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Student-Centered Behavior Management: A Holistic Approach to Reducing Overall Discipline While Minimizing the Disproportionate Racial Gap (Project)

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Student-Centered Behavior Management: A Holistic
Approach to Reducing Overall Discipline While
Minimizing the Disproportionate Racial Gap
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Chapter One: Project Proposal

Problem Statement

Racial inequities exist in education as evidenced by the disproportionate suspension rates of minority populations. Discrimination remains an issue, although 60 years has passed since the Supreme Court ruled in favor of racial integration and educational equality in the 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* decision. Minority students, especially those of African American descent, are being suspended and expelled from schools at an alarming and disproportionate rate in comparison to Caucasian counterparts (Mendez & Knoff, 2003; Skiba et al., 2011; Skiba, Michael, Nardo, & Peterson, 2002). Often times, students in minority groups are suspended for relatively minor behavioral infractions (Mendez & Knoff, 2003) and have a higher likelihood of receiving harsh punishments such as exclusion from learning through out-of-school suspensions (McFadden & Marsh II, 1992; Skiba et al., 2011). The advent of zero tolerance policies has added to the complexities of equality in education. Its wide adoption has increased the rate at which all students are withheld from learning and has perpetuated the disproportionately high rates of suspensions and expulsions of African American students (Harvard, 2000; Hoffman, 2014).

Importance and Rationale

Disproportionate suspension rates of minority populations are a nation-wide issue and are well documented in previous work (Harvard, 2000; Krezmien, Leone, & Achilles, 2006; McFadden & Marsh II, 1992; Mendez & Knoff, 2003; Skiba et al., 2011; Skiba et al., 2002; Wu, Pink, Crain, & Moles, 1982). The findings in numerous

studies highlight a grim outlook for minority students, especially African Americans, in the public school system. The likelihood that African American students are suspended range from a little more than twice as likely (Gregory, Cornell, & Fan, 2011; Wu et al., 1982) to as high as almost four times more likely in comparison to their White classmates (Skiba et al., 2011). A recent study of 46 schools in Colorado, Illinois, Maryland, and Michigan suggested that African American students are 3.11 times more likely to be excluded from school than White students (Tobin & Vincent, 2011). Often times, Black students are referred for relatively minor infractions (Mendez & Knoff, 2003) and are subject to the use of harsher punishments such as suspensions, even though they may have committed the same offenses as white students (Nicholson-Crotty, Birchmeier, & Valentine, 2009).

Bias treatment is even more prominent in districts that use zero tolerance techniques. In a study of an urban school district with a student enrollment of 24,000, Hoffman (2014) concluded that after the expansion of zero tolerance, this district doubled its number of students recommended for expulsion in just two years. Although the percentage of White and Hispanic students recommended for expulsion only rose 0.2 percent, the percentage of African American students recommended for expulsion more than doubled. The expansion of zero tolerance also contributed to a widening disciplinary gap. The percentage of days suspended for Black compared to White students was 7 to 1 (Hoffman, 2014). This finding is considerably higher than historic work in the area of disproportionality of minority discipline. Although a

causal relationship was not determined, it is nonetheless strong evidence against the effectiveness of using harsh punishments as deterrents to bad behavior.

In an article submission to The Illinois School Board Journal, Felesena (2013) describes an adaptation of zero tolerance he calls the Progressive Discipline Policy (PDP). Felesena argues that many instances in education tend to follow the 90/10 rule; educators tend to spend 90 percent of their time dealing with 10 percent of the population. He asserts that time strapped administrators spend unreasonable amounts of resources dealing with small, habitual infractions preventing them from otherwise improving the learning for the majority of the student population. The consequences in the 13 step Progressive Discipline Policy "are successful deterrents of future misbehavior" (Felesena, 2013, p. 40). Felesena experienced success with PDP at Central High School and urges administrators to adopt the program. Despite the great news at Central High School, previous studies in school discipline indicate different results in the use of prescribed consequences. Since the widespread adoption of zero tolerance disciplinary practices similar to PDP, out-of-school suspension and expulsion rates have increased (Hoffman, 2014; Krezmien et al., 2006). Moreover, schools that have adopted the zero tolerance mindset have not solved the issue of minority disproportionality in discipline (Krezmien et al., 2006).

The practice of zero tolerance in excluding youth from the structured environment of school has strong implications and can lead to unintentional consequences. Suspensions and similar consequences conflict with a student's ability to form strong, healthy, and trusting relationships with adults. Additionally, the rigid

assignment of pre-prescribed consequences for behavioral infractions hinders a student's formation of positive attitudes towards fairness and justice (Harvard University, 2000). By not considering mitigating circumstances and uncontrolled factors into the disciplinary process, adults teach students a "one size fits all" model preventing students from truly learning from their mistakes.

The need for educational reform in disciplinary policies is dire. It has become increasing clear that the deterrent effect of zero tolerance is minimal. As a nation, school leaders must shift communities in the belief that punitive consequences alone can change behavior. Rather, student success hinges on the school's willingness and ability to reduce and prevent disruptive behaviors at the root of the cause. In other words, schools must be proactive rather than reactive in discipline if they wish to increase academic success and reduce bias treatment of historically marginalized groups.

Background of Project

Studies in school discipline have consistently suggested racial bias in the application of school rules (Gregory et al., 2011; McFadden & Marsh II, 1992; Mendez & Knoff, 2003; Skiba et al., 2002; Skiba et al., 2011; Tobin & Vincent, 2011; Wu et al., 1982). Although racial inequities continue to be an issue, there is little research explaining the causes of ethnic disparities in discipline. Perhaps the complexity of the issue makes it difficult to isolate causal factors. However, some research is available to address alternative hypotheses for higher rates of minority discipline. The evidence provided suggests that disproportionality is not due to

socioeconomic factors (Skiba et al., 1992; Wu et al., 1982), nor is it due to higher rates of violence or disruptive behavior in African American students (McFadden & Marsh II, 1992; Wu et al., 1982). Moreover, increased representation of minority teachers in the school system was not found to be a significant factor in reducing high rates of minority suspension (Wu et al., 1982). Rather, African American students are often disciplined more harshly for less serious offenses (McFadden & Marsh II, 1992; Skiba et al., 2002). Notably, Skiba et al. (2002) concluded that the perceived preferential treatment of White students may have a relationship with the different patterns of referrals for the two ethnic groups. White students were referred more frequently for objective infractions such as smoking or vandalism. The expectations and consequences for these types of violations are usually well defined in student handbooks, potentially making the application of discipline more straightforward. Conversely, the majority of referrals given to African American students were for infractions that required judgment or were subjective. Common referrals included loitering, disrespect, or excessive noise. These types of violations required some judgment by the sending teacher.

Schools that employ zero tolerance disciplinary policies not only experience more behavioral issues; they perpetuate the process in which minority students are treated unjustly (Harvard, 2000; Hoffman, 2014). Zero tolerance policies originally emerged as a means to reduce dangerous and criminal behavior in schools. It gained nationwide popularity as fear of increased school violence became a prominent media topic, influencing educators and legislators to adopt a "get tough" attitude towards

discipline. Although intended to be used as a last resort, out-of-school suspensions became the norm of disciplinary consequences for relatively minor infractions. Moreover, policies on expulsions, which were reserved for the most serious offenses such as possession of a gun on school property, were expanded to include other weapons and drug related violations. As a result, the number of students withheld from school increased drastically in the 1990s since the expansion of zero tolerance policies (Harvard, 2000).

Although the rates in school violence declined by a large margin in the 1990s, public perceptions of the likelihood of school violence increased (Brooks, Schiraldi, & Ziedenberg, 2000). Perhaps high profile tragic incidences of school violence like the Columbine High School massacre had a negative effect on the public's perceptions. Despite the declining rates of school and youth violence, many districts resorted to using harsh consequences indicative of zero tolerance in an attempt to discourage bad behavior. Research indicates that even when subject to harsh consequences, children still misbehave. Punishment alone does not prevent future misbehavior (McFadden & Marsh II, 1992) and the expansion of zero tolerance did little to decrease the number of incidences of suspensions and expulsions (Hoffman, 2014).

As a district, a racially diverse West Michigan school system (pseudonym) has unintentionally created racial barriers for its minority population. Program entry requirements and the use of zero tolerance policies have contributed to a biased system. District data indicate that a disproportionate ethnic margin exists between

participation in honors and remedial programs as well as disciplinary referrals (see Appendix B).

An alternative high school within this racially diverse West Michigan School District was initially opened as an attempt to resolve increasing rates of student failure, dropouts, and low test scores. These issues were identified as major contributors to the district's inability to adequately meet Annual Yearly Progress (AYP) at the high school level. The program was initially designed to provide students with an opportunity to quickly recover lost credit through an online learning platform called Education 2020. Although students are encouraged to return to their sending schools, the alternative program offers an 18-credit diploma.

Despite its reputation in the community as a beacon of hope and social justice for displaced teenagers, the alternative high school has become a contributor to the current unjust system through pervasive use of a zero tolerance policy. Dissemination of discipline is largely subjective and dependent on administrator judgment. Additionally, the interpretation and implementation of school rules differ considerably from room to room. There is urgent need for policy reform.

Statement of Purpose

Schools that rely on exclusion as a primary disciplinary tool run the serious risk of disproportionate rates of minority discipline (Skiba et al., 2002). The purpose of this project is to reduce the overall rates of office discipline referrals and close the gap of disproportionate suspensions by creating a student-centric, goal-oriented classroom model. This project will provide teachers with processes for preventing

negative behavior by ensuring students' academic and emotion needs are met. Project elements also include a system for goal setting and tracking, guidelines for creating classroom expectations. Project components will have a central focus on positive behavior through processes and systems structured to maintain a safe, productive learning environment. It provides teachers with a framework to structure classrooms with high expectations and provide students with high-level support structures. While this project will challenge current institutional norms, it will not be a comprehensive replacement for existing school and classroom rules, procedures, and expectations. However, it will offer alternative approaches to attaining the desired outcomes.

Since launching, the alternative high school located in West Michigan has relied on high behavioral expectations and tough consequences designed to protect the learning environment. The extensive use of out-of-school suspensions for relatively minor to moderate offenses has contributed to high rates of suspension and disproportionality across the various ethnic groups. The current system is not effective as evident by a substantial number of repeat offenders, and the increasing rate of office discipline referrals. This project will help move educators towards fair and consistent expectations and consequences.

Objectives

The objective of this project is to reduce the total number of disciplinary referrals school-wide and minimize the gap in disproportionate representation of African American students in discipline. The components of the project facilitate a student-centric, goal-oriented classroom structure to meet the needs of an ethnically

and academically diverse student population. The classroom structure will emphasize a holistic approach to discipline that will empower students, yet hold them accountable for their decisions. The intention is to help students realize their locus of control over their actions and reactions.

Definition of Terms

<u>Annual Yearly Progress</u> - Refers to a system in which schools are held accountable for student performance. This system measures success based on indicators such as student achievement, student growth, attendance, graduation rates, dropout rates, etc.

<u>Education E2020</u> – A virtual learning platform that provides students with instruction, subject-relevant tasks, assessments, and immediate feedback.

<u>School Wide Positive Behavior Support</u> – "A set of systemic prevention processes focused on developing positive and contextually appropriate relationships intended to facilitate the social and academic success of all students" (Tobin & Vincent, 2011, p.192).

<u>Zero Tolerance</u> – "A philosophy or policy that mandates the application of predetermined consequences that is intended to be applied regardless of the gravity of behavior, mitigating circumstances, or situational context" (Skiba, 2008, p.852).

Scope of the Project

This project addresses the classroom structure used in the alternative school located in West Michigan. It offers recommendations for alternatives towards achieving desired outcomes while minimizing the number of overall office discipline referrals and reducing the disproportionate rates of minority suspension. The

strategies offered as part of this project are meant to work in conjunction with existing norms and is not a complete replacement of any existing disciplinary structure.

