Building Healthy, Equitable Communities Through Transforming the School Climate

changelabsolutions.org/the-series  September 18, 2018
Welcome to the Building Healthy, Equitable Communities Series

A virtual space for exploring the topic of health equity
2018 SCHEDULE

cangelabsolutions.org/the-series

**Episode 1: Health Equity** (April)
Building healthy, equitable communities through equitable laws and policies

**Episode 2: Healthy Children & Families** (May)
Building healthy, equitable communities through supports for working families

**Episode 3: Food Systems** (June)
Building healthy, equitable communities through a just food system

**Episode 4: Built Environment** (August)
Building healthy, equitable communities through comprehensive long-range planning

**Episode 5: Schools** (September)
Building healthy, equitable communities through transforming the school climate

**Bonus Training: Preemption** (October)
Preemption, public health, and equity - the search for local solutions

**Episode 6: Community Pillar** (October)
Building healthy, equitable communities through community-driven solutions
What you can expect from our episodes:

**Blog Post**
Creating Safe and Supportive Schools: 5 Promising Areas for Policy Change

**Webinar**
Building Healthy, Equitable Communities Through Transforming the School Climate

**Expert Panel**
Continued Conversation About Schools (September 20)
Welcome!

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*ChangeLab Solutions*

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*Director, Policy Development*  
*Child Trends*

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*President*  
*Learning Policy Institute*
The information provided in this discussion is for informational purposes only, and does not constitute legal advice. ChangeLab Solutions does not enter into attorney-client relationships.

ChangeLab Solutions is a non-partisan, nonprofit organization that educates and informs the public through objective, non-partisan analysis, study, and/or research. The primary purpose of this discussion is to address legal and/or policy options to improve public health. There is no intent to reflect a view on specific legislation.

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• Why should we pay attention to school discipline?
• How is school discipline related to health?
• How can we use alternative approaches to ESD to help more children thrive?
• How do we improve school climate to support student success?
Why should we pay attention to school discipline?
Walkthrough…

- **Part I**: Harms associated with suspension and expulsion
- **Part II**: Prevalence of school discipline practice & gaps by subgroup
- **Part III**: Federal and state policy efforts to address discipline
PART I:
Harms associated with suspension and expulsion
Harms at student level:

- Increased likelihood of dropout (Losen & Martinez, 2013)
- Increased likelihood of involvement in the juvenile justice system (Fabelo et al., 2011)
- Reduced likelihood of postsecondary enrollment (Balfanz et al., 2015)

Harms at school level:

- Weak evidence of suspensions preventing future misbehavior (Massar et al., 2015)
- Greater use of suspension associated with less safety, poor student-student relationships (Steinberg, Allensworth, & Johnson, 2011)
• 54% of students studied received at least one suspension or expulsion between 7th and 12th grade

• Black students were 31% more likely to face discipline than white and Hispanic students (with statistical controls)

• Students suspended or expelled were at greater risk of dropout or grade retention

• Students suspended or expelled were 3x as likely to experience juvenile justice contact within the following year (with statistical controls)
Three seminal pieces of research...

Educational and Criminal Justice Outcomes 12 Years After School Suspension

Janet Rosenbaum

Abstract
A third of U.S. students are suspended over a K-12 school career. Suspended youth have worse adult outcomes than nonsuspended students, but these outcomes could be due to selection bias: that is, suspended youth may have had worse outcomes even without suspension. This study compares the educational and criminal justice outcomes of 480 youth suspended for the first time with those of 1,193 matched nonsuspended youth from a nationally representative sample. Prior to suspension, the suspended and nonsuspended youth did not differ on 60 pre-suspension variables including students’ self-reported delinquency and risk behaviors, parents’ reports of socioeconomic status, and administrators’ reports of school disciplinary policies. Twelve years after suspension (ages 25–32), suspended youth were less likely than matched nonsuspended youth to have earned bachelor’s degrees or high school diplomas, and were more likely to have been arrested and on probation, suggesting that suspension rather than selection bias explains negative outcomes.

5 years after suspension:
• Likelihood of receiving HS diploma decreases by 8%
• Likelihood of arrest increase by 40%
• Among black youth, 94% less likely to receive a BA

12 years after suspension:
• Likelihood of BA decreases by 24%
• Likelihood of arrest increases by 30%
• Likelihood of 2 or more arrests increase by 51%
• Likelihood of experiencing prison increases by 23%
“Reduction in out-of-school suspension for severe infractions was associated with small but statistically significant increases in student test scores... consequential attendance improvement...”
PART II:
Prevalence of school discipline practice & gaps by subgroup
The Civil Rights Data Collection (CRDC)

- Universal: Contains data on every public school and school district in the nation
- School discipline data can often be cross-tabulated by race, gender, disability status
- Communities can search for their school or school district on https://ocrdata.ed.gov
What We Know from the 2015-2016 CRDC

NEW RELEASE FOR 2018

2015–16 CIVIL RIGHTS DATA COLLECTION

SCHOOL CLIMATE AND SAFETY

DATA HIGHLIGHTS ON SCHOOL CLIMATE AND SAFETY
IN OUR NATION'S PUBLIC SCHOOLS

What's the 2015-16 Civil Rights Data Collection?

