



CHAPTER 5 GATHERING DATA

Why Gather Data?

The Safe and Responsive Schools process is, first and foremost, a process of self-exploration for each school. How are we doing in school violence prevention? Are there problems with behavior in our school? What are our strengths and resources? What are our most important needs? What do students, staff, and parents think about the safety of our school? Do students and faculty members feel a sense of connection to this school?

The data gathering process is an integral component of the Safe and Responsive Schools Framework providing the team with a method for identifying the concerns of parents, faculty, and students within the school. It allows teams to identify the behavior systems and programs currently in place, and to gain an awareness of the available resources in their school and the gaps that may exist in those resources. Based on the information gained through gathering and analyzing data schools can begin to identify which violence prevention and behavior improvement strategies will best address the needs of their school.

Moreover, much of the data can be continuously monitored when new programs are implemented, and when new positive behavior supports are in place to determine the effectiveness of these programs or supports. As a result, the team should develop systems to continuously gather and analyze data where possible rather than viewing the task as a one-time effort.

Categories of Pertinent Data

The first step is to gather, analyze and interpret data that might help the team and others understand what is currently in place, and what might be needed. We will start by identifying many of the types of data that the team might wish to gather, along with some

questions that this types of data might be able to answer. Later we will also specifically suggest how to gather and use some of these data.

There is a potentially wide array of useful data which may be important. Many of these categories of data may already be available in many schools, although sometimes the data may need to be gathered from various files, recorded and analyzed in order to be useful. Other types of data listed may not currently be available, and a system may need to be created to gather and analyze these categories of data. For secondary schools, some of these types of data will be much more important than for elementary schools and vice versa. The categories of data may include, but are not limited to those on the list that follows. They are in alphabetical order. Each team should decide the relative importance of that type of data for their school.

- **Absences and Tardiness Records.** How many students are consistently absent? How are these students doing academically and behaviorally? Are there days or times when absences are more common? Are some teachers or subjects less likely to have students be truant or absent than others?
- **Academic Achievement Data.** What is the academic achievement level of students? Who are the students who are struggling? Is there a way to identify them? Are these same students also at risk for having trouble with their behavior? How does achievement relate to student grades (see below)?
- **Classroom, School & District Discipline Policies and Expectations.** What are the rules and procedures used by teachers used for discipline and behavior management in the classrooms in this school? What are the school's and district's discipline policies? When and how are these distributed to students and parents?
- **Current Practices and Programs In Place.** What are the current practices or programs in place in this school that address behavior at one of the three levels of action? What are the programs or procedures that prevent behavior problems? What programs exist which address the needs of students who seem to be at-risk of deteriorating academic or behavioral performance? What programs and procedures are in place to address the needs of students with serious behavioral needs? Are emergency plans and procedures in place? What are the limitations

- or impediments to the success of these programs? What are the areas where new programs are needed?
- **Dropout Data.** How many students have dropped out of this school (if applicable) during the past several years? Are these numbers increasing or decreasing? Why?
 - **Environmental Expectations.** What are the behavioral expectations for students in and around school? How are these operationalized? How are these reflected in community and parent expectations?
 - **Grades Data.** How many students in this school have failing grades? Are there students whose grades are declining dramatically? What percentages of students are failing on academic standards or requirements? How do grades compare to achievement test/standards measurement data? How do they relate to office referral data?
 - **Needs Assessment Related to Behavior.** What do students, staff and parents identify as the problems or needs related to student behavior in school? Related to procedures for handling discipline or classroom management? What do they identify as the strengths? What are the similarities and differences in perceptions of these three groups? What does each group believe should be the priorities?
 - **Office Referral Data.** How many students are sent to the office, and for what reasons? Are there locations where referrals occur more frequently? Are there times of the day or year when referrals happen more often? Are there students who have a pattern of frequent office referrals? What are the responses to office referrals- are they different for different “offenses”?
 - **School Climate.** What are the attitudes and perceptions of students, staff and parents regarding various components of the school climate? Do students feel comfortable and that they belong at this school? What is the *esprit de corps* of students and staff? What is the nature of interpersonal communication within the school? What are the administrative staff’s leadership styles? interpersonal communication, sense of ownership, belonging and the like have been long thought to be important to the learning process. A positive climate, sometimes

also called a positive learning environment, may facilitate learning, while a more negative one may impede learning.

