Using Data to Conduct a Root Cause Analysis: Addressing Behavior within a Multi-Tiered System of Support

PAMELA FENNING
LOYOLA UNIVERSITY CHICAGO
SCHOOL OF EDUCATION
pfennin@luc.edu

THANKS TO THE TRANSFORMING SCHOOL DISCIPLINE COLLABORATIVE AT:
HTTP://WWW.TRANSFORMSCHOOLDISCIPLINE.ORG/
Reliance on exclusionary discipline (e.g., suspension and expulsion) (APA Task Force on Zero Tolerance, 2008; Children's Defense Fund, 1975; Losen, 2015; Skiba et al., 2011)

Long-standing disproportionality in exclusionary discipline
- Race/Ethnicity – Particularly African American Males
- Special Education Status and Academic Problems
- More recent focus on LGBTQ Youth
% of all enrolled students with one or more suspensions

NCES Suspension Map Totals

The Hidden Cost of Suspension: How can kids learn if they’re not in school?

1. Out-of-School Suspensions: A Bigger Problem than You Think

Each year, 3 million students face OSS, typically for non-violent behavior.

See percent enrollment of students that were suspended out of school in 2011-2012.

For the data table used to create this map, click here.

NOTE: For each school district, the percent of students receiving one or more out-of-school suspensions (OSS) is calculated by dividing the district's cumulative number of students receiving one or more out-of-school suspensions for the entire 2011-2012 school year, by the district's student enrollment based on a count of students taken on a single day between September 21 and December 31.


2. Disciplining Disability: Addressing High Rates of Removal

3. Don’t forget the details! Race, Gender, and Disability
NCES Suspension Map: Students with a Disability

% of students with disabilities that have one or more suspensions
% of Black male students with disabilities that have one or more suspensions
Suspensions for Students with Disabilities by Race/Ethnicity and Gender

% of Black female students with disabilities that have one or more suspensions
Collateral Suspension Damage

- Suspension and expulsion associated with “school to prison pipeline” a term describing the use of exclusionary discipline to push students out of school and into the juvenile justice/penal system (Losen & Martinez, 2013; Morgan et al., 2014)
- Advent of “Zero Tolerance” has contributed to “criminalization” of school misbehaviors (Skiba & Rausch, 2006)
Implicit Bias

- Examination of our own and others implicit bias
- Implicit and unconscious bias tied to institutional and societal racism is not at a level of awareness
- Having difficult conversations surrounding discipline data
- Implicit bias might interact with other factors such as decision-making under pressure in a more multi-dimensional fashion (McIntosh et al., 2014)
Implicit Bias

- A consistent problem-solving approach could be facilitated by the use of “discipline checklist” within Model Student Code of Conduct developed by Transforming School Discipline Collaborative (TSDC)
- Model code of conduct and discipline checklist will be described in more detail in later presentation today
Implicit Bias

- Short CNN Clip Demonstrating Implicit Bias

https://youtu.be/nFbvBJULVnc
MTSS and School Discipline

ACADEMIC SYSTEMS

**Tier 3** Intensive, Individual Interventions
- Individual Students
- Assessment - based
- High intensity
- Of longer duration

**Tier 2** Targeted Group Interventions
- Some students (at-risk)
- High efficiency
- Rapid response

**Tier 1** Core Instructional Interventions
- All students
- Preventive, proactive

BEHAVIORAL SYSTEMS

**Tier 3** Intensive, Individual Interventions
- Individual Students
- Assessment - based
- Intense, durable procedures

**Tier 2** Targeted Group Interventions
- Some students (at-risk)
- High efficiency
- Rapid response

**Tier 1** Core Universal Interventions
- All settings, All students
- Preventive, proactive

Problem Identification
Start by Analyzing Data and Data Collection Systems

- **Review all sources of data:**
  - Internal discipline data sources (SWIS or others) and academic outcomes/universal screening data
- **Analyze your data:**
  - Compile total numbers of suspensions and expulsions
  - Disaggregate to evaluate for racial disproportionality and/or diverse learning needs
  - Determine top disciplinary infractions resulting in out-of-school discipline
  - Identify top racially disproportionate infractions
Start by Considering Data Collection Systems

- Consider... The effectiveness of current data collection systems
  - What data do you collect?
  - How are those data collected?
  - How frequently are they collected?
  - Do the data you collect adequately inform important educational decisions?
  - What changes or adjustments do you need to make?
Start by Analyzing Data and Data Collection Systems

• **Systematize:**
  - A school-based team should review discipline data monthly to make decisions about which students need support and ensure that disciplinary decisions are equitable
  - Plan to evaluate outcomes of your discipline plans
  - Determine indicators of success
Problem Analysis
Review Your Policies: Documentary Analysis

- **Collect** your policies:
  - Code of Conduct/Student Handbook,
  - Discipline procedures
  - School and PD calendars.
- **Assess** how well your policies comply with your disciplinary goals.
- **Establish** a timeline for revision, including a process for obtaining stakeholder input (including from students, parents, and community members).
Plan Implementation
Develop of an Action Plan to Address the Issue