This project does not address the issues with attendance that has plagued the alternative school in question. The current attendance policy provides neither high structure nor support for students struggling with truancy. In fact, students are commonly under the misconception that there is no attendance policy. This misinterpretation is further bolstered by the nature of a self-paced, online education through Education 2020. Absent students do not fall behind in content since progress through class structures are neither dependent on teachers nor other students. The compounding effect is a cycle of absenteeism that may have negative implications on student engagement, leading to disciplinary issues.

The successful implementation of this project is highly dependent on the willingness of staff and building leadership to support such a system. The strategies offered function best as preventative measures rather than reactive responses to student behavior. Educators must be willing to challenge any preconceived notions of the traditional structure of schools in dealing with difficult students (e.g., break an established rule, be assigned a matching consequence). Instead, they must accept the reality that some students find very little value in a formal education and need to be challenged differently. The staff must be able to function as a cohesive unit, regularly teaching and reinforcing expectations.

The implementation of this project will also require teachers to receive intensive training in the form of professional development and receive continued support during the school year. Training and continued support may be limited as they are reliant on funds and administrative support at the district level. If district funds are unavailable to provide training and continued teacher support, other means may need to be used to secure funding.

Another potential limiting factor that is outside the realm of control of this project is the highly transient student population served in the alternative school. In order to provide high structure with high support, teachers must intentionally teach and reinforce expectations and proper procedures regularly. It is not uncommon for new students to enroll at this alternative school midway through the school year. Many instances result in students being placed in class with very little preparation for academic or behavioral success. Healthy classroom cultures are reliant on the collective ability of the staff to successfully orient new students on expectations and norms.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

Introduction

The racial disadvantage of minority students, especially African Americans, continues to be an issue in education in the United States. The disproportionate representation of African American youth is sustained by an over-reliance on outdated educational policies that focus on punitive measures in response to misbehavior (Harvard, 2000; Hoffman, 2014) rather than addressing these issues in a relevant and student-centered manner. Youth removed from the protective learning environment are left to their own devices without adult guidance, at times resulting in a cumulative disadvantage (McCarthy & Hoge, 1987). A poor educational experience has lasting consequences, often at high personal and societal costs (Lee, Cornell, Gregory & Fan, 2011; Nicholson-Crotty et al., 2009).

To address the disparities in discipline faced by African American students, this literature review examines educational theories and research-based strategies proven to reduce occurrences of misbehavior at both the school-wide and individual student levels. The centralized focus of this chapter is to develop an understanding of the structural and relational factors that affect African American youth negatively. Therefore, this literature review provides research pertaining to the cumulative effect of suspensions on adolescents, the effectiveness of the Positive Behavior Support framework in reducing overall discipline referrals, and culturally viable educational strategies/interventions that present promising directions for closing the disproportion gap.

Theory/Rationale

Disproportion in discipline of culturally diverse students, especially African Americans, is well documented as a major issue in education. A large research base exists documenting radically disproportionate rates of applied discipline (Mendez & Knoff, 2003; McFadden & Marsh II, 1992; Skiba et al., 2011; Skiba et al., 2002). In comparison to White students, African American students are punished more severely (Nicholson-Crotty et al., 2009), are removed from school, either temporarily or permanently, more often (Krezmien et al., 2006; Mendez & Knoff, 2003), and for longer periods of time (Vincent & Tobin, 2011). Yet, minimal research exists on the underlying factors contributing to the disproportionate exclusion of African Americans from school. Available findings suggest that certain relational and structural factors within an organization are essential to the success of African American pupils (Gregory et al., 2011; Gregory & Ripski, 2008; Gregory & Weinstein, 2008).

Research has identified Positive Behavior Support (PBS) systems as a possible means for reducing overall disciplinary referrals (Bohanon et al., 2006; Muscott, Mann, & LeBrun, 2008). Walker et al. (1996) describe PBS as a continuum of behavior supports in which the level of scaffolded support is positively correlated to student needs and challenges. The primary or universal interventions are meant to be applied school wide. Universal interventions may include regular and intentional teaching of school procedures as well as conflict resolution and behavior management strategies. The secondary or group interventions are more focused, strategic

interventions for small groups of at-risk students who need additional support. These students are at elevated risk for developing antisocial behavioral problems and may benefit from group therapy and discussions on moral reasoning, anger management, and self-control. The tertiary level of intervention is reserved for students requiring the most support due to high-risk behavior and includes the development of individualized behavior plans (Walker et al., 1996).

Tobin and Vincent (2011) identified key factors within the implementation of PBS that may contribute to reductions in disproportionate exclusions of African American students. In an examination of schools that have implemented a school-wide positive behavior support system for at least two years, they found that positive staff-student interactions as well as regular communication, training, and ongoing support were integral in minimizing the disproportion. Their findings suggest that schools successful in reducing the suspension gap are provided with the tools and necessary access to resources required to make proactive decisions to prevent problem behaviors. Additionally, schools that reported positive staff-student relationships were more likely to apply fair and consistent rules.

Teacher-student relationship tends to have a positive impact on varying degrees of defiant (disobedient or disrespectful) behaviors in African American students (Gregory & Ripski, 2008; Gregory & Weinstein, 2008). Defiant behavior is not necessarily interpreted similarly to objective misbehaviors such as vandalism or smoking (Skiba et al., 2002). Skiba et al. (2002) ascertain that although there are no patterns of more serious misbehavior among African American students in

comparison to White students, there are two distinct patterns of referrals for the two races. Referrals issued to African American students included items like disrespect, excessive noise, threat, and loitering. These types of violations require judgment, making the teacher-student relationship critical in the referral decision.

Several studies regarding the underlying dynamics that contribute to the overrepresentation of African American students in suspensions further confirm that defiant behavior may be heightened by certain teacher characteristics and expectations. The relational and structural factors that have been identified as crucial in reducing the referral rate of African American students include teachers that are highly supportive and have high academic expectations for their pupils, as well as trusting teacher-student relationships (Gregory et al., 2011; Gregory & Ripski, 2008; Gregory & Weinstein, 2008). Classrooms with teachers who employ a relational approach towards discipline and have high academic expectations earn students' trust and cooperation, thereby reducing the number of discipline referrals. Conversely, classrooms with teachers classified as uncaring or who provide low support report the highest rates of student referrals categorized as defiance. Gregory et al. (2011) reported that schools low in both support and structure not only had comparatively higher rates of overall referrals, but also have the largest racial gap in discipline. These findings show that teachers perceived as those who have high academic expectations and care about relationship building had students that reported themselves as cooperative and engaged. It is then reasonable to suggest that an authoritative style of teaching, where expectations are communicated warmly and

academic excellence is demanded, is the most successful environment in which all students can succeed, especially those from African American backgrounds.

<center>**Research/Evaluation**</center>

Cumulative Impact of Suspensions

The overuse of suspensions through the application of zero tolerance policies has been found to negatively impact academic achievement, academic growth, high school completion, and lead to increased involvement with the court system. In a cohort study of a large, multicultural school district, Arcia (2006) found that students with high suspension rates had relatively lower reading achievement scores. Sixth graders who were suspended for 11 or more days scored, on average, lower than fourth graders who were never suspended. Students in seventh grade who were suspended for 21 or more days scored similarly to non-suspended fourth graders. In other words, students who were repeatedly removed from the learning environment were at least two years behind their cohort in reading achievement. Moreover, there exists a negative correlation between the number of days suspended and the average gains in reading achievement (Arcia, 2006). Students that were suspended demonstrated significantly lower gains in academic growth. Although student achievement and growth can be influenced by many environmental factors, this is compelling evidence that suspension is not a mitigating factor. Ultimately, high suspension rates were found to be consistently associated with high school dropout rates regardless of race or ethnicity (Arcia, 2006; Lee et al., 2011). Despite Lee et al.'s (2011) research indicating a stronger correlation between suspensions and

dropout rates for White students compared to African American students, related

studies indicate that the over-zealous practice of tough discipline can also contribute

to compounding factors that lead to the pervasive criminalization of ethnic youth. In a

study of schools in 53 Missouri counties, Nicholson-Crotty et al. (2009) found that

schools that use exclusionary techniques experienced higher rates of court referrals

for Black youth.

Schools often increase the use of exclusionary techniques with an increase in

African American and sometimes Hispanic populations (Welch & Payne, 2012).

Welch and Payne found that the percentage of Black students enrolled is significantly

and positively correlated to the odds of schools using expulsion as a disciplinary

response. Their results suggest that "for each 1% increase in the percentage of Black

students, the odds of a school using expulsion (vs. not using expulsion) increases by a

factor of 1.04" (Welch & Payne, 2012, p.162). The percent of students receiving

free/reduced lunch and percent of Hispanic students were also strong predictors for

the use of expulsion. Similarly, the increased odds of schools using both in-school

and out-of-school suspensions are strongly related to the percent composition of

Black students enrolled (1% increase in black students increases odds by a factor of

1.03). Interestingly, Welch and Payne did not find any statistical significance for the

variables of student delinquency and drug use as predictors to the increased use of

any type of exclusion.

The previous findings raise concerns regarding equity in the strict application

of school rules, despite ample research suggesting that at-risk populations are most

marginalized by the use of these tactics. Environmental risk factors that are out of the student's realm of influence, such as low socioeconomic status (Skiba, Nardo, & Williams, 1997) and fathers who are unemployed (Wu et al., 1982) serve as predictors for the increased likelihood of out-of-school suspension or expulsion. Furthermore, prior research indicates that suspensions are not deterrents to future misbehavior (McFadden & Marsh II, 1992). They may also influence teacher perceptions, eventually increasing the likelihood of future suspension (McCarthy & Hoge, 1987). Suspensions also predict academic failure and delayed or stunted academic growth (Arcia, 2006) and have been positively correlated to drop out rates (Lee et al., 2011). Such compelling evidence suggest that schools, especially those with high at-risk populations, must establish alternative disciplinary measures if they hope to be fair and equitable institutions.

Teachers' preconceived perceptions of students are also an important contributing factor in the application of discipline. When controlling for race, age, gender, socioeconomic status, and home situation, McCarthy and Hoge (1987) found that the strongest predictor of punishment is knowledge of students' past disciplinary records. Additional criteria used to determine punishment were knowledge of students' previous academic achievement/failure and teacher perceptions of students' behavior. Perhaps some teachers easily form detrimental opinions about their pupils regardless of future action, leading to a system that perpetuates past occurrences. A later study confirms the majority (66%) of disciplinary referrals were issued by a small (25%) population of teachers (Skiba et al., 1997). This finding is supported by

Gregory and Weinstein (2008), who found that a significant percentage (86%) of African American referrals were issued by one to three teachers during a six period daily schedule. The implications of these studies indicate that a pattern exists allowing school leaders to predict the situation-specific contexts in which students are referred for misbehavior. The central focus henceforth will be to minimize the overall rate of disciplinary referrals and reduce the disproportion gap.

Reducing Exclusion

School-wide positive behavior support (SWPBS) is a collection of disciplinary tactics that are designed with a pedagogical focus on behavioral expectations that are clearly defined, reinforced, and implemented school wide. The overall intent of SWPBS is to establish a common school culture where all students are held to high behavioral expectations (Sugai & Horner, 2002; Walker et al., 1996). The components that are essential to successful application of SWPBS, as outlined by Sugai and Horner (2002) are:

- Clearly defined expectations for behavior.

- Procedures for teaching and encouraging expectations for behavior that are routinely and consistently enforced.

- Emphasis on preventing problematic behaviors that include proactive teaching of socially acceptable responses.

- Consistent and fair consequences for behavioral infractions.

- Procedures for data collection and use of data in the decision-making process regarding student needs.

Schools that have implemented SWPBS with fidelity have reported a number of positive outcomes. Researchers have documented reductions in the number of overall disciplinary referrals, increased instructional learning time, and academic gains in math achievement (Muscott et al., 2008). Over a three year study of a culturally diverse, urban high school in Chicago, Bohanon et al. (2006) documented a 20% overall reduction in the average number of daily discipline referrals. Behaviors that was more serious in nature such as "serious disobedience of authority went from 1.64 per every 100 students in Year 2 to 0.05 per every 100 students in Year 3" (Bohanon et al., 2006, p. 140). Furthermore, the successful implementation of a SWPBS decreased the number of students who received multiple disciplinary referrals. From the second to the third year of the study, the number of students receiving between two to five and between six or more referrals reduced from 32% to 25% and 21% to 16% respectively. Meanwhile, the percentage of non-habitual misbehavior, characterized by the number of students receiving one or less referrals increased from 46% to 59%.

