academic materials and be offered alternate instruction even if they receive a suspension from school.

Source: Cambridge Public Schools, "Steering Committee"; REL Northwest, "Revising School Discipline Policies and Procedures to Promote Equity", 2019; The University of Kansas, "Preventative Approaches"; EAB interviews and analysis.

Four Alternatives to Exclusionary Discipline

To help staff adopt a more non-punitive mindset when it comes to discipline, school leaders must begin by ensuring they are aware of alternative approaches.

1

Restorative Practices

- Restorative justice practices focus on having students acknowledge and reflect on mistakes to repair bonds to those harmed.

- Research [1] has shown that schools that implement restorative justice programs lower reliance on detention and suspension, improve school climate, increase trust between teachers and students, and improve academic performance.

▶ Review the *"Punitive vs. Restorative Response Chart"* on **pages 10-11** for implementation support.

2

Trauma-Informed Practices

- Trauma-informed practices equip teachers and staff with knowledge to recognize trauma and strategies to support students who experience trauma.

- Trauma-informed practices have been proven [2] to increase belonging among students, improve relationships among students, staff, and families, decrease misbehavior, and improve school climates.

▶ Explore EAB's toolkit *"Supporting Students with a History of Trauma"* that provides implementation guidance on trauma-informed practices.

3

Social Emotional Learning (SEL)

- SEL strategies involve interventions and curriculum designed to help students better understand and regulate their emotions and behavior.

- SEL strategies have proven [3] to reduce aggression, improve academic performance, decrease behavior incidents, and increase the use of emotion regulation strategies in students.

▶ See EAB's *SEL Support Toolkit* to learn how to include SEL skills into all lessons by selecting and embedding an SEL curriculum.

4

Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS)

- PBIS aims to establish clear behavioral expectations, reward appropriate behavior, utilize progressive discipline, and provide individualized interventions for students with chronic behavior issues.

- Schools that successfully implement PBIS report [4] reduced office referrals, increased academic achievement, and lower levels of aggression in students.

▶ Review **pages 17-24** of EAB's study *"Create Conditions for Positive Classroom Behavior"* for PBIS implementation support.

1) IIRP, "Improving school climate: Evidence from schools implementing restorative practices", 2014
2) TLPI, "How Can Educators Support All Students to Succeed?", 2019
3) Center for Promise, "Disciplined and Disconnected", 2018
4) IPHJ, "Keep them so you can teach them: Alternatives to exclusionary discipline", 2016

Source: REL Southwest, "Handout: Alternatives to Exclusionary Discipline", EAB interviews and analysis.

Restorative Practices Improve Positive Behavior

What Are Restorative Practices?

▶ Restorative practices are an alternative to traditional disciplinary actions, which typically focus on punishment for misbehavior. Alternatively, restorative approaches to behavior focus on **strengthening and healing relationships by resolving conflict and repairing harm.**

▶ Restorative practices emphasize communication, empathy, responsibility, and healing, offering alternatives to punitive measures and **promoting a more positive and inclusive school environment.**

Restorative Practices Have Proven Great Success in Baltimore City Schools

44%
Drop in school suspensions in one year

69%
Of school staff reported improved student respect for one another

77%
Of school staff reported improved school climate

64%
Of school staff reported improved student respect for staff

Three Examples of Restorative Practices

1

Restorative Circles

In a restorative circle, participants gather in a structured format to discuss an issue or conflict. A facilitator guides the conversation, allowing each participant to share their perspective and feelings. This process promotes understanding, empathy, and collaborative problem-solving with the aim of reaching a resolution and restoring relationships.

2

Restorative Conferencing

This practice involves bringing together those directly impacted by a harmful incident, including the wrongdoer, the victim, and relevant stakeholders. The conference allows each party to express their feelings, discuss the impact of the incident, and collaboratively determine how to repair the harm and prevent future occurrences.

▶ For guidance on implementing this approach in your school, consult the *"Restorative Conference Facilitator Guide"* on **pages 12-13.**

3

Peer Mediation

In peer mediation, trained students (typically in secondary grades) facilitate discussions between their peers who are in conflict. The mediators help participants express their thoughts and emotions, find common ground, and work towards a resolution. This practice empowers students to take an active role in conflict resolution within their school community.

Source: EdWeek, "Ways to Implement Restorative Practices in the Classroom", 2020; OSI-Baltimore, "New report indicates major impact of restorative practices in Baltimore City Schools", 2020; EAB interviews and analysis.

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Punitive vs. Restorative Response Chart

Restorative responses to student misbehavior prioritize understanding and empathy, creating a more positive classroom environment. Although punitive responses offer a quicker and more familiar approach, investing in restorative practices can make a significant improvement in the mental health and well-being of students.

