Strategies for Addressing Discipline Disproportionality

Texas Disproportionality Summit

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Handouts:
http://www.pbis.org
Acknowledgements

Information from this session comes from:


Thanks also to ongoing work of the National PBIS Center’s Disproportionality Workgroup

- Clynita Grafenreed
- Kelsey Morris
- Jen Rose
- Russ Skiba
Session Overview

1. Describe the problem of disproportionality
2. Share a 5-point multicomponent intervention for reducing disproportionality
3. Define and describe the role of implicit bias in discipline decision making
4. Share a new set of strategies for assessing and addressing implicit bias

Handouts: http://www.pbis.org
FIGURE 10
Arrest Rates for Marijuana Possession by Race (2001-2010)

Source: FBI/Uniform Crime Reporting Program Data and U.S. Census Data
FIGURE 22

Source: National Household Survey on Drug Abuse and Health, 2001-2010
Stop and Frisk – New York City (2004-2012)

Total Stops

- **White**
  - Population: 30%
  - Stops: 10%

- **Black**
  - Population: 50%
  - Stops: 60%

Successful Frisks

- **White**
  - Weapons Found: 1.5%
  - Contraband Found: 1.0%

- **Black**
  - Weapons Found: 2.0%
  - Contraband Found: 1.5%
Disproportionality in School Discipline (Losen & Skiba, 2010)
A 5-point Intervention to Enhance Equity in School Discipline

Disproportionality represents one of the most significant problems in education today (Gregory, Skiba, & Noguera, 2010; U.S. Government Accountability Office, 2013). The results of decades of research consistently show that students of color, particularly African American students (and even more so for those with disabilities), are at significantly increased risk for exposure to exclusionary discipline practices, including office discipline referrals and suspensions (e.g., Fabelo et al., 2011; Losen & Goldstein, 2012; Shaw & Braden, 1990). These differences have been found consistently across geographic regions and cannot be adequately explained by the correlation between race and poverty (Nolte, 2006; Nolte & Moloughlin, 2010). Given the well-documented negative effects of exclusionary discipline on a range of student outcomes (American Academy of Pediatrics Council on School Health, 2013), educators must address this issue by identifying rates of discipline disproportionality, taking steps to reduce it, and monitoring the effects of intervention on disproportionality. Disproportionality in exclusionary discipline blocks us from the overall objective of promoting positive outcomes for all students.

Components of Effective Intervention to Prevent and Reduce Disproportionality

The existing research is clear that no single strategy will be sufficient to produce substantive and sustainable change. Multiple components may be needed, but not all components may be necessary in all schools. We describe here a 5-point multicomponent approach to reduce disproportionality in schools.

1. Use Effective Instruction to Reduce the Achievement Gap

Because of the well-documented relation between academic achievement and problem behavior (McIntosh, Sadler, &...
School Discipline Guidance


**GENERAL**

**School Climate and Discipline**

Click here for an alternate version of the video with an accessible player.

**GUIDANCE PACKAGE**

- **Dear Colleague letter**
  Guidance letter prepared with our partners at the U.S. Department of Justice describing how schools can meet their obligations under federal law to administer student discipline without discriminating on the basis of race, color, or national origin.
  [English](PDF, 587) | [En español](PDF, 644K)
5-point Intervention to Enhance Equity in School Discipline

1. Use effective instruction to reduce the achievement gap
2. Implement SWPBIS to build a foundation of prevention
3. Collect, use, and report disaggregated student discipline data
4. Develop policies with accountability for disciplinary equity
5. Teach neutralizing routines for vulnerable decision points
1. Why a focus on effective academic instruction?

Teacher presents student with grade level academic task

Student’s academic skills do not improve

Student engages in problem behavior

Student escapes academic task

Teacher removes academic task or removes student

(McIntosh et al, 2008)
What do we mean by effective academic instruction?

- Explicit instruction
- High rates of engagement and OTRs
- Quality performance feedback
- Progress monitoring and data-based decision making

(Hattie, 2009)
Effects of Effective Instruction on the Achievement Gap

Tigard-Tualatin School District (Chaparro, Helton, & Sadler, in press)
2. Why use a foundation of SWPBIS?

1. Proactive, instructional approach *may* prevent problem behavior and exposure to biased responses to problem behavior

2. Increasing positive student-teacher interactions *may* enhance relationships to prevent challenges

3. More objective referral and discipline procedures *may* reduce subjectivity and influence of cultural bias

4. Professional development *may* provide teachers with more instructional responses

(Greiflund et al., 2014)
Effects of SWPBIS on Discipline Disproportionality
(Vincent, Swain-Bradway, Tobin & May, 2011)
5. How do we begin to address racial bias without it backfiring?
Time Out: Our options for building support

1. **Show data**: either theirs or national
   - Hit them over their heads with inequities
   - Cognitive dissonance: pattern that is not in line with our values as educators

**Common Outcomes:**
- Defensiveness
- Challenging validity of the data
- More blaming of students
Time Out: Our options for building support

