Reducing the Need and Use of Suspension for Students with Special Needs: Effective Policies and Practices

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Session Objectives

- Analysis of current trends related to the use of suspension
- Consideration of rationale for use of suspension to address discipline concerns
- Evaluation of outcomes correlated with the use of suspension
- Review of promising practices and policies schools can implement to reduce suspension and improve overall school culture

The Rising Use Of Suspension

Suspension as Percent of Enrollment By Race

The Rationale for Use of Suspension and The Facts about the Outcomes

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Fact or Fiction?

- Out-of-school suspension and expulsion are effective methods for changing student behavior.

- There is no credible evidence that out-of-school suspension or expulsion are effective methods for changing student behavior.

- 30-50% of students suspended are repeat offenders
  - “Suspension functions as a reinforcer...rather than as a punisher” (Tobin, Sugai & Colvin, 1996)
  - In Texas, data from nearly 1 million Texas students indicated:
    - Students who were involved in the school disciplinary system averaged 8 suspensions and/or expulsions during their middle or high school years;
    - 15% of students were disciplined 11 or more separate times.

- If a child doesn’t know how to read, we teach.
- If a child doesn’t know how to swim, we teach.
- If a child doesn’t know how to multiply, we teach.
- If a child doesn’t know how to drive, we teach.
- If a child doesn’t know how to behave, we... TEACH

- “Why can’t we finish the last sentence as automatically as we do the others?”
  (Herner, 1998)

- Suspension and expulsions are associated with improved school climates, lower dropout rates, and higher achievement.
Higher rates of suspension and expulsion are associated with poorer school climate, higher dropout rates, and lower achievement.

- OSS/Expulsions:
  - Predict higher future rates of misbehavior & discipline concerns
  - Long term relationship with dropout, failure to graduate on time
  - According to the report Breaking School Rules (2011), in Texas,
    - Of all students who were suspended or expelled 31 percent repeated their grade at least once. In contrast, only 5 percent of students with no disciplinary involvement were retained.

Use of suspension correlates with:

- School dropout (school level) (Raffaele-Mendez; Ekstrom, 1986)
- Juvenile incarceration (state level) (Skiba et al)
- In Texas,
  - ~50% of students who were disciplined 11 or more times were in Juvenile System
  - Students suspended or expelled for a discretionary violation were nearly 3 times as likely to be in contact with the juvenile system.

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**Fact or Fiction?**

- Suspension and expulsion creates equity for all students.
Minority disproportionality in suspension and expulsion have been consistently documented.
- Black students suspended 2-3x as frequently
- Studies since find disproportionality in:
  - Office referrals
  - Suspension & Expulsion
  - Corporal Punishment
- Students with disabilities over-represented:
  - 11-14% of population
  - App. 20-24% of suspensions

In Texas, students of color are disproportionately disciplined:
- Nearly 75% of students qualifying for SPED services were disciplined at least once

What Behaviors are Students Referred For? By Race?

Of 32 infractions, only 8 significant differences:

- White students referred more for:
  - Smoking
  - Vandalism
  - Leaving w/o permission
  - Obscene Language

- Black students referred more for:
  - Disrespect
  - Excessive Noise
  - Threat
  - Loitering

Skiba et al (2002). The Color of Discipline

Fact or Fiction?

- Suspensions and expulsions represent the most effective way to promote productive learning climates.
A range of alternatives to zero tolerance are available to promote a productive learning climate and address disruptive behavior.

- Clearly defined behavioral expectations
- Proactive teaching behavioral expectations
- Acknowledging students for engaging in appropriate behaviors
- Consistent & clear consequences for behavioral violations
- On-going data collection for decisions regarding students’ support needs

Core features of Effective Policies & Procedures

Use of triangle data for decision-making

- How do we need to allocate our resources?
- How many students need more than universal support?
- A single triangle might not provide sufficiently detailed answers to serve all students equitably
- Disaggregations by race/ethnicity are important to make decisions regarding ALL students’ needs
ODR Data from 155 Elementary Schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students with 0-1 ODR</th>
<th>Students with 2-5 ODR</th>
<th>Students with 6+ ODR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.32%</td>
<td>1.29%</td>
<td>2.22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.17%</td>
<td>4.06%</td>
<td>6.81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>94.51%</td>
<td>94.65%</td>
<td>90.97%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Students n = 72,778</td>
<td>White Students n = 32,056</td>
<td>African-American Students n = 13,601</td>
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ODR Data from 46 Middle Schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students with 0-1 ODR</th>
<th>Students with 2-5 ODR</th>
<th>Students with 6+ ODR</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4.03%</td>
<td>3.16%</td>
<td>6.73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.54%</td>
<td>6.99%</td>
<td>13.51%</td>
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<tr>
<td>87.63%</td>
<td>89.85%</td>
<td>89.99%</td>
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<tr>
<td>All Students n = 30,365</td>
<td>White Students n = 16,339</td>
<td>African-American Students n = 6,298</td>
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ODR Data from 8 High Schools