To make this easier for teachers, share this chart with them which provides examples of compassionate responses to student misbehavior that will lead to more positive behavior in the future. Consider planning a PD session on restorative responses to provide further implementation support and guidance.

Behavior Example	Punitive Response	Restorative Response	Resources and Supports
A student disrupts a lesson.	The student is scolded in front of the class then receives an office referral.	The student is asked to verbally apologize to the teacher and fellow students with a promise to contribute more positively in the future.	Review these examples of proactive solutions for disruptive students to try in the classroom.
Two students get caught skipping class together.	Both students receive detention.	The students are asked to be "circle keepers" and co-lead a circle discussion on truancy with their peers.	See **page 14** of this restorative justice implementation guide for the principles of forming circles in classrooms.
A student steals something from the classroom.	The student receives an in-school suspension.	The student is asked to return the stolen item with a sincere verbal or written apology and offers to pay for replacement of the stolen item if it's unable to be returned.	Share this resource with your students to guide them in writing a thorough and heartfelt apology letter.

Source: Happier Human, "9 Steps to Write an Apology Letter to Your School Teacher", 2023; ICJIA, "Implementing restorative justice"; Jeannette Holtham, "Taking Restorative Justice to Schools: A Doorway to Discipline", 2009; Middle Web, "Using Proactive Solutions with 'Disruptive' Students", 2019; EAB interviews and analysis.

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Punitive vs. Restorative Response Chart (Cont.)

Behavior Example	Punitive Response	Restorative Response	Resources and Supports
Two students get in a physical fight at school.	The students are both apprehended by law enforcement officers.	The two students are invited to a restorative circle with their families and a counselor where each student takes accountability and works toward repairing their relationship.	See **pages 18-19** of this handbook on restorative justice for more context on restorative circles and examples of reflection questions to ask.
One student bullies another student online.	The student bullying receives an out-of-school suspension.	Both students are asked to participate in a restorative conference to repair the harm that has been caused.	Check out this article on restorative conferencing for more information and implementation guidance to help bring restorative conferencing to your school.
A student vandalizes school property.	The student is referred to law enforcement.	The student is asked to help clean, repair, or repaint and pay for any damages caused.	Review this guide from the ACLU on how to appropriately respond to acts of vandalism in a way that won't psychologically harm students.
Two students get in a verbal argument in class.	Both students receive detention.	Both students are asked to work with peer mediators to resolve their conflict in a non-judgmental, fair, and empathetic matter.	Review **pages 217-221** of this *"Restorative Practice Resource Project"* for implementation guidance on training students to be peer mediators/peacemakers.

▶ If restorative responses don't yield the desired outcomes, such as a student refusing to apologize or failing to comply with the agreed-upon actions, it's important to consider additional steps in the restorative approach.

▶ Consequences that focus on repair and accountability may be necessary, alongside individualized support plans and long-term behavioral intervention. The objective remains to foster behavior change and address underlying issues while ensuring safety.

Source: ACLU of Southern California, "Annotated Vandalism and Graffiti Board Policy"; Inclusive Solutions, "Restorative Conferencing"; Jeannette Holtham, "Taking Restorative Justice to Schools: A Doorway to Discipline", 2009; Prison Fellowship International, "Restorative Justice Principles and Practice", 2021; Restorative Practice Consortium, "Restorative Practice Resource Project", 2017; EAB interviews and analysis.

Restorative Conference Facilitator Guide

Follow this guide when facilitating a restorative conference for incidents involving general or broad scale conflict or tension.

① *Welcome and Introduction*

"Hello, as you know my name is ....and I have been asked to facilitate this meeting. I have spoken to all of you about the incident/s and it's clear what has happened has affected everyone involved. This is an opportunity to talk about what has happened and how each of you has been affected/hurt. To help us all work together again, we need to discuss ways of stopping any further harm so we can improve our relationships."

② *Start with the student/s most affected*

"I would like to start by asking (student's name) to talk about how they became involved and what happened? At the time, what were you thinking about? What have you thought about since? How has this affected/hurt you and others? What has been the hardest thing for you?"

③ *Repeat step 2 with other students*

"How did you become involved and what happened? At the time, what were you thinking about? What have you thought about since? How has this affected/hurt you and others? What has been the hardest thing for you?"

④ *Say to all participants*

"Now that we have heard how all of you have been affected/hurt in some way by what has happened, Is there anything anyone would like to say at this point?"

⑤ *Invitation to all participants*

"What suggestions do you have that will stop any further hurt/harm? What will help all of us work together again, without further conflict?"

⑥ *Ask each participant*

"What would you like to see come out of today's meeting?"

