

# STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT EQUITABLE SCHOOL DISCIPLINE

Prepared for the Washington Association of School  
Administrators

July 2017



In the following report, Hanover Research reviews best practices in supporting student discipline and behavioral outcomes, with a focus on equity in discipline interventions.

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND KEY FINDINGS

## INTRODUCTION

In this report, Hanover Research reviews best practices in equitable school discipline. This research is intended to support members of the Washington Association of School Administrators in implementing equitable and effective disciplinary programs in their districts. This report also includes hyperlinks to specific resources, such as toolkits and checklists, that schools can use to support the implementation of new disciplinary practices. This report includes the following sections:

- **Section I** briefly reviews behavioral interventions identified as promising or research-based by the Washington Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction.
- **Section II** discusses the policy and cultural shifts necessary to support equity in school discipline, and specific strategies that schools and districts can use to support these shifts.
- **Section III** discusses strategies to evaluate equity in disciplinary outcomes.

## KEY FINDINGS

- **Schools can replace exclusionary discipline with guidance interventions or strategies such as positive behavioral interventions and supports (PBIS), social-emotional learning (SEL), and restorative justice.** Schools should ensure that disciplinary policies and procedures do not promote exclusionary discipline, as exclusionary discipline leads to negative student outcomes such as school dropout and involvement with the juvenile justice system. In particular, schools should avoid zero tolerance policies that mandate exclusionary discipline for a wide range of infractions.
- **Schools should integrate an explicit focus on equity into behavioral initiatives.** Behavioral initiatives that do not explicitly address equity may result in overall improvements in behavioral outcomes without reducing disproportionalities in behavioral outcomes. Schools should structure behavioral initiatives to explicitly account for issues such as cultural beliefs and biases that may reinforce inequity in discipline.
- **Schools should ensure that teachers possess the skills necessary for culturally competent classroom instruction and that disciplinary programs are culturally responsive.** Without cultural competence, issues such as cultural mismatch or implicit bias may lead to inequitable disciplinary outcomes. In addition to applying cultural competence to classroom management, the Flamboyan Foundation suggests using strategies that incorporate cultural competence to support family engagement.
- **Schools can support teachers' cultural competence through professional development that provides opportunities for teachers to reflect on their individual backgrounds and beliefs regarding diversity.** Some school districts partner with

outside organizations to provide professional development focused on equity. Organizations such as the Southern Poverty Law Center have developed professional development activities that schools and districts can use independently.

- **Schools should analyze student discipline data and data from stakeholder feedback and observations to identify disproportionalities in discipline and develop plans to improve equity.** Student discipline data can identify disproportionalities in discipline and identify specific situations which contribute to disproportionality. School leaders can use stakeholder feedback and observations to assess perceptions of discipline policies and evaluate the degree to which current practices contribute to a positive school climate. Regional Educational Laboratory (REL) Northwest recommends that schools use a plan-do-study-act cycle to identify and address the root causes of disproportionality.

## SECTION I: OVERVIEW OF RESEARCH-BASED BEHAVIORAL INTERVENTIONS

In this section, Hanover Research reviews behavioral interventions listed in the Washington Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction’s (WAOSPI) menu of behavioral supports. The WAOSPI rates the research base for interventions and supports using the categories shown in Figure 1.1. These ratings rely on a review of empirical literature on each intervention conducted by an expert panel of staff from the WAOSPI and the Washington State Institute for Public Policy.<sup>1</sup>

**Figure 1.1: Washington Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction Behavioral Interventions Menu**

RATING	DESCRIPTION
Evidence-Based	A program or practice that has been tested in heterogeneous or intended populations with multiple randomized, or statistically controlled evaluations, or both; or one large multiple site randomized, or statistically controlled evaluation, or both, where the weight of the evidence from a systemic review demonstrates sustained improvements in at least one outcome. Evidence-based also means a program or practice that can be implemented with a set of procedures to allow successful replication in Washington and, when possible, is determined to be cost-beneficial.
Research-Based	A program or practice that has been tested with a single randomized, or statistically controlled evaluation, or both, demonstrating sustained desirable outcomes; or where the weight of the evidence from a systemic review supports sustained outcomes [...] but does not meet the full criteria for evidence-based.
Promising	A practice that, based on statistical analyses or a well-established theory of change, shows potential for meeting the evidence-based or research-based criteria.

Source: Washington Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction<sup>2</sup>

Figure 1.2 on the following page shows ratings for individual interventions in the most recent edition of the WAOSPI’s behavior menu, published in May of 2017. Although no interventions meet the evidence-based standard, several interventions meet the research-based standard. Research-based student-centered practices include direct instruction in social skills and mentoring, as well as behavioral health and monitoring interventions. Research-based interventions focused on educators include some form of professional development, such as instructional coaching or targeted professional development.

<sup>1</sup> “Behavior Menu of Best Practices and Strategies.” Washington Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, May 2017. p. 28. <http://www.k12.wa.us/SSEO/pubdocs/BehaviorMenu.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Chart contents taken directly from: Ibid.

**Figure 1.2: Washington Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction Behavioral Interventions Menu**

STRATEGY	RATING
<b>Student-Centered Practices and Strategies</b>	
Behavioral Health	Research-Based
Behavior Monitoring	Research-Based
Mentoring	Research-Based
Peer Mediation	Promising
Restorative Justice	Promising
Social Skills Instruction	Research-Based
<b>Educator-Focused Practices and Strategies</b>	
Behavior Consultant Teacher/Instructional Coach	Research-Based
De-escalation	Promising
Professional Learning Communities	Promising
Targeted Professional Learning	Research-Based
Trauma-Informed Approaches	Promising
<b>Transition and Readiness Practices and Strategies</b>	
High School Transition Supports and Credit Retrieval	Promising
Kindergarten Transitions	Promising
<b>Family and Community Practices and Strategies</b>	
Family Engagement	Research-Based
School-Community Partnerships	Research-Based

Source: Washington Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Chart taken directly from: Ibid., p. 30.

## SECTION II: POLICY SHIFTS AND TOOLS TO SUPPORT EQUITABLE DISCIPLINE

In this section, Hanover Research reviews research on the cultural and policy shifts needed to ensure equity in disciplinary outcomes. Data collected by the Department of Education suggests an increasing loss of instructional time due to exclusionary discipline practices such as suspension or expulsion, and that exclusionary discipline disproportionately affects students from certain ethnic backgrounds.<sup>4</sup> Schools may be able to increase learning time by eliminating disproportionality in discipline and reducing the use of exclusionary discipline. This section begins with a discussion of the shifts in policy and school culture needed to ensure equity in discipline before discussing specific tools that schools and districts can use to support these shifts.

### POLICY SHIFTS TO SUPPORT EQUITY

Equitable discipline requires shifts in disciplinary policies and procedures in addition to the implementation of research-based interventions. Effective discipline policies “set the tone for a school system of youth development that holds students responsible in a restorative and productive manner,” according to a 2015 article on the Positive and Safe Schools Advancing Greater Equity (PASSAGE) initiative in Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools (MNPS).<sup>5</sup>

**In particular, schools and districts should reconsider zero tolerance policies that mandate exclusionary discipline for a wide range of specific disciplinary infractions.** According to the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP), “zero tolerance policies are ineffective in the long run and are related to several negative consequences, including increased rates of school dropout and discriminatory application of school discipline practices.”<sup>6</sup> Likewise, the American Academy of Pediatrics states that zero tolerance policies and excessive reliance on exclusionary discipline “are harmful and counterproductive to the student, the family, the school district, and the community as a whole.”<sup>7</sup> A 2014 review of previous empirical research on exclusionary discipline finds a causal relationship between exclusion and several negative outcomes, including school dropout and involvement in the juvenile justice system.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> “Dear Colleague Letter on the Nondiscriminatory Administration of School Discipline.” Letters (Correspondence). U.S. Department of Justice Civil Rights Division and U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights, October 16, 2015. <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/letters/colleague-201401-title-vi.html>

<sup>5</sup> Majors, T. and T. Ward. “Breaking the Cycle of Inequitable School Discipline through Community and Civic Collaboration in Nashville.” *Voices in Urban Education*, 2015. p. 29. <https://eric.ed.gov/?q=discipline+equity&ft=on&id=EJ1082878>

