

## Reducing Exclusionary Discipline Practices

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 March 4, 2017

## Why do we suspend and expel students from school?

- ▶ The research is pretty clear that suspensions are not effective at changing behavior.
- ▶ Suspensions are cheap, quick, take little effort, show we are being "tough on discipline", and are permissible by policy and law
- ▶ What does it give us:
  - ▶ Students are removed from the environment for a time
  - ▶ Teacher and rest of class get a break from the behavior
  - ▶ Student returns later—behavior and root causes of behavior are unchanged
  - ▶ Repeat cycle

## Why do we care about reducing exclusionary discipline practices?

- ▶ High rates of suspension and expulsion aren't the problem, but a symptom of other problems in your school
  - ▶ Instruction that is not engaging and relevant
  - ▶ Poor classroom management skills of teachers
  - ▶ Lack of relationship between teachers and students
  - ▶ Unhealthy cultural issues like drugs or gangs
  - ▶ Explicit or implicit bias

## Why do we care about reducing exclusionary discipline practices?

- ▶ It is a moral imperative. The more that we suspend and expel, the greater the likelihood that the student will be in jail, homeless, and/or unemployed



## Let's be a little more selfish...

- ▶ Increase your achievement, growth, and graduation rates...
- ▶ Student don't learn when they aren't in school
- ▶ The more you suspend and expel, the greater the likelihood of dropout
- ▶ We tend to suspend and expel the students who most need to be at school



## What is possible?

Overton 2010-2014 (1<sup>st</sup> Qtr)

Hillsboro 2015-16 (1<sup>st</sup> Sem)

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ ISS incidents: 709 to 97</li> <li>▶ ISS students: 380 to 81</li> <li>▶ OSS Incidents: 234 to 53</li> <li>▶ OSS Students: 145 to 48</li> <li>▶ TLS Referrals: 31 to 2</li> <li>▶ Perfect Attendance: 89 to 740</li> <li>▶ ADA: 93% to 95%</li> <li>▶ Graduation Rate: 72% to 85%</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ OSS Incidents: 241 to 83</li> <li>▶ OSS Students: 129 to 76</li> <li>▶ Expulsion Incidents: 14 to 9</li> <li>▶ Expulsion Students: 14 to 9</li> <li>▶ Perfect Attendance: 41 to 165</li> <li>▶ ADA: 91.8% to 92.75%</li> <li>▶ Graduation Rate: 85% to 87%</li> </ul> |
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## How do you get started?

- ▶ Baseline your data and resources
- ▶ Create alternatives for accountability and consequences
- ▶ Access community and district resources
- ▶ Increase mentoring, build more relationships
- ▶ Provide professional development
- ▶ Be positive, reinforce and reward the right behaviors

## Baseline your data and resources

- ▶ Know your data
  - ▶ Who is writing referrals?
  - ▶ What are your top five categories of referrals?
  - ▶ Do you have consistency in punishment?
  - ▶ Do your offense codes accurately reflect the action?
- ▶ Decide what is really worthy of exclusion from school, and what can and should have different or alternative punishment
  - ▶ Discipline roundtables can be very effective for this
  - ▶ Think about chronic vs. disruptive vs. disrespectful
  - ▶ Don't let ego get in the way
  - ▶ Set goals around reducing the top two or three

## Create alternatives for accountability and consequences

- ▶ Story of "The Perfect Storm" at Hillsboro...
  - ▶ Predecessor eliminated ISS
  - ▶ District codified discipline, reduced behaviors that were suspendable
  - ▶ Tightened up on not allowing school to revoke out of zone transfers
- ▶ Had to create more tools and resources for assistant principals and deans
  - ▶ Lunch detention, Saturday School, Twilight School, behavior contracts, apologies, loss of privileges, refer to coach or sponsor, counseling



## Access community and district resources

- ▶ Counselors—get them counseling! Anger management classes
- ▶ Social Workers—home visits—maybe there are some good reasons a child is acting out.
- ▶ Community Organizations (Big Brothers and Sisters, YMCA, TN Voices for Children, Martha O'Byran, Oasis Center). Often these groups have resources in the way of parenting classes, counseling, can assist with referrals for mental and physical health needs
- ▶ School Psychologists—5-Teams and referrals for testing.
- ▶ Support and Intervention Meetings



## Increase mentoring, build more relationships

- ▶ Stephen Covey: "Seek first to understand, then be understood"
- ▶ Advisory: key component of academies—started in aftermath of Columbine shootings
- ▶ Morning meeting: Great way to start the day. Used more in elementary and middle
- ▶ Special groups: Who is most at risk in your building?
- ▶ My "wake up call" as a first year principal

## Provide professional development

- ▶ It is tempting to say that it is the students that have to change
- ▶ The reality is that we have to start with changing the adults
  - ▶ We have more control over us
- ▶ Training takes a commitment in both time and money
- ▶ Should be reflected in your SIP—creates accountability
- ▶ Start with a core group, expand over time. Consider teachable moments (example—the apology)
- ▶ Include parents, students, and stakeholders

## Reward the desired behaviors

- ▶ Don't let the worst behaviors get all of the attention
- ▶ Narrow your scope, decide what you want to encourage
- ▶ Set regular and attainable rewards
  - ▶ Local vendors and businesses will often provide simple items (free Frosty for perfect attendance, free donut for hitting reading goals, etc)
  - ▶ Some rewards cost little money (assemblies, free time, certificates)
  - ▶ Recognition is the often the best reward



## Summary

- ▶ Focus on what you can control
- ▶ You will have some failures and missteps, that is OK
- ▶ Think about changing behavior, not metrics or data
- ▶ Involve stakeholders in the process all the way
- ▶ When dealing with undesired behaviors, remember to ask "why is this child doing this?"

Thank You!  
Questions?