

Safe, Equitable and Effective Alternatives to Zero Tolerance !

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Topics

- ◆ A. Zero Tolerance School Discipline
 - Origins and controversies
 - Does it work?
- ◆ B. Proactive and Positive Alternatives to School Exclusion
 - A model of school violence prevention
 - What are the available alternatives
- ◆ C. School Discipline Reform: A Planning Process
 - Safe & Responsive Schools Planning Process
 - Outcomes

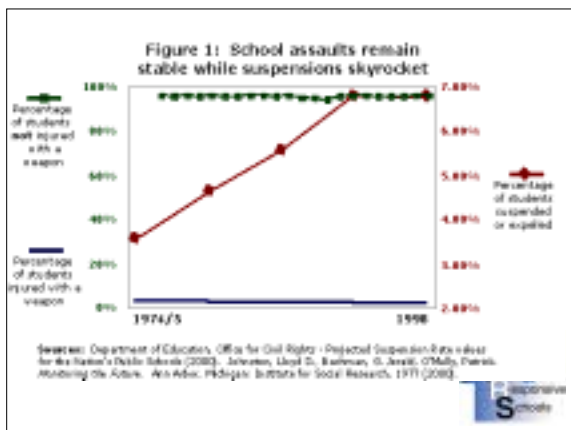


A. Zero Tolerance: Origins & Effectiveness



The Roots of "Zero Tolerance"

- ◆ Based in 1980's Drug Programs
- ◆ Picked up in Schools in 1989-1990
- ◆ 1994: Gun Free Schools Act Becomes Law
- ◆ Has led to significant increases in disciplinary removal



Selected School Events Leading to Suspension or Expulsion as Reported in National News.

Location & Date	Description of Incident	Outcome
Atlanta, GA September, 2000	Eleven-year-old Ashley Smith was found with a 10 inch novelty chain attaching her Tweety Bird wallet to her key ring.	Suspended for two weeks for violating school's weapon policy classifying a chain as a weapon, in the same category as pellet guns, ice picks, and swords.
Chicago, IL May, 1998	17 yr old junior shot a paper clip with a rubber band at classmate, missed, and broke skin of cafeteria worker.	Expelled from school; taken to county jail for 7 hours and charged with misdemeanor battery; advised by school officials to drop out of school
Phoenix, AZ Oct., 1997	16 yr old sophomore pulled skeet shooting gun out of trunk of car after school to loan to a 17 yr old senior	Both boys expelled for violating zero tolerance weapons policy, charged by local police with misconduct with a firearm
Columbia, SC Oct., 1996	6th grader brought steak knife in her lunch box to cut chicken; asked teacher if she could use it	Police called, girl rode away in cruiser; suspended even though never took knife out, threatened with expulsion



What is Discipline?

◆ The etymology of *discipline*:



From same *Lat.* root as *disciple*:
discipere: "To teach or comprehend"

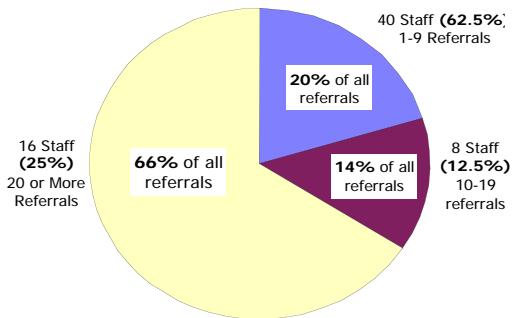


Criteria for an Effective Intervention

- ◆ Quality of Implementation
 - Used as intended (e.g. based on behavior)
 - Used consistently
- ◆ Non-Discriminatory
 - Equal Protection Clause of 14th Amendment
 - Title VI of Civil Rights Act
- ◆ Positive Outcomes
 - Improved school safety or climate
 - Improved student behavior



of Referrals Made by Staff as % of All Referrals



School Contributions to Suspension (Wu et. al, 1982)

- ◆ Attitude and behavior contribute
- ◆ But so do:
 - Overall suspension rate
 - Teacher attitudes
 - Administrative centralization
 - School governance
 - Perceptions of achievement
- ◆ More influence of school than student factors



PERCENT OF REFERRALS LEADING TO SUSPENSION BY SCHOOL

School	Percent of Incidents Suspended
1	11.3%
2	13.9%
3	16.5%
4	17.0%
5	17.2%
6	23.3%
7	26.1%
8	30.3%
9	32.2%
10	32.9%
11	34.0%
12	35.0%
13	37.9%
14	38.4%
15	58.9%
16	86.5%

"One could argue from this finding that if students are interested in reducing their chances of being suspended, they will be better off by transferring to a school with a lower suspension rate than by improving their attitudes or reducing their misbehavior."

