Utilizing Instructional Alternatives to Exclusionary Discipline

Rhonda Nese, PhD
Danielle Triplett, MEd
University of Oregon

Ambra Green, PhD
University of Texas at Arlington

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Agenda

- Some policy history
- Research on current policies
- Exclusion: Definition/Impact/Changes
- Research & Data!!!
- Q/A throughout

History of Discipline Policies

- 100 year history
- Safe School Study
  - While school violence decreased compared to previous years, school crime increased when rules were not clear and/or were extremely punitive.
  - Largest shift towards the need for the use of written policies
- National School Resource Network, and legislation
  - published set of guidelines on developing effective codes of conduct for discipline

(Freasing & Bobbie, 2002, National Institute of Education, p.39)
Earlier Perceptions of Discipline Policies

A positive way of providing clear guidelines for behavior that would likely result in the “consistent and equitable application of rules for all” while making schools safer. (Fenning & Bohannon, 2006)

Discipline policies: Early 1990’s

  - Mandated the adoption of zero tolerance weapons policies
    - Reduce weapons on campus
    - Reduce school violence and violence at school-sponsored events
  - In the 1990’s-60% of the US states broadened federal guidelines for zero tolerance:
    - Fighting
    - Drug or alcohol
    - Gang activity
    - Possession of narcotics
    - Disrespect to authority
    - Sexual harassment
    - Verbal threats vandalism
  - ...and all other behaviors considered to disrupt the school environment

  [Congressional Quarterly Incorporated, 2000; Skiba & Peterson, 1999]

Effects of Zero Tolerance and Exclusionary Discipline Policies

- Overrepresentation of students of color and students with disabilities receiving exclusionary discipline practices for minor and arbitrary behaviors unrelated to weapons or drugs (Skiba et al., 2000).
- Policies are theoretically unsound, empirically unsupported, and fall prey to several legal critiques (Losen, 2013; Morgan & Walker, 2012; Skiba et al., 2000).

  Consequences for firearms should not equate to those for “disrespect” as they do not have the same implications for safety.
Addressing Discipline Disparities

- Civil Rights Data Collection Surveys

Dear Colleagues Letter (2014)

- Remove zero tolerance and exclusionary policies
- Multi-tiered behavioral frameworks
- Implementing PBIS
- Restorative Practices
PBIS and EDPs

Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports
Implementation Blueprint:
Part 1 – Foundations and Supporting Information

But, how many schools/districts changed their policies?

Systematic Review of District Discipline Policies

- Coded 147 policies
  - Hawaii, NYC, and D.C. coded as 1 policy each
- Checklist for Analyzing District Policies for Equity (CADPE)
  - Adapted from Discipline disproportionality policy guidebook and other policy checklists (Longstreth et al., 2013, Fenning and Bohanon, 2006)
  - 7 Domains Elements and Early Childhood Section - 47 Questions

7 Domains

Key Elements of Effective Policy to Enhance Equity in School Discipline

Based on the limited research available, we recommend seven key elements for equity policies (and policies in general). These elements include:

1. Specific Commitment to Equity
2. Family Partnerships in Policy Development
3. Focus on Implementing Positive, Proactive Behavior Support Practices
4. Clear, Objective Discipline Procedures
5. Removal or Reduction of Exclusionary Practices
6. Graduated Discipline Systems with Instructional Accommodations to Inclusion
7. Procedures with Accountability for Equitable Student Outcomes
Checklist for Analyzing Discipline Policies and Procedures for Equity (CADPPE)

Element 3: Clear, Objective Discipline Procedures

21. Does the policy provide clear delineations between minor and major behavioral incidents?
22. Are problem behaviors operationally defined?
23. Are rights and responsibilities for adults and students defined?

Element 5: Absence, Removal, or Isolation of Confinement Practices

25. In “zero tolerance” (i.e., other automatic or automatic procedures for certain behaviors) mentioned in a provision to the district policy, provided:
26. Does the policy include the use of exclusionary discipline (e.g., ISS, OIS, or Suspension) for non-
   violent offenses?
27. Are there times when the suspension or expulsion is limited to situations that pose a serious and
   immediate threat to the safety of students and staff?
28. Does the policy include definitions of and prohibitions for using alternatives to suspension?