<sup>6</sup> “Zero Tolerance and Alternative Strategies: A Fact Sheet for Educators and Policymakers.” National Association of School Psychologists. [http://www.naspcenter.org/factsheets/zt\\_fs.html](http://www.naspcenter.org/factsheets/zt_fs.html)

<sup>7</sup> Lamont, J.H. “Policy Statement: Out-of-School Suspension and Expulsion.” *Pediatrics*, 131:3, February 1, 2013. p. 1005. <http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/early/2013/02/20/peds.2012-3932>

<sup>8</sup> Skiba, R.J., M.I. Arredondo, and N.T. Williams. “More Than a Metaphor: The Contribution of Exclusionary Discipline to a School-to-Prison Pipeline.” *Equity & Excellence in Education*, 47:4, November 2014. pp. 557–558. Accessed via EBSCOhost

Research has identified several discipline strategies that schools can use instead of exclusionary discipline. For example, a 2011 report published by Child Trends identifies Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS), social and emotional learning (SEL) or character education curricula, and targeted supports for at-risk students as potential alternatives to zero tolerance policies.<sup>9</sup> Similarly, a 2014 report published by the Council of State Governments Justice Center identifies PBIS, SEL, and restorative justice as evidence-based strategies to reduce exclusionary discipline.<sup>10</sup>

Hanover reviews these recommended strategies in the following sub-sections, including PBIS, restorative justice, social emotional learning, and cultural competence.

### **POSITIVE BEHAVIORAL INTERVENTIONS AND SUPPORTS**

A 2014 report by the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) Technical Assistance Center for PBIS recommends implementing school-wide PBIS as a strategy to reduce disproportionality in school discipline. According to this report, PBIS supports equity by reducing ambiguity around disciplinary policies, which reduces the potential for implicit bias to affect disciplinary decisions and for misunderstanding of behavioral standards by students. The collaborative process of developing behavioral expectations within PBIS can ensure that expectations are culturally congruent for students.<sup>11</sup>

PBIS consists of escalating tiers of support, as shown in Figure 2.1 on the following page. All students receive Tier 1 supports, which are designed to reduce overall rates of misconduct and support a positive climate. These supports reduce the percentage of students in need of more targeted interventions.<sup>12</sup>

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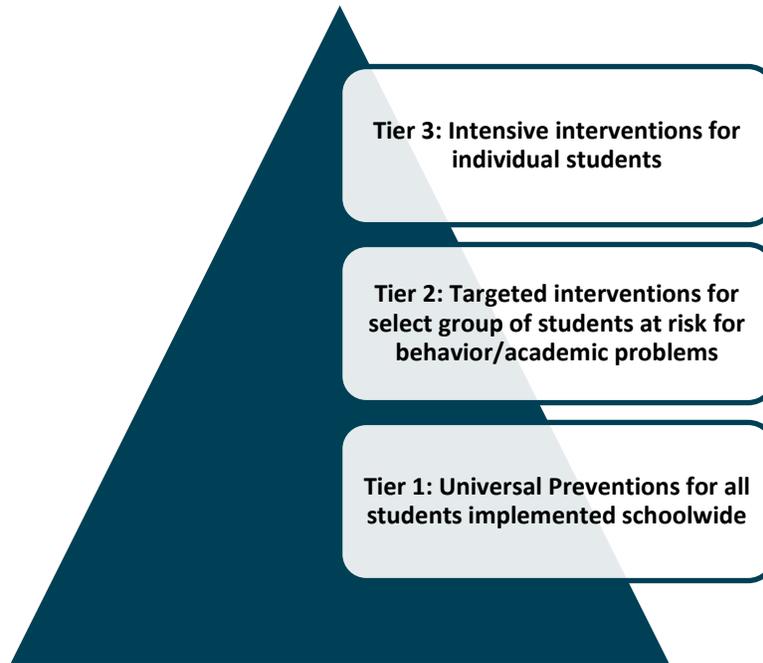
<sup>9</sup> Boccanfuso, C. and M. Kuhfeld. "Multiple Responses, Promising Results: Evidence-Based, Nonpunitive Alternatives to Zero Tolerance." Child Trends, March 2011. pp. 4–8. <http://www.nea.org/assets/docs/alternatives-to-zero-tolerance.pdf>

<sup>10</sup> Cohen, R. et al. "The School Discipline Consensus Report: Strategies from the Field to Keep Students Engaged in School and Out of the Juvenile Justice System." The Council of State Governments Justice Center, 2014. p. 14. [https://csgjusticecenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/The\\_School\\_Discipline\\_Consensus\\_Report.pdf](https://csgjusticecenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/The_School_Discipline_Consensus_Report.pdf)

<sup>11</sup> McIntosh, K. et al. "Recommendations for Addressing Discipline Disproportionality in Education." OSEP Technical Assistance Center, Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports, August 7, 2014. p. 2. [http://www.doe.virginia.gov/special\\_ed/program\\_improvement/eligibility\\_determination/2015/jan/recommendations\\_for\\_addressing\\_discipline\\_disproportionality.pdf](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/special_ed/program_improvement/eligibility_determination/2015/jan/recommendations_for_addressing_discipline_disproportionality.pdf)

<sup>12</sup> Cohen et al., Op. cit., pp. 52–53.

**Figure 2.1: PBIS Tiered Support System**



Source: The Council of State Governments Justice Center<sup>13</sup>

## RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

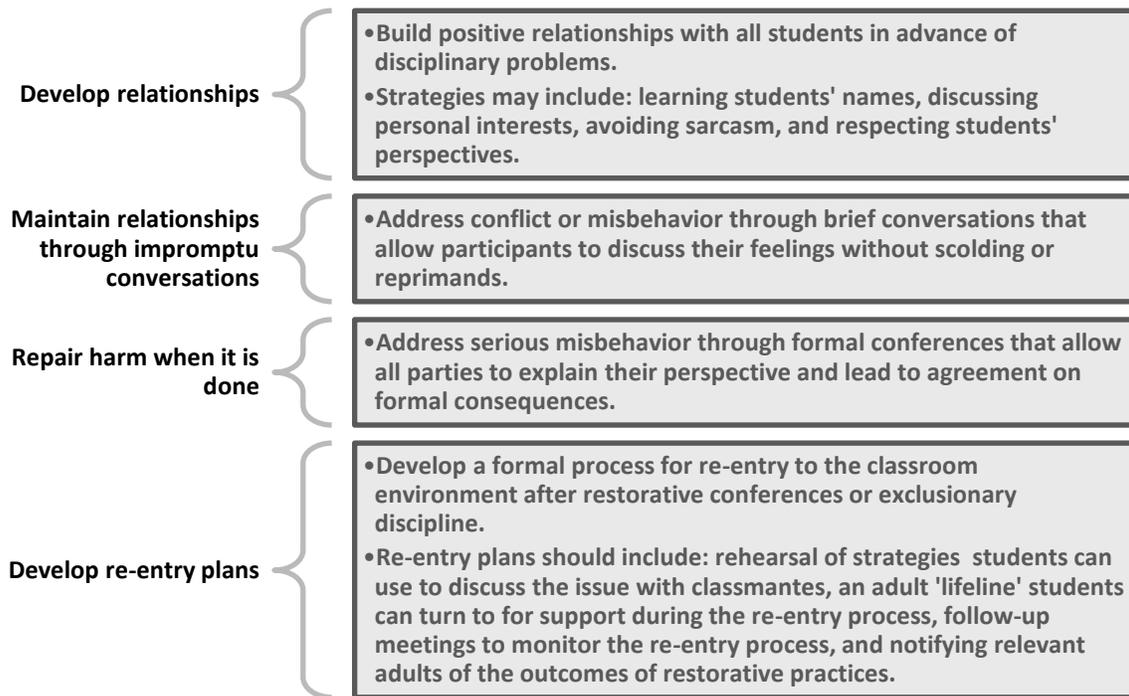
A 2016 article in the journal *Values and Ethics in Educational Administration* suggests restorative justice as an alternative to zero tolerance policies that provides an opportunity to develop students' moral reasoning.<sup>14</sup> However, this article also finds that, based on a review of previous case studies, restorative justice typically does not fully replace traditional discipline policies or eliminate exclusionary discipline, and that implementing restorative practices may be difficult due to teachers' beliefs about students and discipline.<sup>15</sup> A 2016 article published in the journal *Educational Leadership* suggests following the principles outlined in Figure 2.2 to support restorative justice.

