Revising School Discipline Policies and Procedures to Promote Equity

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Training Guide for Using Data to Promote Equity in School Discipline Series

This series includes

- Introduction: Planning and Facilitating Work Sessions to Improve School Discipline

- Work Session: Revising School Discipline Policies and Procedures to Promote Equity

- Work Session: Using School Discipline Data to Pinpoint Concerns and Track Progress

- Work Session: Using Reflection Groups to Learn How Families and Educators View Their School or District

- Work Session: Identifying Strategies to Promote Equity in School Discipline

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Find a partner

- Find a partner

- Prepare a 1–2 minute introduction of your partner that includes

    Name

    Position

    One success related to school discipline or making students feel welcome

Agenda

1 **Introduce yourself**

2 **Discuss reasons for reviewing discipline policies**

3 **Review school discipline policies**

4 **Plan next steps**

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Objectives

- Discuss why school discipline policies are shifting, both nationally and within your district, from a zero-tolerance approach to school discipline to one that focuses on prevention and keeping students in school.

- Review your district's school discipline policies using the Discipline Policies and Procedures Summary (DPPS).

- Identify resources and example discipline documents to inform revision of your district's discipline policies and procedures documents.

- Begin organizing and planning revision of the district's discipline policies.

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Why are school discipline policies and procedures important?
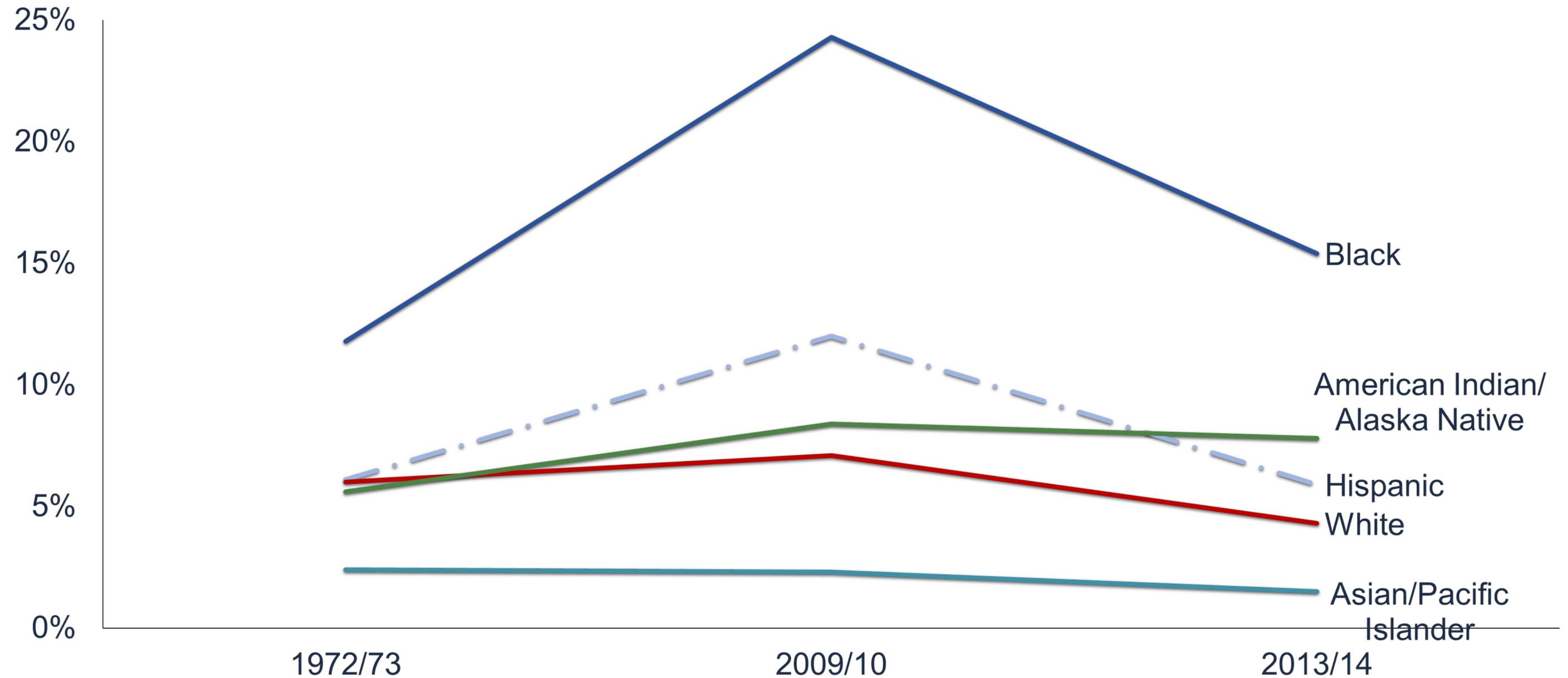
- Communicate values and mission

