Closing the Gap: Lessons in Equity and Grace

Central Middle School
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Closing the Gap: Lessons in Equity and Grace

Twitter Feedback

If you have Twitter account, I would love to hear feedback. If you hear something that is new, beneficial, or interesting, please tweet it using the hashtags:

#moswpbs
#closingthegap
#shawnshackelford
Welcome every morning with a smile. Look on the new day as another special gift from your creator, another golden opportunity to complete what you were unable to finish yesterday. Be a self-starter. Let your first hour set the theme of success and positive action that is certain to echo through your entire day. Today will never happen again. Don’t waste it with a false start or no start at all. You were not born to fail.

~Og Mandino
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Overview

- Michigan’s Integrated Behavior and Learning Support Initiative (MIBLSI)* /PBIS
  - How PBIS looks at Central Middle School
- Equity
  - How we addressed implicit bias at Central Middle School
- Grace
  - How we demonstrated Grace to achieve results

*Michigan’s Integrated Behavior and Learning Support Initiative (MIBLSI) is a Grant Funded Initiative (GFI), funded under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) through the Michigan Department of Education.
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Referrals

- Total Referrals: 4029
- Number of Students Referred:
  - 2015-16: 747
  - 2018-19: 386
- Number of Staff Referring:
  - 2015-16: 183
  - 2018-19: 83

Legend:
- Blue: 2015-16
- Orange: 2018-19
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Referral Reductions

- 81% Total Referrals
- 53% Number of Students Referred
- 33% Number of Staff Referring
How did we do it???
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We achieved these results by focusing on:

- teacher buy-in;
- having systems in place;
- changing adult behavior;
- having the hard conversations about implicit bias;
- demonstrating grace
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Port Huron Area School District (PHASD)

K-12

Student Population - 8247

16 schools

10 Elementary

3 Middle

3 High Schools

White - 75%

Black - 8%

Hispanic - 7%

Native American - <1%

Asian - <1%

Pacific Islander - <1%

Free/Reduced - 55%

Students who receive Special Education Services - 14%
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Central Middle School (CMS)

Student Population - 809

Male 421  Female 389

White - 72%
Hispanic - 9%
Multi-racial - 9%
Black - 8%
Native American - 1%

Asian - <1%
Pacific Islander - <1%
Free/Reduced - 62%
Students who receive Special Education Services - 17%
IEP’s - 10%
504 - 7%
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PBIS- How did we get here?

- Priority (as a staff)
- Structure (adults and students)
- Reteach (adults and students)
- Intentional focus on positive choices (adults and students)
- Rewarding and acknowledging (adults and students)
- Professional development (staff and community)
In 2015-2016, PHASD was awarded Promoting Positive School Climate (PPSC) grant; Grant is a partnership between Michigan Department of Education (MDE), MIBLSI, and PHASD; MIBLSI partners with school districts to help implement and sustain these supports for improved student outcomes; Competitive grant that provided valuable training; PBIS became more systemic: schools were broken up into 3 cohorts; State/Federal grant funded behavior coaches; District re-prioritized needs; In 2016-2017, MIBLSI approached PHASD to pilot equity and disproportionality
Tier 1

Tier 1 is the universal, school-wide support system for all students. Tier 1 establishes the school culture and expectations for behavior and learning. Effective universal supports should meet the needs of most students.
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Structure

The parents dropped off in the parent loop;

The way students entered the building;

Where students must wait until the bell rings;

Procedure for picking-up chromebooks before 1st hour

Walking in the halls
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Structure con’t

Bells

Dress code

“10/10” Rule

Cafeteria- One Rule: “Have a seat”

Students must leave the premises at the end of the day
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Teach/Re-teach
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Teach/Re-teach
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Teach/Re-teach
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Positive choices

Recognize students

- Pride Cards
- Positive Phone Calls
- Via Social Media

“Respect the place you learn”

“My bad. I’m sorry.”
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Acknowledgment and Rewards