- **SOME POSSIBLE GUIDING QUESTIONS**
- Are the action plan items at the tier 1 (universal), tier 2 (secondary) and/or tier 3 (tertiary) level?
- At the system level, what happens to prevent and address behavior?
- At the classroom/secondary level, what happens to prevent and address behavior?
- At the individual level, what happens to prevent and address behavior?
Develop of an Action Plan to Address the Issue

- How does your action/next steps align with your school discipline/behavior practices along a continuum (tier 1, tier 2, tier 3)
- How can the action plan items integrate with existing practices along a continuum of supports?
Plan Evaluation

How will you know your action plan/next steps to address discipline/discipline worked?
What is working an at what tier?
What adjustments need to be made?
Plan Evaluation

What data will you look at to determine if your plan is effective?
- Discipline Data
- Academic Data
- Attendance Data
- School Climate Surveys
- School Engagement
- Talking to Students/Teachers and Key Stakeholders
Getting At Root Cause of Behaviors

- **Hypothetical Case Study**

  - Graphs of referral data and suspension by behavior and racial/ethnic subgroups and special education status in two hypothetical large high schools
  - Interviews with students and teachers/classroom and unstructured setting observations
  - Review of highlights within the case
Getting at Root Cause of Behaviors

Discipline Disparities Document

- Event
- Cause
- Hypothesized Root Cause
- Action Steps
“Root Cause” Factors to Consider

- Health, mental illness, or undiagnosed disabilities
- Appropriateness of the student’s academic placement and performance
- LGB/T status
- Peer factors, e.g., whether student has been bullying victim
- Any other events out of the ordinary
- Substance abuse or addiction
- Prior experiences and exposure to trauma
- Family situations, e.g., homelessness, domestic violence, divorce or separation
Root Cause Example from Case Study

Root Cause Using One Behavior from Case Study

- **Event:** Insubordination

- **Cause:** High rates of referrals for African American students with disabilities/diverse learning needs who are more likely to be in lower track classes where the highest percentage of referrals for insubordination happen.
Root Cause Example from Case Study

One Behavior from Case Study Continued

- Hypothesized Root Cause: Cultural misunderstandings, differing communication styles between students and teachers; curriculum mismatch and instructional level not a match

- Action Steps: System wide support and professional development in empathy and relationship building (e.g., restorative practices); teacher consultation and support in cultural styles, re-teaching expectations for respect and skill building in this area for all students as part of universal PBS system
NOW, YOUR TURN
In small groups, do a root cause analysis using one of the top behavior referrals from your school/district leading to behavioral concerns/referrals and/or suspension? Consider behaviors that are disparate by race/ethnicity and/or disability status or knowledge of diverse learning needs.

Using your data/knowledge of the building, you will work with others who have similar concerns. Use the case example as a guide to do the root cause analysis.
Small Group Activity

- We will organize you next in small groups.
- Upon returning, analyze your referral concern using a root cause analysis.
Fill in the following for your behavioral concern by writing down the following:

- Event
- Cause
- Hypothesized Root Cause
- Action Step

Report out to the larger group
Model Code of Conduct
Transforming School Discipline Collaborative

- Illinois collaborative that includes organizational and institutional members
- Steering committee includes:
  - attorneys, school psychologists, policy advocates and community organizers
  - university/graduate school/law school faculty and non-profit staff members
Model Code Components

1. Discipline Philosophy
2. Rights and Responsibilities
3. Participation and Collaboration
4. Prevention, Intervention and Disciplinary Responses
2. Approach to School Discipline and the Investigative Process
3. Due Process Procedures
4. Procedures following Suspension and Expulsion
5. Procedural Guidelines for Discipline of Students with Disabilities
6. Professional Development
7. Data Collection and Monitoring
Discipline Philosophy

• Effectuating a **positive school climate** is critical to transforming disciplinary practices
• Discipline should be **prevention-oriented** and build upon **academic and behavioral supports** for students
• Disciplinary responses should be **instructional and corrective**
• Out-of-school discipline is **counterproductive** and should be **limited** to the extent possible.
Evaluation of restorative justice in schools is desperately needed; Approach is promising but more systematic research documenting outcome are needed.

Important role for school psychologists because we are in schools, understand evaluation and treatment implementation and integrity.
Credits and Next Steps

- The model code work is collaborative and draws upon the varied contributions of the members of the Transforming School Discipline Collaborative.
- The summary of the Discipline Reform included attorneys from Equip for Equality who drafted a self-reflection checklist for the Discipline Reform Legislation.
- This presentation contains a general overview of legislative highlights. Please review the entire legislation and become familiar with it for use and applicability in your district.
- Since this is new, and discipline reform is changing rapidly, stay abreast for updates!
Resources: Alternatives to Suspension

- Schoolwide Positive Behavior Support (SWPBS) (Horner et al., 2009)
- Restorative Justice Practices (Karp & Breslin, 2001)
- Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) (Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor, & Schellinger, 2011)

