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Trauma-Informed Alternatives to Suspension

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School Climate & Culture

While school climate and culture have been defined in a number of ways, and at times are used interchangeably, they are two distinct terms which overlap and influence one another.

Think of school climate as the attitude and school culture as the personality. One drives and determines the other.

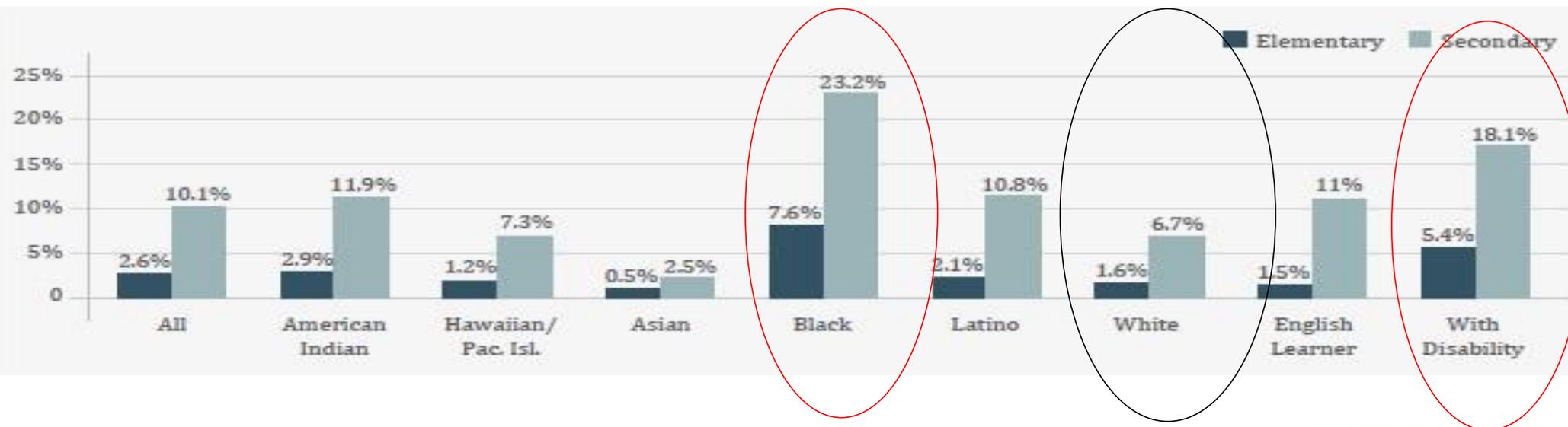
[Video](#)

School Benefits

- Improved academic achievement and test scores..
- Improved teacher sense of satisfaction and safety in being a teacher. Improved retention of new teachers.
- Reduction of student behavioral out-burst and referrals to the office.
- Reduction of stress for staff and students.
- Reduction in absences, detentions, and suspensions.
- Reduction in student bullying and harassment.

(Oehlberg, 2008)

Figure 1. Elementary and Secondary Out-of-school Suspension Rates by Subgroup, 2011-12



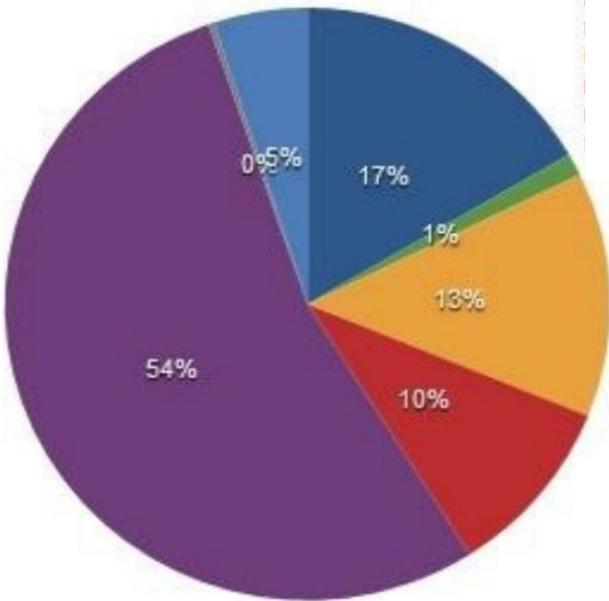
Oklahoma Trends: Discipline 2016-2017

Black or African-American students on IEPs are about **2.5 times as likely** to be suspended out of school than all others.