- Set the stage

- Provide guidance
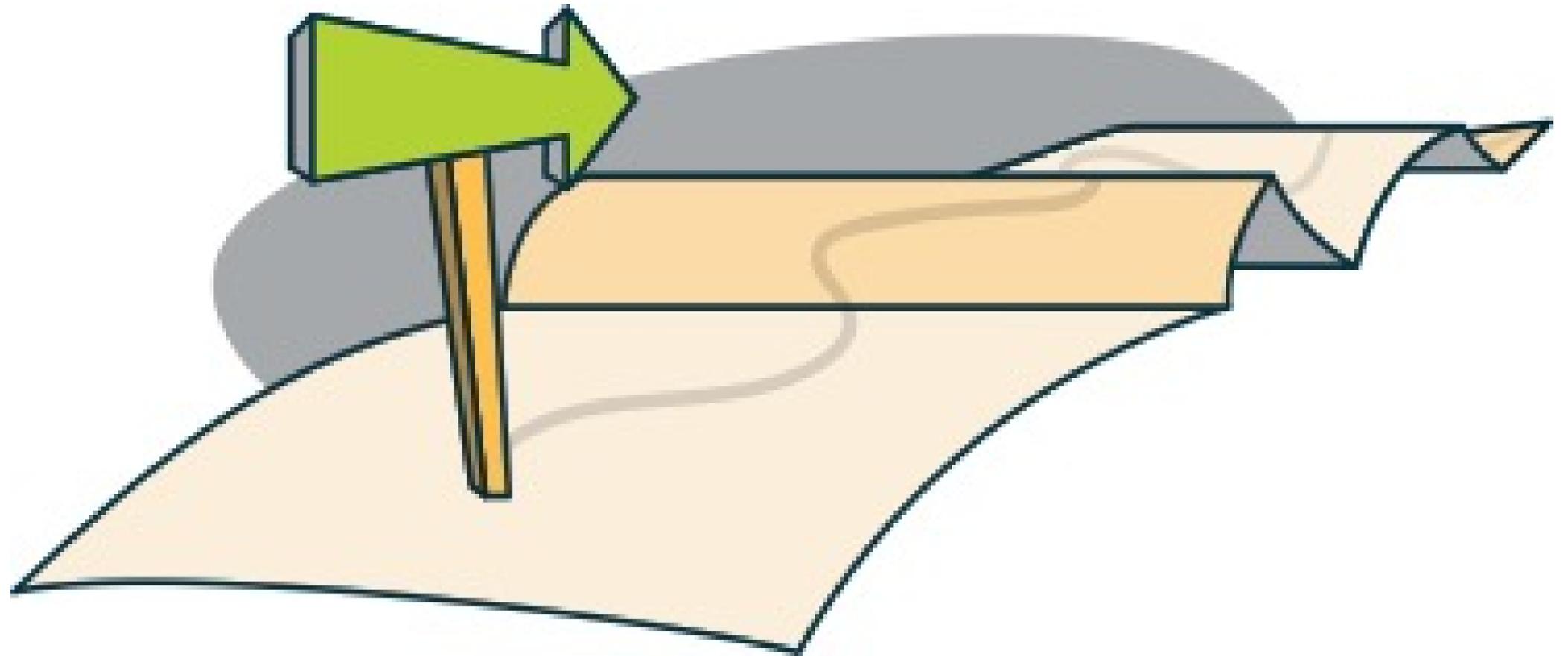
"Zero tolerance" was initially defined as consistently enforced suspension and expulsion policies in response to weapons, drugs, and violent acts in the school setting.