- Cougar Champs
- Awards Ceremonies
Some students still struggle, even after tier 1 supports are in place. Tier 2 supports are programs and strategies for students who need additional support. Students receive targeted supports, based on their needs, that are more intense and more frequent. If a student’s performance improves, he or she may be able to continue achieving without tier 2 supports.
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- CICO
- High Needs Check-In
- Social Skills Group
A very small number of students with severe difficulties need interventions beyond tier 2 supports. Tier 3 supports are intensive programs and strategies for students with highly individualized needs. The supports are designed to meet the student’s specific needs. If a student’s performance improves, he or she may be able to continue achieving without Tier 3 supports.
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Behavior Support Plan
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Professional Development

● Data dive
  ○ Building level
  ○ Cohort

● MIBLISI
  ○ Vulnerable Decision Points (VDP)
  ○ NRs (Neutralizing Routines)
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Dr. Ruthie Payno-Simmons
Equity Specialist, MIBLSI

Beth Hill
Equity Specialist, MIBLSI
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VULNERABLE DECISION POINTS

Vulnerable Decision Point (VDP): A specific decision that is more vulnerable to effects of bias.

Two parts:
1. Elements of the situation
2. The person’s decision state (internal state) Setting Events

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VULNERABLE DECISION POINTS

1. What are one or two trigger situations that happen to you in the school environment?
   (disrespectful attitude, student interrupting, subjective behavior, etc.)

1. What are one or two common setting events that can affect you in the school environment?
   (hunger, fatigue, ambiguity, etc.)

1. Thinking of these two previous questions, what are one or two specific points (VDPs) that you have faced in the school environment?
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SOMETIMES YOU JUST GOTTA RELAX
AND "WOOSAH"

makeameme.org
NEUTRALIZING ROUTINES

STOP

- **S**top your unconscious response
- **T**ake three mindful breaths to self-regulate
- **O**bserve how you are feeling
- **P**roceed positively by doing what is most effective (not what you initially feel like saying or doing)

TRY

- **T**ake a deep breath
- **R**eflect on your emotions
- **Y**outh’s best interest
  - “Let’s **TRY** that again.”
  - “Let’s **TRY** it a different way.”
  - “Let’s **TRY** it how we do it at school.”

(Renshaw et al., 2015)

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**Equity:** When some are excluded or lack the knowledge, income, equipment, or [resources] necessary to participate fully in public discourse, they must overcome obstacles to access in order to ensure fairness. In other words, fairness also demands remedies to redress historic injustices that have prevented or diminished access in the first place … in order to maximize opportunities for access experienced by certain groups, a good society commits resources in order to level the playing field (Kranich 2001).
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Cultural Mismatch: Dominant culture typically influences all functions of school that often unintentionally excludes the voices of historically marginalized children and their experiences (Riddle, 2014; Fruchter, 2007; Noguera, 2003; Valenzuela, 1999)
Subtractive Schooling: A form of schooling that systematically strips historically marginalized students of their language, culture, and academic well being through the of assimilation to the dominant culture (Valenzuela 1999).
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Based on their actual population in the student body

This chart shows whether each group of students was underrepresented or overrepresented among students suspended out of school. For example, boys were overrepresented by about 18 percentage points because they made up about 51% of all students, but nearly 70% of the students suspended out of school.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage of all students</th>
<th>Underrepresented</th>
<th>Overrepresented</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White 50.3</td>
<td>17.8</td>
<td>23.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black 15.5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boys 51.4</td>
<td>18.3</td>
<td>18.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls 48.6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With disabilities 11.7</td>
<td>13.2</td>
<td>13.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Without disabilities 88.3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: GAO analysis of Department of Education, Civil Rights Data Collection | GAO-18-258
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This was true no matter the type of punishment.
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No matter the type of school

Figure 7: Representation of Students Suspended Out-of-School Compared to Student Population, by School Type, School Year 2013-14

This chart shows whether each group of students was underrepresented or overrepresented among students suspended out of school based on type of public school. For example, Black students were overrepresented among students suspended out of charter schools by nearly 32 percentage points, as shown in the chart, because they made up nearly 26% of all charter school students, but about 60% of the students suspended out of those schools.

