Improving School Climate: Alternative Approaches to Discipline

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Alternatives to Suspension: What are they and why do we need them?
Students Who Have Been Suspended Scored Lower on Tests
2013 MSA

% Proficient/Advanced

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>No Suspensions</th>
<th>1 Suspension</th>
<th>2+ Suspensions</th>
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<td><strong>MATH</strong></td>
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<td>31,471</td>
<td>2,009</td>
<td>803</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>61.1</td>
<td>37.8</td>
<td>27.5</td>
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<td><strong>READING</strong></td>
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<td>31,516</td>
<td>2,021</td>
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<td></td>
<td>69.5</td>
<td>53.8</td>
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NOTE: *SY1213 suspension data are preliminary, unofficial, and subject to change

NOTE: Beginning in 2009, Mod-MSA was reported with MSA totals

NOTE: Ns refer to the total number of students who took the MSA
SCHOOLS WITH HIGHER RATES OF SUSPENSION:

- Lower academic quality ratings regardless of student demographics
- Spend disproportionate time on discipline
- Pay less attention to school climate

Research indicates that Alternatives to Suspension:

- Reduce school disciplinary problems
- Also increases and supports a positive school climate.

WHAT WE THINK SUSPENSIONS ACCOMPLISH

I LEARNED MY LESSON

I WILL NEVER DO IT AGAIN
WHAT SUSPENSIONS ACTUALLY ACCOMPLISH

“Hey girl, What are you doing after school?”

I JUST BEAT MY HIGH SCORE

Hey girl, What are you doing after school?"
What are some of the most common ways that we respond to challenging behaviors?

- Sending students to the office
- Detention
- Placing students outside the classroom in the hallway
- Suspension
- In-school Suspension
- Refusing to accept students back in class without a parent teacher conference
There is a need for adults to shift the way we think about student behavior.

- Modeling the desired behavior actually has an impact
- Appropriate behavior can actually be taught
Moving from punitive...
...to restorative
**Punitive Responses**

- Focusing on the offender
- Assigning blame to the wrong doer
- Imposing harsh punishment
- Social Injury (shaming/demoralizing)

**Restorative Responses**

- Addressing all persons harmed
- Holding wrong doer accountable
- Repairing the harm done/restitution
- Becoming a stronger member of the community
There are many successful alternative approaches to discipline.

They all have these components in common:

- Student Voice
- Alternatives to Suspension
- Relationships
- Restorative Accountability
Student Voice

“Too many schools operate under the false assumption that the quality and character of schools can be shaped by adults alone.”

(How Listening to Students Can Help Schools to Improve, Pedro A. Noguera, PhD., professor New York University.)
Relationships

Alternatives to Suspensions build:

- Student-student relationships
- Adult-student relationships


Accountability

Students must understand what they did wrong.
Restorative

1. Everyone affected comes together
2. Everyone has a voice
3. Everyone agrees
THE EFFECTS OF CLIMATE ON SUSPENSIONS

As positive climate increases, the need for suspensions decreases.
Questions

Comments
WHAT ARE WE ALREADY DOING?
Alternatives to Suspension

Some of the current resources in Baltimore City Schools:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>PBIS</th>
<th>Restorative Practice</th>
<th>Peer Mediation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Community Conferencing</td>
<td>Character Education</td>
<td>Holistic Life</td>
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<tr>
<td>Traditional Conferencing</td>
<td>Mentoring</td>
<td>Capturing Kids Hearts</td>
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<td>Conflict Resolution</td>
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<th>WHAT ARE YOU CURRENTLY DOING?</th>
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“There is considerable evidence that a history of school suspension does one of two things – either it puts a child on the path toward delinquency or it accelerates his journey there.”

(Report of the Task Force on the Education of Maryland’s African American Males, 2006)
ALTERNATIVES TO SUSPENSION IS A SHIFT IN THINKING
ALL STUDENTS CAN CHANGE