Suspension rates by race/ethnicity

(Losen & Martinez, 2013; Musu-Gillette, McFarland, Sonnenberg, & Wilkinson-Flicker, 2017)

Zero-tolerance policies

- Higher rate of exclusionary discipline

- Wider racial discipline gap

- Used for nonviolent behaviors:

  - Disrespect

  - Defiance

  - Disruption

  - Minor verbal and physical aggression

Suspensions and chronic absenteeism are costly for students

- Removes students from classroom instruction

- Weakens the students' connection with their school, teachers, and peers

- Lowers students' academic achievement

- Increases risk of repeating a grade and/or dropping out

(Balfanz, Byrnes, & Fox, 2015; Fabelo et al., 2011; Hinze-Pifer & Sartain, 2018; Noltemeyer, Ward, & Mcloughlin, 2015)

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Think, pair, share

AMAZING IDEA

AWESOME IDEA

COOL IDEA

Why is your team reviewing your district's school discipline policies?

Discipline Policies and Procedures Summary (DPPS)

Organization of the DPPS

The DPPS has three sections

1. Rate **9** elements

2. List alternatives to suspension

3. Inventory reasons for suspension or expulsion

1

Equity is a district priority

- Clearly states that eliminating discipline disparities is a district priority

- Mandates an equity focus in discipline decisions

TOP PRIORITY

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Focus on prevention

- Expectations and rights are stated positively

- Positive acknowledgement systems are in place

- Discipline approach includes:

  - Prevention and early intervention strategies –Evidence-based practices
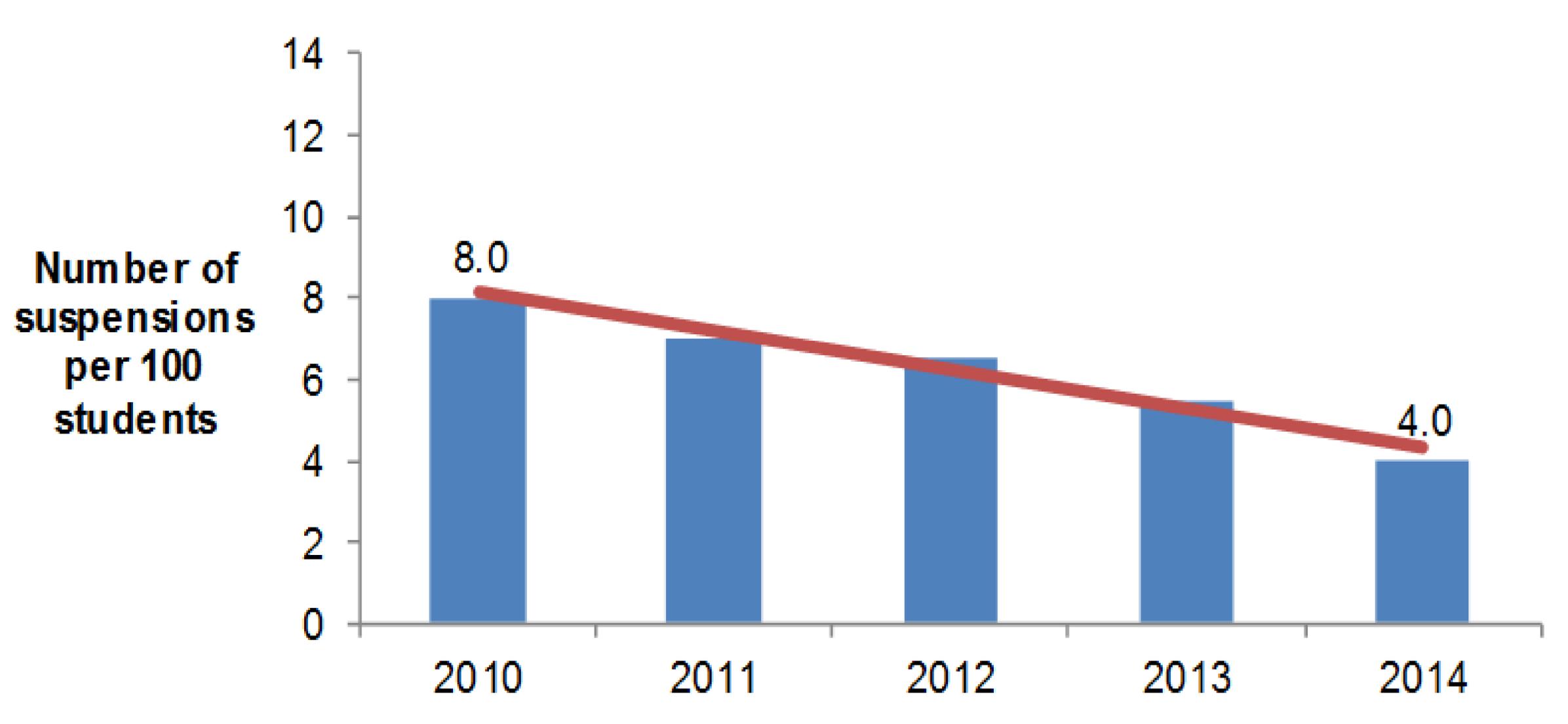
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3 Family engagement

"The best way of formulating a comprehensive discipline policy was involving everyone . . . principal, deans, teachers, parents, students, and community members at large, and ask them what they could see as the problem. If that was done, then everyone would be supportive."