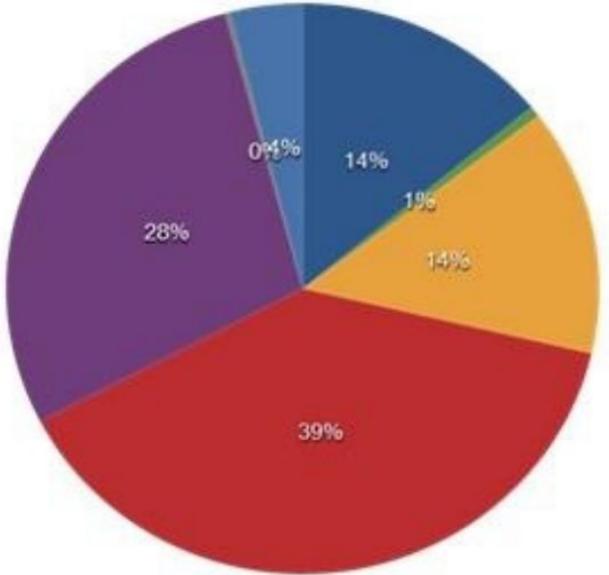
Percent Students w/IEPs Suspended, by Race			
<i>Out-of-School</i>		<i>In-School</i>	
Black	19.71%	Pac. Islander	5.79%
2 or More	9.73%	Black	4.97%
Hispanic	7.68%	Native Am.	4.92%
White	6.53%	2 or More	4.72%
Native Am.	6.18%	White	4.25%
Pac. Islander	5.26%	Hispanic	3.80%
Asian	2.08%	Asian	1.38%

<https://sde.ok.gov/sites/default/files/documents/files/Understanding%20Significant%20Disproportionality.pdf>

Enrollment by Ethnicity



Expulsions under zero-tolerance by ethnicity¹⁰⁴



- Native American
- Asian
- Hispanic/Latino
- Black
- White
- Nat. Hawaiian/Pac. Islander

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Rich & Stein (2019)

https://www.usccr.gov/pubs/docs/Oklahoma_SchooltoPrisonPipeline_May2016.pdf

What is Trauma?

- Trauma is anything that changes the brain's development.
- Examples include:
 - Abuse, assault, natural disaster, death of loved one.
- Really, anything can lead to trauma depending upon the person and the circumstance.

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)