<sup>13</sup> Chart taken directly from: Ibid., p. 52.

<sup>14</sup> Buckmaster, D. "From the Eradication of Tolerance to the Restoration of School Community: Exploring Restorative Practices as a Reform Framework for Ethical School Discipline." *Values & Ethics in Educational Administration*, 12:3, September 2016. p. 2. Accessed via EBSCOhost

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., pp. 5–6.

**Figure 2.2: Principles for Implementing Restorative Practices**



Source: *Educational Leadership*<sup>16</sup>

## SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL LEARNING

A 2011 meta-analysis published in the journal *Child Development* finds that school-wide SEL programs demonstrate a significant positive impact on student behavior.<sup>17</sup> Improved student behavior may reduce the rate of misconduct that leads to exclusionary discipline and opportunities for inequitable discipline.

A study conducted by the Coalition for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) examines the implementation of SEL in 10 large urban school districts. This study finds that SEL is most effective when fully integrated into core activities at both the school and district levels. At the school level, effective SEL requires a welcoming and affirming school culture and a commitment to explicit SEL instruction in classrooms. At the district level, SEL requires integration into budgets and strategic plans. Districts participating in the CASEL study supported the integration of SEL using a variety of strategies aligned with the framework shown in Figure 2.3.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>16</sup> Chart contents adapted from: Fisher, D., N. Frey, and D. Smith. "After Sticks, Stones, and Hurtful Words." *Educational Leadership*, 74:3, November 2016. pp. 55–58. Accessed via EBSCOhost

<sup>17</sup> Durlak, J.A. et al. "The Impact of Enhancing Students' Social and Emotional Learning: A Meta-Analysis of School-Based Universal Interventions." *Child Development*, 82:1, February 2011. p. 9. <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/513f79f9e4b05ce7b70e9673/t/52e9d8e6e4b001f5c1f6c27d/1391057126694/meta-analysis-child-development.pdf>

<sup>18</sup> "Key Insights from the Collaborating Districts Initiative: A Multiyear Effort to Help School Districts Integrate Social and Emotional Learning across All Aspects of Their Work." Coalition for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning, March 2017. pp. 8–10. <https://www.casel.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/Final-CDI-Report-3-17-17.pdf>

Figure 2.3: CASEL Framework for SEL Integration



Source: Collaboration for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning<sup>19</sup>

**Schools should explicitly emphasize equity when implementing SEL.** A 2017 article published in the journal *The Future of Children* suggests that schools restructure SEL programs “to account for the cultural beliefs, biases, and power dynamics that privilege developmental expressions of behavior that are more likely to be nurtured among while middle-class children.”<sup>20</sup> According to the authors, this restructuring will lead to improvements in school climate and teachers’ ability to implement SEL with diverse students.<sup>21</sup> The authors cite examples of SEL and restorative justice programs in several school districts which reduced overall rates of exclusionary discipline but did not eliminate racial disproportionalities in discipline as evidence that an explicit focus on equity in disciplinary interventions is necessary.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>19</sup> Chart contents taken directly from: Ibid., p. 8.

<sup>20</sup> Gregory, A. and E. Fergus. “Social and Emotional Learning and Equity in School Discipline.” *Future of Children*, 27:1, 2017. p. 118. <https://eric.ed.gov/?q=discipline+equity&ft=on&id=EJ1144814>

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., pp. 125–126.

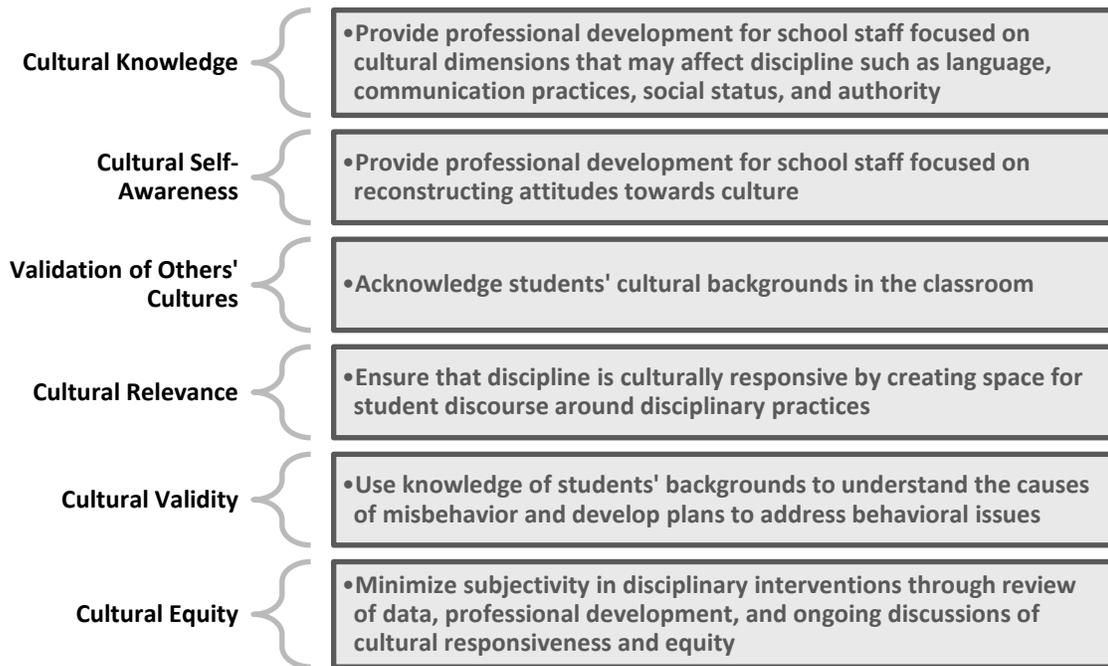
## CULTURAL COMPETENCE

The National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) identifies cultural competence on the part of teachers as a key element of a positive school climate.<sup>23</sup> The National Education Association (NEA) reports that cultural competence requires teachers to understand the impact of culture on themselves and their students and to value their students' cultural backgrounds. Culturally competent teachers can also address conflicts or miscommunication caused by cultural difference and support the institutionalization of cultural knowledge within their school.<sup>24</sup> If schools do not develop their teachers' cultural competence, issues such as implicit bias and cultural mismatch may lead to disproportionalities in discipline.<sup>25</sup>

A 2008 report by the Metropolitan Center for Urban Education recommends incorporating cultural competence into classroom management to address disproportionality in discipline.<sup>26</sup> For example, Montgomery County Public Schools in Maryland has developed a detailed list of culturally responsive classroom practices, available [at this hyperlink](#).<sup>27</sup> Likewise, a 2017 article in the journal *Delta Kappa Gamma Bulletin* suggests incorporating cultural competence into a school's PBIS framework. The author recommends including the culturally responsive practices shown in Figure 2.4 in a school's PBIS framework.<sup>28</sup>

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- <sup>23</sup> "The Importance of Cultural Competence." National Association of School Psychologists. <https://www.nasponline.org/research-and-policy/advocacy-tools-and-resources/communications-strategies-and-resources/school-climate%E2%80%94connectthedots/the-importance-of-cultural-competence>
- <sup>24</sup> "Diversity Toolkit: Cultural Competence for Educators." National Education Association. <http://www.nea.org/tools/30402.htm>
- <sup>25</sup> Kourea, L., Y.-Y. Lo, and T.L. Owens. "Using Parental Input from Black Families to Increase Cultural Responsiveness for Teaching SWPBS Expectations." *Behavioral Disorders*, 41:4, August 2016. p. 227. Accessed via EBSCOhost
- <sup>26</sup> "Culturally Responsive Classroom Management Strategies." Metropolitan Center for Urban Education, October 2008. p. 2. <http://steinhardt.nyu.edu/scmsAdmin/uploads/005/121/Culturally%20Responsive%20Classroom%20Mgmt%20Strat2.pdf>
- <sup>27</sup> "A Resource for Equitable Classroom Practices." Montgomery County Public Schools, 2010. <http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/development/resources/ecp/ECP%20-%2008-13-10.pdf>
- <sup>28</sup> Parsons, F. "An Intervention for the Intervention: Integrating Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports with Culturally Responsive Practices." *Delta Kappa Gamma Bulletin*, 83:3, March 2017. pp. 53–54. Accessed via EBSCOhost

**Figure 2.4: Culturally Responsive Practices to Support PBIS**



Source: *Delta Kappa Gamma Bulletin*<sup>29</sup>

## TOOLS TO SUPPORT EQUITABLE DISCIPLINE

In the remainder of this section, Hanover Research discusses specific tools that school districts can use to support the cultural and policy shifts required for equitable discipline. This subsection reviews tools to support student-centered, educator-focused, and family- and community-focused strategies and includes hyperlinks to documents or toolkits outlining these strategies where available.