The 2015–16 Civil Rights Data Collection (CRDC) is a survey of all public schools and school districts in the United States. The CRDC measures student access to courses, programs, staff, and resources that impact education equity and opportunity for students. The CRDC has long provided critical information used by the Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights in its enforcement and monitoring activities.
What We Know from the 2015-2016 CRDC

In 2015-2016, 2.7 million of K-12 students received at least one OSS.

Wide, persistent disparities by race for black male and female students.
What We Know from the 2015-2016 CRDC

Wide, persistent disparities by disability for children served under IDEA

Historically, male children of color with disabilities have been at highest risk

FIGURE 14: Percentage distribution of students receiving one or more out-of-school suspensions, by disability (IDEA)

What We Know from the 2015-2016 CRDC

FIGURE 2: Percentage distribution of students referred to law enforcement or subjected to school-related arrests, by race

FIGURE 11: Percentage distribution of students subjected to restraint or seclusion, by race

FIGURE 15: Percentage distribution of students receiving expulsions, by race and sex

NOTE: Data may not add up to 100 percent due to rounding.
What we know from the 2018 GAO Report

Patterns in Disciplinary Actions
GAO’s examination of the CRDC uncovered a narrative about how our schools are disciplining black students differently from all others.
Patterns in Disciplinary Actions

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What we know from the 2018 GAO Report

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 school by nearly 32 percentage points, as shown in the chart, because they made up nearly 29% of all charter school students, but about 60% of the students suspended out of those schools.

Source: GAO analysis of Department of Education, Civil Rights Data Collection. | GAO-18-258

Note: Disparities in student discipline such as those presented in this figure may support a finding of discrimination, but taken alone, do not establish whether unlawful discrimination has occurred.
PART III:
Federal and state policy efforts to address discipline
Every Student Succeeds Act
• State and local plans must address the overuse of exclusionary discipline
• State plans must address use of discipline practices that threaten health and safety
• State report cards must include school discipline data
• States must maintain school accountability systems that include school quality

Individuals with Disabilities Act

Titles IV and VI of the Civil Rights Act
Every Student Succeeds Act

Individuals with Disabilities Act
- Schools have authority to discipline, but must conduct a “manifestation determination” if discipline exceeds 10 school days
- States must identify and intervene in districts with “significant disproportionality,” by race and ethnicity, in the discipline of children with disabilities
- Schools must provide an education program appropriate to a child’s circumstances

Titles IV and VI of the Civil Rights Act
Federal Policy

Every Student Succeeds Act

Individuals with Disabilities Act

Titles IV and VI of the Civil Rights Act

• Schools have an obligation to not discriminate on the basis of race in the administration of discipline
• Discrimination includes the use of facially neutral policies that have a disparate impact
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abolishing Zero-Tolerance</th>
<th>Grade-level Bans (e.g., P-3)</th>
<th>Bans for Offense Types (e.g., willful defiance)</th>
<th>Bans for First Offense</th>
<th>Length Restrictions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Colorado</td>
<td>Maryland</td>
<td>California</td>
<td>Illinois</td>
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<tr>
<td>Illinois</td>
<td>Texas</td>
<td>District of Columbia</td>
<td>Maryland</td>
<td>Maryland</td>
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How is school discipline related to health?
What are ACEs?

Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) are “traumatic experiences that can have a profound effect on a child’s developing brain and body with lasting impacts on a person’s health throughout her lifespan.”

Source: Center for Youth Wellness white paper “An Unhealthy Dose of Stress (June 2013)”
45% of all children in the U.S. have experienced at least one ACE.

Source: Child Trends “The Prevalence of adverse childhood experiences, nationally, by state, and by race/ethnicity” (February 2018)
## Prevalence of ACEs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race or Ethnicity</th>
<th>% of children that have experienced at least one ACE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Black non-Hispanic</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White non-Hispanic</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian non-Hispanic</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Black non-Hispanic, Hispanic, and non-Hispanic children of other races are more likely than White children to experience 2 or more ACEs*

Source: Child Trends “The Prevalence of adverse childhood experiences, nationally, by state, and by race/ethnicity” (February 2018)
Toxic stress is “the extreme, frequent, or extended activation of the body’s stress response without the buffering presence of a supportive adult.”