ABUSE



Physical



Emotional



Sexual

NEGLECT



Physical



Emotional

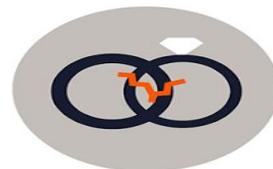
HOUSEHOLD DYSFUNCTION



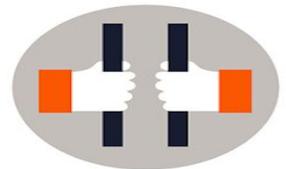
Mental Illness



Mother treated violently



Divorce



Incarcerated Relative

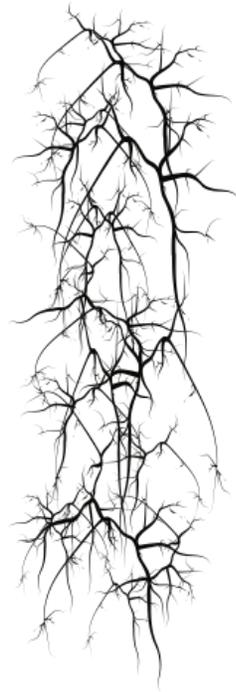


Substance Abuse

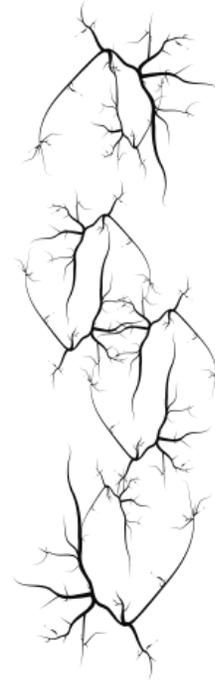
SYNAPTIC DENSITY



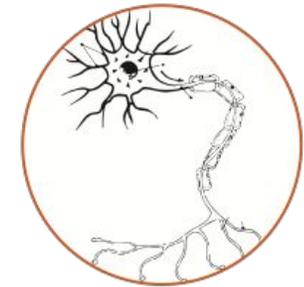
At Birth



Elementary Age

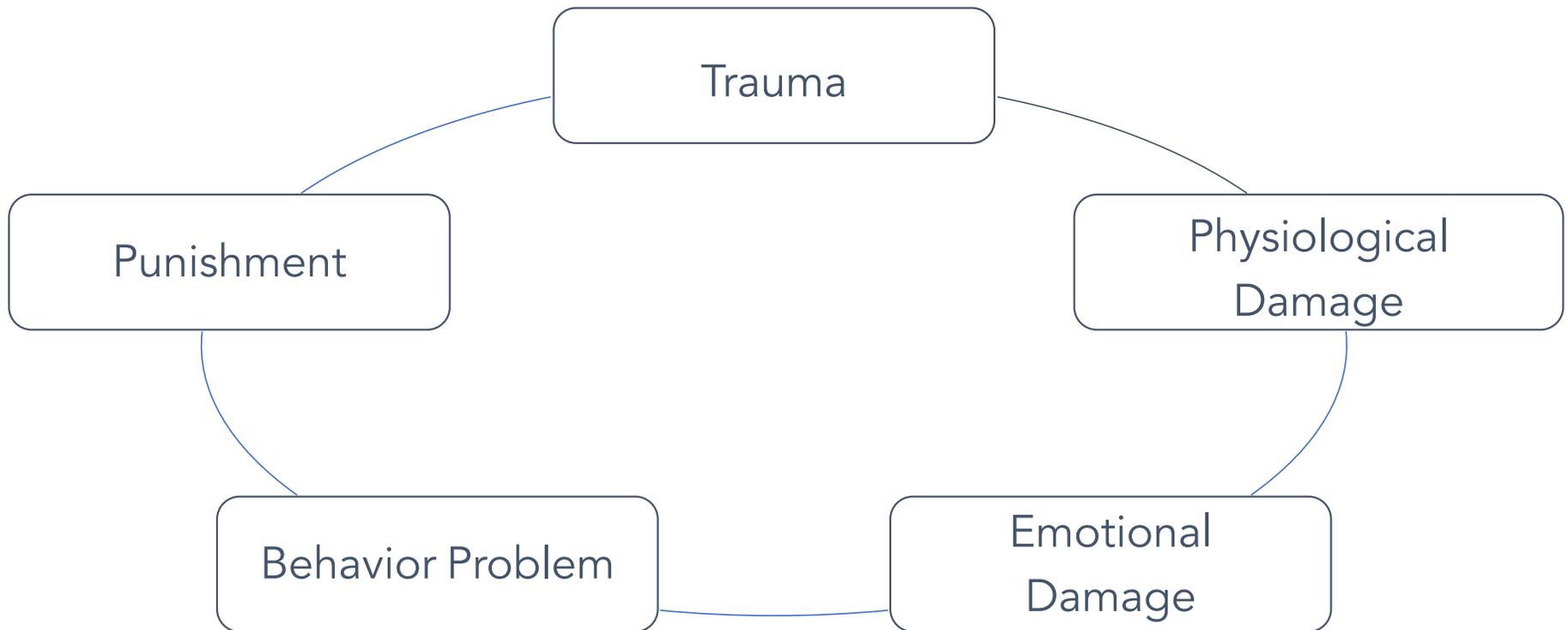


Puberty



Single Neuron

Cycle of Trauma



Trauma-Informed Schools

Discipline is to teach, not
punish.