Perhaps the largest implication of successful implementation of a school-wide positive behavior program is increasing overall teacher instructional and student engagement time leading to gains in academic performance. Through a significant reduction in the number of discipline referrals and out-of-school suspensions, Lassen, Steele, and Sailor (2006) were able to demonstrate a statistically significant relationship between students' academic achievement and behavioral indicators (i.e., disciplinary referrals, suspensions). Lassen et al. found that SWPBS resulted in

profound increases in standardized mathematics achievement scores. While a similar

statement cannot be made for reading scores, there were noticeable increases from the

first year of observation to the third year. This finding is consistent with similar

research on the effectiveness of positive behavior supports in a school-wide setting

(Muscott et al., 2006). "Such improvements provide support for the argument that as

student time in instruction increases, there will be a corresponding increase in

academic achievement" (Lassen et al., 2006, p. 710). While Lassen et al. found the

relationship between decreased misbehavior and increased academic performance to

be statistically significant, it should be noted that the effect size was relatively small.

The complex interaction of many factors that influence performance on standardized

test scores are not examined in this study. However, these findings suggest a

reduction in disciplinary referrals and suspensions not only allowed for more

instructional time and student learning time, it also changed school culture having a

positive effect on overall test performance.

At first glance, it seems as though SWPBS implementation may be an

effective way to address antiquated disciplinary procedures and pervasive academic

failure. Vincent and Tobin (2011) conducted a detailed study of the components

within SWPBS implementation in schools from Maryland, Colorado, and Illinois

finding results that are consistent with the existing literature base (Bohanon et al.,

2006; Lassen et al., 2006; Muscott et al., 2008). Yet, their research raised key

questions regarding equitability in the application of positive behavior support

systems. Although schools that scored highly on fidelity of implementation reported

reductions in exclusion, empirical analysis of suspension records indicates that the attrition in exclusion rates was not proportionately distributed across all ethnic backgrounds. Despite the reductions in suspension for the overall population, African American students remained over-represented in disciplinary sanctions over the course of the study as represented in the percentage of student days out of school. African Americans accounted for 34.34% of days missed due to suspension during time one and 36.32% during time two of the study. At the time, the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) reported African American students represented 21.81% of the total student enrollment at the schools included in this study. With exception to students with ethnicities listed as unknown or not specified, all other ethnic categories (Native American, Asian, Hispanic, White) were proportionately represented or under-represented. In regards to long-term suspensions (10 or more days), there was a slight decrease from time one to time two in the percentage of African American students excluded. However, African Americans remained grossly overrepresented when compared to Hispanic or White students. Once again, the only other group to not benefit in terms of long-term suspensions from SWPBS implementation were those whose ethnicities were not reported or unknown. Interestingly, Vincent and Tobin (2011) noted that the percentage of long-term suspensions for students with individualized education programs (IEP) were vastly in favor of African American students, somewhat favorable for Hispanics, but White students with disabilities were over-represented in this category.

Closing the Disproportion Gap

Within the context of widespread racial disproportion, not all students respond to universal interventions (Walker et al., 1996), necessitating focused behavioral modification systems for students with at-risk behavior (Sugai & Horner, 2002). While SWPBS implementation decreased the overall rates of exclusion from the learning environment, White students benefited the most. African American students remained over-represented in a number of disciplinary matters, especially males (Vincent, Cartledge, May, & Tobin, 2009) and those involving long-term suspensions (Vincent & Tobin, 2011). School-wide positive behavior support implementation alone has little effect on reducing the disproportionate exclusions of African American students (Vincent & Tobin, 2011). Still unclear are the factors within the construct of the school environment that negatively impact African American pupils.

Studies examining the contexts in which disciplinary referrals are issued consistently reflect the over-use of exclusionary techniques in response to minor misbehavior (McFadden & Marsh II, 1992; Skiba et al., 1997), the majority of which originate from the classroom (Skiba et al., 1997; Skiba et al., 2002). The most commonly cited reasons for student referrals are insubordination/disobedience, noncompliance, and defiance (McFadden & Marsh II, 1992; Skiba et al., 1997). Although these behavioral infractions do not threaten safety, less punitive consequences such as behavioral contracts or counseling are among disciplinary actions used most infrequently. Rather, Skiba et al. (1997) found that the most frequent disciplinary action assigned for minor misbehaviors are suspensions. In a

study conducted at an urban high school in a mid-sized city, Gregory and Weinstein (2008) concluded that the most common reason given for student referrals was defiance. A closer analysis of the data indicated that the majority of referrals for defiance were issued to African American students even though they accounted for less than one-third of the school's total enrollment. Given the evidence that students, especially African Americans, are most often excluded from learning for reasons that do not affect school safety, it is then feasible to suggest that teachers and administrators need to shift their theoretical approach towards discipline.

Schools that reported lower disciplinary issues and have limited gaps in ethnic disproportion are characteristically "highly supportive, yet highly structured with academic and behavioral expectations" (Gregory et al., 2011, p. 904). In other words, these are the attributes of authoritative schools (Gregory et al., 2011). An authoritative approach, high in both support and structure, has also been linked to decreasing levels of defiant behavior in the classroom. Referrals for defiant behaviors are situational and can often be attributed to classrooms with teachers classified as uncaring. Conversely, teachers that have earned students' trust reported cooperative interactions with African American students (Gregory & Weinstein, 2008). This claim is supported by Gregory and Ripski (2008) who studied levels of defiant behavior based on teachers' disciplinary approaches. They concluded, "teachers who reported that they used a relational approach were more likely to have students who exhibited lower defiant behavior than those teachers who did not report using such an approach" (Gregory & Ripski, 2008, p. 345). These studies highlight the significance

of trust building among African American students in order to reduce the disciplinary gap.

Although well documented as a persistent issue, few empirical studies exist outlining specific strategies or interventions to reduce the disproportionate gap of African American suspensions. The available research indicates that certain aspects within the implementation of SWPBS have strong correlation towards achieving more proportionate representation of all ethnic groups in discipline. Tobin and Vincent (2011) reported four factors that were most impactful:

- "Expected student behaviors are acknowledged regularly" (Tobin & Vincent, 2011, p. 197). In other words, teachers should strive to attain a ratio of four or more positive for every one negative interaction.

- "Regular reporting of discipline referral data to school-wide teams and faculty" (Tobin & Vincent, 2011, p. 197).

- "The school team has access to ongoing training and support from district personnel" (Tobin & Vincent, 2011, p. 197).

- "Local resources available to conduct functional assessment-based behavior support planning" (Tobin & Vincent, 2011, p. 198). The authors highlighted that approximately ten hours per week should be spent on individual student interventions.

Tobin et al. urge educators to focus on these strategies in order to "help prevent racially disproportionate disciplinary exclusions" (Tobin & Vincent, 2011, p. 198) by regularly monitoring and evaluating their effectiveness. Although unique and

compelling, these findings lack sufficient detail for the implementer. For instance, the researchers do not discuss specific ongoing training and support from district personnel, nor do they provide ample recommendations for how to use discipline referral data once it is reported to school-wide teams and faculty. Once again, the discussion reverts to the complexity of the issue. Perhaps the interconnectedness of many exacerbating factors makes definitive answers difficult to obtain.

      A recent qualitative study at a dropout recovery school focusing on the circumstances that caused academic disengagement and the protective factors that lead to re-enrollment and success provides some insight into the personal and school components that contribute to student achievement. Iachini, Buettner, Anderson-Butcher, and Reno (2013) focused on a relatively small sample size (n = 13), six of which were male and seven were female. The majority of the participants in this study were African American (n = 11) and all were at least 17 years of age or older. In a semi-structured interview format, students were asked the following questions: (1) "How has this school been different than what you experienced before?" (2) "What motivated you to apply to this school?" (3) What are some of the things that you found difficult in the school you were in before?" (Iachini et al., 2013, p. 115). Results indicated that most students' lack of success in their previous school was due to behavioral and disciplinary challenges and lack of support from teachers. Self-determined motivation and referral by friends, family, or teachers were among the most common factors that lead to students transferring or re-enrolling in the current alternative school. However, most important were the students' perspectives on the

characteristics of their current school that promotes success. A large proportion of the students (n = 8) cited an individualized approach to learning as the primary reason for their success. Within this category, students shared appreciation for the personalized attention and individualized planning they received from staff members. One student shared, "They [staff at the school] focus on what you need first, they don't just give you a bunch of classes" (Iachini et al., 2013, p. 118). The 13 participants in this qualitative focus group cited very similar reasons for their success (received individualized attention) or lack thereof (lack of teacher support). Previous findings indicate that teachers who fail to build trusting relationships with students experience higher levels of defiant behavior resulting in lost instructional time (Gregory & Ripski, 2008). The result of this study provides promising insight on gap-reducing educational philosophies. These outcomes suggest that student success is dependent upon educators' ability to effectively meet their needs.

Existing studies investigating the disparities in education experienced by African American pupils suggest that the racial discipline gap cannot be predicted by a single causal factor (Gregory et al., 2011; Gregory & Ripski, 2008; Gregory & Weinstein, 2008; McCarthy & Hoge, 1987; Skiba et al., 2002; Skiba et al., 1997; Wu et al., 1982). Therefore, potential solutions must address this pandemic issue using varied approaches. Yet, research is lacking on specific strategies proven to reduce disproportion in discipline. In the absence of empirical studies that definitively cite strategies that are effective in reducing the discipline gap, it is necessary to seek guidance from research related to interventions.

In a review of 40 behavioral intervention programs designed for implementation in a school setting, Freiberg and Lapointe (2006) provide promising evidence regarding programs effective in reducing problem behaviors. Those interventions found to be successful in diminishing the overall levels of exclusion and applied in school settings with economically disadvantaged, African American, and Hispanic students all shared common characteristics, including school connectedness, moving beyond discipline, and having a centralized focus on students' social-emotional needs. The qualities of caring and trust as well as a desire to facilitate positive school and classroom climates were also identified as important traits in successful programs. In summary, these programs emphasize movement away from behavioral policies that are reactive in nature. Rather, effective disciplinary approaches are flexible and operate under a student-centered construct.

A paradigm shift in educational practice is necessary in order to change the bleak outlook for so many African American pupils. This shift could begin by infusing teacher preparation programs with culturally competent strategies and continued development of educators' understanding of culturally responsive classroom management through student-centered pedagogical approaches. Student-centered approaches to behavior management programs are characterized by emphasis on social-emotional needs, school connectedness, positive school and classroom climate, and student self-discipline (Friedberg & Lamb, 2009). In a post-hoc, quasi-experimental design study addressing the effects of a behavior management program called Consistency Management and Cooperative Discipline

(CMCD), Freiberg, Huzinec, and Templeton (2009) empirically demonstrated increases in math and reading performance in the experimental group through improved classroom management techniques. "The [CMCD] program emphasizes preventing discipline problems before they begin, improving school and classroom climate as well as student behavior, and effectively managing instructional time, resulting in greater student achievement" (Freiberg et al., p. 64). The school samples in which Freiberg et al. conducted their study reported the enrollment of economically disadvantaged students as 96.2% prior to program implementation and 97.2% afterwards. All of the schools had high percentages of Hispanic (52%) and African American (46%) enrollment. Although the CMCD program contains no content specific curriculum, the experimental group scored on average, 17 percentile points higher than the control group in mathematics and 14 percentile points higher in reading. The researchers did not fixate on discipline in the context of this study; instead they focused on the relationship between cooperative classroom climates, in which students can learn self-discipline, and academic results. These findings suggest that by focusing on student needs, educators may minimize wasted instructional time, thereby increasing engagement and overall academic success.