--(Wu et al., 1982)



Is School Discipline Fair?: 25 Years of Study

- ◆ CDF (1975): Black students suspended 2-3x as frequently
- ◆ Studies since find disproportionality in:
 - Office referrals
 - Suspension & Expulsion
 - Corporal Punishment
- ◆ Black males 16x as likely as white females to be suspended (Gregory, 1996)

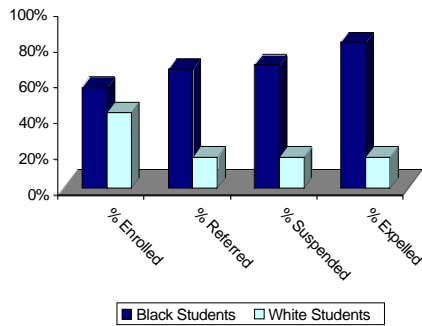


Alternative Explanations of Disciplinary Disproportionality

- ◆ Disproportionality is related to SES
 - SES and disproportionality correlate, but...
 - Effects of race remain after control
- ◆ Do black students misbehave more?
 - No supporting evidence
 - May in fact be treated more severely for same offenses



Disproportionality in Office Referrals, Suspension, and Expulsion



What Behaviors are Students Referred For? By Race

Of 32 infractions, only 8 significant differences:

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| ➤ White students referred more for: | ➤ Black students referred more for: |
| ● Smoking | ● Disrespect |
| ● Vandalism | ● Excessive Noise |
| ● Leaving w/o permission | ● Threat |
| ● Obscene Language | ● Loitering |



Improved Student Behavior?

- ◆ 30-50% of students suspended are repeat offenders
 - "Suspension functions as a reinforcer...rather than as a punisher" (Tobin, Sugai & Colvin, 1996)
- ◆ Use of suspension correlates with
 - School dropout (school level)
 - Juvenile incarceration (state level)
- ◆ Dropout or pushout?



Improving the Learning Climate?

- ◆ Schools with higher rates of suspension have:
 - Higher student teacher ratios
 - Lower academic quality ratings
 - Pay less attention to school climate
 - Spend disproportionate time on discipline
 - Have less effective school governance
- ◆ School-Pipeline Study
 - Negative relationship between achievement and use of school suspension



Criteria of Effectiveness for Disciplinary Removal

◆ Quality of Implementation

- Based on classroom, school rather than behavior
- Very little consistency from school to school

◆ Non-discriminatory?

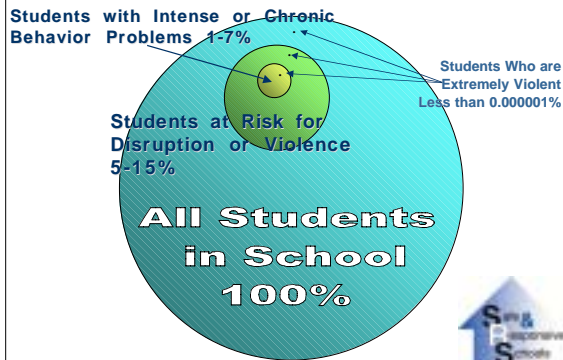
- Consistently overused with minorities, low SES

◆ Effective outcomes?