Perspective Shift

Old

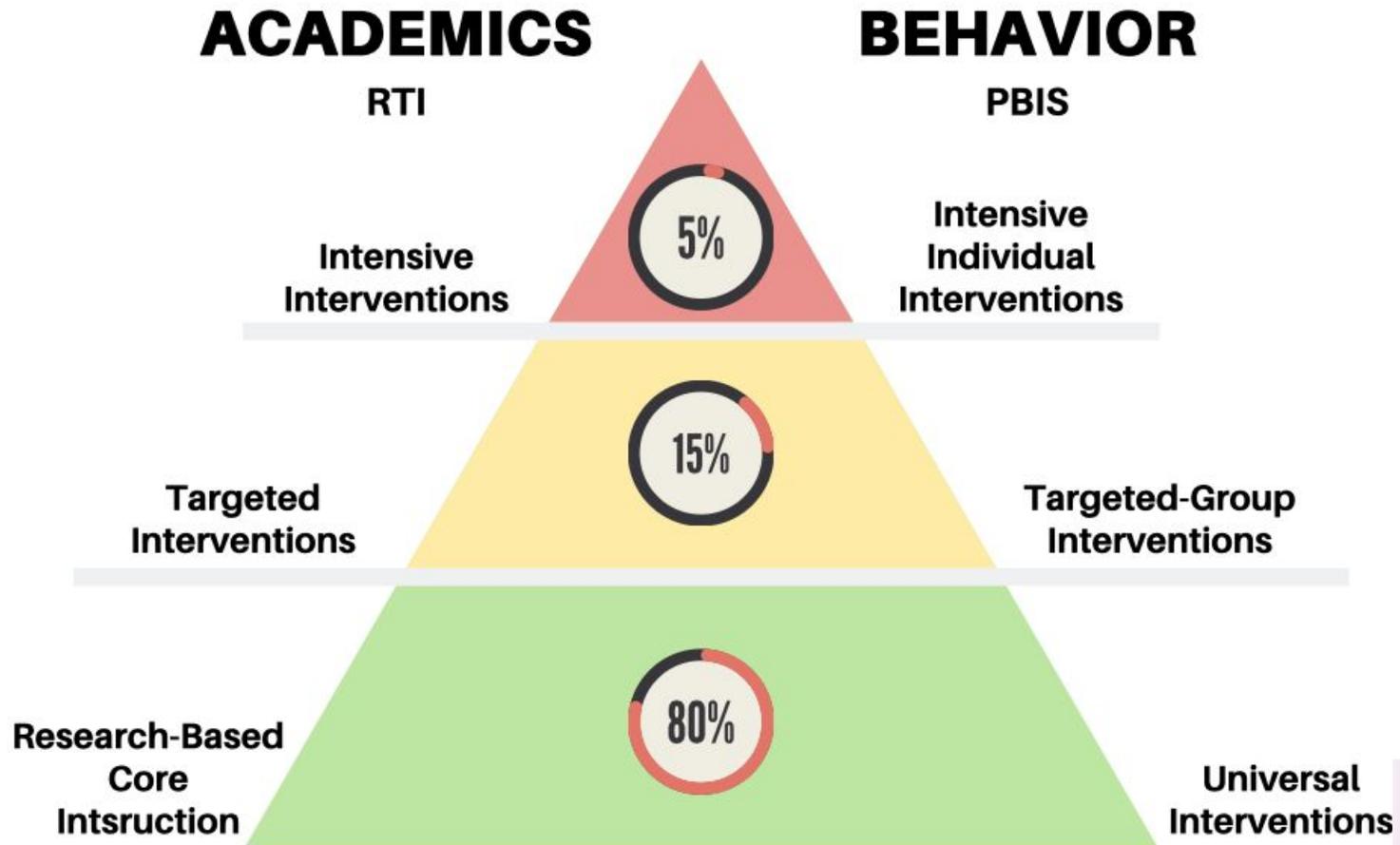
- He's so defiant
- She is choosing this behavior
- What's wrong with him?
- I don't need to call home, they won't help
- I won't tolerate disrespect