Summary

Although schools in the United States have been entrusted to prepare all youth to be contributing citizens in a democratic society, the reliance on dated disciplinary approaches have lead to serious concerns regarding racial equality. Current disciplinary practices have resulted in over-representation of African Americans in

exclusionary discipline practices (Mendez & Knoff, 2003; McFadden & Marsh II, 1992; Skiba et al., 2011; Skiba et al., 2002). African American youth are subjected to more frequent and harsher punishments compared to their White classmates (Krezmien et al., 2006; Mendez & Knoff, 2003; Nicholson-Crotty et al., 2009) despite a number of empirical studies showing that African American students do not misbehave more frequently, nor are their misbehaviors more severe (McFadden & Marsh II, 1992; Wu et al., 1982). Many disciplinary referrals originate from the classroom for minor misbehaviors that do not threaten safety and often result in suspensions, necessitating change in educational practice (Skiba et al., 1997). The high price of continued exclusion from learning include detrimental effects on achievement, growth, and high school completion, which in turn often lead to increased criminal activity that negatively impacts society at large (Arcia, 2006; Lee et al., 2011, Nicholson-Crotty et al., 2009). Subsequent research focuses on programs proven to decrease overall levels of disciplinary referrals and close the discipline gap.

The School Wide Positive Behavior Support framework has been identified as a viable means to reduce overall discipline when applied with fidelity. A number of studies document the positive effects of SWPBS and have reported gains in academic achievement in addition to minimizing referrals (Bohanon et al., 2006; Lassen et al., 2006; Muscott et al., 2008). However, evidence exists suggesting the reductions in referral rates due to proper implementation are not evenly distributed across all ethnicities (Vincent & Tobin, 2011; Vincent et al., 2009). The findings of Vincent

and Tobin indicate that within SWPBS, a disproportionate representation of African American students in discipline persists.

Working within the authoritative framework, this literature review focused on research that emphasized holistic treatment of students in regards to discipline. Although few studies cite specific strategies effective in reducing the discipline gap, empirical evidence identified teacher-student relationships and student-centered strategies as prominent mitigating factors. Multiple researchers found that the majority of referrals were issued by a relatively small percentage of teachers (Gregory & Weinstein, 2008; Skiba et al., 1997). This finding is bolstered by Gregory and Ripski (2008) who studied the relationship between teaching philosophies and defiant behavior in African American students. Gregory and Ripski (2008) found that teachers who invested time in a relational approach experienced lower rates of defiant behavior and increased cooperation from African American pupils.

Conclusions

In order to help at-risk students be successful, educators have to focus on preventative measures that address students' social-emotional needs in a holistic manner. Additionally, educators should strive to ensure that at-risk pupils have positive perceptions of school as safe, consistent, and equitable institutions. The research reviewed in this chapter highlights that there is no single "magic bullet" capable of closing the discipline gap. Yet, a collection of student-centric behavioral management strategies may alleviate racial disparity. Findings indicate that African American students have a strong need to connect with their teachers. Trusting

relationships and a demanding, but warm authoritative attitude is necessary to facilitate positive outcomes. Educators must embrace high standards, communicate great expectations, and support students along the way by providing a bridge over potential barriers.

Chapter Three: Project Description

Introduction

Racial inequality in the schooling system has caused a perpetual cycle in which African American students are over-identified as deviant and under-supported academically. Many educational institutions in the United States continue to apply variations of zero tolerance policies, despite evidence suggesting that it may have a detrimental impact on African American students (Harvard, 2000; Hoffman, 2014). As a result, African American adolescents are often disproportionately excluded from learning for relatively minor behavior and have a higher likelihood of receiving harsh punishment when compared to White students (Mendez & Knoff, 2003; McFadden & Marsh II, 1992; Skiba et al., 2011).

The goal of this project is to reduce the overall rates of disciplinary referrals and disproportionate rates of African American exclusion. It presents a set of solutions supported through research-based ideologies that aim to prevent disciplinary issues by providing high structure and scaffolded academic support. This project is intended to support existing behavior initiatives such as a School Wide Positive Behavior Support program. It is not an exhaustive replacement for existing academic and behavioral policies. However, it proposes alternative means for accomplishing favorable outcomes.

Described in this chapter are the components of a goal-oriented classroom. The in-depth description contains research-based justification for each portion of the project. Subsequently, the criteria for project evaluation are explained proceeded by

conclusions drawn from the research. This chapter concludes with a discussion

regarding the plans for implementation of this project in a school setting, which

includes suggestions for further work.

Project Components

The components of the Goal-Oriented Classroom designed for a racially

diverse West Michigan alternative school include electronic templates for goal

setting, academic progress tracking, and behavior reporting. Additionally, this project

contains guidelines for preventing disciplinary episodes and a description of the

mastery learning process. Although this alternative school will begin the initial phase

of School Wide Positive Behavior Support implementation, research has identified

that a tiered behavioral support structure alone will not sufficient to close the gap of

minority exclusion (Vincent & Tobin, 2011; Vincent et al., 2009).

This project was created with the objectives to reduce overall discipline and,

most importantly, close the disproportion gap. Therefore, the components of this

project are designed to facilitate teacher-student relationships through regular,

meaningful interactions. A literature review examining relevant empirical studies in

education suggests that African American students tend to be successful in classroom

environments that demand high expectations (Gregory et al., 2011) and are facilitated

by teachers who employ a relational approach (Gregory & Ripski, 2008). In other

words, these teachers are demanding and provide their pupils with extensive support.

Outlined in the teacher's implementation guide (see Appendix A) are brief

descriptions and rationales for each portion of the Goal-Oriented Classroom. The

Goal-Oriented Classroom contains five major sections, beginning with a weekly goal setting process. Since this project is designed for self-paced learning environments, the inclusion of a goal setting aspect is essential. Students' success hinges on their ability to be self-disciplined, driven, and accountable learners. Goal setting achieves these goals by continually focusing on growth and positive outcomes. The goal setting process also provides teachers with meaningful opportunities to build trusting relationships with students through positive interactions. This rationale is built upon research conducted by Gregory and Weinstein (2008), who describe the degree of defiant behavior from African American students as contingent on trusting relations. The procedure described is part of a student-centered approach to behavior management that moves beyond discipline (Freiberg & Lapointe, 2006). Rather, goal setting focuses on establishing school connectedness, positive school and classroom climates, and self-discipline (Friedberg & Lamb, 2009).

Gregory et al. (2011) describes classrooms successful in closing the disproportion gap and limiting disciplinary issues as highly structured, yet highly supported in academic expectations. Aided by the goal setting process and reflecting upon this research, the mastery learning process provides students with a highly structured outline for academic success within a self-paced learning environment. It describes retake and review procedures that requires students to demonstrate deep understanding of content before progression is permitted. The process continually insists on regular student-teacher interaction allowing teachers to effectively identify areas of academic concern. The mastery learning process delivers a framework in

which educators may provide individualized support and personal attention to struggling students. This philosophy is consistent with Iachini et al. (2013) who examined self-reported factors that lead to success in alternative school students. They documented that student success is due to individualization of curriculum and support, personal attention and individualized planning from teachers.

A student-centered disciplinary approach is also addressed within this project. Included are guidelines for the formation of classroom norms, a behavior prevention process, and a behavior reaction process. The guidelines included stress setting clear and consistent expectations through continual reinforcement and the use of a relational approach towards discipline prevention and reaction.

The final components of the Goal-Oriented Classroom are electronic templates for progress tracking and behavior reporting. Progress tracking is conducted via a Google Document spreadsheet. The template allows educators to record and track daily academic progress and to monitor students' abilities to meet their goals. Teachers may use this data as a student accountability tool. The behavior-reporting template is also stored on the Google Documents platform. This electronic survey collects, stores, and tabulates behavioral data from multiple users. Student specific statistics are automatically collected and easily shared with groups such as individualized education plan or functional behavior assessment teams. These components are built upon the framework of SWPBS research conducted by Tobin and Vincent (2011). The researchers identified regular reporting and access to referral

data as major factors contributing to successful minimization of the disproportion gap.

Project Evaluation

The effectiveness of the Goal-Oriented Classroom in reducing overall disciplinary referrals and the disproportion gap will be evaluated by comparing historic school and district discipline data to current data once implementation has occurred. District discipline referrals are collected and stored on a district-wide student information-reporting program. Biannual district and school specific referral data are tabulated and shared by central office personnel. Reports include population data disaggregated by ethnicity, socioeconomic status, program participation (e.g. Special Education, English Language Learner, Honors, AP, etc.), and mobility, which allows for examination of disproportion.

For the purpose of evaluation, discipline data from the previous school year will serve as the base comparison group. Program effectiveness will be scrutinized by two factors: (1) Has implementation of the Goal-Oriented Classroom lead to reductions in overall office disciplinary referrals? (2) Are reductions in referrals evenly distributed among all ethnic groups? Emphasis will be placed on reducing the disproportion of those from African American backgrounds. For the first criteria, program success is characterized by a decreased number of disciplinary referrals for each semester of implementation when compared to the baseline data. Additionally, the program will be viewed as successful in meeting the second criteria if the percentage of disciplinary referrals issued to students from African American

backgrounds is proportionate to the percentage of African American students. A special precaution should be placed on interpreting these statistics if small sample sizes exist for sub-groups.

Project Conclusions

Ethnic youth, especially those from African American backgrounds continue to be marginalized in schools despite countless efforts to mitigate circumstances that contribute to academic failure. What are the aspects within the current structure of schools that are not conducive to African American success? A slew of studies are available connecting African American youth with issues such as over-representation in discipline (Mendez & Knoff, 2003; McFadden & Marsh II, 1992; Skiba et al., 2011; Skiba et al., 2002), academic failure, dropout rates, and criminalization (Arcia, 2006; Lee et al., 2011, Nicholson-Crotty et al., 2009). Yet, few researchers have conducted empirical studies examining behavior programs effective in reducing the disproportionate representation of African American students.

The relevant research available has highlighted School Wide Positive Behavior Support Systems a potential solution to the escalating use of exclusionary techniques. SWPBS has been identified as having positive effects on academic achievement and overall rates of disciplinary referrals (Bohanon et al., 2006; Lassen et al., 2006; Muscott et al., 2008). Yet, there are insufficient numbers of empirical studies to date that document a positive relationship between SWPBS and minority disproportion. In fact, recent research highlights that the overall reductions in referrals through implementation of SWPBS are not enjoyed by all members of the

student population (Vincent & Tobin, 2011; Vincent et al., 2009). While White students respond positively to the three-tiered intervention system, African American students remain overrepresented in disciplinary matters.

Trustworthiness and a propensity for building relationships have been identified as teacher traits that have alleviated negative behavior and have fostered increased cooperation from African American students (Gregory & Ripski, 2008; Gregory & Weinstein, 2008). Based on the research examined, successful reductions in disciplinary episodes and fair application of school rules must focus on prevention by providing teachers with a framework to identify students' socio-emotional needs. Moreover, successful gap reducing strategies must be culturally responsive. Consistent with trust and relational research conducted by Gregory and Ripski (2008) as well as Gregory and Weinstein (2008), teachers must purposefully seek opportunities to get to know their students beyond the classroom. In other words, a holistic teaching approach seems to be most suitable for populations of at risk students.

Plans for Implementation

The aspects outlined in the Goal-Oriented Classroom will be implemented in the Fall of 2014 at a culturally diverse alternative high school located in West Michigan. These strategies will first be piloted in a self-paced Mathematics classroom. The target population will vary since the likelihood of having a homogeneous classroom is relatively small due to the transient nature of the student

population. In other words, the target classroom will consist of students with varied ability levels, age, and type of math course assigned.

The pilot teacher will document potential problem areas and evaluate the results of implementation using the protocol previously described. Any necessary modifications to the Goal-Oriented Classroom structure will be made based on observed and recorded data. Program components and all student data will be shared electronically with collaborators within the building; however, participation in the Goal-Oriented Classroom structure is strictly voluntary. Additionally, only the results from the pilot classroom will be collected to ensure fidelity of implementation. If comparative data indicates that the program is successful, the author will submit a request to the local Board of Education for program expansion during the following school year.