PROMISING ALTERNATIVES TO EXCLUSIONARY DISCIPLINE

- My Teaching Partner (Gregory, Allen, Mikami, Haffen, & Pianta, 2015)
- Examination of Implicit Biases and Impact on Decision Making (McIntosh et al., 2014)
Schoolwide Positive Behavior Support (SWPBS) Universal (all students)

- Horner et al. (2009) evaluation findings were reductions in ODRs, improved school climate
- Limited consistent documentation that SWPBS addresses racial/ethnic disparities (McIntosh et al., 2014)
Restorative Justice

- Origins in Criminal Justice System
- Focus on Repairing Damage/Harm and Restoring Relationships
- Doesn’t Condone Behavior But Focus on Restitution
- Emerging Evaluations are Promising/More Outcome Evidence Needed
- Prison Fellowship International Center for Justice and Reconciliation web site at: [www.restorativejustice.org/other/schools/outcome-evaluation](http://www.restorativejustice.org/other/schools/outcome-evaluation).
Social and Emotional Learning (SEL)

- Integration of Social and Emotional Learning
- Skills Directly Taught in the Classroom
- Prosocial Behavior Improves Academic Functioning

- Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL) Has Identified Five SEL Areas
  - Self Awareness
  - Self Management
  - social awareness
  - relationship skills
  - responsible decision-making.
Social Emotional Learning Resources

- CASEL Guide Effective Social and Emotional Learning Programs (Preschool and Elementary Edition)

http://static.squarespace.com/static/513f79f9e4b05ce7b70e9673/t/526a220de4b00a92c90436ba/1382687245993/2013-casel-guide.pdf
SEL Outcomes

- Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor, R.D., & Schellinger, (2011) Meta-analysis of over 200 schoolwide program identified as SEL (using comparison group)

- Findings were:
  - Improved academic functioning
  - More proactive behavior
  - Reduced conduct problems at post-test
  - Significant effects remaining (though not as strong) at six months for the programs that collected data
My Teaching Partner - Secondary

- My Teaching Partner - Secondary (Gregory et al., 2014; Gregory et al., 2015) is a consultation intervention in which teachers receive systematic feedback and support related to student interactions. Positive/promising findings have been obtained with respect to behavioral engagement (Gregory et al., 2014) and reduced racial discipline disparities (Gregory et al., 2015).


National Response

NATIONAL FOCUS AND GENERATION OF GUIDELINES AND DOCUMENTS
United States Department of Education


Arne Duncan

Twitter Hashtag
Addressing the Root Causes of Disparities in School Discipline
An Educator’s Action Planning Guide

Guiding Principles
A Resource Guide for Improving School Climate and Discipline

https://youtu.be/51qVdggp11k?list=PLvoZLdtBgik3v9rjEP2BD2_QYOh5wEy-C&t=143
President Obama formed “My Brother’s Keeper Initiative” to address disparities among young men of color, including discipline disparities.


The White House “My Brother’s Keeper” Interview

President Obama and My Brother’s Keeper Mentee

National Policy and Advocacy Groups

- The Center for Civil Rights Remedies – UCLA
  - Produced a number of reports which analyzed national suspension rates overall and disaggregated by race/ethnicity.

  - Recent examples:
Renewing the civil rights movement by bridging the worlds of ideas and action

Closing the School Discipline Gap: Equitable Remedies for Excessive Exclusion

Date Published: January 24, 2015

Daniel Losen of the The Center for Civil Rights Remedies at the UCLA Civil Rights Project (CRP/CCRR) looks at disciplinary policies and practices in school that result in disparities, and provides remedies that may be enacted at federal, state, and district levels.

Closing the School Discipline Gap: Equitable Remedies for Excessive Exclusion, edited by Daniel Losen of The Center for Civil Rights Remedies at the UCLA Civil Rights Project (CRP/CCRR), looks at disciplinary policies and practices in school that result in disparities, and provides remedies that may be enacted at federal, state, and district levels. Educators remove over 3.45 million students from school annually for disciplinary reasons, despite strong evidence that school suspension policies are harmful to students. The research presented in this volume demonstrates that disciplinary policies and practices that schools control directly exacerbate today's profound inequities in educational opportunity and outcomes. Part I explores how suspensions flow along the lines of race, gender, and disability status. Part II examines potential remedies that show great promise, including a district-wide approach in Cleveland, Ohio, aimed at social and emotional learning strategies.

“Closing the School Discipline Gap can make an enormous difference in reducing disciplinary exclusions across the country. This book not only exposes unsound practices and their disparate impact on the historically disadvantaged, but provides educators, policymakers, and community advocates with an array of remedies that are proven effective or hold great promise. Educators, communities, and students alike can benefit from the promising interventions and well-grounded recommendations.”

—Linda Darling-Hammond, Charles E. Ducommun Professor of Education, Stanford University

Closing the School Discipline Gap, published by Teachers College Press, is a call for action in an area where public schools can and do make a difference in a relatively short period of time.