CADPPE

Checklist for Analyzing Discipline Policies and Procedures for Equity (CADPPE)

Element 4: Graduated Discipline Systems with Instructional Alternatives to Exclusion

29. Does the policy provide lists of possible instructional responses in place of punitive responses? (If the
   answer is no, skip to question 32.)
30. Are the behavioral or other evidence-based strategies (e.g., behavior-specific praise, opportunities to
   respond appropriately) provided?
31. Does the policy provide non-exclusionary (or partial) strategies for students exhibiting problem behaviors?
32. Does the policy provide secondary strategies for students at risk for problem behaviors?
33. Does the policy provide tertiary strategies for children who exhibit chronic and intense problem
   behavior?
34. Is there a process for assessing academic support needs as part of determining responses to behavior incidents
   (e.g., student support teams assess academic risk as a potential reason for problem behaviors)?

Systematic Review

- Does the policy provide practices for reinforcing prosocial and expected behaviors?

Question 22

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage of Policies</th>
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<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
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<td>87/76</td>
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Research Question One: What common themes exist in district discipline policies across the 50 United States and the District of Columbia?

- The overall percentage of items in place barely exceeded 50%.
- The maximum percent of items in place for each element ranged from 50% to 100%.
- The average percent of items in place for each item ranged from 0.68% to 59.18%.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 2. Average of Checklist Scores by Element</th>
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<tr>
<td>Element</td>
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Research Question Two: What is the relationship between themes found in a district’s discipline policy and the risk ratio of ISS, OSS, and expulsion for students of color with and without disabilities?

- Not stat. sig.; small correlations
- HOWEVER,
  - higher scores on the checklist are correlated with a decreased risk ratio for exclusionary discipline for students without disabilities.
  - higher scores on the checklist are correlated with decreased risk ratios for exclusionary discipline for students with disabilities identifying as Hispanic, African American, and Native American.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 3. Correlations between Total Percent Checklist Score and Risk Ratio</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Without Disabilities</td>
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<td>Hispanic</td>
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<td>ISS</td>
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Non-examples of policy statements

- Students suspended from school will receive up to a maximum of 50% credit for all make up work completed for the time they were suspended from school.
- Missing an assigned detention or misbehaving during a detention will result in referral to the office for disciplinary action. Subsequent offenses will include in or out-of-school suspension.
- Many policies continue to use suspension for truancy and attendance.

Examples of policy statements should include:

- language that is more conversational and less legal to ensure that it is available to everyone.
- defined district-wide expectations.
- defined prosocial behaviors.
- defined problem behaviors.
- graduated discipline policies.
- separate equity policies ensuring the use of equitable practices.
- instructional approaches (i.e., re-teach expectations, model).
- evidence-based practices (i.e., precorrection, positive specific feedback, reinforcement).

Examples of policy statements

Key Elements of Effective Policy to Enhance Equity in School Discipline

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7. Procedures with Accountability for Equitable Student Outcomes
**Exclusionary Practices:** Removing students from typical instruction (or social environment) for a period of time in response to unwanted student social behavior.

Severity of the EP is related to severity of long-term outcomes:
- OSS is more strongly related more to negative outcomes than ISS (Noltemeyer et al., 2015).

**What Do We Know?**

- Students miss:
  - Academic instructional time
  - Social skill building time
  - Being a part of a larger learning community

- Harsh & disproportionate discipline in schools for non-threatening behaviors linked to:
  - School failure
  - Drop-out
  - Substance use
  - Incarceration

**What Do We Know?**

- Most frequently used with:
  - Students of color
    - 7% of White students were suspended, but 11% of Hispanic/Latino students, 12% of American Indian students, and 23% of Black students were suspended (Losen et al., 2015).
  - Students with disabilities
    - 18% of students with disabilities were suspended.
    - One in 5 districts in the country suspended over 50% of its Black male students with disabilities (Losen et al., 2015).
  - Students in poverty and struggling academically
    - Race remains a significant predictor, even when controlling for poverty (Ayon et al., 2014; Lee et al., 2011).
    - Bias in disciplinary decision persists, particularly for more subjective behaviors (Skiba et al., 2002; Smolkowski et al., 2015).
ODR, Suspension, Detention
not a “treatment intervention”

* Never rely on ODR, Suspension, or Detention alone to change behavior. Necessary BUT insufficient.