### STUDENT-CENTERED STRATEGIES

The U.S. Department of Education has created a checklist of action steps to promote equitable discipline grouped into three guiding principles: climate and prevention; clear, appropriate, and consistent expectations and consequences; and equity and continuous improvement. Figure 2.5 on the following page shows each item in this checklist. Action steps recommended by the U.S. Department of Education include professional development for teachers and law-enforcement officers, as well as changes in school policies surrounding discipline and outreach to families and stakeholder groups. These strategies support students by creating a safe and supportive school climate with consistent behavioral expectations. Hanover Research discusses strategies related to teacher professional development and stakeholder outreach later in this section.

<sup>29</sup> Chart contents adapted from: *Ibid.*, p. 55.

**Figure 2.5: U.S. Department of Education Action Steps for Equitable Discipline**

GUIDING PRINCIPAL	ACTION STEPS
Climate and Prevention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Engage in deliberate efforts to create positive school climates.</li> <li>▪ Prioritize the use of evidence-based prevention strategies, such as tiered supports.</li> <li>▪ Promote social and emotional learning.</li> <li>▪ Provide regular training and supports to all school personnel.</li> <li>▪ Collaborate with local agencies and other stakeholders.</li> <li>▪ Ensure that any school-based law enforcement officers’ roles focus on improving school safety and reducing inappropriate referrals to law enforcement.</li> </ul>
Clear, Appropriate, and Consistent Expectations and Consequences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Set high expectations for behavior and adopt an instructional approach to discipline.</li> <li>▪ Involve families, students, and school personnel, and communicate regularly and clearly.</li> <li>▪ Ensure that clear, developmentally appropriate, and proportional consequences apply for misbehavior.</li> <li>▪ Create policies that include appropriate procedures for students with disabilities and due process for all students.</li> <li>▪ Remove students from the classroom only as a last resort, ensure that alternative settings provide academic instruction, and return students to class as soon as possible.</li> </ul>
Equity and Continuous Improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Train all school staff to apply school discipline policies and practices in a fair and equitable manner.</li> <li>▪ Use proactive, data-driven, and continuous efforts, including gathering feedback from families, students, teachers, and school personnel to prevent, identify, reduce, and eliminate discriminatory discipline and unintended consequences.</li> </ul>

Source: U.S. Department of Education<sup>30</sup>

Implementing equitable discipline may require changes to formal disciplinary codes. The advocacy organization Dignity in Schools has developed a model disciplinary code which provides alternatives to zero-tolerance policies, available [at this hyperlink](http://www.dignityinschools.org/files/DSC_Model_Code.pdf). This code includes specific language that schools and districts can incorporate into their discipline policies. Dignity in Schools recommends that districts implement the suggested policies after “a broader conversation about how to shift the community’s collective approach to education,” and use the code as leverage to support changes to school culture.<sup>31</sup>

In other cases, school districts independently develop disciplinary codes that minimize reliance on exclusionary discipline. For example, the New York City Department of Education’s (NYCDOE) discipline policies emphasize the use of disciplinary interventions to develop

<sup>30</sup> Chart contents taken directly from: “Guiding Principles: A Resource Guide for Improving School Climate and Discipline.” U.S. Department of Education, January 2014. pp. 5, 12, 16.  
<http://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/school-discipline/guiding-principles.pdf>

<sup>31</sup> “A Model Code on Education and Dignity.” Dignity in Schools, August 2012. pp. 3–4.  
[http://www.dignityinschools.org/files/DSC\\_Model\\_Code.pdf](http://www.dignityinschools.org/files/DSC_Model_Code.pdf)

behavioral skills and requires schools to make “every reasonable effort...to correct student misbehavior through guidance interventions and other school based resources and the least severe disciplinary responses.”<sup>32</sup> The NYCDOE requires schools to consider each of the factors shown in Figure 2.6 when determining disciplinary responses to acts of misconduct.

**Figure 2.6: NYCDOE Checklist of Factors to Consider in Determining Disciplinary Responses**

- The student’s age and maturity;
- The student’s disciplinary record (including the nature of any prior misconduct, the number of prior instances of misconduct, and the disciplinary and guidance intervention measures applied for each);
- The nature, severity, and scope of the behavior;
- The circumstances/context in which the conduct occurred;
- The frequency and duration of the behavior;
- The number of persons involved in the behavior;
- The student’s IEP, BIP (Behavioral Intervention Plan) and 504 Accommodation Plan, if applicable.

Source: New York City Department of Education<sup>33</sup>

In addition to overall strategies to improve school climate, schools can replace exclusionary discipline with less disruptive interventions. For example, the Collaborative Problem Solving (CPS) intervention addresses behavioral challenges with supports for the cognitive skills needed to behave appropriately.<sup>34</sup> The National Clearinghouse on Supportive School Discipline (NCSSD) maintains reference guides with toolkits and information to support the implementation of a variety of discipline strategies, including PBIS, SEL, and restorative justice. The NCSSD’s reference guides are available [at this hyperlink](#).<sup>35</sup> Further, a 2005 article published in the journal *Impact* identifies the following specific interventions schools can use as alternatives to exclusionary discipline:<sup>36</sup>

- **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.
- **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 either by directly addressing the problems caused by the student’s behavior (e.g., in cases of vandalism students can work to repair things they damaged), or by having the student improve the school environment more broadly (e.g., picking up trash, washing lockers).

<sup>32</sup> “Citywide Standards of Intervention and Discipline Measures: The Discipline Code and Bill of Student Rights and Responsibilities, K-12.” New York City Department of Education, September 2012. p. 4.  
<http://schools.nyc.gov/NR/rdonlyres/F7DA5E8D-C065-44FF-A16F-55F491C0B9E7/0/DiscCode20122013FINAL.pdf>

<sup>33</sup> Chart contents taken directly from: Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> “Our Collaborative Problem Solving (CPS) Approach.” Think: Kids – Collaborative Problem Solving.  
<http://www.thinkkids.org/learn/our-collaborative-problem-solving-approach/>

<sup>35</sup> “Reference Guides.” National Clearinghouse on Supportive School Discipline.  
<http://supportiveschooldiscipline.org/learn/reference-guides>

<sup>36</sup> Bulleted text taken verbatim from: Peterson, R.L. “Ten Alternatives to Suspension.” *Impact*, 18:2, Spring 2005. pp. 10–11. <https://ici.umn.edu/products/impact/182/182.pdf>

- **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).
- **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.
- **Counseling.** Students may be required to receive additional supports or individual counseling from trained helping professionals (e.g., counselor, school psychologist) focused on problem-solving or personal issues interfering with learning.
- **Community service.** 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.
- **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.
- **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. It should focus on increasing desirable behavior, and replacing inappropriate behaviors.
- **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.
- **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.

The NYCDOE has published a list of guidance interventions that schools can use to improve student behavior and school climates over the long term.<sup>37</sup> Figure 2.7 on the following page shows student-centered counseling interventions included in this list.

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<sup>37</sup> “Citywide Standards of Intervention and Discipline Measures: The Discipline Code and Bill of Student Rights and Responsibilities, K-12,” Op. cit., p. 6.