This project was created by examining theories on student-teacher relationships and extrapolating existing findings on successful behavior management programs. While it may be effective to some degree, further research is needed to identify a framework proven to reduce overall disciplinary referrals and the disproportionate representation of African American students in discipline. The implementation of strategies that are supported by empirical evidence is necessary in order to truly interpret the effectiveness of a program. Nonetheless, the Goal-Oriented Classroom structure has potential to lay the groundwork for future research in gap-reducing classroom strategies.

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Appendix A

Goal-Oriented Classroom:

A teacher's guide for accountability and success in a culturally diverse, self-paced
learning environment.

Components

The objective of this guide is to provide educators with a student centered system that facilitates high structure and expectations while supporting individual students academically and behaviorally. The overarching theme is to prevent problem behaviors before they occur through scaffolded support systems that address individual needs and deficiencies. The aim is to reduce overall disciplinary referrals and close the disproportion gap by addressing root causes and targeting academic needs. The components outlined in this guide facilitate regular and structured teacher-student interactions, which are integral to trust building. These components are intended to work as a system in a goal-oriented classroom structure. They are designed for use in a self-paced learning environment, where students progress through course content at their own pace. The processes outlined are suggestions and are not absolutes. It is highly encouraged that educators adapt these guidelines to best serve their context.

- Part One: Weekly Goal Setting
- Part Two: Mastery Learning Process
- Part Three: Progress Tracking
- Part Four: Student-Centered Discipline
- Part Five: Behavior Reporting

Note: Many of the components of this guide are online based. While this guide provides examples, users must access the actual electronic templates in order to properly implement this system.

Part One: Weekly Goal Setting

The weekly goal setting process is an essential element to empowering student accountability and success in a self-paced learning environment. Goals are set at the start of each week and serve as a plan for weekly progress. Weekly activity goals should be student driven, reflecting the number of activities each student must complete in order to graduate in a timely manner. Goals should be attainable, yet present a challenge to students.

Teachers are responsible for providing guidance during the goal setting process. Although students should set their own personal goals, teachers may need to coach students in setting meaningful and attainable activity targets. In order to ensure fidelity of goal setting, teachers should provide students with the number of credits they have already earned, the number of credits they must complete in order to graduate, and the corresponding number of daily activities necessary to graduate with their cohort. Teachers must facilitate student goal reporting through the Weekly Goal Setting Survey. Additionally, teachers are responsible for helping students monitor and interpret their goal setting data.

Notes:

- All templates and forms discussed in this section are available electronically through Google Documents and can be shared with any user who wants to implement this system.

- The questions on the Weekly Goal Setting Survey can be modified to better serve individual users. Users can modify the Weekly Goal Setting Survey template by clicking on the "Edit this form" bottom located at the top right corner of the page.

Weekly Goal Setting Survey

At the end of each week, students complete a brief online goal setting survey through Google Form. Page one (*Figure 1*) asks students to record their goal for the previous week and indicate if they successfully completed their weekly goal. If students indicate they successfully completed their goal, the form will direct students to submit. Students who have not met their weekly goal are directed to page two of the goal setting form.

Page two (*Figure 2*) asks students to provide potential factors or barriers to the successful completion of weekly goals. Additionally, students are also directed to complete the follow short response question: What can you do differently to meet your goals next week? Once students have completed the survey, they may submit the form.

Figure 1

Johnny Samples

Goal Setting

Your username (   ) will be recorded when you submit this form.

* Required

Weekly Goal *

[   ]

Did you meet your weekly goal? *

○ Yes

○ No

[Continue »]

Figure 2

Student Response Reporting

Student responses are collected automatically on a Google Spreadsheet. Responses can be examined using the detailed response page (*Figure 3*). Provided below is a detailed account of possible responses for Johnny Samples. The first row of the data chart lists the questions asked on the goal setting survey. Subsequent rows represent a record of the student's goal every week and if he was able to meet his those goals. Additional information included are factors that contributed to Johnny not meeting his goals and steps that he will take to meet his goals next week.

Figure 3				

	A	B	C	D	E
1	Timestamp	Weekly Goal	Did you meet your weekly goal?	What factor(s) contributed to you not meeting your goals?	What can you do differently to meet your goals next week?
2	9/8/2014	Complete 10 activities per day.	Yes		
3	9/15/2014	Finish Algebra 1 by completing 10 activities in class and 5 activities as homework every day.	No	I could not get my home computer function properly on E2020.	Seek technical assistance from teachers or check out a lap top for use at home.
4	9/22/2014	Complete 8 activities per day.	No	Absences	I will attend school all 5 days.
5	9/29/2014	I will complete 35% of my class (60 activities)	Yes		
6	10/6/2014	Complete 25% of my class. (50 activities)	No	Lack of motivation, Lack of understanding	Get help from my teacher as soon as I do not understand rather than wasting 10 minutes before asking for assistance.
7	10/13/2014	Complete 9 activities.	No	Lack of understanding	I need to take better notes on the lecture and write my work rather than attempting to do the problems in my head.
8	10/20/2014	Complete 13 activities.	No	Lack of understanding, I couldn't pass my quizzes	I'm not sure. I tried really hard, but failed my quizzes many times. It really slowed me down and was very frustrating.

Student responses to weekly goals are also available as a summary (*Figure 4*). Figure 4 allows educators to quickly glean information regarding students' ability or inability to meet their weekly goals. It can be a powerful resource for individual teachers or student study teams as they conduct periodic reviews of students struggling academically.

The example provided in Figure 4 shows the reader that Johnny Samples did not meet his goal five out of seven weeks. The most common reasons Johnny gave for not meeting his goals were due to "lack of understanding" and "other". Analysis of the "other" category using Figure 3 indicates that Johnny didn't have access to technology at home and was unable to pass his quizzes. Access to this type of information allows educators to glean important information regarding student needs, allowing teachers to make informed decisions regarding how to best serve their pupils.
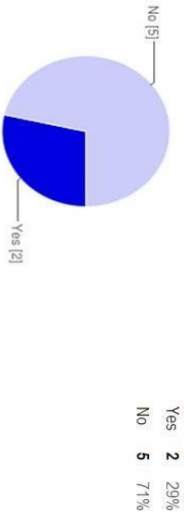
Figure 4

Summary

Weekly Goal

I will complete 35% of my class (60 activities) | Complete 8 activities per day. | Complete 13 activities. | Finish Algebra 1 by completing 10 activities in class and 5 activities as homework every day. | Complete
25% of my class. (50 activities) | Complete 9 activities. | Complete 10 activities per day.

Did you meet your weekly goal?

Yes	2	29%
No	5	71%

Page 2

What factor(s) contributed to you not meeting your goals?

Absences	1	14%
Tardies	0	0%
Lack of motivation	1	14%
Lack of understanding	3	43%
Other	2	29%
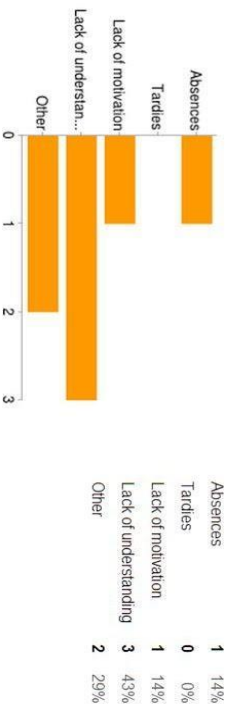
What can you do differently to meet your goals next week?

I will attend school all 5 days. | Get help from my teacher as soon as I do not understand rather than wasting 10 minutes before asking for assistance | I need to take better notes on the lecture and write my work rather than attempting to do the problems in my head. | Seek technical assistance from teachers or check out a lap top for use at home. | I'm not sure. I tried really hard, but failed my quizzes many times. It really

Part Two: Mastery Learning Process

The objective of the Master Learning Process is to ensure that all students are held to high academic expectations and are properly prepared to succeed academically. It ensures that students are held accountable for their academic success and provides a high level of structured student-teacher interaction. Within a self-paced learning environment, it is essential that students are supported. Therefore, this process provides teachers with details on how to interact with students when they run into problem areas.

The Mastery Learning Process is intended to be used in a classroom where students work at their own pace and progress only after demonstrating mastery knowledge of lesson objectives. It provides process guidelines for successful implementation of online learning programs such as Education 2020 (E2020). Within the E2020 structure, classes are divided into overarching units. Each unit contains varying numbers of subsections depending on the unit's complexity. Each section includes activities to ensure that students obtain content expectations. These activities usually include items such as:

- Vocabulary

- Direction instruction

- Online content materials

- Journal/Writing Activities

- Lab lectures and assessments

- Assignment/Practice

- Assessment (quiz)

Each unit contains a summative assessment, which typically includes a unit test review activity and a unit test. Some English Language Arts courses may contain essay-writing activities as summative unit assessments. Students must pass these assessments in order to progress to the next unit.

Quiz Retake Process

The quiz retake process is designed to facilitate deep and long-lasting comprehension of lesson objectives. It operates under the premise of continual improvement, allowing students to learn from their mistakes through a scaffolded retakes process.

Students are allotted three quiz attempts for each section. The first attempt is afforded to students after they've completed all of the lesson activities. If a student does not pass the first quiz attempt, they may acquire a retake by having a short conference with a content area teacher. During the brief meeting, teachers should check for proper lesson notes and completed assignment/practice. The teacher may choose to quickly review common mistakes, misconceptions, or errors associated with the lesson's learning targets. If these requirements are met, then the teacher may provide the student with a retake.

In the event that a student does not pass the second quiz attempt, a student-teacher conference must be held before allowing the student his/her final attempt. The purpose of this conference is to provide an in-depth review or individualized re-
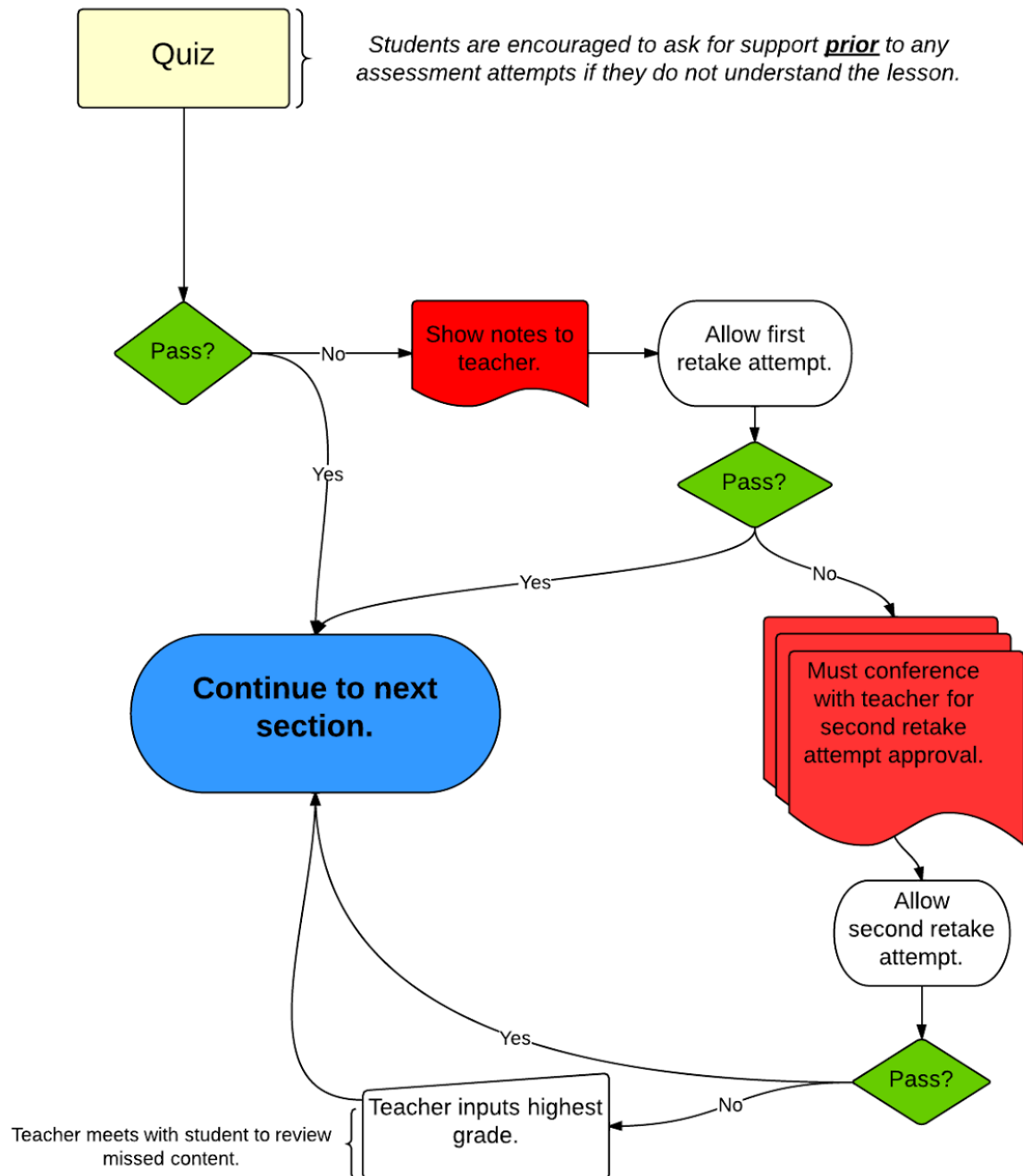
teaching of the lesson's learning targets. The driving questions for student-teacher

conferences include:

- What prior knowledge does the student already possess?