⑦ *Invitation to all participants*

"What will each of you now do to help improve your relationships with one another?"

⑧ *Final invitation to participants*

"What have you found useful from today's meeting?"

⑨ *Closing the meeting*

"Thank you for being involved. It has allowed us to share and understand what has happened and provided an important opportunity to find positive ways of building better relationships with one another."

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Restorative Conference Guide (Cont.)

To promote effective resolution and future conflict prevention, it is essential that all participants in the restorative conference complete and sign this agreement form at the conclusion of the conference.

Restorative Conference Agreement Form	
Background Information	Date: Participants (name, grade):
Incident or Concern	
Agreement Details	How the harm will be repaired: How the harm will be avoided in the future: How the person who did the harm will give back to the community: What support will be given to the person who was harmed:
Monitoring Plan	
Additional Notes	
Signatures	I have read the above agreement and understand and agree to all of the terms. I intend to fulfil any obligations detailed above for which I am responsible. _____ Signature of Person who did the Harm _____ Signature of Person Harmed _____ Signature of Conference Facilitator

Helping Staff Adopt a More Non-Punitive Approach

Borrowing Practices from the Health Care to Combat Compassion Fatigue

▶ Health care systems employing clinicians have realized that simply providing opportunities to connect on issues that cause compassion fatigue can go a long way in combatting it. Often, teachers and staff struggle to take a non-punitive approach to behavior due to compassion fatigue. Schools can apply practices from health care systems to allow teachers and staff to connect on these issues to combat compassion fatigue so they can be more emotionally available to take a non-punitive approach to student behavior.

> ### Compassion Fatigue
> The physical, emotional and psychological impact of supporting others through stressful or traumatic experiences. It is most common in healing and helping professionals like therapists, nurses, doctors, social workers and teachers. If left unaddressed long-term, it could lead to burnout — a long-term onset of hopelessness and feeling like your work has little value or positive impact.

Two Ways to Provide Opportunities for Staff to Reflect on and Share Challenges

Rose, Bud, Thorn Exercise

Begin all faculty and staff meetings with this exercise, in which staff share as a whole group or in smaller groups (depending on time): Rose (a success), Thorn (a challenge), Bud (something exciting in the future) from their week. The goal is to hardwire opportunities for staff to connect with each other through sharing experiences from school, both positive and negative.

Tips to Make Successful

🔑 Model how to do this as an administrator and take part in sharing.

🔑 Offer opportunities for staff to do this without administrator oversight too

🔑 Keep consistent; embed this practice into every meeting to make it a habit in your school's culture

Routine Reflections

Offer opportunities for more in-depth reflections monthly for staff to share challenges they have faced in student or even family interactions in the past month. These should be relatively unstructured sessions for staff to simply explain their experiences and the emotions they created for them.

Tips to Make Successful

🔑 Encourage staff to listen to stories without providing feedback or advice

🔑 Select 2-3 staff members to lead sessions each month, coming prepared with stories to share and facilitating further conversation

🔑 Highlight stories and key takeaways in a follow up email. Include resources for staff to get more support if needed (e.g., EAPs)

Promoting Transparency in Discipline Policies

Use this section to learn how to share your school's discipline policies and data with your school community to increase transparency.

Transparency Holds Schools Accountable on Discipline

By being transparent about the school's discipline policies and data, school's hold themselves accountable to limiting exclusionary discipline and can increase understanding of their communities and their approach to student behavior.

1 **Enhance Families' Understanding of School's Approach to Behavior**

Schools should include disciplinary policies and approach to behavior on their school's websites so that families have access to this information. Ideally, schools have a mechanism to have ongoing discussions about their approaches to supporting students behaviorally to increase understanding with families and their community.

▶ See **pages 18-19** for Maggie Cordova's school behavior support overview webinars that they used to provide transparency to parents on their behavioral practices and create a shared language.

▶ Review Rio Rancho Public School's behavior matrices on **page 20.** Additionally, see their 2023-2024 Behavior Plan that includes elementary, middle, and secondary student expectations, staff expectations, *and* family expectations using shared language.

2 **Include Exclusionary Disciplinary Data on Website and Include Goals for Improvement**

Being transparent about exclusionary disciplinary data specifically helps schools stay accountable. Even if schools only have the data capabilities to share simple data such as number of suspensions and expulsions, they should. Ideally, schools set a goal for improvement each year alongside their data.

▶ See **page 25** for what data to share, where some of this data can already be found publicly (albeit outdated), and examples of how to share this information.

School Behavior Support Overview Webinars

Practice Overview	Maggie Cordova Elementary hosts an annual webinar for families to give an overview of their common behavior practices, establish shared language, and give families the opportunity to ask questions and receive resources. This creates more consistency for students and improves family engagement with schools.