**Figure 2.7: NYCDOE Student-Centered Counseling Interventions**

**Guidance Conference:** Principals and teachers may request a guidance conference with the student and, where appropriate, with the parent. The purpose of the conference is to review the behavior, find solutions to the problem and address academic, personal, and social issues that might have caused or contributed to the behavior.

**Development of Individual Behavior Contract:** The student meets with teachers to create a written contract that includes objectives and the specific performance tasks that the student will accomplish to meet those objectives. The contract is signed by the student and teacher and, where appropriate, by the parent.

**Intervention by Counseling Staff:** Where available, school-based counseling personnel and/or School-Based Mental Health programs offer a wide range of comprehensive and confidential mental health services and interventions including, but not limited to: assessments, individual, group and family therapy, teacher consultations, and educational strategies for parents and staff.

**Referral to PPT (Pupil Personnel Team):** Pupil Personnel Teams are school-based teams that utilize a multidisciplinary approach to encourage student success through prevention and intervention strategies and supports. A case manager is identified for each student referral so that an individualized plan can be created to help students overcome their academic and/or socio-emotional difficulties.

**Referral to Appropriate Substance Abuse Counseling Services:** In the case where a student is presenting problems with substance abuse, including the use, possession, or distribution of illegal drugs, drug paraphernalia, and/or alcohol, referrals should be made to counseling services that are either inside the school or through an outside community-based organization.

**Individual/Group Counseling:** Counseling provides students with an outlet to share issues in privacy that may be negatively impacting their attendance, behavior, and/or academic success. Students discuss and formulate goals, and learn problem solving strategies that will enable them to overcome a variety of personal challenges. Counselors will conference with parents on a regular basis to discuss the student's academic and personal progress.

**Mentoring Program:** A mentoring program matches a mentor who may be a counselor, teacher, student, and/or leader with a protégé. The object of this relationship is to help the protégé in his/her personal, academic, and social development.

**Mentor/Coach:** Assignment of a trained school staff member to provide transition support for a student returning from a Superintendent's Suspension or from a prolonged absence.

**Referral to Counseling Services for Bias-Based Bullying, Intimidation, or Harassment:** When a student or group of students engages in bias-based bullying, intimidation, or harassment of another student or group of students, both the victim and the student who engages in this behavior should be referred to separate appropriate counseling, support, and education services provided by school staff or a community-based agency.

**Referral to Counseling Services for Youth Relationship Abuse or Sexual Violence:** When one person uses a pattern of threatened or actual physical, sexual, and/or emotional abuse to control a dating partner, the school should refer both the victim and the student who engages in this behavior to separate appropriate school or community-based agencies for counseling, support, and education.

Source: New York City Department of Education<sup>38</sup>

<sup>38</sup> Chart contents taken directly from: Ibid., pp. 6–7.

## EDUCATOR-FOCUSED STRATEGIES

As discussed in Section I of this report, research-based strategies to improve behavioral outcomes with a focus on educators typically include some form of professional development or professional learning.<sup>39</sup> The Equity Alliance at Arizona State University maintains a public listing of free professional development resources that address various aspects of educational equity, available [at this hyperlink](#).<sup>40</sup> The Equity Alliance also identifies the general principles for effective professional learning to support equity shown in Figure 2.8.

**Figure 2.8: Principles of Effective Professional Learning to Support Equity**



Source: Equity Alliance at Arizona State University<sup>41</sup>

<sup>39</sup> "Behavior Menu of Best Practices and Strategies," Op. cit., p. 30.

<sup>40</sup> "Professional Learning." Equity Alliance at Arizona State University.  
<http://ea.niusileadscape.org/lc/Category/Professional%20Learning>

<sup>41</sup> Chart contents taken directly from: King, K.A., A.J. Artiles, and E.B. Kozleski. "Professional Learning for Culturally Responsive Teaching." Equity Alliance at Arizona State University, June 2009. p. 6.  
[http://www.equityallianceatasu.org/sites/default/files/Website\\_files/exemplarFINAL.pdf](http://www.equityallianceatasu.org/sites/default/files/Website_files/exemplarFINAL.pdf)

Some school districts independently develop professional development curricula to support teachers' cultural competence. For example, Arlington Public Schools in Virginia published a manual to guide professional learning communities focused on cultural competence. This manual describes the district's approach to cultural competence and includes a selection of academic readings on cultural competence.<sup>42</sup> Schools can also partner with outside organizations to provide professional development focused on equity. For example, Saint Paul Public Schools in Minnesota partnered with the Pacific Educational Group to provide professional development focused on helping teachers address issues of race and racism in the classroom.<sup>43</sup>

Professional development to support equity frequently includes surveys or other activities designed to help teachers reflect on their own beliefs regarding diversity and cultural competence. Many teachers may lack awareness of their individual cultural background and its influence on their teaching, which prevents them from exercising cultural competence. Professional development that supports cultural self-awareness may contribute to improvements in cultural competence.<sup>44</sup>

A 2014 *Education Week* article identifies 140 instruments that can assess cultural or global competence, including the Cross-Cultural Adaptability Inventory (CCAI) and the Globally Competent Teaching Continuum.<sup>45</sup> Further, the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) has developed a professional development activity designed to promote cultural competence by facilitating an examination of teacher beliefs regarding diversity. This activity, designed to be completed as either an individual or group activity, consists of a survey of teacher beliefs with space for teachers to explain their response to each item.<sup>46</sup> The full instrument is available [at this hyperlink](#). A similar instrument developed by the Office of Staff Development at Cecil County Public Schools in Maryland, titled the Cultural Proficiency Receptivity Scale, is available [at this hyperlink](#).<sup>47</sup>

## FAMILY AND COMMUNITY STRATEGIES

Equitable discipline may require strategies to increase family engagement. For example, a 2009 report by the Campaign for Educational Equity at Teachers College, Columbia University

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<sup>42</sup> Stith-Williams, V. "Cultural Competence Curriculum Phase III: 2009-2010." Arlington Public Schools, 2009. pp. 4–7. [http://www.doe.virginia.gov/special\\_ed/tech\\_asst\\_prof\\_dev/self\\_assessment/disproportionality/arlington\\_adapt\\_ed\\_cultural\\_competence\\_notebook.pdf](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/special_ed/tech_asst_prof_dev/self_assessment/disproportionality/arlington_adapt_ed_cultural_competence_notebook.pdf)

<sup>43</sup> Colbert, K. "Where Discipline and Racial Equity Intersect." *American Educator*, 39:4, 2016. p. 27. <http://eric.ed.gov/?q=professional+development+equity&id=EJ1086550>

<sup>44</sup> Ukpokodu, O. "Developing Teachers' Cultural Competence: One Teacher Educator's Practice of Unpacking Student Culturelessness." *Action in Teacher Education*, 33:5/6, December 2, 2011. pp. 443–444. Accessed via EBSCOhost

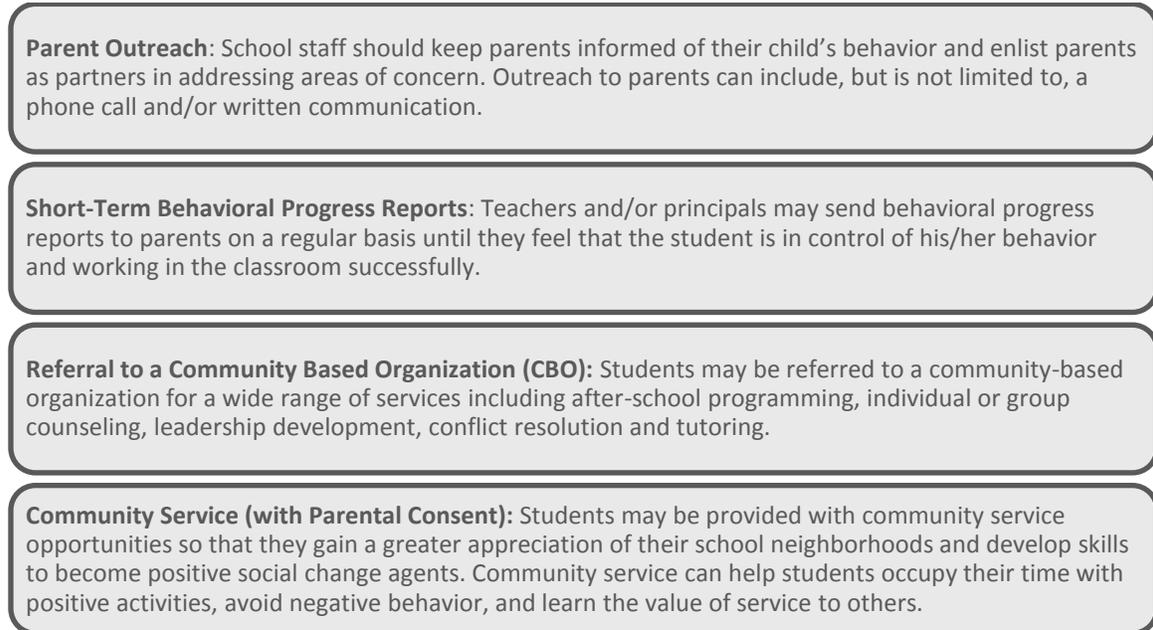
<sup>45</sup> Jackson, A. "Tools for Measuring Global Competence in Future Teachers." *Education Week*, September 3, 2014. [http://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/global\\_learning/2014/09/tools\\_for\\_measuring\\_global\\_competence\\_in\\_future\\_teachers.html?cmp=SOC-SHR-FB](http://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/global_learning/2014/09/tools_for_measuring_global_competence_in_future_teachers.html?cmp=SOC-SHR-FB)