- **School Population Risk & Resiliency Factors.** What are the risk and resiliency factors that may be affecting students in this school? How many students are experiencing poverty? How many are minorities? What are the parent and community supports for children in this community?
- **School Safety.** How safe do students, parents and staff feel at this school? How often do these constituencies observe inappropriate behaviors in and around school? What are these behaviors? Have they seen weapons or drugs? How often does fighting or bullying occur before, during or after school? What are the specific circumstances that create feelings of safety or danger in school?
- **Special Education Referrals.** How many referrals for special education are made in this building each year? In what categories? In particular how many students are referred for emotional or behavioral disorders? Are these increasing or decreasing over the past few years? Why?
- **Suspension and Expulsion Data.** How many students are suspended each semester or year? How many typically expelled? What are the offenses? When and where do these offenses occur? Are the same students frequently suspended? Does suspension for other offenses typically precede expulsion? Is there some form of in-school suspension? What are the same data for this program?
- **Other Pertinent Data?** What additional data might be helpful? Are there any other pieces which may have been overlooked, or which are important to this particular school?

Once the team has discussed these types of data, and their potential use, it might be important to prioritize the importance of these various types of data for their own needs, and for the team's school. A worksheet has been developed for the team to be able to discuss, prioritize, and plan for obtaining these types of data in Figure 10. Additionally it might be possible to identify whether each piece of high priority data is presently available in the school, and if so where that data is stored, and how it can be

Figure 11. SRS Planning Data Availability Worksheet

Type of Data (See <i>Guide</i> for explanation)	Priority? 1=Low to 5=High	Data Currently Available? If yes, where? If no, how could data be gathered?		Person Responsible? (To gather, organize & display data)	Time Frame (For Gathering & Reporting On Data?)
Absences and Tardiness Records.		Yes	No		
Academic Achievement Data.		Yes	No		
Classroom, School & District Discipline Policies/Expectations.		Yes	No		
Current Practices and Programs In Place.		Yes	No		
Dropout Data.		Yes	No		
Environmental Expectations.		Yes	No		
Grades Data.		Yes	No		
Needs Assessment Related to Behavior.		Yes	No		
Office Referral Data.		Yes	No		
School Climate.		Yes	No		
School Population Risk & Resiliency Factors.		Yes	No		
School Safety.		Yes	No		
Special Education Referrals.		Yes	No		
Suspension and Expulsion Data.		Yes	No		
Other Pertinent Data?		Yes	No		

accessed and displayed in a useful format. If a priority type of data is not currently available, the team can discuss how a method for gathering this data could be initiated.

Finally, whether or not the data is currently available, the team might like to identify individuals who will be responsible for gathering, organizing, and displaying each type of data, as well as a time frame for doing so. These individuals may need to spend considerable amounts of their time to obtain and organize the data outside of the team meetings. The facilitator should ensure that individuals are clear about these responsibilities, and that the individuals are supplied with the resources and support to accomplish these data gathering tasks.

How can we gather and use survey and focus group data?

Surveys or focus groups are the most frequent ways to gather data on several of these categories. Many schools may already use these strategies, but these are particularly useful in addressing school climate, school safety, current practices and perceptions about behavioral needs.

These two approaches can each be conducted with groups representing some of the school's common constituencies, including parents, students, staff and community members.

- **Surveys** In typical surveys a questionnaire is provided to a fairly large target group of individuals. Then the responses are tallied and used to provide insight on various issues. Although surveys attempt to be objective, and sometimes factual questions are asked, they are also used to measure perceptions and attitudes. The value of the survey results depend on whether the respondents are representative of the larger target group. Surveys may be conducted via telephone, paper and pencil or web-based entry.
- **Focus Groups** Focus groups are small meetings where a series of questions are asked of a small number of key representatives from a particular target group in a group conference setting. While there may be a structured set of stimulus questions, the group usually has freedom to talk, interact with each other, and brainstorm related ideas. Careful notes are taken of the conversation, attempting to capture the gist of the ideas communicated, and any consensus that develops.

Focus groups are also used to obtain perceptions and attitudes. They have the advantage of permitting the group to come up with new ideas and information. The disadvantage of focus groups is that they involve a small number of persons, and even if carefully selected to be representative, they may not be so.

Can existing data be used where available?

During the SRS needs assessment process, the team will gather and analyze as much pertinent existing data as is possible in each of these categories. The data will be used to guide the development of the school’s Safe and Responsive School Plan.

Some schools may already be gathering and analyzing some of these categories of data. In that is the case, and if the team is satisfied that adequate data which reflects the current school situation is available, it is not necessary to gather “new” data for those categories. However, if such data is not currently available, or not analyzed for some of these categories, the SRS team should consider creating methods to gather and analyze all of the remaining categories of data.

What is the Facilitator’s Role?

The facilitator has a key role during the needs assessment in ensuring that the team perseveres, and that efforts are coordinated and efficient. At times the team may become frustrated with the time spent assessing school needs, rather than actually “doing something.” Team members may be anxious to begin designing or even implementing the school plan. It is important to stress that the needs assessment process is a necessary step in the planning process that enables the team to gain a clear picture of the school’s needs and provides a basis for creating a school plan tailored to the school.