STEP 1 Create the webinar slides and curriculum. Be sure to establish learning objectives you want parents/guardians to take away and refer to the essential ingredients below and examples on the next page.

STEP 2 Establish a time and place for the sessions. Consider offering virtually to increase access. Also, consider hosting more than one session to accommodate more schedules.

Maggie Cordova Elementary, New Mexico

STEP 3 Communicate sessions in weekly newsletters, flyers, and phone calls. Also, post information on website for easy access.

Essential Ingredients

Establish Shared Language

The webinar goes over terms like PBIS, and common phrases used in school. Consider walking through a behavior flowchart like this one.

▶ **Benefits**
- Gives families language they can use for consistency with students at home
- Improves understanding of why schools use certain language

Demystify School Practices

Offer explanations of things the school might do that families may find strange or be confused about. See page 21 for examples.

▶ **Benefits**

Families understand the reason and benefits behind the things schools might ask them to do for students

Highlight Area May Be Causing Challenges in School

Specifically highlighted the negative impacts of screen time and benefits of outdoor play, citing research and gave guidelines on screen limits.

▶ **Benefits**

Provides a gentle nudge to encourage parents/guardians to limit screen time and increase outdoor play at home, which can benefit students' behavioral success in the classroom.

Provide Families Resources

Offered families additional reading materials about the various subjects covered so they could learn more if they wanted.

▶ **Benefits**

Shows families that schools want to be supportive of their efforts in raising students.

Opportunities for Questions

Throughout, there are opportunities for families to ask clarifying questions via prompts and the chat function

▶ **Benefits**

Ensures families feel like they can engage and give input to the materials rather than just receiving information

Source: EAB Interview & Analysis

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Highlights from the Webinar at Maggie Cordova

Demystifying Different Elements of School Families May Have Questions About

Learning Intentions

- I understand how PBIS is implemented at MCE.
- I know what CharacterStrong PurposeFull People is and how it's used.
- I know the colors associated with The Zones of Regulation and the energy level associated with each of them.
- I can explain how PBIS and The Zones work together.

Upfront explanation of the goals of the webinar

Establish shared language families can use to create consistency

Common Language at MCE

- ▹ Walking in the hall: "Third tile."
- ▹ Talking in the hall: "Voices off."
- ▹ Touching the walls or others: "Hands down."
- ▹ Running in the hall: "Walking feet."
- ▹ Lots of body movement: "Calm body."

Too much of all of the above: "We are going to re-set...Ready 1 - 2 - 3 Reset"

Screen Time and Green Time

"The average American child spends as few as 30 minutes in unstructured outdoor play each day and more than seven hours each day in front of an electronic screen."

Screen Time
- Associated with increase in presentation of ADHD symptoms
- Decrease in time engaging in social interactions
- Contributes to sedentary lifestyle
- Negative impact on cognitive development, language and communication, behavior concerns, self-regulation, prosocial behavior
- Replaces imaginative play

Green Time
- Reduction in ADHD symptoms, as well as depression
- Improvement in fitness levels
- Raises levels of vitamin D
- Improves performance on tests that measure critical thinking skills
- Protects children's emotional development
- Enhances social interactions, value for community and close relationships
- Improves creativity

American Academy of Pediatrics

- 0-18 mo. - No screen time except video chat with family
- 18-24 mo. - Only if co-viewed with parents sitting with them and talking about what is on the screen.
- 2-5 yrs. - No more than 1 hour per day of high quality programming, preferably with parent co-viewing.
- 6-18 yrs. - Media should be limited so that child has time for at least 1 hour of physical activity, time for homework and family, and adequate time for sleep.

Additionally, experts agree, "absolutely no TV, video games, computers, or any type of electronics (smartphones, tablets, etc.) in the bedroom—even when they're teenagers."

Teach common issue of too much screen time, not enough play and give guidelines

Family Resources

- The Do's and Don'ts of TV and Technology
- A to Z SEL from www.elsa-support.co.uk
- Finding Fresh Air: Connecting Kids to Nature in the Digital Age
- MCE's Counselor Website - includes contact information and other resources
- 5 Positive Effect of Daydreaming

Provide parent/guardian advice and resources to nudge consistency at home

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

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Highlights from the Maggie Cordova Webinar (cont.)

Demystifying Different Elements of School Families May Have Questions About

CharacterStrong
PurposeFull People

Please keep an eye out for links to the monthly Family Connection letter which will include an overview of the trait, how it is being taught in the classroom and conversation starters to use at home!

The character traits we are learning about and practicing are:

★ Kindness
★ Respect
★ Responsibility
★ Gratitude
★ Empathy
★ Pereserverence
★ Honesty
★ Cooperation
★ Courage
★ Creativity

More shared language and explanation of socio-emotional areas of focus

Establish shared language families can use to create consistency

Why are my kids in pajamas?