<sup>46</sup> "Common Beliefs Survey: Working with Racially and Ethnically Diverse Students." Teaching Tolerance. <http://www.tolerance.org/supplement/common-beliefs-survey-working-racially-and-ethnically-diverse-students>

<sup>47</sup> "Cultural Proficiency Receptivity Scale." Office of Staff Development, Cecil County Public Schools. <http://glec.education.iupui.edu/equity/Cultural%20Proficiency%20Receptivity%20Scale.pdf>

suggests that schools reframe family engagement to align with other learning supports.<sup>48</sup> Further, the NYCDOE’s discipline code notes that parent engagement is essential to support effective discipline and a safe school climate.<sup>49</sup> Figure 2.9 below shows specific family and community counseling interventions included in NYCDOE’s list of guidance interventions for student behavior. These interventions include strategies to engage parents, such as parent outreach and behavioral progress reports, in addition to strategies that leverage community-based organizations to support behavioral outcomes through community service activities and supportive programming.

**Figure 2.9: NYCDOE Family and Community Counseling Interventions**



Source: New York City Department of Education<sup>50</sup>

Figure 2.10 on the following page shows family engagement strategies identified by the Parent Teacher Home Visit Program, which are ordered from the lowest to the highest impact on student learning. Higher impact strategies such as classroom observations, help with learning projects, and home visits typically feature more sustained and intensive engagement than lower-impact strategies such as fundraisers and potlucks.

<sup>48</sup> Weiss, H.B. et al. “Reframing Family Involvement in Education: Supporting Families to Support Educational Equity. Equity Matters.” Campaign for Educational Equity, Teachers College, Columbia University, December 2009. p. 4. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED523994>

<sup>49</sup> “Citywide Standards of Intervention and Discipline Measures: The Discipline Code and Bill of Student Rights and Responsibilities, K-12,” Op. cit., p. 3.

<sup>50</sup> Chart contents taken directly from: Ibid., pp. 6–7.

**Figure 2.10: Family Engagement Strategies**

Fundraisers	Potlucks	Celebrations	Performances and showcases
Parent resource rooms	Family support services	Parent help on administrative tasks	Generic school newsletters
Back to school night	Parent-teacher conferences	Interactive homework	Parent training events
Regular, personalized communication	Positive phone calls home	Classroom observations	Goal-setting talks
Weekly data-sharing folders	Parent help on learning projects	Modeling of learning support strategies	Home visits

Source: Parent Teacher Home Visit Program<sup>51</sup>

Regional Education Laboratory (REL) Pacific, one of 10 RELs funded by the U.S. Department of Education’s Institute of Education Sciences (IES), has developed a series of four toolkits for family engagement, available [at this hyperlink](#). These toolkits include professional development activities designed to develop teachers’ understanding of family engagement, build on family members’ strengths, engage in effective two-way communication, and discuss student data with families.<sup>52</sup> These toolkits note that schools may face challenges engaging parents due to cultural barriers to engagement such as language differences or unfamiliarity with the school system, or due to teachers’ beliefs regarding engagement.<sup>53</sup> The Flamboyant Foundation has developed a checklist of specific activities that may help schools engage difficult to reach families, available [at this hyperlink](#).<sup>54</sup>

<sup>51</sup> Chart contents taken directly from: “Impact of Family Engagement Strategies on Student Learning.” Parent Teacher Home Visit Program, September 2016. <http://www.pthvp.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/Low-to-High-Impact-Engagement-Strategies-1.pdf>

<sup>52</sup> “Tools.” Regional Education Laboratory Pacific. <http://relpacific.mcrel.org/resources/tools/>

<sup>53</sup> “Toolkit of Resources for Engaging Parents and Community as Partners in Education Part 1: Building an Understanding of Family and Community Engagement.” Regional Education Laboratory Pacific, January 2015. p. 3. <http://relpacific.mcrel.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/ToolkitPart1.pdf>

<sup>54</sup> “Tips for Reaching ‘Hard to Reach’ Families.” Flamboyant Foundation. <http://flamboyantfoundation.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/2011/07/Communication-Tips-for-Hard-to-Reach-Families1.pdf>

The Flamboyant Foundation has also developed detailed welcome letter templates and telephone scripts to facilitate culturally competent communications with parents, available [at this hyperlink](#).<sup>55</sup> Figure 2.11 shows the Flamboyant Foundation’s checklist for initial welcome calls.

**Figure 2.11: Flamboyant Foundation Checklist for Welcome Calls**

- Introduce yourself. Tell the family member about your background, history, and interests.
- Ask for the family member’s correct name, relationship to the student, and contact information.
- Let the family member know how much you care about his or her child and that you value his or her engagement.
- Share your broad goals/high expectations for your students (graduate high school, go to college, etc.).
- Ask the family member about hopes and dreams for his or her child.
- Ask the family member about his or her child—what does he or she like to do at home? What are his or her hobbies? His or her strengths?
- Ask the family member about his or her background, interests, and previous experience with school.
- Invite the family member to engage this year by sharing opportunities to get involved in the classroom, ways to support learning at home, etc.
- Ask the family member if there is anything else you should know right away about him or her or the child.
- Give the family member information on multiple ways to reach you if he or she has questions, changes phone numbers, or needs additional support.

Source: Flamboyant Foundation<sup>56</sup>

**Family engagement can also support other initiatives designed to increase equity in discipline.** For example, an anonymous elementary school described in a 2016 journal article used ethnographic interviews with Black parents and family members of students with behavioral difficulties to ensure that the school’s PBIS system was culturally responsive for these families.<sup>57</sup> Specifically, the school used information obtained through these interviews to develop a more culturally responsive curriculum for social skills instruction.<sup>58</sup> Similarly, the Positive and Safe Schools Advancing Greater Equity (PASSAGE) initiative leverages family and community support to address factors that contribute to inequitable discipline.<sup>59</sup> Chicago Public Schools (CPS) recruits parents to lead restorative practices in schools as part of its PASSAGE initiative. According to a CPS parent interviewed for a journal article on the district’s

<sup>55</sup> “Teacher Family Engagement Resource: Tools for Building Relationships with Families.” Flamboyant Foundation, June 29, 2011. [http://flamboyantfoundation.org/resources\\_and\\_publications/teacher-family-engagement-resource-tools-for-communicating-with-families-about-academic-progress-2/](http://flamboyantfoundation.org/resources_and_publications/teacher-family-engagement-resource-tools-for-communicating-with-families-about-academic-progress-2/)

<sup>56</sup> Chart contents taken directly from: “Welcome Phone Call/Conversation Checklist.” Flamboyant Foundation, July 29, 2011. <http://flamboyantfoundation.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/2011/07/Welcome-Conversation-checklist.pdf>

<sup>57</sup> Kourea, Lo, and Owens, Op. cit., pp. 228–229.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., p. 238.