2. Tell people to be less biased
   - Explain importance of equity
   - Describe the laws on discrimination
   - Tell people to cut it out

- Common Outcomes:
  - No change in levels of discrimination
    - Don’t care
    - Don’t have specific guidance

(Girvan, 2014; Girvan et al., 2014; Lai et al., 2013; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006)
Time Out: Our options for building support

3. Cultural sensitivity training
   - Discuss value of diversity
   - Introduce concept of White Privilege
   - Brief introductions to various cultures

- Common Outcomes:
  - Defensiveness
  - White people crying
  - Shift in attitudes for some?
  - No new strategies

(Lai et al., 2013; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006)
4. Introduce the concept of implicit bias and provide specific strategies

☐ Describe the concept of implicit bias
☐ Explain vulnerable decision points (VDPs)
☐ Teach a self-instruction strategy
  1. Am I in a VDP?
  2. If so, use an alternative response

Common Outcomes:
Implicit Bias in School Discipline
What is implicit bias?

- Unconscious, automatic
- Based on stereotypes
- We all have it (even those affected by it)
- Generally not an indication of what we believe or would endorse
- More likely to influence:
  - Snap decisions
  - Decisions that are ambiguous
Implicit Bias at Work

- Attractiveness
  - Real estate agents rated as more attractive sell homes for significantly higher prices (Salter, Mixon, & King, 2012)

- Height
  - One inch of height is worth $789 per year in salary (Judge & Cable, 2004)
Implicit Bias in Refereeing
(Carlson, 2014)

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<th>Away game differential</th>
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<td>Wake Forest</td>
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Implicit Bias and Gender
(Reuben et al., 2014)

- Subjects randomly split into groups of 4 (employers and job candidates)
  - Job candidates paid by performance on timed math (adding sets of 2 digit numbers)
  - Employers paid if they chose the best of 2 job candidates

- Hiring criteria:
  - Appearance
  - Self-reported performance
  - Actual pre-test performance
The top bars show the percentages of female candidates that were picked, and the middle bars show the percentages of times the lower-performing candidate in the pair was picked.

Reuben E et al. PNAS 2014;111:4403-4408
Implicit Bias and Race

“the challenge is not a small number of twisted white supremacists but something infinitely more subtle and complex: People who believe in equality but who act in ways that perpetuate bias and inequality.”

-Nicholas Kristof, The New York Times
A Unidimensional View of Bias

Racial Bias → Disproportionate Discipline
A Multidimensional View of Bias

- Racial Bias
- Situation
- Disproportionate Discipline
Interventions for Implicit Bias in School Discipline
What is a Vulnerable Decision Point?

- A specific decision that is more vulnerable to effects of implicit bias
- Two parts:
  - The person’s decision state (internal state)
  - The situation
Resource Depletion
(Girvan et al., 2014)

■ As we become fatigued, our filters for appropriate behavior can be affected

■ Effects of hunger (Gailliot et al., 2009)

■ Decreases in willpower later in day
  □ “The Morning Morality Effect” (Kouchaki & Smith, 2014)
  □ Examples…
Options for Identifying VDPs for Intervention

- Levels of specificity:
  1. All ODR/suspension decisions (general self-instruction routine)
  2. Identify VDPs through national data
  3. Use school or district data
Using Discipline Data within SWPBIS to Identify and Address Disproportionality: A Guide for School Teams

This practice guide is one of a series of guides for enhancing equity in school discipline. The guides are based on a 5-point multicomponent intervention described by McIntosh, Girvan, Horner, Smolkowski, and Sugai (2014). The 5 points include effective instruction, School-wide PBIS as a foundation for culturally-responsive behavior support, use of disaggregated discipline data, effective policies, and reducing bias in discipline decisions. This guide addresses use of data.

The recommendations and guides are available at: http://www.pbis.org/school/equity-pbis.

Introduction
The purpose of this guide is to provide a reference for SWPBIS school teams in the use of discipline data (e.g., office discipline referrals, suspensions) in the area of racial and ethnic disproportionality in school discipline. The guide will describe a framework and steps for identifying levels of disproportionality, analyzing data to determine solutions, and monitoring the effectiveness of action plans in addressing disproportionality. Specific practices to address disproportionality are described in other guides in this series.

Audience
This guide is designed primarily for use by school or district teams seeking to reduce racial and ethnic disproportionality in school discipline, regardless of whether they are implementing SWPBIS.