Gathering and Displaying Data

Often, in order to gather useful data, it is helpful to know how it might be displayed. The following section suggests how data can be gathered and displayed in a

way which might permit useful analysis to answer the questions related to that type of data identified earlier.

• Absences and Tardiness Records.

Some of the types of information for a particular school such as Absences and Tardiness, and Dropout data require little need for explanation. Simple tables and graphs may be adequate to display many of these types of information (See Figure 11 & 12). The examples illustrate how these types of data might be formatted once they have been obtained from the appropriate source or records. They are included for illustration only, and individual schools may find many other ways to analyze and display these data.

Figure 12. Sample Formats for Analyzing Student Absence Data

Absences by Quarter and School Year

Period	Total Number of Students Absent During This Period	Number of Days School is in Session for Students	Percentage of Students Absent
1 st Quarter			
2 nd Quarter			
3 rd Quarter			
4 th Quarter			
Total School Year			

Absences by Students

Students With the Most (or fewest) Absences	Total Number of Absences for this Student	Percentage of Total Student Attendance Days this Student was Absent
Student A		
Student B		
Student C		
Etc.		

Figure 13.

Sample Empty Tables for Displaying & Analyzing Tardiness Data

Tardiness by Teacher Reporting

Teacher	Total Number of Students Served by this Teacher	Number of Students Reported as Tardy During First Quarter	Percentage of Students Tardy
Teacher A			
Teacher B			
Teacher C			
Etc.			

Tardiness by Daily Class Time Period

Period	Total Number of Students in All Classes During This Period	Number of Students Reported as Tardy During First Quarter	Percentage of Students Tardy
1 st Period			
2 nd Period			
3 rd Period			
Etc.			

Tardiness by Students with Most and Least

Students With the Most and the Fewest Tardiness	Total Number of instances of Being Tardy Reported
Student A	
Student B	
Student C	
Etc.	

These types of tables might permit answers to these questions: How many students are consistently absent? How are these students doing academically and behaviorally? Are there days or times when absences are more common? Are some teachers or subjects less likely to have students be truant or absent than others?

- **Academic Achievement Data.**

What is the academic achievement level of students? Who are the students who are struggling? Is there a way to identify them? Are these same students also at risk for having trouble with their behavior? How does achievement relate to student grades (see below)?

- **Classroom, School & District Discipline Policies.**

Gathering classroom, school and district school discipline policies simply requires gathering and examining documents. Classroom teachers might be asked to identify and write down their classroom rules and procedures if not already in writing. These should be gathered for multiple or even all classrooms or teachers. These can then be examined for the degree to which they represent our best knowledge about classroom management. Are rules simple, clear, worded directly? Are the worded positively- identifying what students should do, rather than merely identifying inappropriate behaviors? Is the list of

rules short and easy to remember? Is there evidence that the rules are explained and taught to students adequately?

Most schools and school districts also have written policies related to office referrals, in-school suspension (if applicable), or other related discipline options. Many times these are formulated into a building and/or district “Code of Conduct”. These documents should be gathered and analyzed by the team. Once gathered they might be examined to determine whether they represent the best thinking about what these issues. Do they clearly and explicitly identify both appropriate and problematic behavior? Are the consequences they identify aligned with the seriousness of the offence? Do they include multiple options for consequences? How are they distributed to students and parents, and taught to students? Each team must examine these policies and propose changes and improvements that they feel might increase their effectiveness at reducing future behavioral problems in school.

- **Current Practices and Programs In Place.**

Before identifying new programs it seems obvious that team should identify what a school already has in place. What are the current practices or programs in place in this school that address behavior at one of the three levels of action? What are the programs or procedures that prevent behavior problems? What programs exist which address the needs of students who seem to be at-risk of deteriorating academic or behavioral performance? What programs and procedures are in place to address the needs of students with serious behavioral needs? Are emergency plans and procedures in place? What are the limitations or impediments to the success of these programs? What are the areas where new programs are needed? Although there may be many ways for a team to find the information they need to answer these questions, the next Chapter of this *Guide* will provide a worksheet that will stimulate discussion and permit these questions to be answered.

- **Dropout Data.**

How many students have dropped out of this school? School dropout data might also be displayed in simple tables like the one in Figure 13.

Figure 14.
Sample Secondary School Dropout Data for a Hypothetical School

Average Student Population This School Last School Year	Number of Students who Have Dropped Out During Last School Year	Percentage of Students Who Have Dropped Out
651	9	1.38 %

Can the students who dropped out of school be interviewed or surveyed to determine their reasons for dropping out? Perhaps a focus group with these students or their parents, could be used to gather this data. Can school records be examined to determine if these students were having academic or behavioral difficulties in school? How many of these students had records of disciplinary action or multiple office referrals?