<sup>59</sup> “School Discipline Equity: PASSAGE (Positive and Safe Schools Advancing Greater Equity).” Annenberg Institute for School Reform, December 17, 2013. <http://www.annenberginstitute.org/what-we-do/projects/school-discipline-equity-positive-and-safe-schools-advancing-greater-equity-pass>

PASSAGE program, parents already living in the communities that schools serve can develop a rapport with students more quickly than outside facilitators.<sup>60</sup>

Districts participating in PASSAGE rely on a committee of internal and external stakeholders to lead equity initiatives. The PASSAGE committee in Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools (MNPS) includes a steering committee with general oversight responsibilities as well as subcommittees responsible for specific issues such as community engagement and SEL.<sup>61</sup>

Through these committees, PASSAGE builds support for policy reforms and leverages additional resources that can improve behavioral outcomes. For example, the PASSAGE initiative in MNPS aligns wraparound services provided by community agencies to improve school readiness. PASSAGE committees in MNPS sought additional stakeholder input through a series of public forums that included a collaborative review of district data. Based on parent feedback in these forums, MNPS emphasized the development of clear and equitable guidelines for responding to misconduct and inclusion of parents in the disciplinary process.<sup>62</sup> Likewise, the PASSAGE committee in CPS facilitates town hall meetings to promote coordination among stakeholder groups such as welfare agencies, the school district, and community organizations.<sup>63</sup> At the NYCDOE, the PASSAGE committee worked with community partners to provide professional development focused on restorative justice.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> Van Ausdal, K., C. Pittman, and T. Towns. "Coming Together: Building Relationships and Navigating Conflict to Reduce Discipline Disparities." *Voices in Urban Education*, 2015. p. 38.  
<https://eric.ed.gov/?q=discipline+equity&ft=on&id=EJ1082778>

<sup>61</sup> Majors and Ward, Op. cit., pp. 28–29.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., p. 30.

<sup>63</sup> Van Ausdal, Pittman, and Towns, Op. cit., p. 39.

<sup>64</sup> Foster, K. "'Pushed out of School for Being Me': New York City's Struggle to Include Youth and Community Voices in School Discipline Reform." *Voices in Urban Education*, 2015. pp. 47–48.  
<https://eric.ed.gov/?q=discipline+equity&ft=on&pg=2&id=EJ1082781>

## SECTION III: EVALUATING EQUITY IN DISCIPLINE

In this section, Hanover Research discusses strategies school districts can use to evaluate equity in discipline and use evaluation data to support improvements in disciplinary policies. This section begins with a review of strategies that use student discipline data to improve discipline policies and goes on to discuss the use of other sources of data such as stakeholder surveys and classroom observations to inform improvement strategies.

### STUDENT DISCIPLINE DATA

Districts can use disaggregated discipline data as an accountability mechanism to support equity initiatives in individual schools. For example, District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS) created a district-wide discipline reporting mechanism to support equitable discipline in the city's charter schools by identifying schools with unusual levels of exclusionary discipline. DCPS reports suspension, student mobility, and expulsion data for each school using standardized metrics, and compares these data to district averages. This reporting allows DCPS to identify schools with unusually high rates of suspension or expulsion and express concerns regarding their discipline policies. DCPS also publishes these data to enable parents to factor disciplinary issues into their choice of schools. A 2016 report published by the Center on Reinventing Public Education (CPRE) finds that average suspension rates have declined since DCPS began publishing school-level discipline reports, and that these declines have been particularly strong for students with special needs.<sup>65</sup>

A 2012 report published by the Civil Rights Project at the University of California, Los Angeles recommends that schools use early warning systems to identify disproportionate discipline and use disaggregated discipline data to inform equity initiatives.<sup>66</sup> Figure 3.1 on the following page shows common methods of analyzing student discipline data identified by REL Northwest. Each method has advantages and disadvantages, and the exact selection of analysis methods will depend on the information of interest.

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<sup>65</sup> Gross, B., S. Tuchman, and S. Yatsko. "Grappling with Discipline in Autonomous Schools: New Approaches from D.C. and New Orleans." Center on Reinventing Public Education, June 2016. pp. 5–7.

[https://eric.ed.gov/?q=equity+policy+implementation&ff1=dtySince\\_2013&pg=2&id=ED566659](https://eric.ed.gov/?q=equity+policy+implementation&ff1=dtySince_2013&pg=2&id=ED566659)

<sup>66</sup> Losen, D.J. and J. Gillespie. "Opportunities Suspended: The Disparate Impact of Disciplinary Exclusion from School." The Center for Civil Rights Remedies at The Civil Rights Project at UCLA, 2012. p. 38.

<http://escholarship.org/uc/item/3g36n0c3.pdf>

**Figure 3.1: Common Methods of Analyzing Student Discipline Data**

METHOD	DATA USED	ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
Absolute number or count	Number in a group of interest	Can provide information on whether exclusionary discipline is overused in general	Does not provide information about disproportionality or account for changes in population
Rate	Number of students with a characteristic or outcome of interest; total number of students or incidents	Provides information about the rate of an event within a group	Does not provide information about disproportionality
Relative rate ratio	Rate of target and comparison group	Identifies disproportionality between two groups	Does not provide information about overall number or rate, and can be affected by small group sizes
Composition Index	Number of students or incidents in the group of interest and the entire population	Provides information about the proportion of a group with a characteristic or outcome of interest	Does not provide information about overall number or rate of incidents or about disproportionality
Relative difference in composition	Number of students or incidents in the group of interest and the entire population	Identifies differences between the rate of an outcome of interest in a group and the group's representation in the total population	Difficult to compare outcomes for schools or districts with varying enrollment or composition

Source: Regional Educational Laboratory Northwest<sup>67</sup>

**In addition to identifying overall disproportionalities, schools can use student discipline data to identify the specific factors that contribute to disproportionality.** For example, a 2016 article in the journal *School Psychology Forum* suggests that schools can use office disciplinary referrals (ODRs) to identify individual teachers with high or disproportionate referral rates and provide targeted professional development to help those teachers more constructively address student behavior.<sup>68</sup> Schools can also identify students who receive frequent ODRs, which may indicate conflicts with specific teachers or patterns of misbehaviors that suggest a need for targeted supports.<sup>69</sup> Figure 3.2 on the following page outlines the proposed methods for analyzing ODRs as proposed by the *School Psychology Forum* article.

<sup>67</sup> Chart adapted from: Nishioka, V., S. Shigeoka, and E. Lolich. "School Discipline Data Indicators: A Guide for Districts and Schools." Regional Educational Laboratory Northwest, 2017. p. 7. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED573680>

<sup>68</sup> Blake, J.J. et al. "Early Warning Signs: Identifying Opportunities to Disrupt Racial Inequities in School Discipline Through Data- Based Decision Making." *School Psychology Forum*, 10:3, Fall 2016. p. 290. Accessed via EBSCOhost

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 291.

**Figure 3.2: ODR Analysis Process**

- Identify whether your campus' school discipline records include the following information:
  - Unique student identification number for referred students (e.g., student ID)
  - Student demographic information: student race/ethnicity, gender, grade level
  - Unique identification number for teacher issuing ODRs (e.g., referring teacher); note that if all ODRs are entered by a single person (e.g., administrator), then the root cause analyses at the referring teacher level cannot be performed
  - ODR details: Date of ODR issued, type of ODR issued
- Export the campus discipline data file to Microsoft Excel.
- Create a monitoring period.
  - Identify the time periods you would like to monitor ODRs. The authors recommend using a 6–8 week periods to align with grading and progress reports.
  - Sort the discipline data by the date the ODR incident was issued and assign a code for dates that fall within each monitoring period.
  - Resort the data by monitoring period.
- Identify high referring teachers.
  - Count the number of teachers who made referrals and the number of ODRs each teacher made within the monitoring period using the pivot tables function in Excel. Include all of the variables (data range) in the Excel file for inclusion in your pivot table.
  - Within the pivot table sheet embedded with your school discipline data Excel file:
    - Calculate the mean number of ODRs made across teachers within each monitoring period and the corresponding standard deviation.
    - Create a threshold score for ODRs by summing the mean number of ODRs and the standard deviation within each monitoring period.
    - Record the teacher ID numbers of teachers who meet or exceed the ODR threshold within each monitoring period; the authors recommend using the first monitoring period to identify high referring teachers and early identification of high referring teachers will create increased opportunity to reduce excessive ODRs.
  - Return to the school discipline data Excel file and create a new column called High Referrers beside the teacher ID variable.
    - Sort the excel file by teacher ID.
    - Use the find function to identify high referring teachers based on their teacher ID; highlight high referring teachers or assign a 1 to high referring teachers for each teacher ID that appears; assign a 0 to all other teachers.
- Examine racial/ethnic disparities in ODRs and reasons for referrals.
  - Using an Excel pivot table, create a bar graph to examine if high referring teachers evidence racial/ ethnic disparities in their ODRs relative to the overall school campus (it may be necessary to complete two separate graphs).
  - Using an Excel pivot table, create a bar graph to examine if high referring teachers evidence differences in the type of ODRs made relative to the overall school campus (it may be necessary to complete two separate graphs).