...Because of Dragon Parties!

And how are they earned?

★ Eaoh olassroom has a dragon puzzle.
★ Eaoh puzzle has 15 pieoes.
★ Eaoh pieoe requires 10 dragon tiokets.
★ Eaoh oompleted puzzle results in a golden dragon to display.
★ Eaoh golden dragon earns a dragon party.

The ZONEs of Regulation

Zones of Regulation is an approach used to support the development of self-regulation in children. All the different ways children feel and the states of alertness they experience are categorized into four colored zones. Children who are well regulated are able to be in the appropriate zone at the appropriate time.

Additionally, all classrooms have Calming Zones

CALM AREA

The goal is self-regulation!

Share school-based terms that educators use with students and explain how they are used in the classroom

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Districtwide, Grade-Level Specific Discipline Matrices

Rio Rancho Public School provides school leaders with district discipline matrices for each grade level. Matrixes are shared on their website and included in all school level handbooks for ease of access to families. See the below examples of two of their grade-level matrices.

Elementary School Level I Matrix

These represent the recommended guidelines for the elementary school's disposition of discipline situations. Therefore, depending on the circumstances of the behavior or education status of the student, responses may vary from situation to situation.

In all cases, administrative discretion will be exercised.

> Student identities and circumstances are considered, allowing school admin final discretion over discipline.

Level I			
Behavior	**1ˢᵗ Offense**	**2ⁿᵈ Offense**	**3ʳᵈ Offense**
General Disruptive Conduct(aligned to Middle School Matrix (Profanity, rudeness, acting disrespectfully, dishonesty, name-calling, etc.)	Warning/Reteach Teacher Intervention Parent Notification	Possible Recess Detention Teacher Intervention Parent Notification	Parent Notification Behavior Contract and/or ½ - 1 day ISS/OSS
Bus Disruptions	Refer to Bus Discipline Matrix Bus Discipline Matrix		
Dress Code Violation	Parent Contact and Warning Options: -Change into other clothing, may have clothing provided by the school, turn inside out	Parent Contact and Warning Change to acceptable clothing, same as 1ˢᵗ offense	Parent Notification Change to acceptable clothing, same as 1ˢᵗ offense
Public Display of Affection (PDA)	Reteach/Counseling Parent Notification	up to 2 Recess Detentions/Counseling Parent Notification	Parent Meeting Behavior Contract
Unexcused Tardy	Parent Contact	Parent Contact	Call to Parent from Admin Possible call to CYFD

> Matrices recommend discipline responses based on behavior type and frequency of offense.

High School Level II Matrix

Level II – RRPD referral may be filed on all Level II Infractions			
Behavior Level II	**1ˢᵗ Offense**	**2ⁿᵈ Offense**	**3ʳᵈ Offense**
Cheating/Plagiarism or Use of Artificial Intelligence	1 Day ISS Parent contact by teacher	2 Days ISS Parent contact by teacher	3 Days ISS Parent contact by teacher
Ditching On or Off Campus	1 Day ISS	2 Days ISS	3 Days ISS
Hostile or Aggressive Behavior or Rough Housing (use of profanity)	1 Day ISS to 1 Day OSS	2 Days OSS	3 Days OSS
Inappropriate use of a motor vehicle at school or at a school-sponsored event (Being in parking lot without authorization)	Loss of parking privileges for 10 or more school days, vehicle may be booted and a fine assessed	Loss of parking privileges for the remainder of the school year, vehicle will be booted and a fine assessed	
Misuse of or falsifying any official document or communication (including but not limited to: pass, ID, progress report, call to excuse absence, parent signature, etc.)	1 Day ISS or 1 day OSS	2 Days OSS	3 Days OSS
Possession of Inappropriate Materials/Contraband	1 Day ISS	2 Days ISS	3 Days ISS

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Highlight Discipline Policies in School Newsletters

Consider including a "Resource of the Month" section in your monthly or quarterly schoolwide newsletters for a quick way to inform families on district and schoolwide discipline polices and information. See this example as one way to add this to your regular newsletters.

Fall 2024

Upcoming Events

- Open House – **Sept 2024**
- Back to School Bash- **Sept 2024**
- Field Trip- **Oct 2024**
- Book Fair- **Oct 2024**

Resource of the Month

We want to call attention to the following district and school wide resources that are available to you all through the district website [*insert hyperlink*]

- **District Wide Discipline Policy**
- **School Staff Directory**
- **School Wide Behavior Expectations**
- **Bullying Reporting Guide**

If you all have any questions on using these resources, please let us know.