- Correlated with repeat offense, dropout
- Correlated with poorer school climate



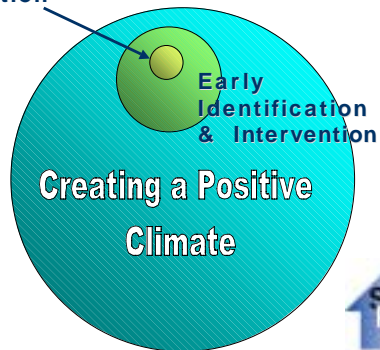
B. Proactive, Preventative Alternatives



Prevention: A New Conceptual Framework



Effective Responses to Disruption

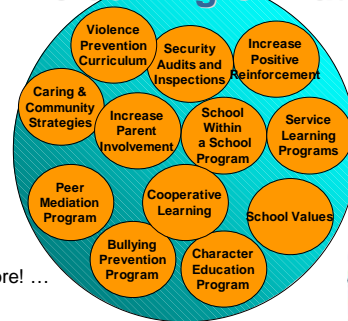


Various Programming Alternatives

- ◆ Which ones do we need?
 - What does the research say about these?
 - We can't do all of these!
 - Can we make some modifications?
- ◆ Don't we already have some of these?
 - Can we refocus some of the things we are already doing?
- ◆ How much will it cost?
 - Training, consulting, materials?
 - Will the benefits be worth the investment?
- ◆ How do we choose?
- ◆ What if the evidence is not clear?



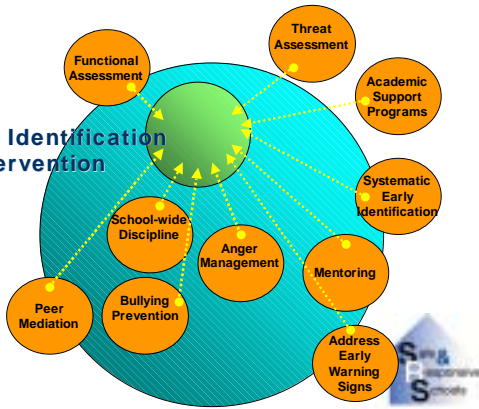
I. Creating a Positive, Welcoming Climate



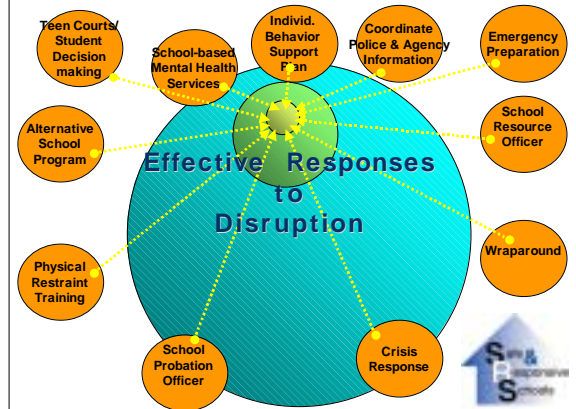
And More! ...



Early Identification & Intervention



Effective Responses to Disruption



Decisions on Implementing Programs

- ◆ Do we have the resources – time and money- to implement?
- ◆ Which are highest priority?
- ◆ Can the programs be applied consistently in our school?
- ◆ Can we build upon what we have?
- ◆ Can we plan long term, but only “bite off what we can chew”?



“Top Ten”

Alternatives to Suspension

(Not in priority order)

10	Problem Solving/ Contracting	Use negotiation/problem solving approaches to assist student to identify alternatives. Develop a contract which includes reinforcers for success, consequences for continuing problems.
9	Restitution	Financial or in-kind. Permits the student to restore or improve the school environment.
8	Mini-courses	Short courses or modules on topics related to their behavior as a disciplinary consequence.
7	Parent Supervision in School	Parents brainstorm with school; example might be to “suspend” the parent to school-have parent follow and supervise the student all day in school.



"Top Ten"

Alternatives to Suspension

(Not in priority order)

6	Counseling	Students required to participate in receive/ counseling.
5	Community Service	Required amount of time in community service in the school system or in the community.
4	Appropriate In-School Suspension	In-school suspension which includes academic tutoring, instruction related to the student behavior problem such as social skills, and a clearly defined procedure to return to class as soon as the student is ready.



"Top Ten"

Alternatives to Suspension

(Not in priority order)

3	Behavior Monitoring	Strategies to monitor behavior and academic progress might include cards checked after each class regarding behavior, self charting of behaviors, strategies to provide feedback to the student, etc.
2	Alternative Programming	Changes in the student schedule, classes or course content; assignment to an alternative school or program; independent study or work experience programs. Should be tailored to student needs.
1	Coordinated Behavior Plans for Any Student	Creation of a structured, coordinated behavior plan specific to the student and based on assessment of the quantity and purpose of the target behavior to be reduced; should focus on increasing desirable behavior, and replacing inappropriate behaviors.