- **Environmental Expectations.**

What are the behavioral expectations for students by parents and the community? What are the behavioral expectations for students in and around school? How are these operationalized? How are these reflected in community and parent expectations?

- **Grades Data.**

A list of students with failing or rapidly declining grades can be created, and cross checked with other lists of students in other categories of data which might indicate that the student is “at risk”. The percentages of students who are failing on academic standards or requirements can be calculated. Grades can be compared with achievement test scores for that student.

- **Needs Assessment Related to Behavior.**

What do students, staff and parents identify as the problems or needs related to student behavior in school? Related to procedures for handling discipline or classroom management? What do they identify as the strengths? What are the similarities and

differences in perceptions of these three groups? What does each group believe should be the priorities?

• Office Referral Data.

One of the most commonly suggested types of data for use in planning and monitoring behavior in schools is “Office Referral” data. Typically a school employs a form which is completed each time a staff member refers a student to the office. An example of part of one of these forms is in Figure 15. Note that this form is relatively detailed, and should always include name, date, time and location of the incident.

Figure 15. Sample Secondary School Dropout Data for a Hypothetical School

DISCIPLINARY ACTION FORM

STUDENT _____		TEACHER _____		ROOM # _____																						
GRADE _____	SEX: M F	PERIOD _____	DATE ____/____/____																							
<p style="text-align: center;">LEVEL I</p> <p>Minor misbehavior that impedes the orderly operation of school or interferes with the learning process of others.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Lack of cooperation</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Disruptive behavior</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Inappropriate language</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Dress code violation</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Littering</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Possession of electronic device</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Improper display of affection</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Open food/pop</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other _____</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">LEVEL II</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Internet misuse</p> <p style="text-align: center;">LEVEL III</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Continued disruptive behavior</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Disrespectful behavior</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Abusive/profane language</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Cheating/misleading personnel</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Insubordination</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Repeated Level I violations</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other _____</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">LEVEL IV</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Fighting</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Vandalism</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Theft</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> False alarm</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Computer misconduct</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Sexual misconduct</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Making threats</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other _____</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">LEVEL V</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Use/possession of tobacco products</p> <p style="text-align: center;">LEVEL VI</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Use/ possession of alcohol/drugs, drug paraphernalia, or being under the influence of drugs</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">LEVEL VII</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Continued and willful disobedience</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Repeated Level III & IV violations</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Selling, giving, or exchanging drugs or alcohol</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Threatening the safety of others</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Possession of a weapon</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Bomb threat</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Felony criminal mischief</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other _____</p>																						
<p>Behavior was directed primarily toward:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other students</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Adults</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Both</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Neither or not applicable</p>	<p>Location of incident:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Classroom</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Hall</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Assembly/auditorium</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Gym/locker room</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Lunch room</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Restroom</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Bus</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Playground/grounds</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other _____</p>	<p>Action(s) staff has taken prior to this referral (mark all that apply):</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Checked student's folder</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Changed student's seat</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Modified/individualized classwork</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Consulted counselor</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Conference with student (date _____)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Telephone parent (date _____)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Detained student after school (date _____)</p>	<p>Pending Action</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Parental conference (date _____)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Hearing</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Reassignment</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Removal from class (3rd referral)</p>																							
<p>Staff Statement: (note specific behaviors and circumstances) _____</p>																										
<p>Staff Recommendation(s)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Conference and return to class</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Out of class until conference is held</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other (specify) _____</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Out of class for this period today</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Refer to _____</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Information only _____</p>																										
<p>Student statement: _____</p>																										
<p>Present action and recommendations:</p> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 33%;"><input type="checkbox"/> Parent called</td> <td style="width: 33%;"><input type="checkbox"/> Suspension with Recommendation for expulsion _____ days</td> <td style="width: 33%;"><input type="checkbox"/> Loss of access to networked computers for _____</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Report sent home</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Saturday school _____ days</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Referred to Student Services</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Parent conference</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> In-school suspension _____ days</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Police Called</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Student suspended _____ days</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Other authority called</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Student contract developed</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Before/after school detention _____ hours</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Other _____</td> </tr> </table>						<input type="checkbox"/> Parent called	<input type="checkbox"/> Suspension with Recommendation for expulsion _____ days	<input type="checkbox"/> Loss of access to networked computers for _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Report sent home	<input type="checkbox"/> Saturday school _____ days	<input type="checkbox"/> Referred to Student Services	<input type="checkbox"/> Parent conference	<input type="checkbox"/> In-school suspension _____ days	<input type="checkbox"/> Police Called		<input type="checkbox"/> Student suspended _____ days	<input type="checkbox"/> Other authority called			<input type="checkbox"/> Student contract developed			<input type="checkbox"/> Before/after school detention _____ hours			<input type="checkbox"/> Other _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Parent called	<input type="checkbox"/> Suspension with Recommendation for expulsion _____ days	<input type="checkbox"/> Loss of access to networked computers for _____																								
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		<input type="checkbox"/> Student contract developed																								
		<input type="checkbox"/> Before/after school detention _____ hours																								
		<input type="checkbox"/> Other _____																								
<p>Agreement or plan _____</p>																										
Staff Signature _____			Administrator Signature _____																							