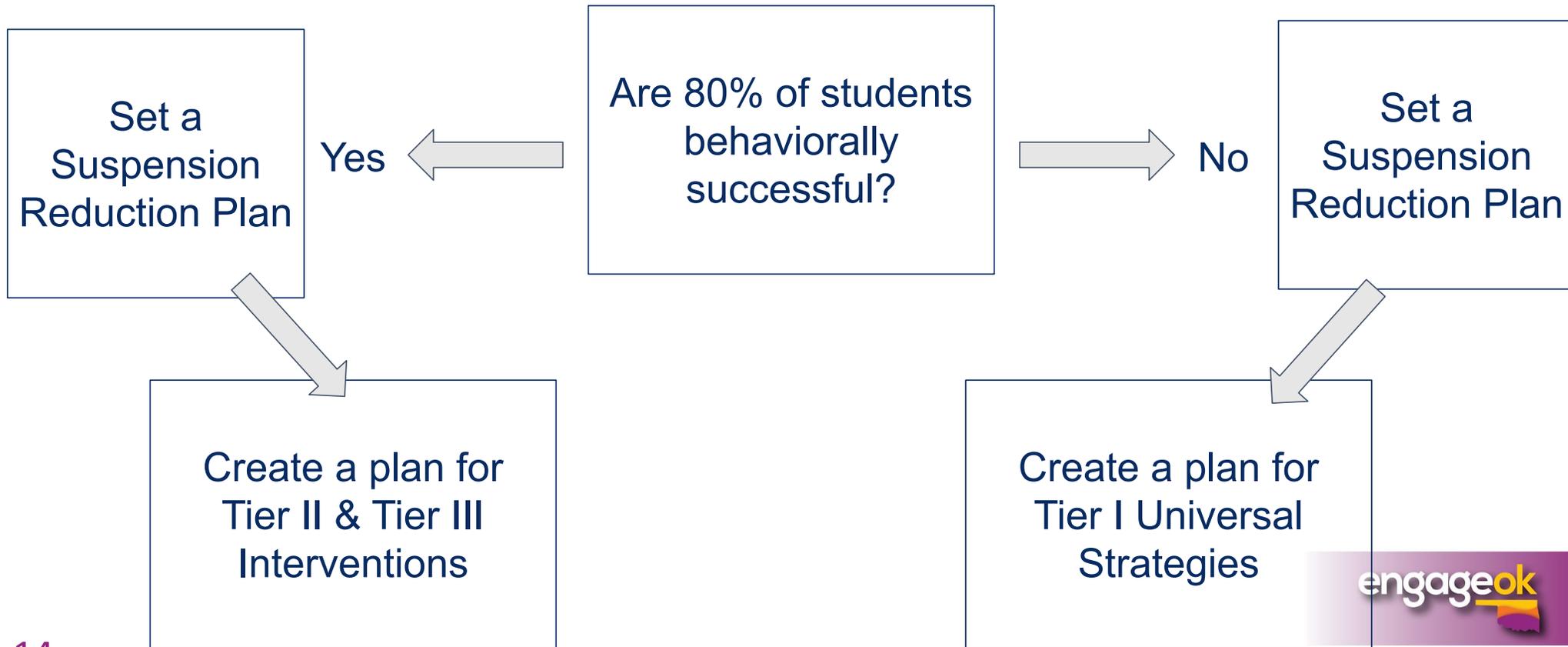
New

- He is lacking social skills
- She is reacting with adrenaline/survival skills
- What happened to him
- Calling home may help give more insight
- How can I help them learn respect

MTSS



Using Data to Drive Practices



Tier 1 Universal Plan

School Plan

- Assess school/classroom climate
 - Student surveys
 - Focus group
- Have a clear classroom plan for expectations of behaviors that is shared with students many times throughout the school year.
 - Classroom behaviors must include traits that students should be exhibiting.
- When a student does not meet expected classroom behaviors create a “Lagging Skills Plan”.
- Create with student the “Development of Skills Plan”.

Teaching Matrix		INCORPORATE Coping Strategies for Managing Stress						
		All Settings	Halls	Playgrounds	Lunch	Library/ Computer Lab	Assembly	Bus
Expectations	Respectful	Be on task. Give your best effort. Be prepared.	Walk.	Have a plan.	Invite those sitting alone to join	Study, read, compute.	Sit in one spot.	Watch for your stop.
	Achieving & Organized	Be kind. Hands/feet to self. Help/share with others.	Use normal voice volume. Walk to right.	Share equipment. Include others.	Have a lunch plan and choose quiet or social lunch area	Whisper. Return books.	Listen/watch. Use appropriate applause.	Use a quiet voice. Stay in your seat.
	Responsible	Recycle. Clean up after self.	Pick up litter. Maintain physical space.	Use equipment properly. Put litter in garbage can.	Use my breathing technique Listen to my signals	Push in chairs. Treat books carefully.	Pick up. Treat chairs carefully.	Wipe your feet.

Motivation

- Positive vs. Negative Consequences.
 - Positive rewards
 - Behavior Logs
 - Clip Charts
 - Zero Tolerance Policies
- Motivation is more about regulation than about making a choice to follow the rules.
 - For students who have experienced trauma the idea of “follow the rules and you will not get in trouble” or “follow the rules and you will get a reward” does not work.
- When a student who has experienced trauma is left to their own devices to regulate they enter survival mode.

Consequences Flow Chart

Minor Behaviors

- . Disruption
- . Inappropriate Language/Gestures
- . Inappropriate Location
- . Late/Missing Assignments
- . Low-Intensity Disrespect/Defiance
- . Physical Contact/Aggression
- . Property Misuse
- . Technology Violation

Major Behaviors

- . Abusive Language/Profanity
- . Alcohol, Tobacco, Drug Use
- . Disrespect/Defiance
- . Failure to Report to Class
- . Fighting/Physical Aggression
- . Forgery
- . Vandalism/Property Damage
- . Leaving School Property
- . Left Class without Permission
- . Theft
- . Weapons

Minor Behaviors

Classroom Steps

Step 1: Redirection and Increased Support

Redirect the student and remind them of the expected behavior

Consider whether the student needs extra support for assigned task

If behavior continues, proceed to Step 2. If student demonstrates expected behavior, acknowledge with behavior-specific praise.

