Closing the School Discipline Gap

Equity and Human Rights Conference 2017
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California Teachers Association
Presentation Overview

• Overview of AB 420
• Latest Data – Signs of Progress
• Ending the School to Prison Pipeline –
• Zero Tolerance vs Evidence based Alternatives
Where we started

California-Wide Epidemic in Schools

• 2012-13 school year,
  • over 329,379 students suspended out-of-school
  • 264,234 80% for “willful defiance,” which can be as minor as disrespect.

In some school districts, the suspension rate for African American students was as high as 60%, and for Latinos as high as 30%.

SOURCE: CA Dept. of Education
AB 420

A three year policy experiment encouraging school districts to establish alternative programs to suspension and expulsion.

• Eliminates “willful defiance or classroom disruption” as a reason to expel a student from school.

• Eliminates “willful defiance or classroom disruption” as a reason to suspend a student from school in grades kindergarten through third grade.

• Preserves the ability of a teacher to suspend a child from the classroom at any grade level for “willful defiance or classroom disruption”.

• Sunsets in the summer of 2018, providing time to evaluate the policy shift.
What is the School to Prison Pipeline?

The *policies* and *practices* that are directly and indirectly pushing students out of school and on a pathway to prison.
Elements of the School to Prison Pipeline

- Racial & ethnic disparities
- Zero tolerance discipline and school suspension
- Criminalization of normative adolescent behavior
- Police in school
- High stakes testing
Being suspended even once in ninth grade is associated with a twofold increase in the likelihood of dropping out, from 16% for those not suspended to 32% for those suspended just once.

(Balfanz, 2013)
Major Trends

- Police presence in schools has been on the rise, especially in the last 15 years.
- More types of incidents now require police notification.
- State and federal funding for police in schools has expanded.
- Many Zero Tolerance policies have broadened the definition of “weapon.”

Image: JOE RAEDLE/GETTY IMAGES
Suspensions and the Path to Prison

• Students are more likely to be retained
• Students are less likely to graduate
• Students are more likely to get arrested
A Tale of Two Schools

Carlos had a heated argument with his parents before leaving for school, so he's running late. Let's see the difference that restorative policies and practices can make.

Zero-tolerance education system

- He is greeted by metal detectors and a police search.
- His teacher scolds him in front of the class. Carlos talks back, and is given a detention.
- A school police officer detains and arrests both students.
- Carlos is held in a juvenile detention facility all afternoon, missing school. He now has an arrest record and is facing suspension.

Restorative practices-based education system

- Teachers and administrators welcome him and his fellow students as they enter.
- His teacher waits until after class to speak with Carlos to learn more, and sets up a meeting with his school counselor.
- Student peer mediators and support staff intervene, have the students sit down together, and de-escalate the situation.
- Carlos and the other student agree to help clean the cafeteria during a free period. Carlos meets with his counselor and parents after school to help resolve the conflict at home.

Learn more about restorative practices: www.otlcampaign.org/restorative-practices
Disrupting the School to Prison Pipeline

- Improve the code of conduct to hold students accountable for minor misbehavior without excluding from school
- Examine the root causes of racial disparities and make a commitment to end them
- Limit the role of law enforcement to serious crimes
- Increase counseling and community intervention resources
- Give youth, parents, and teachers a real voice in creating and implementing positive school discipline
- Implement evidence-based alternatives to suspension and expulsion
California Suspensions and Expulsion Data 2014-15
source: CA Dept. of Ed, January 2016

• 13.9% decrease in expulsions from prior year
• 12.8% decrease in suspensions from prior year

• Third year of declines in suspensions and expulsions since 2011-12
  • Suspensions decreased 33.6%
  • Expulsions decreased 40.4%
  • Willful defiance category:
    • 57.3% decrease in expulsions
    • 30.9% decrease in suspensions
Introductory statewide analysis shows that low district suspension rates correlated with higher district achievement:

Alameda USD
2011-12 to 2013-14 – OSS dropped from 9.4 - 5.2
API increased by 6 points

Berkley USD
2011-12 to 2013-14 – OSS dropped from 7.6 – 4.6
API increased 11 points
### API Scores by Race/Ethnicity

source: Closing the School Discipline Gap, 2015 - Center for Civil Rights Remedies,

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<td>766</td>
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<td>885</td>
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<td>Berkley Unified</td>
<td>659</td>
<td>674</td>
<td>760</td>
<td>764</td>
<td>923</td>
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Creating a Supportive School Environment

Evidence-based Alternatives

- Positive Behavioral Intervention Supports
- Restorative Justice
- Trauma-Informed Schools
- Social-Emotional Learning
PBIS Basics

• PBIS is NOT a packaged curriculum, scripted intervention or manualized strategy.