Expanding the Array of Disciplinary Alternatives

- ◆ Generate a list of non-exclusionary alternatives to responding to school or classroom disruption.
- ◆ What would it take to implement these alternatives? Time, materials, costs?
- ◆ What would be the potential benefit?
- ◆ Match consequences with levels of inappropriate behavior.
- ◆ Develop a more sophisticated system of responding to different types of inappropriate behavior.



For Example, A Three Tiered Code of Conduct

Offense/ Infraction	An Array of Consequences
Minor- Tardiness; Lack of homework;	Mini-course; detention; Parent Supervision; etc.
Moderate- Insubordination;	Community service; Restitution; Counseling; Mini-course; Etc.
Serious- Drugs; weapons; assault.	Alternative programming; suspension;expulsion; Etc.
<i>At each level, are supportive measures in place?</i>	<i>What are the supportive measures for this student?</i>

Prerequisites

What does it take to make these consequences work?

What supports for positive behavior are necessary?




Ten

Supports for Positive Behavior


10	Mediation Programs	Programs which teach students about non-violent conflict resolution; permit students the chance to use & experience these in school. Peer-mediation programs one example.
9	Bullying Prevention & Intervention Programs	Programs which teach students about bullying behaviors, and how they can be responded to and reported in school. Specific interventions are created for both bullies and victims.
8	Early Identification & Intervention	Systematically screen students for potential behavior problems, and which provide positive supports for the students identified as at "risk."
7	Conflict De-Escalation	Teach staff and students to recognize & to disengage from escalating conflict.


(Not in priority order)




 Ten Supports for Positive Behavior

6	Increased Parent Involvement	Involvement of parents and community members in functions and activities within the school. Improve systems of communication with parents.	(Not in priority order)
5	Character Education/ Consistent School Values	Curriculum and organization features of schools that promote the development of fundamental values in children. A list of desirable goals for student behavior.	
4	Positive Office Referrals/ Recognition	Programs which identify and reward individual students for appropriate behavior; permits recognition, reinforcement and celebration of all kinds of "good" behavior.	





 Ten Supports for Positive Behavior


3	Efforts to Build Adult-Student Relationships	Programs which offer opportunities for students to develop individual relationships with staff.	(Not in priority order)
2	Creating a Caring School Community	Programs which permit the student to restore or improve the school environment.	
1	School-Wide Discipline Program	Programs which develop a common terminology and consistent approach to discipline across staff in a school. Responsibilities of students & staff are identified; Consequences consistently enforced.	



C. Planning for Safe and Responsive Schools: Process and Outcomes



- ### The SRS Philosophy: Increase Resources to Decrease Exclusion
- ◆ Safe and Responsive Schools
 - 3 Year USDOE Grant
 - Teaching schools to develop comprehensive needs-based approaches to school violence prevention
- 

- ### Participating Schools
- ◆ 3 districts in Indiana (RBB, Spencer-Owen, Gary; 3 districts in Nebraska)
 - ◆ 11 schools
 - 5 middle schools
 - 280-800 students per school
 - 6 high schools
 - 500-1500 students per school
 - 9 elementary schools
 - 150-500 students per school
- 

- ### Keys to School Reform: A Structure for Change
- ◆ School Teams
 - Teachers, parents, administrators, students
 - Key Representatives of School Community
 - ◆ Needs Assessment
 - ◆ Building the Knowledge Base
 - ◆ Strategic Planning
- 

Getting Started

- ◆ Initial Orientation
- ◆ Logistical & Organizational Issues
- ◆ Schedule and Agendas
- ◆ Developing a "Vision Statement"
- ◆ Creating a team "mission"



The SRS Planning Process: Overview

- ◆ Needs Assessment
 - Review School Practices
 - Survey perceptions of students, staff, parents
- ◆ Reviewed Best Practices
- ◆ Engaged in Strategic Planning



Needs Assessment: SRS Practices & Programs Inventory

- ◆ Questionnaire
 - 28 items measuring program implementation
 - Likert scale + Rationale
 - Assesses presence of programs at each of the three levels
- ◆ Compilation of Results
 - Discussed ratings, came to consensus
 - Discuss why there are variations in the team members responses