- What lesson specific content is the student lacking?

- What are the potential barriers to student success?

- What needs to be accomplished in order for the student to demonstrate

   mastery of content expectations?

Teachers should also review or re-teach the objectives from the previous sections

within the unit since quizzes in the E2020 learning platform are cumulative. A final

retake attempt can be assigned after these requirements are met.

Students that have taken a quiz three times and are unable to pass the

assessment will need to meet with a content area teacher once more prior to

progressing to the next section. The purpose of this final meeting is to provide

intensive support which should include the creation of a student-directed plan for

acquiring the learning targets prior to taking the unit summative assessment. It should

be noted that although a student is not required to hold a detailed conference with a

content area teacher prior to the third quiz attempt, it is highly encouraged that

students seek teacher guidance if they do not comprehend lesson standards prior to

any quiz attempts. In this context, students' weekly goals can be reinforced since it is

not conducive for students to retake quizzes multiple times as retakes do not count

towards students' weekly activity numbers. It is of utmost importance that teachers

reiterate proper practice and preparation prior to assessment attempts.

Quiz Retake Process

Quiz

Students are encouraged to ask for support __prior__ to any assessment attempts if they do not understand the lesson.

Pass? — No → Show notes to teacher. → Allow first retake attempt.

Yes

Pass?

Yes → **Continue to next section.**

No → Must conference with teacher for second retake attempt approval. → Allow second retake attempt.

Pass?

Yes

No → Teacher inputs highest grade.

Teacher meets with student to review missed content.

Unit Test Retake Process

The goal of the unit test retake process is to maximize students' abilities to demonstrate what they've learned in the unit. This process is similar to the quiz retake process described previously, except students are limited to two attempts as opposed to the three attempts allowed on quizzes. Students are allowed an attempt on their topic test once they successfully complete the unit test review activity. The unit test review activity serves as a formative assessment, helping teachers check for student understanding. Teachers should be intentional in checking unit test reviews for reasonable, best effort prior to providing approval for a unit test attempt. Content area teachers should also provide students with an opportunity to review any questions or content missed on the unit test review or previous quizzes.

If a student does not demonstrate sufficient content knowledge of unit objectives on the first unit test attempt, a student-teacher conference must be held. Once again, the purpose of the conference is to provide students with a high level of support. The nature of the conference is to conduct an in-depth review and re-teach the unit learning targets in which the student did not comprehend. The driving questions for this conference are similar to the quiz retake process and are as such:

- What prior knowledge does the student already possess?
- What unit specific content is the student lacking?
- What are the potential barriers to student success?
- What needs to be accomplished in order for the student to demonstrate mastery of unit content expectations?

Once these driving questions have been addressed, the teacher may approve a final unit test attempt.

Students that have exhausted their retake attempts on a unit test, but have not adequately demonstrated proficiency will need to meet with a content area teacher to create a remedial plan. The teacher should identify the specific unit objective(s) most commonly missed and provide the student with a plan to learn those skills. This may include individualized differentiated instruction, re-watching direct instruction(s), and reviewing and/or revising quizzes covering the missing content. The most important aspect of this conversation is the intentional effort to meet the needs of the student. Once the student and teacher can agree upon a plan, the teacher may input the student's highest grade and allow him/her to progress onto the next unit.

Unit Test Retake Process

Unit Test

*Students are encouraged to ask for support **prior** to any assessment attempts if they do not understand the lesson.*

Approve unit test attempt.

Pass?

No

Must conference with teacher for retake attempt approval.

Yes

Allow retake attempt.

Continue to next unit.

Yes

Pass?

No

Teacher inputs highest grade.

Teacher meets with student to create a remedial plan/review missed content.
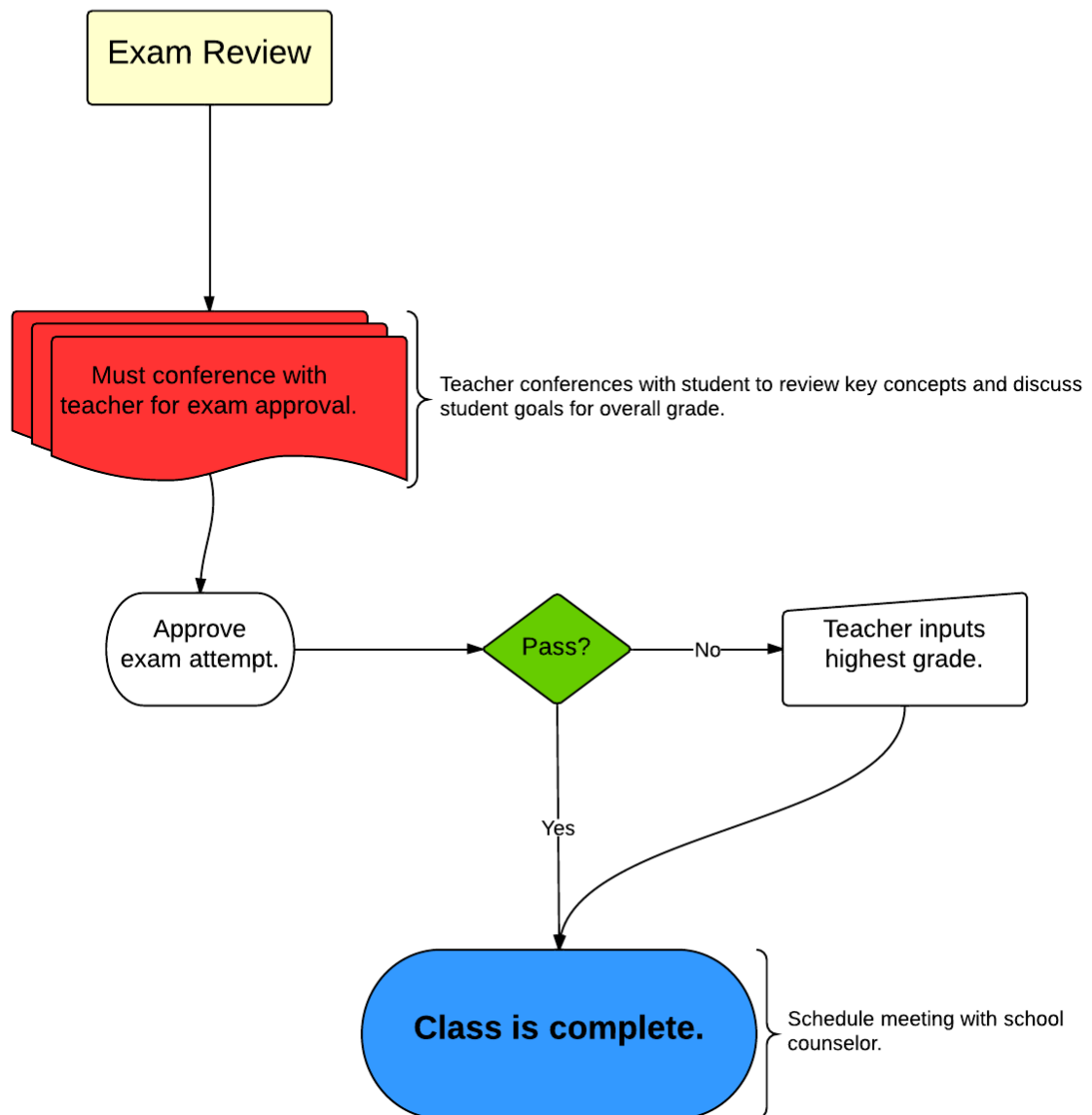
Exam Review Process

      The exam is the last summative assessment in any course given on E2020. It typically accounts for a large portion of students' overall grades (approximately 20%). Once students reach the exam, they must conference with a content area teacher to discuss final grade expectations and to conduct a spiral review. Students are also expected to diligently complete the exam review with reasonable best effort. Teachers may assign additional review assignments or provide supplementary aids after they have conducted an exam review conference with students.

      The major difference in the exam review compared to the quiz and unit test retake processes is students are only allowed one attempt on an exam. Therefore, it is exceedingly important that teachers ensure that students are adequately prepared. Once the exam is been taken, the teacher will input the final grade and schedule a meeting with the school counselor to schedule additional classes.

Exam Review Process

Exam Review

Must conference with teacher for exam approval.

Teacher conferences with student to review key concepts and discuss student goals for overall grade.

Approve exam attempt.

Pass?

No

Teacher inputs highest grade.

Yes

Class is complete.

Schedule meeting with school counselor.

Part Three: Progress Tracking

Progress tracking is an fundamental element to the successful implementation of a goal-oriented classroom. The progress-tracking template allows teachers to keep detailed records of daily progress, weekly totals, and weekly averages. It provides a quick reference, displaying patterns in student achievement. When used in conjunction with goal setting, progress data helps teachers hold students accountable for their academic success.

Figure 5 provides a sample of progress tracking data for a fictional classroom. The "Color Code Key" located at the bottom of Column A is a helpful way for teachers to quickly identify students who receive special services as well as archive students whom have graduated or have dropped. The "Activities Required Per Day" listed in Column B should be updated at least once a semester or when a student is assigned a new course. This value is calculated by taking the quotient of the number of total activities in the student's and the number of school days remaining in the semester. The entries found in Column B should serve as the baseline for weekly goal setting, however it is acceptable to diverge slightly due to special circumstances.

Items such as daily attendance and total activity numbers need to be entered manually at the end of each class period. Users also need to manually color code students' daily progress by selecting each entry, and then clicking on the "Fill color" option located on the toolbar at the top of the page. Green indicates that students successfully completed their allotment of daily activities, while red signifies the student was unsuccessful in reaching their daily goal.

Column's N and O represent the weekly activity totals and daily average respectively. The weekly totals represent the sum of the daily activity entries for the previous week. The daily average is the mean of each daily entry for the previous week. These columns are calculated automatically and do not require users to enter data manually.

The student progress tracking template can be used to document student issues as well as communicate accommodations for students with individualized education plans (*Figure 6*). Comments may be inserted by highlighting an entry, right click, then selecting "Insert comment" from the drop down menu. Collaborators have the ability to view each other's comments, as well as reply, and close comment threads when issues have been resolved.

Note: All templates and forms discussed in this section are available electronically through Google Documents and can be shared with any user.