• PBIS systems include:
  • Team based leadership
  • Data-based decision-making
  • Continuous monitoring of student behavior
  • Regular universal screening
  • Effective on-going professional development
PBIS Basics

To ensure a successful implementation districts and schools are **encouraged** to:

- Use an existing or establish a PBIS leadership team
- Examine their school data to define and specify the need
- Secure an agreement from school staff (>80%) to move forward with PBIS
- Identify a person on the team who will facilitate or coach the implementation process.

Source: National Center on PBIS –www.pbis.org
PBIS Basics

Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports Pyramid
Adapted from: Sprague & Walker, 2004

Tier 1/ Universal
(All Students/All Settings)
School-wide, Culturally Responsive Systems of Support/ School-wide PBIS (75-85% of students)

Tier 2/ Selected
Classroom & Small Group Strategies (10-20% of students)

Tier 3/ Targeted/Intensive
Individual Interventions (3-5%)

Includes: Individualized interventions for high-risk behaviors

Includes: Social-skills groups, daily check-in with adult, classroom behavior interventions

Includes: Expectations signage, school-wide recognition, social-emotional skills teaching

Acevedo & Bartz, 2012
An Effective Plan Needs A Blueprint

www.pbis.org

Implementation Blueprint

Professional Development Blueprint

Evaluation Blueprint

Ask your PBIS coordinator/team for the blueprints!
Resources

- www.pbisworld.com
- www.pbis.org
- www.pbiscaltac.org
What is Social Emotional Learning (SEL)

Social and emotional learning (SEL) is the process through which children and adults acquire and effectively apply the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions.
Social Emotional Learning

Source: Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL)

www.casel.org
Trauma Sensitive Schools

Once schools understand the educational impacts of trauma, they can become safe, supportive environments where students make the positive connections with adults and peers they might otherwise push away, calm their emotions so they can focus and behave appropriately, and feel confident enough to advance their learning—in other words, schools can make trauma sensitivity a regular part of how the school is run. Trauma sensitivity will look different at each site.

www.traumasensitiveschools.org
Fundamental Principles of Trauma Sensitive Schools

- Comprehend the Prevalence and Impact of Trauma
- Trauma Informed Lens
- Using Relationships to Heal and Build School Connectedness
- Caregiver Capacity
- Empowerment and Resiliency
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<tr>
<th>Common/Traditional View</th>
<th>Trauma-Informed View</th>
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<tr>
<td>Students choose behavior and need consequences</td>
<td>Students want to do well but lack the skills or have learned bad behavior patterns</td>
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<td>Characterizes student behavior negatively (i.e. manipulative)</td>
<td>Characterizes student behavior constructively (i.e. needs calming strategies)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Uses labels to describe students (&quot;EBD&quot;)</td>
<td>Reframes behavior to identify strengths</td>
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<tr>
<td>Authoritarian</td>
<td>Collaborative</td>
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<tr>
<td>Minimizes coping strategies</td>
<td>Behavior is communication and serves a function</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academics focused</td>
<td>Whole-student focused</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student should already know the expectations</td>
<td>Teaches and re-teaches expectations using differentiation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creates systems that make students work for support</td>
<td>All students receive support regardless of their needs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Staff-centered environment</td>
<td>Student-centered environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uses jargon with parents and non-educators</td>
<td>Uses language so that all can understand</td>
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Trauma Sensitive Schools

• Assumes that most students have been exposed to trauma.

• Trauma sensitive schools integrates an awareness of the impact of trauma with existing programs and practice.

• Trauma sensitive schools use the lens of trauma to inform current practices and policies.
Discuss with your group...

• What **stood out** to you during the two videos?

• What **feelings** came up for you?