Murkuria, 2002, p. 444

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Use disaggregated data

Source: Fictitious data for example purposes
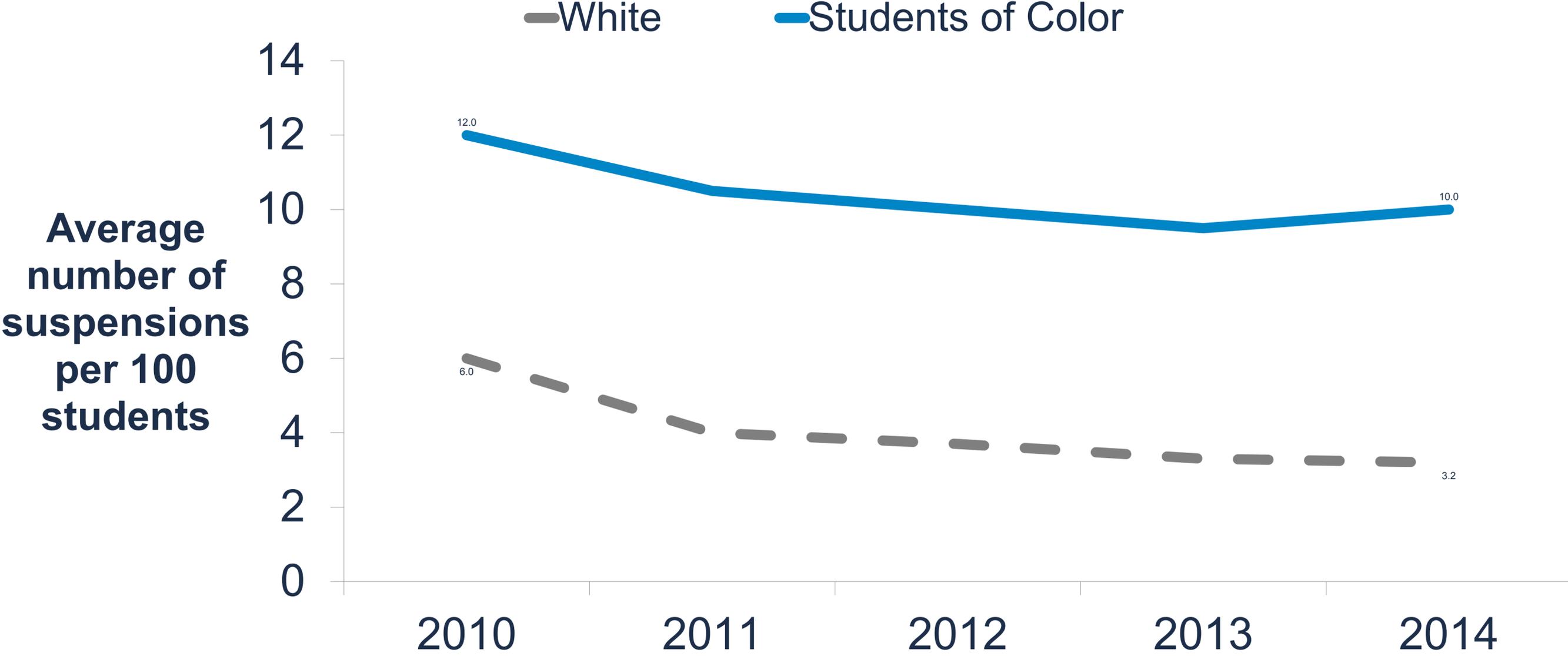
5 Minimize academic penalties

- Guidance preventing academic penalties for disciplinary concerns

- Allows students to make up credit for assignments missed during exclusion

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Apply to school only

- Applies to school activities only

  - On school grounds

  - School activities that are off school grounds

- Prohibits assigning discipline consequences for incidents that *do not directly influence* school functioning

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7 Outlines graduated discipline responses

- Promotes discipline policies that focus on early intervention and student support

- Limits use of exclusionary discipline and includes alternatives to suspension

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Mild

Student conference

Parent conference/involvement in planning

Prompted reflection

Verbal reprimand

Planning with counselor

Loss of privilege

Afterschool conference with teacher

Coordinated behavior plan/monitoring plan

Alternative programming

Counseling/mentoring

(Payne & Welch, 2010)

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Restorative

Restitution

Community/school service

Work duties or tasks

Verbal/written apologies

School project(s)

(Payne & Welch, 2010)

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Punitive

Suspension

In-school suspension

Afterschool detention

Saturday school

Lunch academy

(Payne & Welch, 2010)