I. Creating a Positive Climate

To what extent does your school have:

1. Programs for students who are struggling academically?

1 No awareness 2 Know of, but not used 3 Good awareness Beginning to use 4 Frequently used 5 Well-established school-wide

Documentation:

2. One or more programs that focus on building a sense of community or a sense of belonging for students in your school?

1 No awareness 2 Know of, but not used 3 Good awareness Beginning to use 4 Frequently used 5 Well-established school-wide

Documentation:



SRS School Practices Survey Mean Ratings

	Elementary School A	Middle School A	High School A	Middle School B	High School B
One or more programs that focus on building sense of community/belonging	3.67	2.33	2.81	3.1	2.5
Established programs to increase parental involvement (beyond PTO)	3.5	2.33	2.81	1.3	1.8
Procedures for identifying students at-risk for violence and/or disruption	1.83	1.67	1.56	2.2	2.2
School-wide bullying prevention programs	1.33	1	1.13	1.4	1.5

1= No Awareness
2= Know Of, but not used
3= Good awareness, beginning to use
4= Frequently used
5= Well-established



Discussion: Resources

- ◆ What are our greatest strengths for violence prevention? What do we have in place?
- ◆ What areas need additional programming?



Needs Assessment: SRS Safe Schools Survey

◆ Broader look at violence prevention

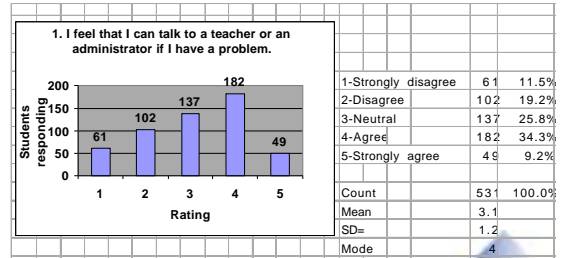
- Delinquency/major safety
- Personal safety
- Climate/belongingness
- Incivility/disruption

◆ Survey

- Student (Elementary - 25 items; Secondary - 45)
- Staff (40 items)
- Parent (27 items)



SRS School Safety Survey Sample Item Analysis



Discussion: What are the Issues in Our School?

- ◆ What are the greatest problems for our school in disruption, climate, violence?
- ◆ Do students, teachers, administrators view that differently?



Reviewing Best Practices

- ◆ Fact Sheets summarizing research on potential programs & practices:



- Violence Prevention Curricula
- Peer Mediation,
- Bullying Prevention,
- Anger Management
- Parent Involvement
- Mentoring
- Using Early Warning Signs
- Wraparound
- Security Cameras
- Peer Mediation
- Cooperative Learning
- School Resource Officers
- Character Education Programs
- And many others...

- ◆ Team read/discussed



A Menu of Options for Safe School Planning

◆ Creating the Climate

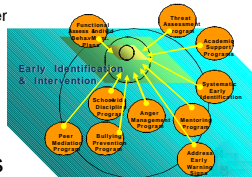
- Conflict Resolution/Life Skills
- Classroom Management
- Parent/community Involvement

◆ Identification and Early Intervention

- Early Warning Signs
- Mentoring, counseling, bully prevention

◆ Effective Responses

- Crisis Intervention
- Schoolwide Discipline
- Individual Behavior Plans



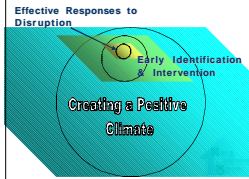
Discussion: What's Out There?



- ◆ What programs are available to meet the needs we have identified?
- ◆ How well validated are those programs?
- ◆ How well do those programs meet the specific needs of this school?