What We're Learning This Quarter

Reading
- We will continue to have our bi-weekly book exchange
- Please encourage your child to continue to practice their monthly spelling & vocabulary words nightly

Math
- The class will learn about patterning (within the classroom & in nature) and geometry this month

Science
- This month we'll be learning about growth and changes in animals
- Students will have a live butterfly chrysalis to examine in the classroom!

Social Studies
- Students will be learning about consumerism and tourism - particularly examining the modern changes in our current consumerism culture.

A Note From Principal

Happy September! We are so exciting to welcome our families and students – both new and old to the new school year!

At the end of the month, we will host our schoolwide open house. We encourage you all to attend. Please look out for more info via email

Volunteers Needed:

We're looking for parent volunteers to help with activities, snacks, and supervision during the Back to School Bash. If you're available and interested in participating, please let us know. Your help would be greatly appreciated!

Quote of the Month

"And all at once summer collapsed into fall."

-Oscar Wilde

Family, Student, and School Admin Discipline Agreement

While many school districts provide guidelines for discipline, schools are left to handle many "grey" areas. After an initial behavior concern, use the below template to help provide clear expectations on the schools' next response if the students' behavior continues.

Student Name: [Insert Student Name]

Grade/Class: [Insert Grade/Class]

Date: [Insert Date]

Parent/Guardian/Family Member Responsibilities:

We, the family members of *[student name]*, acknowledge receipt and understanding of the school's discipline policies and procedures. We understand that our child's behavior impacts their learning environment and the well-being of others within the school community.

We understand if the [*insert observed behavior resulting in disciplinary meeting]* behavior continues, our child will receive further disciplinary action as outlines by district policy and school admin discretion.

We agree to actively participate in supporting our child's behavioral development by:

• [*insert steps parent identify to help correct behavioral concern]*

Student Responsibilities:

I, [*Student Name],* acknowledge receipt and understanding of the school's discipline policies and procedures. I understand that my behavior is subject to the expectations outlined by the school and that I am responsible for my actions.

I agree to:

• [*Insert steps student identifies, school rules/regulations, and classroom expectations]*

School Responsibilities:

We, [*insert school admin names],* agree to enforce disciplinary policies and procedures consistently and fairly – as outlined by district policy. We commit to:

• *Offering support and resource to assist the student in modifying their behavior.*
• *Implementing disciplinary actions in accordance with the appropriate response based on the severity and frequency of the student's misbehavior, as outlined in the school and district policies.*
• *We will work collaboratively with the student and their family to ensure a positive and supportive learning environment for all students.*

Family Signature: _____

Student Signature: _____

School Administrator Signature: _____

Date: _____

Communicating Student Behavior Trends and Concerns

Maggie Cordova Elementary School's administration noticed an increase in 5th grade behavior referrals due to conflicts originating on social media/online platforms. The following is the communication sent out to help mitigate the behaviors in collaboration with families.

Email Example to Families

Maggie Cordova Elementary, New Mexico

Good morning families,

We want to reach out with some important information regarding concerns amongst our 5th grades students specific to communication on social media. While many time we find that communication between students occurs outside of the school day on personal devices, the impact to learning and behavior at school is still evident. We not only want to help decrease such concerns, but we also want to support educating students on the importance of communicating appropriately as they begin to move toward middle school and beyond.

Fortunately, many students do not partake in cell phone communication or digital platforms in ways that are inappropriate, however, we do want all parents to be aware of some of the concerns we are seeing to help support sharing a message of responsibility and positive behavior among students when communicating via devices. Developing digital citizenship is a growing area of need as more students have access to personal devices and we want to support positive outcomes even when away from campus.

A few examples of recent concerns reported among students include the following:

- *Text messages that are unkind, mean or rumor-based or adding student to group chats where unkind messages are sent.*
- *Messaging or calls at noticeably early or late times.*
- *Messages referring wanting to fight.*
- *Videos shared to platforms such as Snapchat, Instagram, or YouTube that may include names of the school, other students or teachers (we want to ensure confidentiality and online safety on public platforms so please encourage your students to refrain from any posts that are identifying of themselves or others or the school).*
- *Name calling, memes, or other unkind digitally based messages.*

Personal devices are not allowed during school hours, and we want to remind students that this includes playgrounds and buses as well. We ask that all devices be stored off and away in backpacks during the instructional day.

We understand that it is a personal decision for parents to provide students with personal devices, such as cell phones, and we want to encourage students to develop responsibility in use of such items. We appreciate your support and encourage you to have on-going conversations around responsible, appropriate use when communicating with other students and in general.

Thank you for your time and attention to this matter.