Traditional schools
- Underrepresented [White: 17.4, Hispanic: 2.8, Black: 3.4, Asian: 0.6, American Indian/Alaska Native: 1.0, Two or more races: 0.06]
- Overrepresented [White: 21.9, Hispanic: 9.8, Black: 4.9, Asian: 0.2, American Indian/Alaska Native: 0.3, Two or more races: 0.3]

Magnet schools
- Underrepresented [White: 14.0, Hispanic: 15.0, Black: 9.8, Asian: 4.9, American Indian/Alaska Native: 0.2, Two or more races: 0.3]
- Overrepresented [White: 28.2, Hispanic: 15.6, Black: 28.2, Asian: 15.6, American Indian/Alaska Native: 0.6, Two or more races: 0.6]

Charter schools
- Underrepresented [White: 19.7, Hispanic: 8.7, Black: 3.1, Asian: 0.1, American Indian/Alaska Native: 0.1, Two or more races: 0.1]
- Overrepresented [White: 31.6, Hispanic: 2.3, Black: 1.1, Asian: 0.2, American Indian/Alaska Native: 0.2, Two or more races: 0.2]

Alternative schools
- Underrepresented [White: 8.3, Hispanic: 2.3, Black: 1.1, Asian: 0.2, American Indian/Alaska Native: 0.2, Two or more races: 0.2]
- Overrepresented [White: 11.4, Hispanic: 6.4, Black: 3.0, Asian: 1.0, American Indian/Alaska Native: 1.0, Two or more races: 1.0]

Special education
- Underrepresented [White: 10.8, Hispanic: 6.4, Black: 3.0, Asian: 1.0, American Indian/Alaska Native: 1.0, Two or more races: 1.0]

Source: GAO analysis of Department of Education, Civil Rights Data Collection. | GAO-18-258
No matter the rate of poverty at the school
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Years 1 and 2

Equity Pilot Outcomes for 2016-17 and 2017-2018:
Decrease disproportionate discipline across racial subgroup by:

- Focusing on adult behavior and results;
- Systematically reviewing data and action planning around closing the gap;
- Naming race and disproportionality

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Year 3

Equity Pilot Outcomes:
Decrease disproportionate discipline across racial subgroup by

- Emphasizing results by meeting regularly to systematically examine data specific to understanding behaviors and disproportionality
- Explicitly naming and understanding the role of race in inequitable outcomes by engaging in ongoing learning around implicit bias and our socio-historical context
- Deepening knowledge of how core components of PBIS, VDPs and the Safe and Inclusive School Framework work together to create equitable experiences for all students
- Fostering critical consciousness amongst staff and administration
- Developing and carry out action plans specific to the data review process and aligning action items to school/district improvement process and plans

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Equity in Practice

- Agenda
- Action Plan
- Trend Data Goal & Measurable Objectives
- Monthly Referral Rates by Subgroups
- Equity Pilot Problem Solving Guide for Addressing Racial and/or Ethnic Disproportionality

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Implicit Bias: The attitudes or stereotypes that affect our understanding, actions, and decisions in an unconscious manner. The biases, which encompass both favorable and unfavorable assessments, are activated involuntarily and without an individual’s awareness or intentional control (Blair, 2002 and Rudman, 2004, as cited in Staats & Patton, 2013).

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A Few Key Characteristics of Implicit Biases:

- Everyone possesses them.
- Implicit and explicit biases are not mutually exclusive and may even reinforce each other;
- Do not necessarily align with our declared beliefs or even reflect stances we would explicitly endorse;
- We generally tend to hold implicit biases that favor our own ingroup, though research has shown that we can still hold implicit biases against our ingroup.
- Our brains are incredibly complex, and the implicit associations that we have formed can be gradually unlearned through a variety of debiasing techniques.
The combination of defensiveness, guilt, and silence that many white people exhibit when faced with questions about race and racism.
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The 5-Stages of Staff Equity Training

Denial/Denial

Anger/Defensive

Bargaining/Rationalizing

Depression/Sobering Realization

Acceptance/Acceptance
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Denial

“Why is this necessary?”

“I’m not racist”

“I’m not a bigot”

“I don’t have biases toward my students”
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Defensive

“Are you calling me a racist?”

“Do you think I’m racist?”

I KNOW YOU ARE...