In addition to identifying specifically the nature of the problem behavior that resulted in the referral, it also includes information about the date, time and location of the problem, as well as the referring staff member. It may also include information about how that staff member had intervened related to this behavior in prior incidents with this student (if applicable), as well as a space for the person receiving the referral to identify a disposition of the referral.

Typically, each school has a system for recording and tracking office data. Secondary schools may be more likely to have such a system in place, often with computerized data entry, while in elementary schools such data may not be used as frequently. Some elementary schools may not even have an office referral form in place. If a school does not have such a system in place, the team should consider whether creating a system to gather this data should be a priority.

There are also several commercially available systems for managing, recording and entering data about office referrals. These offer schools a variety of services which

Figure 15. Examples of office referral data management systems.

Systems for entering & managing office referral data

ABI online program (Excel template):	www._____
BoysTown:	www.girlsandboystown.org/pros/training/education/index.asp
Powerschool:	www.apple.com/education/powerschool/
The School Wide Information System (SWIS):	www.swis.org
Schoolmaster:	www.schoolmaster.com

may include pre-determined office referral forms, methods for easy data entry or even web-based analysis of data typically with fees for these services. Some of these may also have an office referral component of a larger school data management information system.

Office referral data are the result of the analysis of all completed office referral forms for a school for a period of time. This allows a school to look at disciplinary issues

that may need to be addressed within the SRS planning process. Pertinent office referral data may include total number of office referrals per month, per quarter, types of office referrals, locations of referrals, students being referred, types of disciplinary actions taken, as well as absences and tardy reports. Schools may also wish to look at suspension and expulsion data in terms of numbers and reasons for suspension/expulsion.

By looking at their office data, a school may find that the majority of office referrals have occurred in the lunchroom and hallway. With this information, a school may do further assessment to examine the reason for the high referrals in these locations (i.e., behaviors resulting in referral, students accounting for referrals, teacher referring, disciplinary action taken). A school may then use this information in the planning process to help develop a plan to address this issue.

