ENHANCING EQUITY THROUGH DISTRICT AND SCHOOL POLICY

Rhonda Nese, PhD
University of Oregon

2017 Texas PBIS Conference

Acknowledgements

PBIS Center Disproportionality Workgroup

- Timothy Baker
- Aaron Barnes
- Alondra Canizal Delabra
- Yolanda Cargle
- Edin Chaparro
- Sara Coccimiglio
- Tai Collins
- Bert Elaison
- Erik Givhan
- Steve Goodman
- Cyntia Grant-Reed
- Ambra Green
- Bath Hill
- Rob Hornet

- Don Knoel
- Milaney Leverston
- Tim Lewis
- Kent McIntosh
- Kelcey Morris
- Rhonda Nese
- Vicki Nahiska
- Heidi von Ravensberg
- Jennifer Rose
- Theresa Sandomierski
- Russ Skiba
- Kent Smith
- Keith Smolkowski

http://www.pbis.org/school/equity-pbis

A 5-point Intervention Approach to Enhance Equity in School Discipline

http://www.pbis.org/school/equity-pbis
5-point Intervention Approach

1. Use engaging **academic instruction** to reduce the support gap (achievement gap)
2. Implement a **behavior framework** that is preventive, multi-tiered, and culturally responsive
3. Collect, use, and report **disaggregated** discipline data
4. Develop **policies** with accountability for disciplinary equity
5. Teach **neutralizing routines** for vulnerable decision points

http://www.pbis.org/school/equity-pbis

---

**Key Elements of Policies to Address Discipline Disproportionality**

**A Guide for District and School Teams**

Purpose of the Guidebook

- Provide resources for districts and schools in developing policies and procedures to reduce racial and ethnic disproportionality in school discipline.
- Describe and provide examples of key elements for policy and their application in schools.
- Provide a process and tool for assessing aspects of policies to enhance equitable discipline.
- Not intended to replace legal counsel for policies required by local, state, and federal legislation.

How Equity Policies Could be Effective

- Effective Equity Policies
  - Set clear priorities.
  - Reduce the effects of explicit bias.
  - Enable implementation of specific interventions.
  - Reduce discriminatory practices.

What does *not work* in policy

- Enacting policies that nobody knows about
- Enacting policies that don’t change practice
- Policies without accountability for implementation
# Key Elements of Effective Policy to Enhance Equity in School Discipline

1. Specific Commitment to Equity
2. Family Partnerships in Policy Development
3. Focus on Implementing Positive, Proactive Behavior Support Practices
4. Clear, Objective Discipline Procedures
5. Removal or Reduction of Exclusionary Practices
6. Graduated Discipline Systems with Instructional Alternatives to Exclusion
7. Procedures with Accountability for Equitable Student Outcomes

# 7 Key Elements and Critical Features of Effective Equity Policies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Element</th>
<th>Critical Feature</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Specific Commitment to Equity</td>
<td>Specific language frameworks and statements promoting equity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Partnerships in Policy Development</td>
<td>Commitment to regularly seeking and using input from a range of families.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus on Implementing Positive, Proactive Behavior Support Practices</td>
<td>Regular evaluation of effectiveness of family engagement programs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clear, Objective Discipline Procedures</td>
<td>Clear delineation between minor and major behavior incidents.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Removal or Reduction of Exclusionary Practices</td>
<td>Clear delineation between minor and major behavior incidents.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduated Discipline Systems with Instructional Alternatives to Exclusion</td>
<td>Graduated discipline systems with instructional alternatives to exclusion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Procedures with Accountability for Equitable Student Outcomes</td>
<td>Procedures with accountability for equitable student outcomes.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Element 1: Specific Commitment to Equity**

- Requests school codes to implement high-quality, research-based, evidence-informed practices.
- Involves all stakeholders in the development and implementation of the policy.
- Provides regular training and support to all staff.

**Example:** District Policy

*The district commits to implementing evidence-based practices and providing regular training to all staff.*

---

**Element 2: Specific Commitment to Equity**

- Requests school codes to implement high-quality, research-based, evidence-informed practices.
- Involves all stakeholders in the development and implementation of the policy.
- Provides regular training and support to all staff.