...BUT WHAT AM I?
Rationalizing

“I’m not racist, but…”

“I don’t see color/race”

“I deal with behavior, not race.”

Aesop’s The Fox and the Grapes fable is an apt example of rationalization.
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Sobering Realization

“Why would anyone think that way?”

“Are there times when someone would think that way about me?”

“Could someone have perceived me or my actions as racist/bias?”
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Acceptance
Critical Consciousness: The willingness and ability to see how power and privilege are at work to systematically advantage some while simultaneously disadvantaging others (Radd & Kramer, 2013).
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Equity of Referrals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>White Students</th>
<th>Black Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2015-16</td>
<td>2984</td>
<td>961</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016-17</td>
<td>2194</td>
<td>637</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017-18</td>
<td>1221</td>
<td>232</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018-19</td>
<td>560</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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Swis Trend Data

- Blacks
- Whites

Number of Retracts per 100

- September 2015 to February 2019
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Out of School Suspensions

- 2015-16: 630 (All Students: 134, Black Students: 81)
- 2016-17: 390 (All Students: 81, Black Students: 31)
- 2017-18: 261 (All Students: 31, Black Students: 20)
- 2018-19: 155 (All Students: 20, Black Students: 20)
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What is Grace?

- Simple elegance or refinement of movement;
- Polite manner of behaving;
- Do honor or credit to (someone or something) by one's presence;
- Be an attractive presence in or on; adorn;
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Here’s what grace looks like in my house:
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grace /grɑːs/ noun:
1. The exercise of love, kindness, compassion, mercy, favor; disposition to benefit or serve another.
“Yeah hey, they say two thousand zero zero party over, oops, out of time…”
“So in school
I'm gonna
punish
like it's....
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Shackelford Wisdom - "Shack-isms"

Students are different

- Distracted
- Increased social/emotional needs
- Lack coping skills
Teacher: Ms. Seely  
Date: May 10, 2019  
Message: Between Instagram, Snapchat, Phone, Youtube, weather, calls, texts, etc (I did not include Google Class notifications)  
1st - 174  
2nd - 157  
3rd - 212  
4th - prep  
5th - 168  
6th - did not do  
7th - 112 (started later in the hour)

Teacher: Ms. Pawson  
Date: May 10, 2019  
Message: Results from our cell phone experiment.  
2nd hour- 110 total notifications  
3rd hour- 238 total notifications  
4th hour- 345 total notifications  
5th hour- 330 total notifications  
6th hour- 470 total notifications  
7th hour- 310 total notifications
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Grand Total: 2,626 Interruptions
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Shackelford Wisdom - "Shack-isms"

Parents are different

- Distracted
- Stress about job, money, relationships
- Trust issues about school based on their past negative experiences with school
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“All Things PLC”

- Myth #1: Grades motivate students. / ODR/Suspensions motivate students.
- Myth #2: Grading homework and practice improves achievement. / ODR/Suspensions improves behavior.
- Myth #4: Punishment deters unwanted behavior. / ODR/Suspensions deters unwanted behavior.
- Myth #5: It's okay for teachers to have their own grading systems/ It's okay for teachers to have their own discipline policies
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Shackelford Wisdom - "Shack-isms"
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Shackelford Wisdom - "Shack-isms"

REPO!!!
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Shackelford Wisdom - "Shack-isms"
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Shackelford Wisdom - "Shack-isms"
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Shackelford Wisdom - "Shack-isms"
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We're all starving for grace, and at the same time, withholding that same grace from each other.
If you want to make the world a better place,
Take a look at yourself and make it change.

- Michael Jackson -
Thank you

Port Huron Area School District

Jamie Cain, Superintendent

Tracie Eschenburg, Executive Director-Employee and Student Services

Deb Barr, Director-Administrative Services/Behavior Supports

Jaime Feenstra, Supervisor, Behavior Supports
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Thank you

Michigan’s Integrated Behavior and Learning Support Initiative

Dr. Steve Goodman, Director

Dr. Ruthie Payno-Simmons, Equity Specialist

Beth Hill, Equity Specialist
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Thank you

Missouri Schoolwide Positive Behavior Support Summer Institute