Figure 16. Sample Secondary School Office Referral Offence Chart

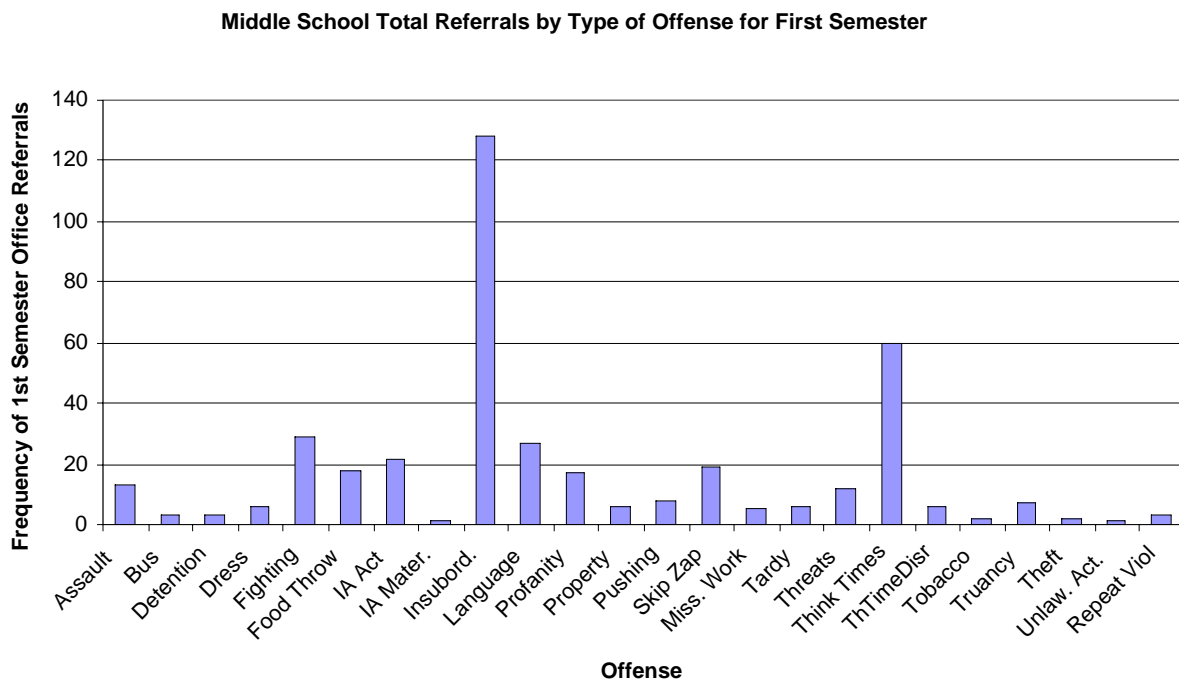


Figure 17. Sample Secondary School Office Referral by Month Chart

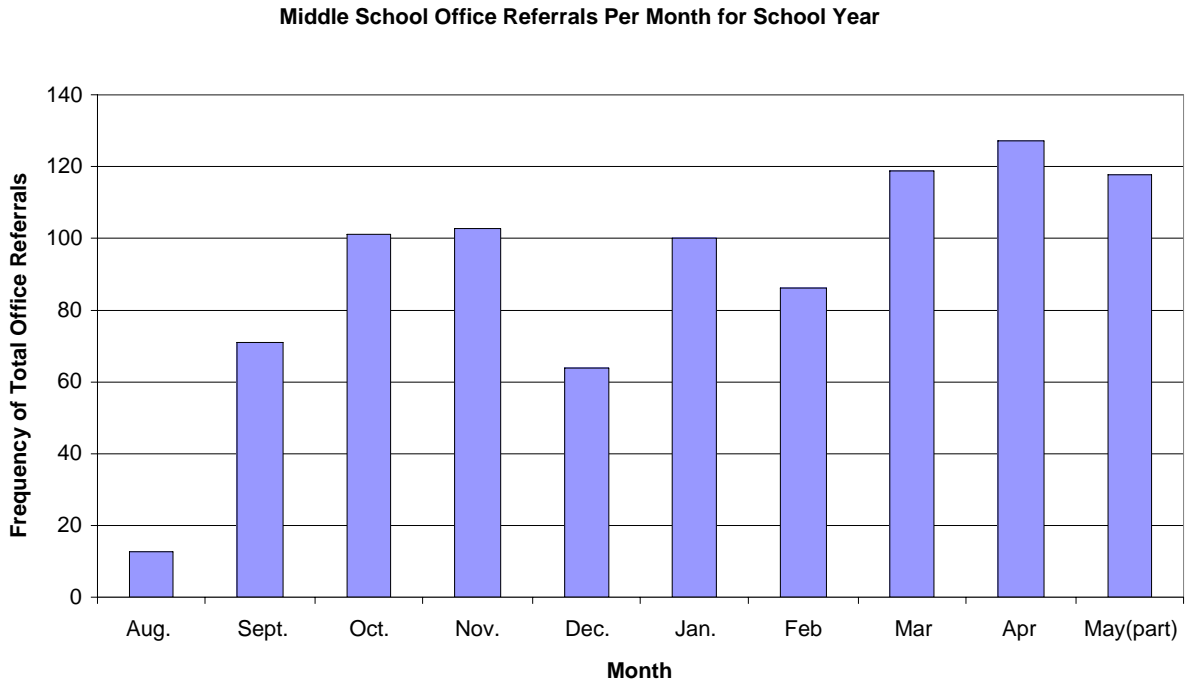


Figure 18. Sample Secondary School Office Referrals by Number of Referrals per Student