Step 2: Warning

Give verbal warning by stating the behavior that needs to stop and the consequence that will occur if it continues.

If behavior continues, proceed to Step 3. If student demonstrates expected behavior, acknowledge with behavior-specific praise.

Minor Behaviors

Step 3: Staff Delivers Consequence

Potential consequences include:

- Conference with Student, Brainstorm Replacement Behavior
- Contact Home
- Loss of Privilege: _____
- Restitution
- Send to Buddy Classroom

Step 4: Complete Behavior Form

Referring staff member should fill out all sections on ODR form.

Major Behaviors

Step 1: Ensure Safety

Ensure all students and staff are safe. Evacuate area if needed.

Step 2: Utilize De-escalation Techniques to Approach Student

Move slowly

Minimize body language

Speak respectfully

Use brief language

Withdraw if situation escalates

Speak privately and calmly

Keep reasonable distance

Establish eye-level position

Acknowledge cooperation

Step 3: Complete ODR Form

Referring staff member should fill out all sections on ODR form except “Administrative Response.”

Major Behaviors

Step 4: Submit ODR Form and Send Student to Office

Send student to office with an escort or contact office to let them know student is coming.

Step 5: Administrator Delivers Consequence

Potential consequences include:

- Conference with Student, Brainstorm Replacement Behavior
- Contact Home/Parent Meeting
- Loss of Privilege: _____
- In School Suspension
- Out of School Suspension/Restorative Practices
- Time in Office

Step 6: Administrator Meets with Teacher

Teaching New Patterns of Behavior

Punitive

- Focus on action:
 - Verbal reprimand
 - Lose recess
 - No specials
 - Seclusion from other kids
 - Suspension

Trauma-Informed

- Focus on behavior:
 - Find out what is going on
 - Allow student to take responsibility for actions
 - Consequences that teach new patterns of behavior

Tier II & III Intervention Plan

Trauma-Informed Restoration Programs

In-School Placement Programs

- Trauma-informed trained staff.
- Mornings start with a regulation building skill
 - Mindfulness
 - Breathing techniques
 - Calming corner
- Class Meeting
 - Take responsibility for actions
- Academic time
 - Added supports, if needed
- Social/Emotional Learning

Small Group Discussions



Student Behavior Goals

One action item to include in a suspension reduction plan is looking at individual student behavior goals.

- Student behavior goals should be measurable as well as realistic and be based on previous behavior data for that child.
- Choosing only one target behavior at a time to focus on, data teams can then set a reasonable growth goal for the student for that behavior.
 - Identify priority behaviors based on data
 - Prioritize behaviors
 - Define priority behaviors

Monitoring Progress

Create a plan for progress-monitoring behavior intervention goals.

- How will your team know when the student has learned the new skill?
What will you measure?
- Who, what, where, when
- Observation data
- Behavior data log
- Check in-check out

Alternatives to Suspension

- Restorative Conversations
- Written/Verbal Apology
- Buddy Classrooms
- Restitution
 - In-kind restitution (rather than financial restitution, which often falls on the parents) permits the student to help to restore or improve the school environment either by directly addressing the problems caused by the student's behavior or by having the student improve the school environment more broadly
- Teacher-created Mini-Modules

Alternatives to Suspension

- Mini-courses or skill modules.
 - Short courses or self-study modules can be assigned as a disciplinary consequence. These should be on topics related to the student's inappropriate behavior, and should be designed to teach the student to have increased awareness or knowledge about the topic, thus facilitating behavior change.
- Behavior monitoring.
 - Closely monitoring behavior and academic progress (e.g., self-charting of behaviors, feedback sessions for the student).
 - Check in-Check out
- Conflict Resolution Training
 -

Alternatives to Suspension

- Conflict Resolution Training
 - Overcoming Obstacles
- Targeted Mentoring
- Counseling/Referral to an Outside Agency
- Alternative Programming
- Saturday Morning Behavior Program

Programs

- [Elementary Programs](#)
- [High School Programs](#)
- [PBIS World](#)
- [Overcoming Obstacles](#)
- [CASEL](#)
- [Teaching Kindness](#)

Suspension Plan

- Support student in completing missed academic work
- Establish or reestablish connectedness with staff and peers
- Teach and plan for using replacement skills



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