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Provides alternatives to suspension
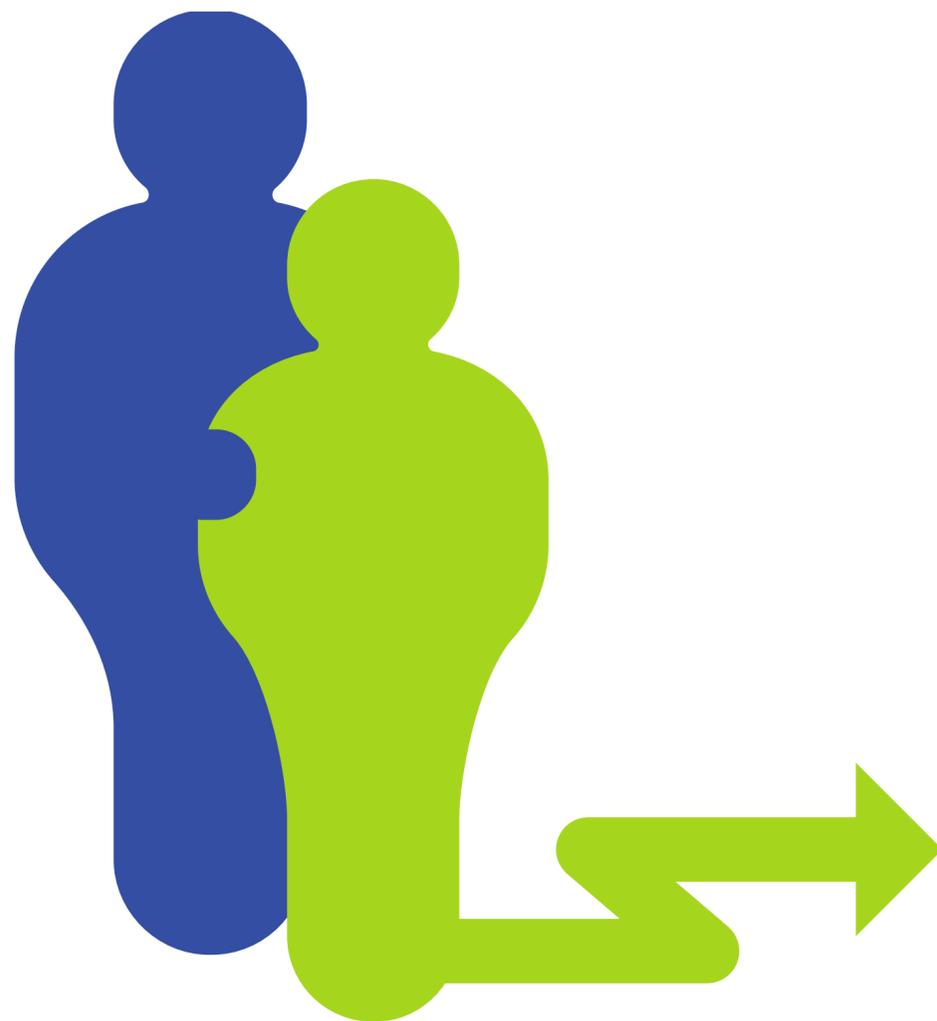
- Uses discipline policies that focus on early intervention and student support

- Limits use of exclusionary discipline and includes alternatives to suspension

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9 Has procedures to address serious threats to school safety

Emergency Plan

- Procedures address behaviors that pose a serious and credible threat to the safety of students and self

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Organizing the discipline policy revision process

Completing Section 1: Scoring 9 elements

Directions: Review the indicators for each element. Indicate the degree to which your district's policies, code of conduct, student/parent handbook, or other documents describe the indicator and implementation guidelines. Record the documents used in your review and key discussion points including strengths, areas of concern, and recommendations to improve the current policies and procedures.

Element 1 **Eliminating disproportionate use of exclusionary discipline is a district priority**	Few or no statements support the component	Some statements support the element and the district provides resource information, but its use is optional	Statements describe the element as part of the discipline approach, but guidelines for implementation are unclear	Statements describe the element as part of the district's discipline approach and provide clear guidelines for implementation
a. Equity is identified as a district priority in the mission statement and/or school improvement plan				√
b. Elimination of discipline disparities is identified as a district priority in the mission statement and/or school improvement plan	√			
c. District mandates that discipline actions are imposed without bias for students who have been historically underserved			√	
d. District uses disaggregated data to monitor exclusionary discipline among different student groups	√			

Comments and information sources:

1a. 2010–15 Strategic Plan (pg. 8). District Values statement includes the following:
   - Diversity. *Diversity is an essential asset of our community and a source of learning and opportunity in our schools.*
   - Equity. *Student achievement belongs to each student and will not be predicted by race, ethnicity, family economics, mobility, gender, disability, or initial proficiencies.*