Figure 5

Progress Tracking Sample

File   Edit   View   Insert   Format   Data   Tools   Help   All changes saved in Drive

Student Name (Last, First)	Activities Require Per Day	Weekly Goal	1-Sep-2014		2-Sep-2014		3-Sep-2014		4-Sep-2014		5-Sep-2014		Weekly Activities	
			Atten	Act.	Atten	Act.	Atten	Act.	Atten	Act.	Atten	Act.	Total	Daily Average
Bish, Sofia	18				P	20	P	19					39	19.5
Delagarza, Nadene	8				P	12	P	10					22	11
Dews, Ernestine	19				A	0	P	22					22	11
Eichner, Phylis	23				A	2	P	5					7	3.5
Freida, Carmen	19				P	23	P	24					47	23.5
Gilmore, Alba	20				A	19	P	20					39	19.5
Gisler, Curtis	20				P	8	P	17					25	12.5
Goudreau, Jenine	18				P	12	P	15					27	13.5
Gum, Marcene	18				P	16	A	20					36	18
Haag, Alease	19				P	25	P	19					44	22
Halladay, Damion	22				P	23	P	23					46	23
Johnstone, Zack	19				P	20	P	23					43	21.5
Killian, Isobel	21				P	31	P	28					59	29.5
Luna, Rodrigo	22				P	17	P	22					39	19.5
Malik, Eliseo	19				P	7	P	20					27	13.5
Moniz, Ashanti	20				P	12	P	21					33	16.5
Petrosky, Kyong	20				P	19	P	19					38	19
Rodriguez, Melani	23				P	22	P	12					34	17
Soto, Jazmin	25				P	15	A	5					20	10
Spriggs, Tracey	18				P	0	P	11					11	5.5

Color Code Key:
Green = Special Ed.
Amber = ELL
Light Blue = Dropped
Red Letter = Behavior
Highlighted Maroon = Graduated

Archived Students:

Student Name	Activities Require Per Day				2-Sep		3-Sep						Total	Daily Average
Johnny Samples	18				P	16	A	20					36	18
Anita Baker	25				P	15	P	5					20	10

Figure 6

18	Moniz, Ashanti	20				P		12	P		21			33
19	Petrosky, Kyong	20				P		19	P		19			38
20	Rodriguez, Melani	23				P		22	P		12			34
21	Soto, Jazmin	25				P		15	A		5			20
22	Spriggs, Tracey	18				P								11

Tung Nguyen [Resolve]

Tracey arrived to class 20 minutes late without a pass. She was unwilling to communicate with me, sent to Dean of Students for resolution. Follow-up necessary.

Show less

Edit Delete

Reply to this comment…

23			
24	**Color Code Key:**	
25	Green = Special Ed.	
26	Amber = ELL	
27	Light Blue = Dropped	
28	Red Letter = Behavior	
29	Highlighted Maroon = Graduated	
30		
31	**Archived**	

9	Gisler, Curtis	20				P		8	P		17			25
10	Goudreau, Jenine	18				P		12	P		15			27
11	Gum, Marcene	18				P		16	A		20			36
12	Haag, Alease	19				P		25	P		19			44
13	Holladay, Damion							23	P		23			46

Tung Nguyen [Resolve]

Accommodations: Modified quizzes (reduce multiple choice to 3 options). Essays are removed from student course work. Tests and quizzes read aloud to student.

Show less

Edit Delete

Reply to this comment…

14	Johnstone, Zack							20	P		23			43
15	Killian, Isobel							31	P		28			59
16	Luna, Rodrigo							17	P		22			39
17	Malik, Eliseo							7	P		20			27
18	Moniz, Ashanti							12	P		21			33
19	Petrosky, Kyong							19	P		19			38
20	Rodriguez, Melani							22	P		12			34
21	Soto, Jazmin							15	A		5			20
22	Spriggs, Tracey							0	P		11			11
23			
24	**Color Code Key:**	
25	Green = Special Ed.	
26	Amber = ELL	

Part Four: Student-Centered Discipline

An important aspect of a goal-oriented classroom structure is a behavioral management process that allows educators to be flexible while insisting on high levels of respect and cooperation. Therefore, it is important to set high and consistent behavioral, routine, and process expectations. These processes must be continually reinforced through intentionally teaching and reviewing norms with students on a regular basis.

Although behavioral, routine, and process expectations are unique at various settings, they should follow certain general protocols. Classroom norms should be:

- Created with student input.

- Clear and concise. Written in student friendly language.

- Clearly visible to all members of the classroom.

- Use affirmative rather than restrictive language.

  - e.g. (Restrictive - Do not use pencil sharpener when teacher is speaking.)

  - e.g. (Affirmative - Please use pencil sharpener in a respectful manner.)

- Reflect school-wide norms and expectations.

- Limited to at least three, but no more than five rules.

Classroom expectations should be created at the beginning of each semester or any time a teacher is assigned a new group of students. They are most effective when students are involved in the process and are willing to keep each other accountable for upholding classroom norms (i.e. self-police).

Behavior Prevention Process

      The Behavior Prevention Process works within a goal-oriented classroom structure to avoid disciplinary issues through a relational classroom approach. These guidelines present a process to identify signs of potential issues and address these issues before they become causal factors for misbehavior. This process allows students to actively process their needs, rationalizing the necessary steps in order to return to normalcy. It allows teachers to help students discover locus of control over their actions.

      Misbehaviors can be prevented if addressed properly at the root of the cause. This Behavior Prevention Process challenges educators to take a preemptive approach towards discipline by building trust with students when they notice distress. It can be as simple as, "I noticed you were upset when you entered class. What's going on?" or "It looks like you haven't finished your assignment. Are you stuck on a problem? How can I help?" When these types of leading questions are poised, it informs the student that you have noticed that there may be something wrong. These preventative interactions acknowledge that you care for your pupils holistically and are willing to help them succeed. The five step preventative guideline is listed below:

      Step 1: State observed demeanor.

            e.g. "It looks like you are really tired."

      Step 2: Ask the student to communicate their need(s).

            e.g. "Are you alright?"

      Step 3: Express willingness to help student overcome their need(s).

e.g. "What can I do to help you succeed today?"

Step 4: Create an action plan to move forward academically, including a timeline for follow-up.

e.g. "Lets make a plan together."

Step 5: Follow-up with the student to see if the issue has been resolved.

e.g. "How are you doing now?"

A scheduled follow-up meeting informs students that you will hold them accountable for following through with the action plan they've created. It also provides you with an opportunity to re-evaluate the situation to determine if further action is necessary.

Behavior Prevention Process

```
                    State observed        Ask student to
                      demeanor.           communicate
                                             need.
         Yes

  Observable                                        Express willingness
  risk signs of                                      to help student
  misbehavior.                                       overcome need(s).


  Follow-up with        Create an action plan to
     student.          move forward academically.
                        Include timeline for follow-up.


  Issue resolved.          Behavior
                           Reaction
                           Process
```
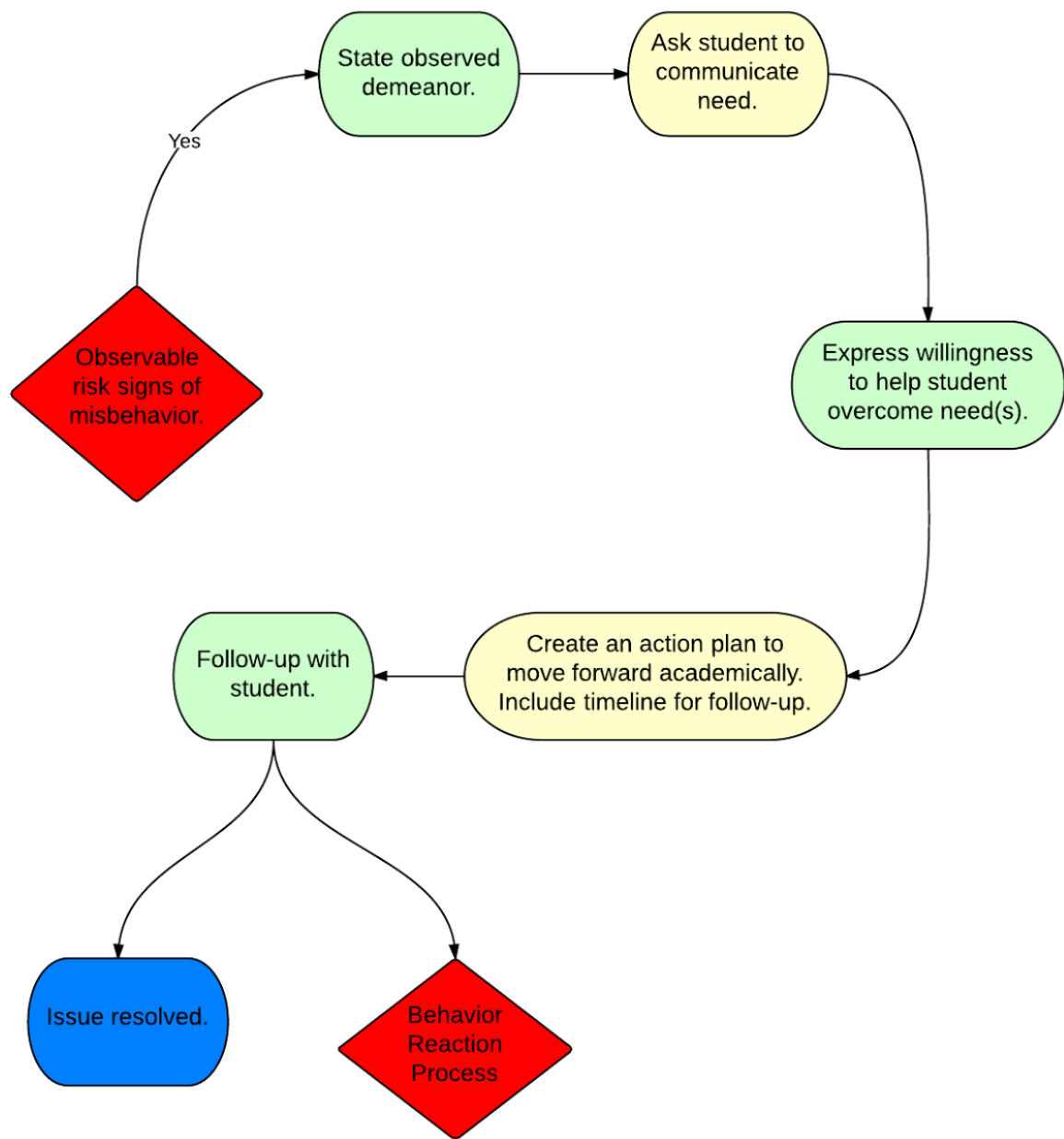
Behavior Reaction Process:

The Behavior Reaction Process should be used when misbehavior has already occurred and is similar to the Behavior Prevention Process. It allows students an opportunity to rationally process their actions and actively create a plan to discontinue negative conduct.

Step 1: State observed behavior.

Step 2: Ask the student to communicate their needs or intentions of their behavior.

Step 3: Express willingness to help student overcome their need(s).

Step 4: Discuss the impact his/her behavior on the entire class and the teacher's ability to teach.

Step 5: Create an action plan to mitigate negative behavior, include potential consequence(s) and a timeline for follow-up.

Step 6: Follow-up with the student to see if the issue has been resolved. If the issue has not been resolved, the consequences discussed during the initial conversation should be applied. Although the intention of this guide is to minimize the need for discipline through preventative support systems, students must be held highly accountable for upholding the established classroom norms.

Behavior Reaction Process

State observed behavior.

Ask student to communicate need or intention of behavior.

Observable behavior.

Express willingness to help student overcome need(s).

Explanation of impact of behavior on classroom environment.

Create an action plan to mitigate behavior. Include potential consequence(s) and timeline for follow-up.

Follow-up with student.

Issue resolved.