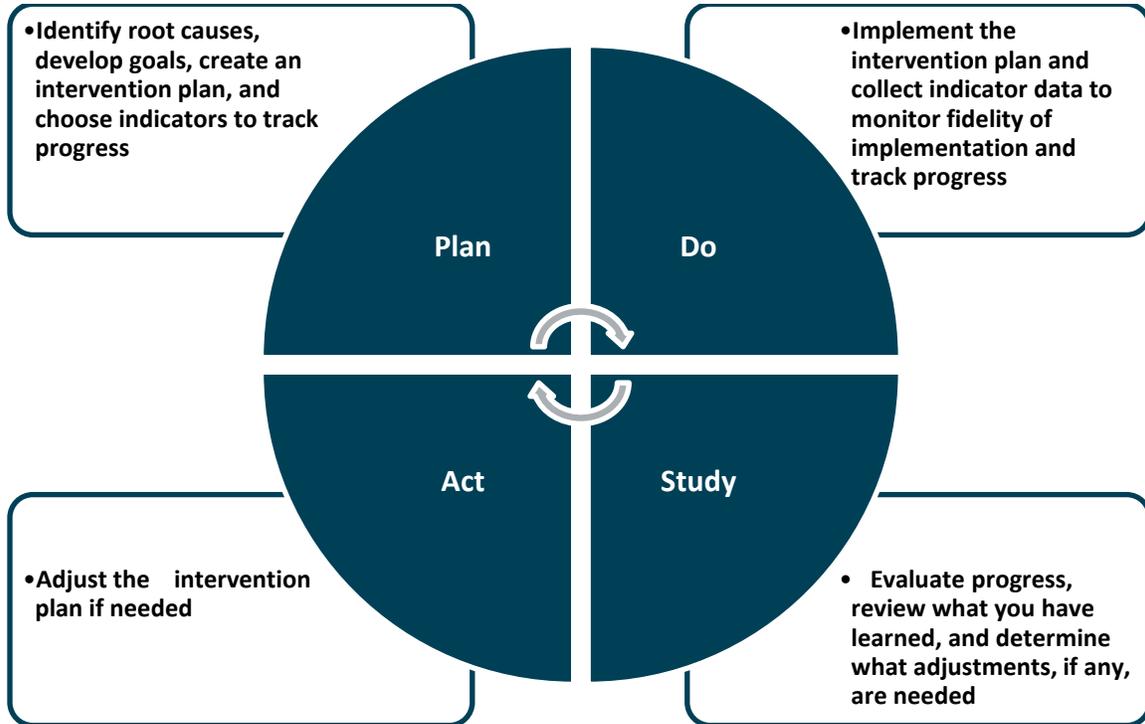
Source: *School Psychology Forum*<sup>70</sup>

REL Northwest recommends using the plan-do-study-act process shown in Figure 3.3 on the following page to identify and address root causes of disproportionality. This process supports

<sup>70</sup> Chart contents taken with very minor alterations from: *Ibid.*, pp. 302–303.

a continuous cycle of improvement in which educators re-examine data after implementing intervention plans to inform future adjustments or changes.<sup>71</sup>

**Figure 3.3: Plan-Do-Study-Act Process**



Source: Regional Educational Laboratory Northwest<sup>72</sup>

## OTHER SOURCES OF DATA

REL Northwest notes that schools need to collect a variety of data in addition to discipline data. These data may include direct observations of classroom instruction and student supervision, as well as stakeholder feedback.<sup>73</sup> Similarly, the Council of State Governments Justice Center Report recommends including observational assessments of school and classroom climate into the evaluation process for teachers and principals.<sup>74</sup>

Several organizations have developed observation protocols to assess school climate or specific strategies that support equitable discipline. For example, Baltimore City Public Schools in Maryland has developed a school climate walk protocol that stakeholders can use to assess overall school climate, available [at this hyperlink](https://www.baltimorecityschools.org/cms/lib/MD01001351/Centricity/Domain/231/Climate%20Walk%20Tool.pdf).<sup>75</sup> Education Northwest has developed the Leadership for Equity Assessment & Development (LEAD) Tool, a self-

<sup>71</sup> Nishioka, Shigeoka, and Lolich, Op. cit., p. 15.

<sup>72</sup> Chart contents taken directly from: Ibid.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid., p. 16.

<sup>74</sup> Cohen et al., Op. cit., pp. 103–104.

<sup>75</sup> “Climate Walk Tool.” Baltimore City Public Schools.

<https://www.baltimorecityschools.org/cms/lib/MD01001351/Centricity/Domain/231/Climate%20Walk%20Tool.pdf>

assessment tool that school leadership teams and stakeholders can use to evaluate their implementation of 10 practices that promote an equitable school culture. The LEAD Tool is available [at this hyperlink](#).<sup>76</sup> The Flamboyan Foundation has developed an observational rubric to assess classroom strategies to promote family engagement, available [at this hyperlink](#). This rubric scores family engagement using four stages and includes example statements and activities at each stage in the following domains:<sup>77</sup>

- The teacher possesses the beliefs and mindsets to effectively engage families,
- Teachers and families have trusting relationships, and
- Teachers engage families in supporting learning by effectively communicating academic information and progress.

Schools should also assess stakeholder perceptions of existing disciplinary policies. The Council of State Governments Justice Center report recommends that schools use surveys and forums to assess students' and families' perceptions of current discipline policies. The stakeholder engagement process should focus on whether discipline policies are fair and transparent.<sup>78</sup> The Flamboyan Foundation has also developed parent surveys and exit slips that teachers can use to evaluate the impact of family engagement strategies on parent activities. These surveys are available [at this hyperlink](#).<sup>79</sup>

The Council of State Governments Justice Center Report also recommends that schools analyze the results of school climate surveys to assess the degree to which students feel welcome and connected to school, and if the school's culture supports high expectations and constructive responses to misbehavior. Climate surveys should be empirically validated and include items relating to school safety and student discipline to inform discipline equity strategies.<sup>80</sup> The National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments (NCSSLE) maintains a database of climate surveys that have demonstrative empirical validity and reliability, available [at this hyperlink](#).<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> "About the LEAD Tool." Education Northwest. <http://leadtool.educationnorthwest.org/about-the-lead-tool>

<sup>77</sup> Bulleted text taken verbatim from: "Classroom Family Engagement Rubric." Flamboyan Foundation, June 9, 2011. pp. 1, 3, 6. <http://flamboyanfoundation.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/Classroom-Family-Engagement-Rubric-V4-VF.pdf>

<sup>78</sup> Cohen et al., Op. cit., p. 20.

<sup>79</sup> "Parent Surveys and Exit Slips." Flamboyan Foundation, July 29, 2011. [http://flamboyanfoundation.org/resources\\_and\\_publications/teacher-family-engagement-resource-parent-surveys-and-exit-slips-2/](http://flamboyanfoundation.org/resources_and_publications/teacher-family-engagement-resource-parent-surveys-and-exit-slips-2/)

<sup>80</sup> Cohen et al., Op. cit., p. 35.

<sup>81</sup> "School Climate Survey Compendium." National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments. <https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/topic-research/school-climate-measurement/school-climate-survey-compendium>

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