Source: Center for Youth Wellness white paper “An Unhealthy Dose of Stress (June 2013)
The Toll of ACEs and Toxic Stress

ACEs and a student’s academic trajectory
• Chronic absenteeism
• Behavioral and learning challenges, and struggles in schools

ACEs and detrimental socioeconomic outcomes
• High school non-completion and household poverty
• Periods of unemployment
ACEs, toxic stress, and health outcomes

- Increased risk of suicide attempts, sexual risk behaviors, and lifetime depressive episodes
- Disruptions of the metabolic and immune systems
- Lower life expectancy
What role do schools play?

Schools can play a critical role in mitigating the effects that ACEs and toxic stress can have on a young person’s healthy development and educational success.
Despite this, many schools beginning at the pre-K level, continue to suspend and expel students—particularly students of color—at alarming rates.
ESD practices exacerbate the effects of ACEs and toxic stress

Exclusionary school discipline (ESD) practices undermine critical protective factors that can support children’s healthy development, even in the face of adversity:

- safe, stable and nurturing relationships
- safe environments
- positive academic experiences
ESD practices can transform schools into spaces that...

...have lower levels of connectivity:

- feelings of mistrust between students and teachers
- social isolation of students

School connectedness is a stabilizing force in the lives of youth.
ESD practices can transform schools into spaces that...

...have a more limited understanding between families and schools

- Linked to negatives impacts on parents' views of schools as safe and accepting places
ESD practices can transform schools into spaces that...

...compound stress for students and families

• May retrigger histories of trauma for children with someone in the household who was/is incarcerated
By pushing students out and depriving them of **critical protective factors**, ESD practices exacerbate racial disparities and external stressors that threaten the health and wellbeing of developing children.

These practices undermine the traditional purpose of schools—which is to create a safe, nurturing, learning environment.
But wait! There is good news.
How can we use alternative approaches to ESD to help more children thrive?
Three Principles to Improve Outcomes for Children and Families

Restorative alternatives that emphasize healthy development of the whole child positively reinforce each of the three design principles to cultivate healthier school environments, empower students, remove barriers to educational attainment, and equip students with the skills to thrive in and outside of the classroom.
Design Principle #1: Support Responsive Relationships

Restorative justice practices:
• Foster healthy relationships in schools built on a foundation of trust, respect, and care
• Increase engagement for students and families, and improves two-way communication

Social and emotional learning:
• Leads to schools characterized by
  – a supportive culture and climate
  – positive relationships
  – deeper learning and
  – improved classroom management
Design Principle #2: Strengthen Core Life Skills

Restorative justice practices:
- Replace fear and punishment as motivators with belonging, connectedness, and a willingness to change
- Can create a school climate that develops social and emotional skills and understanding

Social and emotional learning:
- Fosters skills such as
  - self-regulation
  - executive function
  - self-efficacy and
  - empathy
Design Principle #3: Reduce Sources of Stress

Restorative justice practices:
• Can reduce suspension rates across a school district
• Contributes to the narrowing of the racial-discipline gap for Black non-Hispanic and Hispanic students

Social and emotional learning:
• Linked to reduced risk-taking and emotional distress
• Can shift race and gender disparities in school discipline
ESD practices exacerbate the effects of ACEs and toxic stress.

Students at greater risk of experiencing 1 or more ACEs are being pushed out of schools at a disproportionate rate, raising health equity concerns.

There is growing momentum around an alternative vision for schools, grounded in science, that mitigates the effects of ACEs and toxic stress, and supports students to reach their full potential.
How do we improve school climate to support student success?
Improving School Climate to Support Student Success

Linda Darling-Hammond
A New Focus:
Social, Emotional, & Academic Development

Figure 1
The Whole Child Ecosystem
What We Know from Science

The brain and the development of intelligences are malleable. The brain develops throughout life as a function of experiences that activate neural pathways which permit new kinds of thinking and performance. The kinds of experience matter greatly.

• Secure relationships
• Rich, stimulating environments
• Back-and-forth conversation
Variability in human development is the norm. The pace and profile of each child’s development is unique.

Human relationships are the essential ingredient that catalyzes development & learning.

Adversity affects development and learning -- and how schools respond matters.
Learning is social, emotional and academic.

Children actively construct knowledge based on their experiences, relationships, and social contexts.
Hundreds of studies have found that a positive school climate supports stronger achievement, better behavior, more attachment, and stronger long-term outcomes for students.
A Framework for Whole Education

- **Positive School Climate**: Promotes strong attachments and relationships, a sense of safety and belonging, and relational trust.

- **Productive Instructional Strategies**: Connects to student experiences, supports conceptual understanding, and develops metacognitive abilities.