**Example:** District Policy

*The district commits to implementing evidence-based practices and providing regular training to all staff.*

---

**Element 3: Specific Commitment to Equity**

- Requests school codes to implement high-quality, research-based, evidence-informed practices.
- Involves all stakeholders in the development and implementation of the policy.
- Provides regular training and support to all staff.

**Example:** District Policy

*The district commits to implementing evidence-based practices and providing regular training to all staff.*

---

**Element 4: Specific Commitment to Equity**

- Requests school codes to implement high-quality, research-based, evidence-informed practices.
- Involves all stakeholders in the development and implementation of the policy.
- Provides regular training and support to all staff.

**Example:** District Policy

*The district commits to implementing evidence-based practices and providing regular training to all staff.*

---
Element 1: Specific Commitment to Equity

Example High School is committed to high expectations, varied and challenging experiences relevant for each student, positive and proactive discipline practices, and educational equity for all students. We are committed to identifying strengths and addressing improvements in the operations of our school through the continuous use of data as an effort to honor each component of our mission.

Element 1: Specific Commitment to Equity

The mission of Non-example Elementary School, a diverse community, is to cultivate relationships and acceptance while developing college and career ready students. We welcome and respect students from all cultures and diverse backgrounds, and all students have a chance to succeed.

Element 4: Clear, Objective Discipline Procedures

- Policy 3.1.A: Schools within Example School District will:
  - Develop precise definitions for each common problem behavior in the school. These definitions are taught to all staff members in order to gain consensus on what specific problem behaviors look like.
  - Define the differences between major versus minor behavior incidents. This step is critical, because many behaviors (e.g., disrupting the class, talking back to the teacher) can either be easily handled in class or be so severe that an administrator needs to be involved.
  - Train teachers on the difference between major problem behaviors, which are typically handled by an administrator, and minor problem behaviors, which are most commonly addressed by the teacher in the classroom.
Element 4: Clear, Objective Discipline Procedures

Non-example School District believes in punishment that fits the crime. Therefore, we work with our schools to make sure that fair disciplinary actions are appropriately assigned in response to student offenses.

Appendix A

Discipline Policies and Procedures Summary

- The school district policies are important, as they ensure that the application of discipline is fair and consistent across the district.
- The Discipline Policy and Procedures, developed in consultation with school administrators and educators, emphasize the importance of consistency and fairness in discipline.

The school district policy on discipline emphasizes the following:

1. Consistency in applying discipline policies across the district.
2. Fairness in the application of discipline.
3. Transparency in the decision-making process.
4. The involvement of students, parents, and educators in the discipline process.

Appendix B

Element 4: Clear, Objective Discipline Procedures

Element 4: Clear, Objective Discipline Procedures

Appendix B

Element 4: Clear, Objective Discipline Procedures

Appendix B

Element 4: Clear, Objective Discipline Procedures

Appendix B

Element 4: Clear, Objective Discipline Procedures
Because the issue of disproportionality in school discipline is multifaceted, there may not be one easy solution.

However, direct efforts in policy are recommended to reduce ubiquitous racial and ethnic disparities (Skiba et al., 2011).

Tigard Tualatin School District

- Suburban Portland School District
- 12,800 students K-12
- 60% White, 26% Hispanic, 6% Multiple
- 10 Elementary, 3 Middle, 2 High Schools
- 36% Economically Disadvantaged
- 9% Limited English Proficient
- 9.5% Special Education
Students of Color in Tigard-Tualatin School District

Office Discipline Referrals per 100 Students per Month

PBIS in Place at all schools since 1997
RTI in Place since 2001

Focus on Closing the Support Gap

# OSS/100 Students
Our exclusionary practices weren’t equitable and weren’t working!

# of Days Missed/100 Students for OSS

- White
- Hispanic

- Elementary
- Middle School
- High School

2009-10
2010-11
2011-12
2012-13
We needed to change our practices!