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Students with 0-1 ODR</th>
<th>Students with 2-5 ODR</th>
<th>Students with 6+ ODR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.44%</td>
<td>1.79%</td>
<td>8.27%</td>
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<tr>
<td>7.62%</td>
<td>6.29%</td>
<td>21.17%</td>
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<td>89.94%</td>
<td>91.92%</td>
<td>86.04%</td>
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<tr>
<td>All Students n = 8,609</td>
<td>White Students n = 6,802</td>
<td>African-American Students n = 411</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Arguing with a kid is like mud wrestling with a pig...
You both get dirty,
But the pig loves it!
### Survey of Respectful Behavior

- **Participants**
  - 2850 middle & high school students
  - Chicago, IL, Hammond, IN, Houma, LA & Webster, MA
  - Approximately 76% of students across the schools surveyed receive free or reduced lunch
- Survey asked students, “What are some ways that teachers show you respect?”

### Survey Process

- Administered to each student through their English class.
- Asked to provide 3 responses to the following question:
  - “How does a teacher show you respect?”
- Instructions stated that “respect” should be defined in terms that are observable and acknowledgeable.

### Top 12 Answers

- Of the over 3800 responses, the ones listed were written by 200 students or more.

1. Talk privately to students when a problem occurs (Does not embarrass me in front of my friends).
2. Use a calm tone of voice, even when they are upset. (No yell)
3. Respect personal space (Don’t touch, grab, eyeballing, crowd)
4. Listen without interrupting.
5. Have a sense of humor.
6. Display student work around the classroom/school.
7. Makes learning fun/ Prepares exciting lessons. (good instruction)
8. Let parents/guardian know student did a good job sometimes (see a balanced picture).
9. Use student’s name when talking to them or address me as Ma’am or Sir
10. Be available during non-classroom times
11. Return work promptly/ Let’s me know how I’m doing (provides feedback)
12. Smiles or says hello when I come to class

Worth noting: Acknowledge birthday received multiple mentions.

1. Acknowledge expected behaviors
2. Have orderly transitions
3. Frequently make data-based decisions
4. Seek on-going training

6. Involve parents & provide resources for families
7. Develop good teacher-student relationships
8. Provide academic instruction that is relevant to the students’ lives and builds on their previous knowledge
9. Facilitate cooperative and friendly peer relationships

10. Learn from model schools
11. Visionary leadership
12. Intensive academic support (relates to “relevant instruction” but more about seriously working hard at lots of basic, excellent instruction)
13. Acknowledgement of race (relates to teacher-student relationships & peer relationships but more direct discussion of cultural issues and personal attitudes)
14. Parental and community engagement (relates to involving parents & providing resources but also involves getting agencies, business, politicians, & community members interested in helping the schools)

15. Teachers’ effective practices — Teacher collaboration (see below – another 5 even more specific strategies)
16. **Meet regularly** by grade or subject matter
17. **Use data to plan** [relates to data-based decisions but this time, about instruction more than about behavior]
18. **Discuss examples of students’ work** – to help each other!
19. **Identify students in need of academic interventions**
20. **Help plan to re-teach & give examples**

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**Clarifying Terms: Some Examples**

- Primary Prevention (Does **not** mean elementary)
  - Tier 1, “Universal”
  - Whole school or whole class interventions
- Secondary Intervention (Does **not** mean high school)
  - Tier 2, “Targeted”
  - Ready-to-use interventions that can quickly provide some extra support to students who need a bit more help.
- Tertiary Intervention
  - Tier 3, “Intensive and individualized”
  - Behavior Support Plan based on Functional Behavioral Assessment

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**Some Tier 2 Supports**

- Social Skill Groups
- Academic Supports (Homework Club Afterschool, Tutoring, Study Skills Lessons)
- Point Card & Daily Behavior Report Card

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**Focus is on a Tier 2 strategy called “CICO”**

- Combined a paper and pencil classroom point card intervention with
- A data collection and analysis program for data from the Check In Check Out (CICO) point cards
- Acknowledgement for meeting goals
- Transitions students into goal setting & self awareness of behavior.
A secondary (targeted) intervention that is continuously available to all students.

Key features:

- Student checks in with an adult in the morning and receives Daily Report Card (DRC).
- Student hands DRC to the teacher at the start of each class period.
- Teacher returns DRC to the student and provides feedback at the end of each class period.
- Student checks out with an adult at the end of the day, receives feedback, and takes copy of DRC home.
- Family member recognizes student’s success and signs the DRC.


**Web Resources**

- **CHILDREN LEFT BEHIND: Fact Sheet**
  [http://ceep.indiana.edu/ChildrenLeftBehind/pdf/FactSheet.pdf](http://ceep.indiana.edu/ChildrenLeftBehind/pdf/FactSheet.pdf)

- **The Equity Project at Indiana University**
  [http://www.iub.edu/~safeschl/Equity/resources.html](http://www.iub.edu/~safeschl/Equity/resources.html)

- **Impact of Zero Tolerance School Discipline Policies**
### Web Resources

- Check & Connect
  - [http://ici.umn.edu/checkandconnect/](http://ici.umn.edu/checkandconnect/)

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

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