

How Schools Can Make Discipline More Equitable



EQUITY
ASSISTANCE
CENTER -
SOUTH AT SEF



The commitment to every student's growth and well-being guides the implementation and desire for equitable discipline practices. These practices not only support the well-being of students, they enhance their learning experiences.

BENEFITS OF EQUITABLE DISCIPLINE PRACTICES

- Improved Student Behavior
- Enhanced Student Engagement
- Reduced Discipline Issues
- Increased Academic Outcomes
- Advanced Equity and Inclusion Practices

SCHOOL RECOMMENDATIONS

Establishing clear behavioral expectations and consistent support to promote social, emotional, and academic success for all students will foster a supportive school environment and decrease disciplinary incidences.

School districts can consider the following actions to reduce exclusionary discipline practices:

Examine the Data: Gather detailed data about disciplinary incidents, particularly suspensions and expulsions, and examine group differences (particularly for Black and Brown students and students with disabilities). Conduct critical conversations, develop goals and norms, and provide a disciplinary guide that directly focuses on reducing disciplinary disproportionality.

Adopt a Prevention Mindset: Prioritize addressing students' needs and emotions. Recognize that behaviors may reflect these needs, and proactively provide support to address their root causes.

Create Equitable Systems and Support Them: Shift mindsets to prioritize student success and well-being by fostering a schoolwide approach involving teachers, administrators, and students. Train staff to incorporate preventative measures when students have challenging behaviors.

Implement Evidence-Based Practices: Implement evidence-based strategies like the Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS). This framework assesses student progress, uses proven practices, and adjusts interventions based on data to support academic and behavioral success across different support levels.

For help with implementing these strategies, contact the Equity Assistance Center – South
The Southern Education Foundation at: eacsouth@southerneducation.org

CONSEQUENCES OF UNEQUAL DISCIPLINARY PRACTICES

Research shows that a school's approach to student discipline significantly affects students' access to equitable learning opportunities. Particularly concerning are the disparities in suspension rates across racial and ethnic groups, which underscore broader equity issues and highlight the need for more fair and consistent disciplinary practices.

Schools with inequitable disciplinary actions face significant negative consequences:

Disproportionate Discipline and Educational Outcomes: Inequitable disciplinary practices lead to higher rates of suspensions, expulsions, and other exclusionary measures particularly for Black and Brown students as compared to their peers. This disparity contributes to educational inequities, negatively impacting academic achievement, school engagement, and long-term academic and non-academic outcomes for these students.



School Climate: Inequitable disciplinary practices create unsafe and unwelcoming school environments by fostering mistrust and resentment among students, families, and staff. When students perceive disciplinary actions as unfair or discriminatory, it undermines their sense of belonging and erodes the school's overall climate of trust and community.

For additional details and resources, please scan the QR code.



The EAC-South would like to thank Cindy Corcoran, Carla Curtis, Mindy Duell, and Tom Munk, for their participation in a webinar, sponsored by the EAC-South, which significantly informed the content of this document. Additionally, thank you to the National Academy of Education for their significant contributions to the document's development.

For more information, the webinar is available at <https://eacsouth.org>.