• Did anything addressed in the video **resonate** with your observations/experiences regarding discipline at your school?
Social and Restorative Justice:
Fostering a Safe and Inclusive School Climate

California Teachers Association
Human Rights Department
Lisa Adams
Restorative Justice

• A philosophy of justice that...
  • Emphasizes repairing harm
  • Invites all of those affected to collaboratively figure out how to repair the harm
  • Gives equal attention to community needs, those who are harmed, and those who caused harm
RETRIBUTIVE JUSTICE

• Offense = violation of system
• Focus on rule that was broken, naming offender, and guilt
• Focus on offender, not victim
• Offender’s role is passive

RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

• Problem = harm to school community and individuals
• Focus on repairing harm and holding person who caused harm accountable to person harmed/community
• Addresses rights and needs of person harmed
• Person who harmed plays active role, develops empathy
**RETRIBUTIVE JUSTICE**

- Accountability = punishment
- Offender feels misunderstood, alienated, stigmatized
- Focus on removing offender from school
- Little room for remorse of forgiveness

**RESTORATIVE JUSTICE**

- Accountability = reparations
- Person who harmed feels heard and affirmed as part of community
- Focus on re-integrating person who caused harm with appropriate support
- Remorse is encouraged and forgiveness is possible
With your group...

1. Brainstorm **examples** of both retributive/punitive discipline and restorative discipline from your schools.

2. Choose **one punitive** and **one restorative** example. Discuss how the punitive example could be change to a more restorative approach.
Restorative Model of Prevention and Supports

- Build Community
- Respond to Conflict and Harm
- Provide Individualized Support

Build Relationships

- Build intentional **equitable and safe classroom environments** for teachers and students that are conducive to learning.
Respond to Conflict and Harm

- **Address conflicts and harmful behavior** with strength-based restorative processes:
  - Individual conversations
  - Harm / Peacemaking circles
  - Mediations
Provide Individualized Support

• **Re-entry** after a suspension or other sustained absence or in cases of chronic lateness and truancy

• **Restorative Conferences:**
  • Brings together parents/caregivers and others who can play a supportive role
  • Support all participants while insisting on accountability for harmful actions
Types of Circles

- Community Building
- Learning
- Peace Making
Types of Circles

- Create **safe and inclusive spaces**, enhance group dynamics through relationship building
- Provide opportunities for **dialogue and reflection** on topics that impact the community
Types of Circles

- **Skill Building Circles**: Develop skill-sets to support healthy and productive interaction
  - Communications skills
  - Emotional awareness and expression
  - Empathy, Compassion, and Mindfulness
  - Identity awareness (race, gender, etc.)
  - Conflict resolution skills

- **Academic Circles**: Use RJ format to engage students in activities that elicit critical thinking, introspection, problem solving, and reflection related to curriculum
Types of Circles

- Also called “Harm” or “Conflict” Circles
- Focuses on equitably addressing surface and root causes of harm and conflict
- Identify what happened, address needs, uncover impacts and collectively create sustainable solutions
- Cultivate safe spaces to clarify misunderstandings, acknowledge responsibly, and provide support for those who were harmed and those who caused harm

Peace Making Circles
Why Use Circles?

• Key practice to prevent and deal with harmful thoughts and actions
• Link to wisdom of the past
• Democratic space where all voices can be heard
• Safe, non-judgmental space to express ideas and emotions
Circle Elements

- Circle Keeper
- Talking Piece
- Center Piece (optional)
Circle Guidelines

• Speak and listen from your heart
• Speak and listen with respect
• Respect the talking piece
• Honor privacy
• Be peace
• The problem is the problem, the person is NOT the problem
Suggestions for Circles

- Use Respect Agreements instead of rules
- Circle Keeper models respect, appreciation, and deep non-judgmental understanding
- Guide toward deeper understandings that can lead to solutions
- Ask questions from respectful curiosity
- Ask about assumptions, feelings, actions, ways of thinking and how they were formed
Remember

• There is no “one size fits all” approach to student discipline. Many of these evidence based alternatives can be used together to design a supportive school climate.

• Evidenced based alternatives focus on teaching appropriate behavior, building empathy, and being part of a school community.
“It is easier to teach children than repair broken men.”
-Frederick Douglass