ALTERNATIVES TO SUSPENSION & EXPULSION

Why is there a need for alternatives to suspension & expulsion?

Zero Tolerance: Assumptions vs. Facts

- There is no credible evidence that out-of-school suspension or expulsion are effective methods for changing student behavior.
- Higher rates of suspension and expulsion are associated with poorer school climate, higher dropout rates, and lower achievement.
- Minority disproportionality in suspension and expulsion have been consistently documented.
- A range of alternatives to zero tolerance are available to promote a productive learning climate and address disruptive behavior.

References


Unplanned Outcomes: Suspensions & Expulsions in Indiana.

- Indiana ranks first in the nation in its rate of school expulsion, and eighth in out-of-school suspensions in the most recent available national data.
- Over 90% of out-of-school suspensions were accounted for by infractions in the categories Disruptive Behavior and Other.
- The top 10% of schools in terms of rate of suspensions account for over 50% of Indiana’s out-of-school suspensions.
### Unplanned Outcomes:
#### Suspensions & Expulsions in Indiana.

- African American students are four times as likely to be suspended out of school and about two and a half times as likely to be expelled as white students. Hispanic students are also over-represented in suspension and expulsion.

- Regardless of demographic factors, schools with higher rates of out-of-school suspension have lower average passing rates on ISTEP.

### Discipline is Always Teaching:
#### Effective Alternatives

- Clarify expectations regarding office referrals and train staff in classroom management strategies.
- Actively teach appropriate behavior through school philosophy and preventive programs.
- Seek to reconnect alienated students through mentoring and anger management.
- Develop options in the school and community to keep students who are suspended and expelled engaged in learning.

### Alternatives to Suspension and Expulsion

- Development and utilization of teacher problem-solving skills in handling student problems
- Student involvement in the development of schoolwide expectations for behavior
- Public reinforcement for good behavior
- Systematic approach to consistent use of consequences for not fulfilling expectations
- Community involvement
- School-wide focus on establishing good behavior
- Use of data on discipline for evaluation and planning
Behavioral Expectations

- Behavioral Expectations should be:
  - Observable,
  - Acknowledgeable, and
  - Teachable.
- Define abstract expectations, like “Be respectful” or “Be responsible” in observable, teachable, and acknowledgeable terms.

Behavioral Expectations (cont. . . )

- Staff involvement in establishing behavioral expectations is necessary.
- Behavioral expectations should be consistent within a school system and reviewed at least annually.
- Consistent enforcement is necessary
- Explain school expectations at the beginning of the school year and reviewed throughout the school year as necessary.
- Teach and post the school-wide behavioral expectations.

Why problem behaviors occur?

- Why did the behavior occur, think functionally
  - Peer attention
  - Adult attention
  - Escape difficult tasks
  - Obtain preferred item/activity, etc
- What environmental factors or setting events play a role in students’ problem behaviors?
  - Please consider community and home environments
  - Ex: dress and language
- What evidence do you have that the IEP/BIP was properly implemented? Provide examples

Alternatives / Effective Interventions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BEHAVIOR</th>
<th>CONSEQUENCE</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Destruction of property</td>
<td>Pay for the property  Fix the property  Clean up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lunchroom Problems</td>
<td>Eat lunch in classroom  Eat lunch in isolated area of lunch room  Eat in an alternative area with principal/teacher and other students with lunchroom behavior problems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refusal to do work</td>
<td>Stay at school until work is completed  Loss of privilege until work finished</td>
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</table>
Alternatives / Effective Interventions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fighting in the hall</th>
<th>Lose privilege of walking in the hall during normal pass time, have to walk in the hall supervised by an adult and spend time in conflict resolution.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Recess problems</td>
<td>Lose recess time, consequences – OWE TIME AFTER SCHOOL, isolated during recess.</td>
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Possible Alternatives to Suspension and Expulsion

- The following 10 examples are:
  - Researched based that demonstrate positive behavioral-change outcomes for students; and
  - Provide an opportunity to maintain or re-engage students in school rather than pushing them out of school.
- These examples could be built into the school’s formal disciplinary code of conduct as part of an array of consequence for inappropriate behavior.