For substantive behavior change incorporate:
- (1) instruction on appropriate behavior,
- (2) ongoing acknowledgement of appropriate behavior.
- (3) an instructional response to unwanted behaviors, focused on teaching and reconnecting

BECAUSE YOU CAN’T
PUNISH SKILLS INTO A KID

Classroom Component
- Strong classroom management and routines: logical response to prob behavior
- Focus on building relationships
- Buddy classrooms/break systems
- Instructional time is held sacred SW

Restorative and Instructional Component
- Engage in reconnection conversations
- Triage process
- Empathy and listening
- Skill building and behavior instruction
- Help students own their piece
- Data used for decision making
- Fidelity of implementation
- Action plan guides efforts
- Team > staff > team process

Team Component
- Data used for decision making
- Fidelity of implementation
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ISLA Model
Inclusive Skill-Building Learning Approach
**Preventative Classroom Management**

- Systematic Breaks and Out-of-Class Time
- Sent to the Office: ISLA with Support Staff
- Sent to the Office: ISLA with Administrator

**ISLA Team Guides Implementation:**
- Data-based decision making
- Embed supports in school system

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**WOW!**

ISLA Relationship Building Strategies

1. **Welcome** students at the door
2. **Own** your environment: establish and teach routines
3. **Wrap up** class with intention

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**What is a logical response to unwanted behavior?**

- Calm and respectful
- Discreet
- Consider WHY the kid is doing this
- Focus on building skills
- Response matches level of severity
Graduated Discipline

- Reserve exclusionary discipline for the most serious behavior incidents
- A system of discipline that is graduated ensures that less serious behavior incidents are met with milder responses rather than punitive consequences

Examples

- Re-teach of appropriate behavior
- Request change in behavior
- Invitation to self-correct
- Modify assignment
- Teacher proximity or visual prompt
- Student reflection (Think Sheet)
- Mini-conference with student
- Break in buddy classroom
Big Deal-O-Meter

Minor Fighting
Cursing
LOW-MODERATE

Jumping a Student
HIGH

Weapons
VERY HIGH

Engage All Staff in Conversations About Behavior & Discipline
**Preventative Classroom Management**

**Systematic Breaks and Out-of-Class Time**

**ISLA Team Guides Implementation:**
- Data-based decision making, Embed supports in school system

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**Break System Critical Features**

- In a classroom as close to yours as possible
- A quiet designated work space in the classroom that allows for sitting and working
- All students are pre-taught that the quiet space is used for many things
- Student must come with work
- 15 minutes max; both teachers and student help monitor time
- Re-entry process established and pre-taught
  - Connect with the student, remind them of expectation, set them up for success
- If you need to use a Buddy Classroom 3x in 1 week, submit a request for support with your Behavior Team

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**Example Process: Systematize Breaks**

- Develop system
  - team → staff → team process
- Teach to all students
- Practice with students
- Implement
- Monitor & evaluate
- Reteach/modify as needed
ISLA Team Guides Implementation:
Data-based decision making, Embed supports in school system

Sent to the Office: ISLA with Support Staff
Sent to the Office: ISLA with Administrator

Equitable supports to match students’ needs

ISLA

- Provide in-school **instructional** supports (in lieu of exclusion) that include:
  - Student debrief
  - Skills coaching on appropriate behaviors
  - Reentry plan w/ rehearsal
  - Transition supports w/ a reconnection conversation
Triage Process

Step 1: Debrief
1. Tell me what happened. Start from the beginning. What was going on in class?
2. What did you do? What did others do?
3. What did you want or need in that situation?
4. How did that work for you? How do you think it worked for the other people in class?
5. If that’s what you needed, what’s another way we can get what you need in this class?
6. What could the teacher do to help you in these situations?

Step 2: Behavioral Skills Coaching

Skills Coaching Process
1. Identify the appropriate skill
2. Teach and model
3. Practice with guided support
4. Performance feedback
5. Communication with staff members
Step 3: Reconnection Conversation

- Two Forms
  - In person
  - In card form to teacher’s mailbox or to teacher
- Double dose of a positive interaction

Briggs Reconnection Card

Dear [Teacher]

I am [Your Name],

I want to try and make things better.

I really need help with [specific issue].

I promise to try hard to do better from now on.

Sincerely,

[Your Name]
When Students Return to You

- Allow the student to engage in the reconnection conversation with you.
- If they do this, allow them back into the classroom without punishment, retribution, or a grudge.
- Allow the student to rejoin the class activity without a further conversation about it; trust that the point has been driven home.

Reconnection Conversation: Teacher Responses

- Thank you, (name)!
- I appreciate your apology.
- Sounds great! Let’s get back to work.
- Tomorrow is a fresh start.
- Your honesty means a lot.
- Glad to have you join us.
- Welcome back. We are working on _______.
- Thanks for letting me know that. I will do my part to support you.