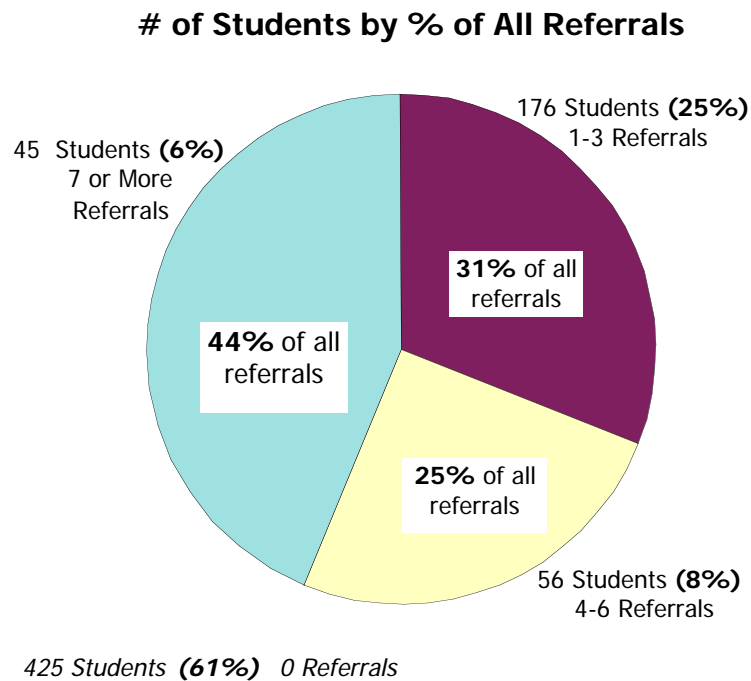
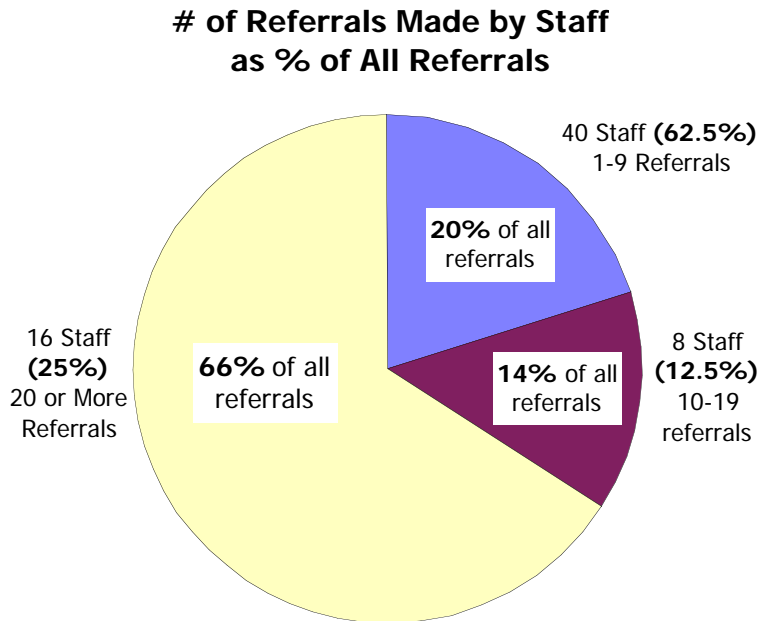


Figure 19. Sample Secondary School Office Referral by Staff Source of Referral



The sample charts and graphs included here are intended to be simply illustrative of some of the ways office referral data might be displayed in order to be useful to the team and administrators for making decisions. School teams may come up with pertinent ways of displaying data for their school, and once identified, these charts and graphs can then be updated each month, quarter or semester. The resulting data can assist schools in detecting changes in office referrals, as well as answer a variety of other questions.

- **School Climate.**

What are the attitudes and perceptions of students, staff and parents regarding the learning environment at this school? What are the attitudes and perceptions of students, staff and parents regarding various components of the school climate? Do students feel comfortable and that they belong at this school? What is the *esprit de corps* of students and staff? What is the nature of interpersonal communication within the school? What are the administrative staff's leadership styles? Interpersonal communication, sense of

ownership, belonging and the like have been long thought to be important to the learning process and are also widely believed to also be factors influencing the prevention of inappropriate behavior. A positive climate, sometimes also called a positive learning environment, may facilitate learning, while a more negative one may impede learning.

While there are potentially many ways to measure climate the most common has been a survey method of attitudes of various stakeholders in the school (especially students and staff). Numerous instruments, which cover a very wide range of variables, are identified as measuring school climate. Key variables for our purposes here might include, sense of belonging, sense of caring, orderliness, civility, and the like, but other variables mentioned earlier may also be important. Data should be specific enough to permit the team to analyze the specific variables for their school. Schools may use existing school climate data if it is available, or may use a new survey such as the SRS Safe Schools Survey described in the next chapter.

- **School Population Risk & Resiliency Factors.**

What are the risk and resiliency factors that may be affecting students in this school? How many students are experiencing poverty? How many are minorities? What are the parent and community supports for children in this community? An environmental scan of the school, neighborhood and community might be valuable here. Community and governmental agencies may be sources of this type of information, if the school does not already have ready access to this type of information. A summary of this data should identify both the risk and resiliency factors which apply specifically to that school.

- **School Safety.**

In order to obtain a measure of perceptions about school safety, it is necessary to ask key stakeholders in the school about their perceptions. How safe do students, parents and staff feel at this school? How often do these constituencies observe inappropriate behaviors in and around school? What are these behaviors? Have they seen weapons or drugs? How often does fighting or bullying occur before, during or after school? What are the specific circumstances that create feelings of safety or danger in school? While

there may be many ways to answer these questions, one of the most common is a survey. Perceptions of safety are difficult to measure and may be influenced by emotions and media hype. Therefore the wording of questions should be carefully thought through, and the results interpreted with care. The SRS School Safety Survey is one example.