1) Problem Solving / Contracting

- Negotiation and problem-solving approaches can be used to assist students in identifying alternative behavior choices.
- The next step should involve developing a contract that reminds the student to engage in a problem-solving process, and which includes reinforcers for success and consequences for continuing problem behaviors.

2) Restitution

- In-kind restitution (rather than financial restitution, which often falls on the parents) permits the student to help to restore or improve the school environment.
  - Students may repair things they damaged (i.e., vandalism)
  - Students may be required to improve the school environment (i.e., picking up trash, washing lockers).
### 3) Mini-Courses or Skill Modules
- Short courses or self-study modules can be assigned as a disciplinary consequence.
- These should be on topics related to the student’s inappropriate behavior, and should be designed to teach the student to have increased awareness or knowledge about the topic thus facilitating behavior change.
- These modules might include readings, videos, workbooks, tests, and oral reports on a range of topics such as alcohol/drug use or abuse, strategies for conflict resolution, anger control strategies, social skills (e.g., getting along with peers, making behavior appropriate for the setting), and appropriate communication skills (e.g., appropriate and inappropriate language, how to express disagreement).

### 4) Parent Involvement / Supervision
- Parents should be invited to brainstorm ways they can provide closer supervision or be more involved in their child’s schooling.
- Better communication and more frequent contacts between teachers and parents, as well as coordinated behavior-change approaches, are very useful and could be formalized into a disciplinary consequence.

### 5) Counseling
- Students may be required to receive additional supports or individual counseling from trained helping professionals (e.g., counselor, school psychologist) focused on social skills, problem solving, and/or personal issues interfering with learning.
- Counselor can also provide study and/or organizational skill training. (e.g. Skills for Success, Life Skill Training, Skill Streaming, Second Steps)

### 6) Community Services
- Programs that permit the student to perform a required amount of time in supervised community service outside of school hours (e.g., volunteer at another school or an organization) should be created.
7) Behavior Monitoring

- Closely monitoring behavior and academic progress (e.g., self-charting of behaviors, feedback sessions for the student) will permit rewards to be provided for successful performance.

- Check-in Check-Out with an adult in building (e.g. BEP, Check & Connect, etc.).

8) Coordinated Behavior Plans

- Creation of a structured, coordinated behavior support plan specific to the student and based on a hypothesis about the function of the target behavior to be reduced should be created. (See Horner & Crane book “Building Positive Behavior Support Systems in Schools: Functional Behavioral Assessment”)

- It should focus on increasing desirable behavior, and replacing inappropriate behaviors.

9) Alternative Programming

- Provide short- or long-term changes in the student schedule, classes or course content or offer the option of participating in an independent study or work-experience program.

- Programming should be tailored to student needs, and permit appropriate credit accrual and progress toward graduation.

- Change of placement or programming must be made by the IEP (Individualized Education Program) team for students with EBD or other disabilities.

10) Appropriate In-School Suspension

- In-school suspension should be provided and include academic tutoring, instruction on skill-building related to the student behavior problem (e.g., social skills), and a clearly defined procedure for returning to class contingent on student progress or behavior.

- The environment should be carefully managed to guard against using in-school suspension as a way to avoid attending classes.

- See TRIP Report on www.successfulschools.org website for strategies on how to set-up an effective ISS program.
How to make these alternatives work?

- Create a caring school community and climate.
- Make efforts to build adult-student relationships.
- Increase parent involvement through better home-school communication.
- Develop and teach consistent school expectations
- Implement systems for early identification and intervention for students at-risk for school failure.

How to make these alternatives work? (cont. . .)

- Mediation Programs
- Bullying prevention and intervention
- Conflict de-escalation training
- School-wide discipline program
- Positive office referrals/recognition

Web Resources

CHILDREN LEFT BEHIND: Fact Sheet
http://ceep.indiana.edu/ChildrenLeftBehind/pdf/FactSheet.pdf

The Equity Project at Indiana University
http://www.iub.edu/~safeschl/Equity/resources.html

Impact of Zero Tolerance School Discipline Policies

Web Resources

- Check & Connect
  http://ici.umn.edu/checkandconnect/

- Tier II Positive Behavior Supports & Interventions
  http://www.pbis.org/secondaryprevention.htm

- Effective Educational Practices
  http://www.successfulschools.org/ns/resources.html