Source: EAB Interviews & Analysis.

eab.com

Analyzing Discipline Data 101

Use this page as a starting point for identifying ways to begin analyzing your schools discipline data and identify any trends occurring in your school.

Collect Multiple Inputs to Identify Schoolwide Disciplinary Trends

While looking for trends in your school's response to students' behavior, ensure you are using at least two different inputs. Below are some examples of common inputs that many schools already track.

Data Sources	Behavior Type/Frequency	Student Demographics
• Behavior Referrals • Teacher Observations • In-School Suspensions • Out-of-School Suspensions	• Common behaviors observed (e.g., opposition, eloping, physical altercations) • How often each behavior type occurs • Time of day each behavior occurs • Location of behavior occurrence	• Gender • Race/Ethnicity • Special Education • Socio-Economic Status • Grade Level

▶ *Key Questions for Analysis*

- Is the use of exclusionary discipline a problem in your school?
- Is this problem schoolwide or isolated to a specific grade-level?
- Are there more common behaviors occurring at a specific grade level?
- Are students receiving suspensions too often, for too many days, or for unnecessary reasons?
- Do some student groups receive more suspension or expulsions than others?
- Which behaviors are most commonly met with exclusionary discipline?
- Does our current disciplinary approach align with district recommendations

Recommendations for Analyzing Discipline Data

Review discipline data at least once per year. Consider tackling this over the summer prior to the start of each school year.

Include support staff and any intervention teams in discipline analysis. These roles may have helpful context for understanding any trends and supports needed to address them.

Discipline Data Transparency Examples

ProPublica Miseducation Includes Your School's Disciplinary Data (and More)

▶ Even for schools who do not post their exclusionary discipline data publicly, the information can likely be found somewhere on the web—although it may be outdated. This increases the importance that schools should prioritize doing this themselves so they can ensure accurate, updated data is available and so they can own the narrative of that data.

▶ Explore ProPublica Misinformation's in-depth dashboard here.
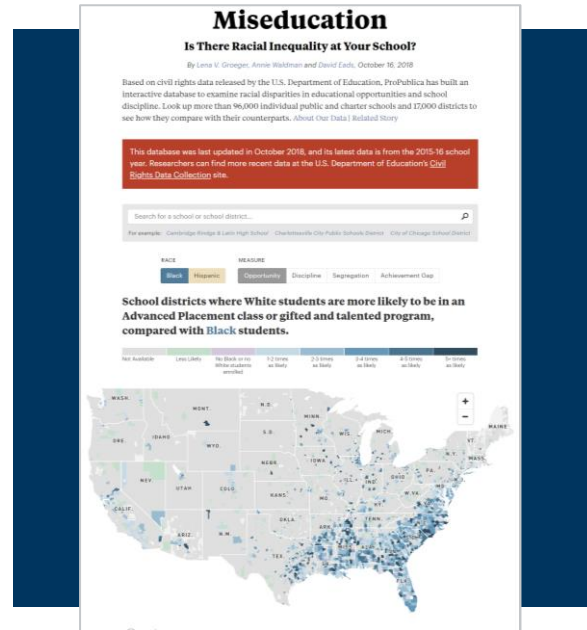
What Data to Include and Examples

- Schools can keep it simple and should not allow data analysis limitations prevent them from sharing any information at all. At the very least, posting the number of suspensions and expulsions (the most common type of exclusionary disciplinary practices tracked). Ideally, highlighting any decreases or other notable trends (positive and constructive) can help audiences understand the data.

- If data analysis capabilities already exist, more interactive or informative breakdowns of the data can be helpful. Check out the School District of Lancaster's (PA) equity dashboard (specifically the behavior tab) for an example.

▶ Minimally, setting a goal for improvement increases accountability and helps schools send the signal that a more supportive, non-punitive approach to behavior is the ideal. Rio Ranch Public Schools' 2023-2024 Behavior Plan set this goal to decrease exclusionary discipline for the district:

> " Reduce the number of discipline referrals for chronic disruption, bullying, disrespect, insubordination, violence and student aggression by 20%. Decrease the number of hearings for long-term suspensions and expulsions by 20%. "

Suspension Data Online Publication Example

Arlington Public Schools compiles suspension data at each school. Data is then published to their district website in a report analyzing suspensions at each school by grade-level and race/ethnicity. See the below sample of their elementary schools' suspensions from their 2019-2020 data report.

> Compare total # of suspensions to total school population to identify percentage of students receiving exclusionary discipline.

> Compare each schools' and the districts' total suspension numbers for each racial group to identify any disparities.