Strategic Planning Process



- ◆ Based on needs assessment
 - Identified focus
 - Identified problem areas
- ◆ Reviewed/brainstormed strategies to address needs
- ◆ Used strategic planning worksheets to guide through process



Strategic Planning: Developing the Plan

- Parameters:
 - One strategy from each dimension
 - Creating Climate
 - Early Identification
 - Effective Response
 - Overarching focus
 - Title
 - Mission/Goal Paragraph
 - Evaluate:
 - *How do we know if its making a difference?*



School Plans

- ◆ Plans varied by school
 - Built upon preexisting programs
 - Created new programs
 - Used commercially available programs



Team Plans

- ◆ **Spencer Owen**
 - Intervention Room
 - Safe Schools TV
 - Bullying prevention
- ◆ **RBB**
 - Code of Civility
 - Alternatives to Out of School Suspension
- ◆ **Beatrice**
 - Mentoring
 - "Community Connections"
 - Early identification and intervention



Project Outcome Data



School Team Evaluation--Process

	IN	NE	Total
Kickoff	4.03	4.17	4.09
Fact Sheets	3.78	4.04	3.89
NdsAsses Proc	4.21	4.06	4.15
NdAsses Res	4.16	3.95	4.07
Survey	4.29	4.00	4.17
Other data	3.88	3.86	3.87
SRS Staff	4.32	4.25	4.29
Plan	4.42	4.32	4.38
Team Discuss	4.45	4.05	4.28
Focus on Beh. issues	4.33	3.92	4.16



Greater awareness of options:

As a teacher I have some options now to work with kids, either the victim or the aggressor. Where before I didn't feel like it was really a valid issue that anybody was willing to talk about. "Well you know if they didn't throw a punch there is nothing we can do" ... So I feel like now we are making valid the comments that kids are making to each other and realizing the effect that just comments can have on a person.

Elementary Teacher



Different views of students and problems:

We thought it was physical safety. We had several conversations about it, especially as it started... And I think shortly thereafter we kind of started making connections between those subtle behaviors that go on in the school and explosive school violence. It's not the one whose doing the picking on who's in danger to the school's outright safety, but it's more of who is receiving the brunt of all that...I can guarantee you that I watch those kids who were being pushed outside of the social circles more now than I ever would have thought of before.

Junior High Teacher



Increased Ownership:

I am much more conscious about the process of trying to help students solve the problems within my own setting. I tap into counseling services and occasionally use the intervention room. But again the heightened awareness has made me much more conscious about making that effort first.

HS Teacher



Changes in student behavior and attitudes:

Kids ...come into my office with a totally different way of behaving when somebody has started a rumor about them. I mean last year they physically got into fisticuffs. This year they have another way in approaching it and a lot of times it is to say " We need to talk to you".

Elementary School Principal

I like it when I hear kids referring to the "code" and they call their friends or classmates on some of their behaviors as not being in line with the code.

Junior High Teacher



More options to keep kids in school:

I just think that we work harder with individual students towards keeping them in school, and keeping them from dropping out or being expelled. I think that there are other options now that we look at and there's a larger range of opportunities for them to remain in school.

HS Teacher



Owen Valley High School: Changes in Disciplinary Data* from 1999/2000 to 2000/2001

	1999/2000 SCHOOL YEAR	2000/2001 SCHOOL YEAR	PERCENTAGE CHANGE (+ OR -) YEAR TO YEAR
Total Number of Suspensions	397	171	-56.9%
Number of In School Suspensions	115	13	-88.6%
Number of Out of School Suspensions	282	158	-43.9%
Number of Expulsions	27	7	-74.0%
Average Length of Expulsion (in days)	94.3	57.1	-39.4%
Number of Dropouts	15	12	-20.0%
Number of Students with an IEP Suspended	113	31	-72.5%
Number of Students with an IEP Expelled	5	0	-100%

Note: These numbers are based on figures reported to the state of Indiana.



Lessons Learned

- ◆ Respect teachers' time
- ◆ Student perspectives must be represented
- ◆ Process more important than content for front line staff
- ◆ Effective schools specialize



Conclusions

- ◆ A team-based, needs assessment approach fits school needs
- ◆ A team-based approach can change perspectives
- ◆ Having more alternatives keeps more kids in school
- ◆ The Goal: Zero tolerance for simplistic solutions



Resources from Safe & Responsive Schools Project:

<http://www.unl.edu/srs>

- ◆ The SRS Guide
 - Overview and Framework
 - Process Guide
 - Detailed procedures
 - Safe & Responsive Schools Surveys
 - Resource Guide
 - Fact sheets
 - Other resources based on comprehensive model
- ◆ Websites
 - Access to materials when available
 - Samples of school produced products
- ◆ Consultation



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