

A MULTI-TIERED APPROACH TO SCHOOL DISCIPLINE: PROACTIVE STRATEGIES TO REDUCE EXCLUSIONARY PRACTICES

Disciplinary exclusions are found to be ineffective in reducing problematic behaviors (Sundius & Farneth, 2008). Therefore, it is recommended that schools shift their approach from a focus on punitive measures towards strategies that support students' strengths while addressing needs through collaboration and support.

Educators can provide stronger support for students through thoughtful consideration of the school's culture and implementing a variety of strategies.

To address challenging behavior more effectively, strategies should prioritize meeting students' behavioral needs instead of relying solely on punishments (Peterson, 2006).

By adopting a multi-tiered systems approach, school teams can choose options that align with their school's culture and implement multiple strategies that can improve support for students.

TIER 1

UNIVERSAL INSTRUCTION AND SUPPORTS

Strategies are provided to ALL students with an aim to create a positive school environment that fosters a sense of belonging and values individual students.

Examples of strategies may include and are not limited to:

- Create a supportive learning environment
- Create opportunities for building positive relationships
- Deliver de-escalation training to all staff
- Establish explicit schoolwide expectations and values
- Implement a positive schoolwide behavior support system
- Incorporate restorative practices
- Increase opportunities for positive reinforcement
- Intervene proactively upon identification of early warning signs of problematic behaviors
- Promote social-emotional learning and development of coping skills
- Provide effective instruction on protective and risk factors
- Provide training on positive classroom behavior supports, vulnerable decision points, and neutralizing routines to all staff
- Teach explicit evidence-based strategies for promoting and maintaining wellness

TIER 2

TARGETED AND GROUP INTERVENTIONS

Interventions are targeted and focused on SOME students who require additional supports beyond the universal tier.

Examples of strategies may include and are not limited to:

- Behavior Contracting/Problem Solving
 - Check In; Check Out
- Instruction in Self-Monitoring
- Mentoring
 - Check & Connect
- Purposeful, Skill-Based, Instructional Mini Lessons
- Restorative Practices
 - Conflict Resolution and Peer Mediation Programs
 - Restitution
- Social-Academic Instructional Groups (SAIG)
- Structured Breaks
- Student Assistance Program (SAP) Team Referrals

TIER 3

INTENSIVE INTERVENTIONS

Interventions are intensive and individualized for a FEW students who require additional behavioral supports.

Examples of strategies may include and are not limited to:

- Community Service
- Coordinated Behavior Plans/Action Plans
- Functional Behavior Assessment
- Individualized Counseling
- Innovative Student Programming
- In-School Suspension Reframed for Student Support
- Outside Agency Support
- Person-Centered Planning

References

Peterson, R.L. (2006). *What every administrator needs to know about alternatives to suspension and expulsion*. [PDF document].

Sundius, J. & Farneth, M. (2008). *Putting kids out of school: What's causing high suspension rates and why are they dangerous to students, schools, and communities*. [PDF document].