School Population and Out of School Suspension Data
2019-2020 (September 2019 - June 2020)

SCHOOL	Total Population*	% of Students in School Level	Total Number of Students Suspended*	Students Susp. as % of School's Total Pop.	Total Number of Suspensions*	Total Susp. as % of School's Total Pop.	Asian Pop.	Asian Pop. As % of Total Pop.	Asian Students Susp.	Asian Students Susp. as % of School's Total Students's Susp.	Asian Total Susp.	Asian Susp. as % of Total Susp.	Black Pop.	Black Pop. As % of Total Pop.	Black Students Susp.	Black Students Susp. as % of School's Total Students's Susp.	Black Total Susp.	Black Susp. as % of School's Total Susp.	Hispanic Pop.	Hisp. Pop. As % of Total Pop.	Hisp. Students Susp.	Hisp. Students Susp. as % of School's Total Students's Susp.	Hisp. Total Susp.	Hisp. Susp. as % of School's Total Susp.
Abingdon Elementar	751	5	3	0	3	0	77	10	0	0	0	0	129	17	2	67	2	67	232	31	0	0	0	0
Alice West Fleet Ele	670	5	0	0	0	0	71	11	0	0	0	0	77	11	0	0	0	0	189	28	0	0	0	0
Arlington Science Fo	738	5	0	0	0	0	160	22	0	0	0	0	76	10	0	0	0	0	66	9	0	0	0	0
Arlington Traditional	589	4	2	0	2	0	132	22	0	0	0	0	103	17	0	0	0	0	80	14	0	0	0	0
Ashlawn Elementary	753	5	1	0	1	0	86	11	0	0	0	0	32	4	0	0	0	0	120	16	1	100	1	100
Barcroft Elementary	455	3	2	0	3	1	18	4	0	0	0	0	53	12	1	50	2	67	232	51	1	50	1	33
Barrett Elementary S	574	4	4	1	4	1	32	6	0	0	0	0	52	9	1	25	1	25	303	53	3	75	3	75
Campbell Elementar	442	3	0	0	0	0	39	9	0	0	0	0	71	16	0	0	0	0	168	38	0	0	0	0
Carlin Springs Eleme	650	4	1	0	1	0	75	12	0	0	0	0	77	12	0	0	0	0	435	67	1	100	1	100
Claremont Elementa	732	5	0	0	0	0	20	3	0	0	0	0	34	5	0	0	0	0	381	52	0	0	0	0
Discovery Elementar	599	4	0	0	0	0	33	6	0	0	0	0	11	2	0	0	0	0	63	11	0	0	0	0
Dr. Charles R. Drew	439	3	0	0	0	0	35	8	0	0	0	0	155	35	0	0	0	0	163	37	0	0	0	0
Glebe Elementary Sc	558	4	0	0	0	0	47	8	0	0	0	0	35	6	0	0	0	0	105	19	0	0	0	0
Hoffman-Boston Eler	544	4	3	1	3	1	125	23	2	67	2	67	116	21	0	0	0	0	140	26	1	33	1	33
Jamestown Elementa	618	4	0	0	0	0	29	5	0	0	0	0	11	2	0	0	0	0	48	8	0	0	0	0
Key Elementary Sch	710	5	1	0	1	0	30	4	0	0	0	0	15	2	0	0	0	0	388	55	1	100	1	100
Long Branch Elemer	534	4	1	0	1	0	46	9	0	0	0	0	66	12	0	0	0	0	114	21	0	0	0	0
McKinley Elementary	784	5	0	0	0	0	39	5	0	0	0	0	30	4	0	0	0	0	67	9	0	0	0	0
Montessori Public Sc	456	3	0	0	0	0	55	12	0	0	0	0	66	14	0	0	0	0	95	21	0	0	0	0
Nottingham Element	499	3	3	1	6	1	44	9	0	0	0	0	4	1	0	0	0	0	42	8	0	0	0	0
Oakridge Elementary	646	4	0	0	0	0	80	12	0	0	0	0	104	16	0	0	0	0	86	13	0	0	0	0
Randolph Elementar	473	3	0	0	0	0	52	11	0	0	0	0	96	20	0	0	0	0	252	53	0	0	0	0
Taylor Elementary Sc	707	5	0	0	0	0	54	8	0	0	0	0	19	3	0	0	0	0	43	6	0	0	0	0
Tuckahoe Elementar	541	4	0	0	0	0	28	5	0	0	0	0	11	2	0	0	0	0	56	10	0	0	0	0
TOTAL E.S.	13170	100	18	0	22	0	1302	10	2	11	2	9	1303	10	2	11	3	14	3580	27	8	44	8	36

> Consider comparing total elementary school suspensions year-to-year and against middle or high school data.

> Compare each school and the districts' total annual suspension numbers by racial group to identify any disparities over time.

Source: Arlington Public Schools, "Suspension Data"

eab.com