• Spring 2014: Secondary Associate Principals met regularly to revise/rewrite disciplinary procedures
  – Removed all “zero tolerance” wording
  – Added guidance for thinking restoratively
  – Reviewed past data
  – Developed agreements, actions & SMART goals

Work Continued through 2014-15

Administrators met twice monthly to:
  – Learn about best practices for reducing discipline disparities
  – Review current data
  – Discuss what’s working and areas of concern
  – Continue to develop Discipline Procedure guidelines

TTSD Student Discipline Guide

Student learning is at the center of all the work we do in TTSD. With instruction as the focus, our goal goes beyond compliance and asks educators and administrators use all the tools and resources we have to reserve exclusion through any means (sending a student to the office, suspension, etc.) as the last resort.
Administrative Action Guiding Questions

1. What happened before the incident occurred?
2. What happened after the incident occurred?
3. What was the student trying to gain or avoid?
4. What was the teacher or adult who responded to the incident trying to gain or avoid?
5. What are the different ways to address these concerns?
6. What will restore the environment and social relationships (teachers and peers) in the classroom and/or school?

Discipline Practices to Consider

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mild</th>
<th>Restorative</th>
<th>Punitive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student Conference</td>
<td>Restitution</td>
<td>Suspension</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent Conference/Involvement in Planning</td>
<td>Community/School Service</td>
<td>In-School Suspension</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prompted Reflection</td>
<td>Work Duties or Tasks</td>
<td>After School Suspension</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verbal Reprimand</td>
<td>Verbal/Written Apologies</td>
<td>After School Detention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning with Counselor</td>
<td>Leadership Project(s)</td>
<td>Saturday School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loss of Privilege</td>
<td></td>
<td>Lunch Academy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After School Conference with Teacher</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coordinated Behavior Plan/Monitoring Plan</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alternative Programming</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counseling/Mentoring</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TTSD Student Discipline Guide, Continued

- A student whose conduct is seriously detrimental to the health and safety of the school can be referred for expulsion under School Board policy.
- Our goal is to limit the use of expulsion to the most serious of cases and to utilize an alternative to expulsion program to offer intervention services whenever possible.
1. Submit findings of fact to your direct supervisor for guidance
2. Depending on the nature of the findings, the Cabinet member will either:
   - Recommend the student for an expulsion hearing
   - Work with the building administrator to determine the duration of suspension
   - Work with the building administrator to refer the student to an appropriate Alternative Placement OR
   - Work with the building administrator to determine the appropriate supports at the student’s home school

“If student conduct poses a threat to health and safety or when required by law…”

Secondary School Administrators Developed Smart Goals

1. By June, 2015, the (difference in the) number of days that our students of color miss due to ISS/OSS/expulsions (compared with our white students) will reduce by 15% from last year. (So that it’s in line with the percentage of students of color in the district)
2. By June, 2015, the number of TOTAL days of exclusion all students miss due to ISS/OSS/expulsion will reduce by 50% from last year.

![Number of Discipline Actions by Level 2013-14](image)
Number of Discipline Actions by Level 2014-15

- Elementary: 50 In-School Suspension, 43 Out-of-School Suspension, 221 Expulsion
- Middle: 118 In-School Suspension, 118 Out-of-School Suspension, 2 Expulsion
- High: 6 In-School Suspension, 67 Out-of-School Suspension, 317 Expulsion

Lost Instructional Days 2013-14

- Elementary: 114.5 In-School Suspension, 26 Out-of-School Suspension, 1161.5 Expulsion
- Middle: 185 In-School Suspension, 66 Out-of-School Suspension, 363.5 Expulsion
- High: 236 In-School Suspension, 172 Out-of-School Suspension, 4948 Expulsion

Lost Instructional Days 2014-15

- Elementary: 68 In-School Suspension, 53.5 Out-of-School Suspension, 1053 Expulsion
- Middle: 236 In-School Suspension, 62.5 Out-of-School Suspension, 216.5 Expulsion
- High: 62 In-School Suspension, 109 Out-of-School Suspension, 572 Expulsion
There’s still work to do.

Working towards inclusion and equity.
Thank you!!!!!!!!!

rnese@uoregon.edu