1c. 2012-13 Student Parent Resource Handbook
   - *Strategy 1: Supportive, inclusive learning environments ensure each and every student, regardless of background, experiences success"* (p. 9)
   - Educators/school staff responsibilities include, *"respecting race, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, gender identify, gender expression, national origin, marital status, age, veterans' status, genetic information or disability in any education programs, activities or employment'* (p. 11 and 21)

1b and 1d. We could not find any statements identifying eliminating discipline disparities as a priority. Likewise, no statements on using disaggregated data to monitor progress on reducing the use of exclusionary data overall, and for students of color in particular.

Completing Section 1: Scoring 9 elements

Rating	Description of the DPPS rating
Not in place	Few or no statements identified to support the element
Beginning	Some statements about the element or the documents provide resource information about the element, but their use is optional
Progressing	Statements describe the element as part of the district's discipline approach, but guidelines for implementation are vague or unclear
In place	Statements describe the element as part of the district's discipline approach and provide clear guidelines for implementation

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Completing Section 2: Alternatives to suspension

Strategy	Definition	Implementation guidelines	Source and comments
Parent or student conference	No	No	School board policies *Guide to Policies, Rules, and Procedures on Student Responsibilities, Rights, and Discipline* (pp. 23–49)
Additional social skills instruction	No	No	
Problem solving (e.g., restorative chat)	No	No	
Behavior support plan	Yes	No	
Restriction from extracurricular activities	No	No	
Connection to mentor	No	No	
Break or reflection room	Yes	No	
In-school suspension	Yes	Yes	
Lunch or afterschool detention	No	No	
Athletics restrictions	Yes	Yes	
Community service	No	No	
Alcohol/drug assessment	No	No	

Completing Section 3: District guidelines for discipline actions by type of behavior or infraction

Behaviors	First infraction		Second infraction	
	Suspension	Expulsion	Suspension	Expulsion
Example *Disorderly conduct, including disruption of the school environment*	*Discretionary*	*N/A*	*Mandatory*	*Discretionary*
Alcohol	Mandatory	Discretionary		Mandatory
Assault	Mandatory	Discretionary	Mandatory	Discretionary
Automobile misuse	Discretionary		Discretionary	Discretionary
Bullying/harassment/cyberbullying	Discretionary	Discretionary	Mandatory	Discretionary
Bus misconduct	Discretionary	Discretionary	Discretionary	Discretionary
Dangerous drugs	Mandatory	Discretionary		Mandatory
Defiance of authority	Discretionary		Mandatory	Discretionary
Disorderly or disruptive conduct	Discretionary		Mandatory	Discretionary
Disruptive appearance/student dress	Discretionary		Discretionary	Discretionary
Fighting	Mandatory	Discretionary	Mandatory	Discretionary
Fire setting, attempted fire setting, fireplay	Mandatory	Discretionary	Mandatory	Discretionary
Forgery, lying, or academic integrity	Discretionary		Discretionary	Discretionary
Lewd conduct/profanity	Discretionary	Discretionary	Discretionary	Discretionary
Loitering (afterschool suspension)			Discretionary	

Organizing the discipline policy revision process

1. Convene a policy revision team

2. Gather planning information and organize resources

3. Revise your school discipline policies and procedures

4. Get necessary approvals for final documents

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School discipline policy and revision checklist

Activities	Staff and timeline		Comments
	Staff/team responsible	Date of completion	
1. Convene a policy revision team			
2. Gather planning information and organize resources			
a. Review Discipline Policy and Procedures Summary (DPPS) findings			
b. Determine the approvals needed for policy and procedure revisions			
c. Identify strategies for gathering stakeholder input			
d. Organize resources and examples			
3. Develop a plan			

Additional thoughts?

- What has been one benefit of reviewing school discipline policies and procedures?

- What challenges did you encounter and how did you solve them?

- What are next steps to completing the policy revision process?

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