- **Whole Child**: Academic, cognitive, ethical, physical, psychological, social-emotional development.

- **Individualized Supports**: Enable healthy development, meet student needs, and address learning barriers.

- **Social and Emotional Development**: Promotes the skills, habits, and mindsets that enable self-regulation, interpersonal skills, perseverance, and resilience.

- **Extended Learning Opportunities**: Structures for effective caring.

- **Coordination of Support**: Integrated services.

- **Learning to Learn Strategies**: Conceptual understanding and motivation.

- **Integration of Social-Emotional Skills**: Development of positive mindsets.

- **Coordinated Support**: Effective solutions.

- **Multi-level Systems of Support (MTSS)**: Behavioral supports.

- **Student-Centered Instruction**: Positive community.

- **Environment for Learning**: Safe and secure learning communities.
I. Environmental conditions that support success along the developmental and learning continuum:

- Structures for effective caring
- Identity-safe classrooms that support belonging
- Relational trust among staff and families
II. Support for Social and Emotional Development:

- Explicit teaching and integration of SEL:
  - Self-regulation
  - Empathy
  - Collaboration
  - Conflict resolution
  - Decision making

- Mindfulness / stress management

- Growth mindset

- Agency & resilience
III. Instructional strategies that support competence, efficacy, and motivation.

- Authentic, engageable, well-supported tasks that
  - build on students’ prior knowledge & experiences
  - provide the right amount of challenge and support
  - provide feedback with opportunities for revision
  - focus on mastery and learning goals, not competition
IV. Structures that reach beyond the classroom to provide systems of academic and social support.

- Integrated services
- Extended learning
- Multi-tiered systems of support
- Community schools
Recommendations
1. Focus the System on Developmental Supports for Children

**Include Measures of School Climate, Social-Emotional Supports, and School Exclusions in Accountability and Improvement Systems.**

**Adopt Guidance for Social, Emotional, and Cognitive Learning that Clarifies the Competencies Students Should Be Helped to Develop and the Practices That Can Help Them Accomplish These Goals.**

**Replace Zero-Tolerance Policies with Discipline Policies Focused on Social-Emotional Learning and Restorative Discipline.**

**Incorporate Educator Competencies Regarding Support for SEL and Restorative Practices into Licensing and Accreditation Requirements.**

**Provide Funding for School Climate Surveys, Social-Emotional Learning and Restorative Justice Programs, and Revamped Licensing Practices to Support These Reforms.**
## 2. Design Schools to Provide Settings for Healthy Development

| Design schools for strong relationships by creating small schools & SLCs, advisory systems, teaching teams, looping teachers with students, and organizing schools with longer grade spans. | Develop schoolwide norms and supports for identity-safe, culturally responsive classrooms that teach social, emotional, and cognitive skills. | Provide integrated student supports through community school models and partnerships. | Develop multi-tiered systems of support (MTSS), from universal designs for learning through academic & non-academic supports available without labelling or delay. | Provide extended learning time to ensure that students do not fall behind, from tutoring models such as Reading Recovery, to after school supports and summer enrichment. | Design outreach to families through home visits and flexibly scheduled conferences; outreach and regular positive communication. |
3. Ensure Educator Learning

- **INVEST IN EDUCATOR WELLNESS:** Investment in preparation and mentoring that improve efficacy, mindfulness and stress management, SEL programs, and supportive administration.

- **DESIGN PREPARATION PROGRAMS THAT PROVIDE A STRONG FOUNDATION IN PRACTICES THAT SUPPORT DEVELOPMENT AND LEARNING** – and how to design such school environments.

- **OFFER IN-SERVICE PROGRAMS THAT HELP EDUCATORS REFINE STUDENT-CENTERED PRACTICES:** Use data about school climate & student outcomes to improve; problem solve around children’s needs, and engage in collegial learning.

- **INVEST IN EDUCATOR RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION:** High-retention through high-retention pathways into the profession that diversify the educator workforce, high-quality mentoring, and collegial environments for practice.
Educating the Whole Child: Improving School Climate to Support Student Success

Linda Darling-Hammond and Channa M. Cook-Harvey

Thank you! Questions?

Join our expert panel for Continued Conversation About Schools on September 20, 12pm – 1pm PT

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Want more health equity?

Next up, bonus training! Preemption, public health, and equity - the search for local solutions.

- Webinar: October 16

changelabsolutions.org/the-series
Resources for changemaking:

- Educating the Whole Child: Improving School Climate to Support Student Success (Learning Policy Institute)
- Youth Policy Playbook
- Stay tuned for our Issue Brief and Blueprint for Collective Action

For these and other resources, visit us at changelabsolutions.org
Keep the conversation going

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