Dr. Kelsey Morris

http://www.pbis.org/school/equity-pbis
National SWIS Data (2011-12)

3,026,367 ODRs
6,269 schools
47 states, plus DC
Office Referrals by Problem Behavior

**White**
- Language: 4
- Defiance/Disrespect: 14
- Disruption: 5
- Fighting: 2
- Forgery/Theft: 1
- Harassment/bullying: 3
- Lying/cheating: 1
- M-Defiance/Disrespect: 15
- M-Disruption: 14
- M-Dress code: 1
- M-Language: 1
- M-Other: 2
- M-Physical Contact: 6
- M-Property Misuse: 6
- M-Tardy: 4

**Black**
- Language: 5
- Defiance/Disrespect: 9
- Disruption: 11
- Fighting: 1
- Forgery/Theft: 5
- Harassment/bullying: 3
- Lying/cheating: 1
- M-Defiance/Disrespect: 7
- M-Disruption: 3
- M-Dress code: 1
- M-Language: 2
- M-Other: 3
- M-Physical Contact: 3
- M-Property Misuse: 3
- M-Tardy: 3
Office Referrals by Location

- The bar chart shows the number of referrals for different locations.
- The locations with the highest referrals are Classroom and Common Areas.
- The chart compares referrals for Black and White students.
Office Referrals by Time of Day

White

Black
VDPs from national ODR data

- Subjective problem behavior
  - Disruption, defiance, major vs. minor
- Non-classroom areas
  - Hallways
- Afternoons
Multidimensional View of Bias

Racial Bias

Situation

Disproportionate Discipline

Vulnerable Decision Points
- Subjective Behavior
- Vague Discipline System
- Common Areas
- Hunger
- Fatigue
- Unfamiliar with Student
School Example

Urban K-8 School
Risk Indices

Referral Risk Index
All, 2013-14

Black/White ODR Risk Ratio = 2.5
Problem Behavior: All Students

Referrals by Problem Behavior
Drill Down

Referrals

Problem Behavior
Problem Behavior: Black Students Only

Referrals by Problem Behavior
Drill Down

Referrals

Disrespect, Harass, M-Dress, Prop dam, Inapp Lan, M-Inapp Lan, M-Other, M-Contact, M-Defiance, Disruption, M-Disrespect, Defiance, PA99, M-Disruption

Problem Behavior
Drill Down: Physical Aggression

Black/White ODR Risk Ratio = 6.5
Drill Down: Physical Aggression Playground

Referral Risk Index (Ethnicity)

Drill Down

Percentage (out of 100%)

Native, Asian, Black, Latino, Pacific, White, Unknown, Not Listed, Multi-racial

Ethnicity & Enrollment
Addressing Common Questions

“Isn't it all really about poverty?”

- Poverty plays a role, but racial disproportionality remains, even when controlling for poverty
  - American Psychological Association, 2008
  - Skiba et al., 2005
  - Wallace et al., 2008
Addressing Common Questions

“ Aren’t Black boys just more violent? ”

- No evidence of different base rates of behavior for any subgroups
  - Bradshaw et al., 2010
  - Losen & Skiba, 2010
  - Skiba et al., in press
Addressing Common Questions

“Are you saying that all teachers are racist?”

No! Our research indicates that disproportionality comes from unconscious bias – that we’re not even aware of.

- Banaji & Greenwald, 2013
- Greenwald & Pettigrew, 2014
- van den Bergh et al., 2010
Two-step Neutralizing Routine for **Staff**:

- When you see problem behavior, stop and ask yourself:
  1. Is this a VDP?
     - Situation
     - Decision state
  2. If so, use an agreed-upon alternative response
Neutralizing Routines for Reducing Effects of Implicit Bias

Setting event
Lack of positive interactions with student
Fatigue

Antecedent
Loud complaints about work (subjective behavior)

Self-assessment
“Is this a vulnerable decision point?”

Behavior
Send student to office (ODR)

Consequence
Student leaves class (Escape social interaction)

Alternative Response
“See me after class.”


What makes for a good neutralizing routine?

- Brief
- If-then statements
- Clear steps
- Doable
What makes for a good alternative response?

- Delay
  - “See me after class”
- Pause
  - Think it through before sending to office
- Use least exclusionary choice
  - Delayed ODR
- Speak with student
  - State your confidence in them
  - Ask about their needs privately
Neutralizing Routine Examples

- “If this is a VDP, am I acting in line with my values?”
- “If disrespect, keep in class”
- “If I am tired, delay decision until I can think clearly”
Two-step Neutralizing Routine for **Staff**:

- Can also be used as precorrection
  1. Am I about to enter a VDP?
  2. What are my values?
  3. When I see problem behavior, I’ll use the alternative response
Two-step Neutralizing Routine for Administrators:
(Susan Barrett)

1. Don’t just do something, stand there!
   - Be sure you are ready to act in line with values
   - Get information from student and staff
   - Assess student-teacher relationship

2. Whenever possible, use an agreed-upon instructional response
   - Teaches missing skills
   - Connects student to school and staff
1. Tell me what happened.
2. What you were thinking at the time?
3. What do you think about it now?
4. Who did this affect?
5. What do you need to do about it?
6. How can we make sure this doesn't happen again?
7. What I can do to help you?
Professional Development

1. Use data to identify:
   - The extent of the problem
   - Vulnerable Decision Points (VDPs)
2. Teach and practice:
   - Implicit bias
   - VDPs
   - Neutralizing routines
3. Follow up:
   - Ongoing coaching
   - Monitor progress with data
Contact Information

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Handouts: http://kentmcintosh.wordpress.com
References


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