

# Alternatives to Suspension

A Menu of Consequences

MO SW-PBS:



We've all heard that suspension does not change behavior and may harm students, but rarely hear of strategies we can use instead.

I'm going to suggest developing a menu of teaching alternatives to suspension leveled by behavior intensity

## Why Offer Alternatives to Suspension?

Denies  
Students  
Opportunity  
to  
Learn



Gregory, Bell, and Pollock (2014); Skiba, Arredondo, and Williams (2014)

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Suspension is related to lower state accountability tests scores, reading achievement, writing achievement, and math achievement.

Suspension denies kids the opportunity to learn, thereby exacerbating these problems.

## Why Offer Alternatives to Suspension?

Does Not  
Teach  
Replacements



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(Brooks, Schiraldi, & Ziedenberg, 1999; Gregory & Weinstein, 2008; Morgan-D'Atrio, Northrup, LaFleur, & Spera, 1996; Raffaele Mendez & Knoff, 2003; Rosen, 1997; Skiba, Peterson, & Williams, 1997;

Majority of suspensions are for discretionary offenses: Defiance, disrespect, disruption, and attendance problems

Furthermore, suspension change behaviors, and for some students, may make it worse.

## Why Offer Alternatives to Suspension?

Increased  
Risk  
of  
Dropout



(Balfanz, Byrnes, and Fox, 2014)

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1 suspension in 9<sup>th</sup> grade raises dropout rate from 16% to 32%

50% of students with 3 or more suspensions on their record drop out.

## Why Offer Alternatives to Suspension?

Increased  
Risk  
of  
Arrest  
and  
Incarceration

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Students suspended for discretionary offenses are nearly 3 times more likely to come into contact with law enforcement.

Students who are suspended are more likely to drop out. Students who drop out are 8 times more likely to be incarcerated.

## Why Offer Alternatives to Suspension?

### Disproportional Impact



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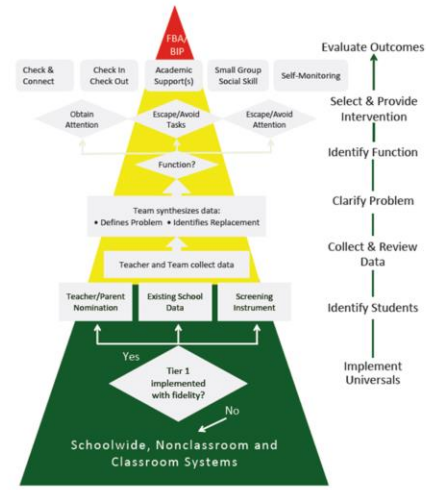
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There is a large body of research that shows that minorities, especially African Americans, are suspended on average 3 times more often than white students.

African American students are more likely than white students to be suspended for discretionary offenses.

# Guiding Principles

## Preventative Proactive



The following are guidelines for choosing alternatives to suspension

The first step in responding to student misbehavior is to prevent it from occurring in the first place.

The second step is to intervene early with research based interventions to prevent problems from recurring.

A PBIS framework provides such a preventive proactive approach.

## Guiding Principals

# Leveled Menu of Consequences

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Level	Examples	Consequences Available
Level I:	Low level bullying; dangerous behavior; Chronic minor behavior; Vandalism	Alternative Programing Behavior Monitoring Behavior Plan; Community Service; Coordinated Behavior Plans Counseling Mini-course; Parent Supervision; Problem Solving/ Behavior Contracting; Referral to child study team Restitution
Level II:	Sexual or racial harassment; Bullying; Fighting; Look alike weapons;	Alternative Programing Behavior Monitoring Coordinated Behavior Plans Counseling; ISS with behavior lessons and academic; Problem Solving/ Behavior Contracting; Restitution Restorative Justice
Level III:	Unprovoked assault with intent to harm; Sexual or racial harassment that is unresolved at Level II Sexual Misconduct	ISS with behavior and academic lessons; OSS
Level IV: Violent crimes	Sexual Assault; Unprovoked Assault with intent to cause serious bodily harm	Expulsion and contact law enforcement

However, problems will still occur.

Therefore, I am advocating that schools develop a leveled menu of teaching consequences.

Such consequences teach appropriate replacements and help administrators avoid overreacting.



## Guiding Principles

Consequence  
does not have  
to punish!!!



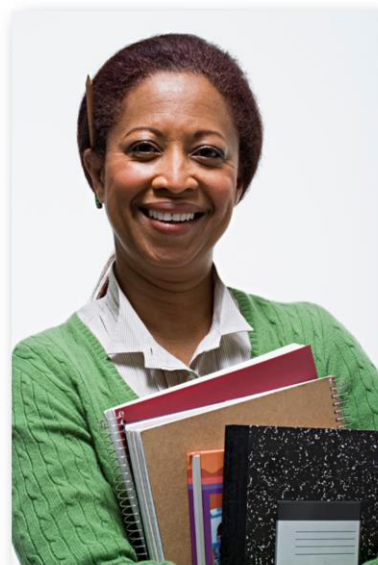
Having a menu of Teaching Alternatives to suspension requires a staff-wide mindshift :

Consequences don't have to punish students in order to be effective!

## Guiding Principles

Teach  
Appropriate  
Replacement  
Behavior

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Alternatives to suspension should teach appropriate replacement behaviors.

## Guiding Principles

### Logical Consequences



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Alternatives to suspension should be logically tied to the behavior

A consequence not tied to behavior is going to jail for driving while intoxicated

A logical consequence is losing driving privileges.

## Guiding Principles

### Restorative



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Alternatives to suspension should restore damage to relationships and to property to the way things were before the problem behavior occurred.

## Guiding Principles

### Address Function



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A variety of alternatives should be available that address the array of behavioral functions.

This allows the administrator choose a consequence that matches the needs of each student.

## Examples of Instructional Alternatives

### Community Service



The following are just a few examples of alternatives to suspension.

The first is community service.

This involves assigning a task that allows the student to give back to the community that was harmed.

Examples include wipe tables, clean graffiti, pick up trash, tutor.

## Examples of Instructional Alternatives

Student  
Created  
And  
Presented  
Mini-Modules



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Students can be required to create and present a lesson on the behavior, how this behavior harms others, and what kids should do instead.

## Examples of Instructional Alternatives

### Teacher-Made Mini-Modules



Teachers could create a library of mini lessons on common problem behaviors and appropriate replacements.

These could include demonstrations, opportunities to practice, cues and prompts, feedback, homework, etc.

Students would be required to complete the mini-module.



## Examples of Instructional Alternatives

### Alternative Programming



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Alternative programming temporarily removes students from the environment where the problem occurs.

It can include alternative lunch, recess, or passing periods.

## Examples of Instructional Alternatives

### Additional Learning Opportunities



Additional learning opportunities make up for instructional time lost due to the behavior.

Examples include after school detention or Saturday School.

Additional learning opportunities are *NOT* just a holding pen.

## Examples of Instructional Alternatives

### Restorative Practices



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Restorative practices include a variety of practices that restore relationships to where they were before the problem behavior occurred.

Examples include healing circles, peer mentoring, peer courts, etc.

## Summary



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Suspension does not improve student behavior or school climate, and may harm students.

As part of a proactive and preventative approach, a leveled menu of teaching consequences can reduce reliance on suspension, reduce over-reactive consequences, and improve student behavior.

Please join me for a discussion on developing a menu of teaching alternatives to suspension.