ISLA Pilot Study
Nese et al. (in press)

- 1 Year pilot in 2 MS with high levels of exclusion
- Training for Teachers:
  - PBIS in the classroom
  - System for responding to behaviors
  - When/why/how to send a student out
- Training for Paras:
  - Triage process for students sent to the office
  - Behavioral and academic supports for students
  - Reconnection process for getting students back to class
- Training for Admin:
  - Clarifying triage process
  - How to handle major ODRs
  - How to process OSS when returning to school
Feedback from Teachers

1. What do you feel is most beneficial about this primary intervention? What is the least beneficial part?
   The most beneficial part is that students get the benefit of seeing how to handle situations that arise in the middle school setting. Some students truly do not know what is right or what is wrong. The least beneficial part would be missing scheduled class time and instructions.

2. What other information would you like to contribute about this intervention?
   Our report is 63% have gone down significantly. A new support system has been established. This report is timely because it is the first day of school.

ISLA Grant

Year 1: Formative Development & Usability
- Design Team
- 2 middle schools
- Model, systems, materials and measures tried out by some staff members

Year 2: Feasibility & Fidelity Study
- Design Team
- Same 2 middle schools
- 2 additional middle schools
- ISLA rolled out school-wide

Year 3: Pilot Study
- UO Research Team
- Works with 4 new middle schools for pilot study

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Year 1: Sample
- 2 middle schools in the PNW (6th – 8th)
- Monthly meetings with ISLA team
- Research staff provided coaching and technical assistance
- Bi-monthly meetings with Design Team

Student Focus Groups:
- School A: 12 students
- School B: 11 students

Staff Survey (PIRS): 53 respondents
Year 1: PIRS Participants

Staff Feedback (PIRS)

Do you think that you and your students’ participation in the ISLA model will cause your students’ performance to change? If so, how?

"I think our taking part in the ISLA model has made our student’s performance change because even though we have always worked through issues verbally with the student, we are now asking them to reconnect with the teacher and take responsibility for their actions with the staff member."

"Yes, I think students will feel more connected to their teacher and classmates. They will have a better understanding of what is going on in the class. Students will also stop using behavior to exit the room, knowing that this no longer works as a way to avoid academic assignments."

"I do think it can make our students behavior change. We have had at least two break through issues that came from filling out the reconnection card. However, we have to work through different issues with the same student on other occasions. The communication between the teacher and the student improved with this system."

Staff Feedback (PIRS)

What do you feel is most beneficial about the ISLA model? What is the least beneficial part?

"ISLA appears to take students’ voices into account and help them be heard by school staff. This then allows for staff and students to communicate and understand each other. The least beneficial part is the possibility that students will believe that these conversations, etc. are not genuine and are just part of the process."

The most beneficial is the communication with the student and them taking the time to work through the process. Them taking the time to reconnect with the staff member. To really think about what has happened. I don't really find anything not beneficial, however sometimes filling out the form is hard to get to, so it is not something that is always able to be accomplished. Also, students don't take that part as seriously as they should with the written answer."
Student Focus Groups

For students who are sent out of class, what are some of the things that make it difficult for them to either come back to class or want to come back to class?

“Some teachers send them down (to the front office) for the rest of the class period — and I feel like when they do that it just makes it hard for the student because of the work that they missed... homework. Sending them out then bringing them back right away makes it 10 times better.”

“Teachers that talk kids through it because I think it is better for them instead of keeping them out of class.”

“Or just be nice when they come back. Sometimes they have an attitude when you do come back.”

Student Focus Groups

What strategies would be helpful in repairing the relationships between students and their teachers?

“When teachers admit they make mistakes that just calms you... you are not alone. Because one of my teachers she’ll make a mistake and she’ll just get mad at the kids for her making the mistake and teacher won’t ever admit (she was wrong).”

“Teachers that listen to you. One of my teachers teacher was yelling at me and I tried telling her what happened and teacher kept interrupting and wouldn’t let me talk. I got more and more mad so I kept yelling at her and it just got all bad. And it was in front of the entire class too.”

“When I get in trouble or something and I talk to them about it... they check up on you. Usually it is better when there is not a bunch of kids in the class, it’s one-on-one with the teacher.”

To Sum It Up...

- Exclusion alone does not correct unwanted behaviors
- Building a system focused on teaching and reinforcing appropriate behaviors does
- Teachers and students benefit from a system that maximizes the amount of time students spend in class while providing them instruction when they are sent out
Contact Information:
Rhonda: rnes@uoregon.edu
Danielle: dht@uoregon.edu
Ambra: ambra.green@uta.edu
Thank You!

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