- **Special Education Referrals.**

Has the number of referrals for special education increased or decreasing over the past few years? Why? Is the number of referrals similar to or different from other similar schools? How many of these referrals are based entirely or in part on problems with student behavior? Is the Student Assistance Team (SAT) process effective? How many referrals to the SAT have involved behavior? These data could be displayed in simple tables similar to those described earlier for school drop-out data.

- **Suspension and Expulsion Data.**

Most schools keep records of students who are suspended and expelled. These records could be compiled to create overall rates of suspension or expulsion for a school. The suspension data could be displayed in a variety of ways including those illustrated in the sample table in Figure 20. Similar data could be calculated for each semester, and could be used to track changes through time for semesters and years.

Figure 20. Sample Secondary School Suspension Data for a Hypothetical School

Average Student Population This School Last School Year	Number of Students Who Were Suspended During Last School Year	Percentage of Students Who Were Suspended
651	32	5.0 %

Number of Office Referrals for School Year	Number of Days of Student Suspension During Last School Year	Percentage of Days of Suspension per Office Referral
999	112	5.0 %

Similar tables might be created to display and track expulsion data as illustrated in the examples in Figure 21.

Figure 21. Sample Secondary School Expulsion Data for a Hypothetical School

Average Student Population This School Last School Year	Number of Students Were Expelled During Last School Year	Percentage of Students Who Were Expelled
651	6	0.9 %

Average Student Population This School Last School Year	Number of Students Were Expelled During Last School Year	Percentage of Students Who Were Expelled
651	6	0.9 %

These rates of suspension or expulsion could then be compared to other similar data from other schools either within the same school district or from elsewhere (if available).

Figure 22 shows an example of a table which displays the rates of suspension and expulsion for 16 middle schools in an urban district. Note the wide range of rates among these schools.

Figure 22. Sample Middle School Comparison of Suspension and Expulsion Rates for a Hypothetical Schools.

Middle School Suspension Rates in a Large Midwestern Urban School District by School	Percent of Office Referrals Resulting in a student Suspension	Percent of Office Referrals Resulting in a Student Expulsion
1	11.3	0.3
2	13.9	0.6
3	16.5	0.4
4	17.0	0.5
5	17.2	0.7
6	23.3	0.6
7	26.1	0.9
8	30.3	0.5
9	32.2	0.6
10	32.9	0.9
11	34.0	0.8
12	35.0	0.7
13	37.9	0.5
14	38.4	0.9
15	58.9	1.0
16	86.5	1.7
Average Rate	31.97	0.725

In addition, a school might create a list of the individual students who were suspended or expelled, along with the student's behavior that resulted in the suspension or expulsion. This list might be cross checked with other data such as data related to achievement, grades, suspension and expulsion, etc.

- **Other Pertinent Data?** What additional data might be helpful? While the categories of data described above cover much ground, there may be other topics or sources of data that may be pertinent to a particular school, and to the behavior of students in that school. For example, some schools may need to work with police and other agencies to focus on data related to gang activity, or drug and alcohol abuse. Each team should look over all of the types of data to make sure that they are comfortable that they have a thorough and comprehensive set of data for planning.

Summary Box 5.

SUMMARY CHAPTER 5 - GATHERING DATA

Why Gather Data

- Data is a vehicle to determine what is in place and what is needed.
- Data can be used to monitor the effects of changes

Categories of Data

- Absences and Tardiness Records
- Academic Achievement Data
- Classroom, School & District Discipline Policies
- Current Practices and Programs in Place
- Dropout Data
- Environmental Expectations
- Grades Data
- Needs Assessment
- Office Referral Data
- School Climate
- School Population Risk and Resiliency Factors
- School Safety
- Special Education Referrals
- Suspension and Expulsion Data
- Other pertinent data?

Survey and Focus Group Data

- In addition to other existing archived data, both survey and focus groups may be useful tools in gathering additional data.

AGENDA –MEETINGS #3 & BEYOND

- An orientation to the needed data
- Using the “Planning Data Availability Worksheet” decisions will need to be made about whether data is currently available, and if not, how it might be gathered.
- Beginning plans and assignment of responsibility for gathering and displaying the various types of data along with a time frame will also be needed.

Time

- Teams can expect to spend about an hour making preliminary plans to gather data and assigning responsibility.
- Considerable time outside of meetings may be needed for individuals to gather and display the data so that it is ready for team discussion.
- Time should be allotted to almost every meeting to discuss parts of the data as per the schedule determined by the team.