Execute Consequence(s)
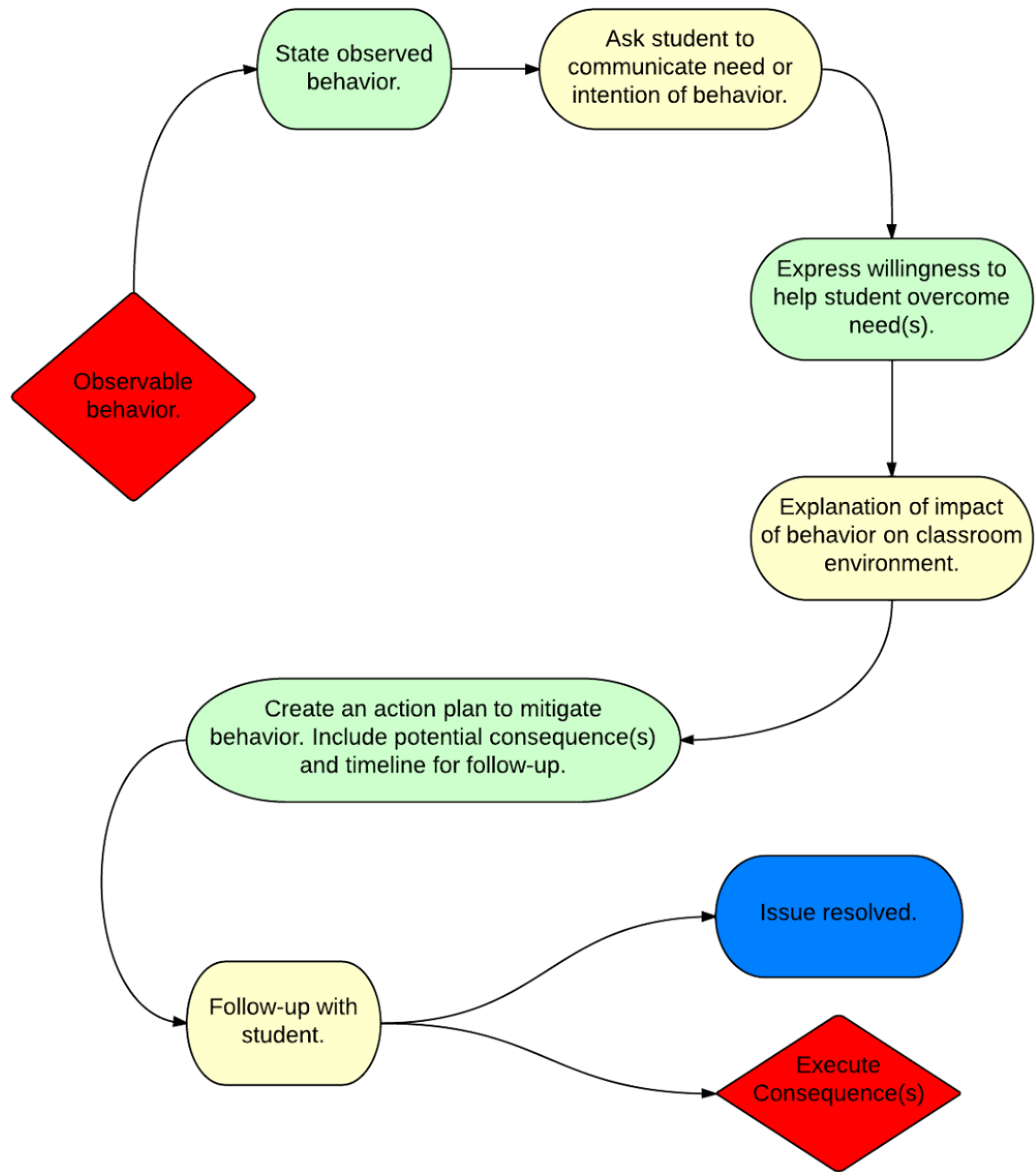
Part Five: Behavior Reporting

The behavior reporting component of this guide is intended to help educators better understand the context in which student needs are not being met and therefore misbehaviors occur. Items included in the reporting survey provide contextual clues for educators attempting to find patterns in misbehavior. There are a total of five required fields on the survey asking teachers to provide information such as the location of the behavioral incident, the antecedent to the incident, the actual behavior, the consequence, and finally the teacher's hypothesis for the occurrence of the behavior. The survey also has an option for users to provide additional comments (*Figure 9*).

The reporting component is designed to be a teacher friendly online survey that collects discipline data. Each student's behavioral reporting information is automatically collected and stored online providing ease of access for multiple collaborators. Similar to the Weekly Goal Setting Survey, individual student behavioral data are available in a detailed format (*Figure 7*) and summary (*Figure 8*).
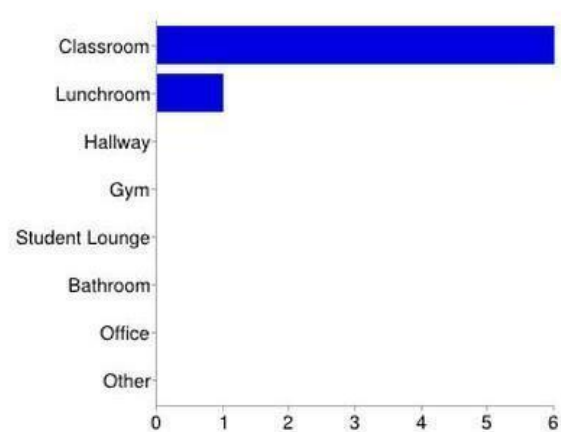
Easy access to behavioral data allows educators to quickly identify factors that lead to behavioral referrals. The examples provided in Figures 7 and 8 are behavioral incidents for a fiction student Johnny Samples. The majority of Johnny's misbehavior occurred in the classroom (86%). While he was mostly cited for disrespect (18%), non-compliance (55%), and leaving without permission (18%); Johnny rarely used inappropriate language (0%), did not use physical or verbal threats (9%), and has not participated in fights (0%). An examination of the reporting teacher's hypothesis for

Johnny's behavior reveals that most incidents were a result of Johnny attempting to avoid a task and/or maintaining his social status. This type of examination could lead teachers to discover that Johnny misbehaved because he was unable to keep up with the pace of the class due to deficiencies such as low reading comprehension. Instead of admitting he did not understand, it was socially more acceptable for Johnny to misbehave when directed to accomplish academic tasks.

Note: All templates and forms discussed in this section are available electronically through Google Documents and can be shared with any user who wants to implement this system.
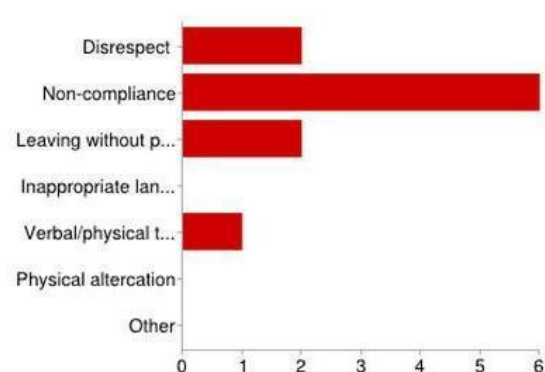
Figure 7

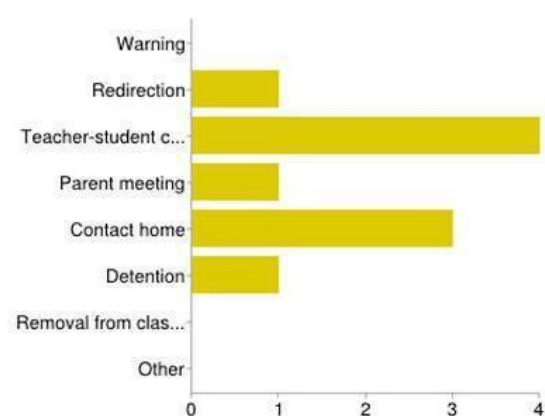|	A	B	C What Happened Before? (Antecedent)	D What happened? (Behavior)	E What Happened After? (Consequence)	F Why did this happen? (Hypothesis)	G
1	Timestamp	Location					Additional Comments
2	9/2/2014	Classroom	Misuse of technology	Non-compliance, Leaving without permission	Teacher-student conference (classroom)	Maintain/improve social standing	
3	9/10/2014	Classroom	Directed to accomplish a task	Non-compliance	Redirection	Task avoidance, Wants/needs not met	
4	9/17/2014	Classroom	Disruptive behavior	Disrespect , Non-compliance	Teacher-student conference (classroom), Contact home	Task avoidance	
5	9/29/2014	Lunchroom	Not following classroom/school norms	Verbal/physical threat	Detention	Maintain/improve social standing	
6	9/30/2014	Classroom	Sleeping/inactivity	Non-compliance, Leaving without permission	Teacher-student conference (classroom), Contact home	Task avoidance	
7	10/14/2014	Classroom	Not following classroom/school norms	Non-compliance	Teacher-student conference (classroom)	Wants/needs not met	
8	10/16/2014	Classroom	Directed to accomplish a task, Misuse of technology	Disrespect , Non-compliance	Parent meeting, Contact home	Task avoidance, Maintain/improve social standing	I can't seem to get Johnny to completed his work in class. He doesn't seem to be concerned about his academic progress.

Johnny Samples - Student Behavior Reporting (Responses)

File   Edit   View   Insert   Format   Data   Tools   Form   Add-ons   Help   All changes saved in Drive

Figure 8

Summary

Location

Classroom	6	86%
Lunchroom	1	14%
Hallway	0	0%
Gym	0	0%
Student Lounge	0	0%
Bathroom	0	0%
Office	0	0%
Other	0	0%

What Happened Before? (Antecedent)
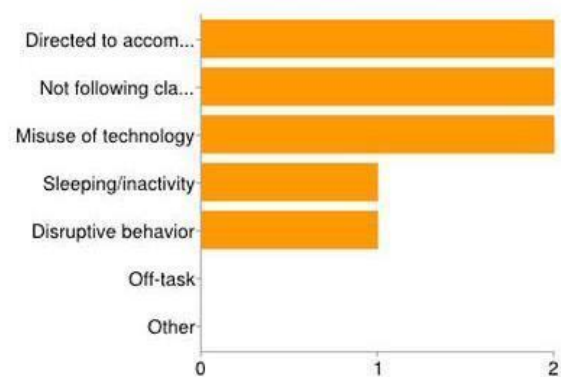
Directed to accomplish a task	2	25%
Not following classroom/school norms	2	25%
Misuse of technology	2	25%
Sleeping/inactivity	1	13%
Disruptive behavior	1	13%
Off-task	0	0%
Other	0	0%

Figure 8 (continued)

Figure 9

Johnny Sample

Your username (   ) will be recorded when you submit this form.
* Required

Location *

☐ Classroom
☐ Lunchroom
☐ Hallway
☐ Gym
☐ Student Lounge
☐ Bathroom
☐ Office
☐ Other: _____

What Happened Before? (Antecedent) *

☐ Directed to accomplish a task
☐ Not following classroom/school norms
☐ Misuse of technology
☐ Sleeping/inactivity
☐ Disruptive behavior
☐ Off-task
☐ Other: _____

What happened? (Behavior) *

☐ Disrespect
☐ Non-compliance
☐ Leaving without permission
☐ Inappropriate language/profanity
☐ Verbal/physical threat
☐ Physical altercation
☐ Other: _____

What Happened After? (Consequence) *

☐ Warning
☐ Redirection
☐ Teacher-student conference (classroom)
☐ Parent meeting
☐ Contact home
☐ Detention
☐ Removal from classroom
☐ Other: [_____]
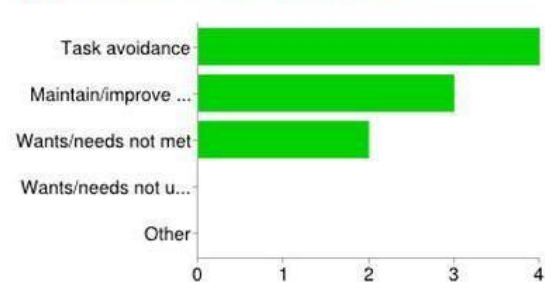
Why did this happen? (Hypothesis) *

☐ Task avoidance
☐ Maintain/improve social standing
☐ Wants/needs not met
☐ Wants/needs not understood
☐ Other: [_____]

Additional Comments

[_____]

☐ Send me a copy of my responses.

Submit

Appendix B

District Program Participation Data
2011-2012
2012-2013
2013-2014

Class/Activity	13/14 Ethnicity Percentage (White/Hispanic/Black/Asian)	13/14 Low SES Percentage (Free/Reduced)	12/13 Ethnicity Percentage (White/Hispanic/Black/Asian)	12/13 Low SES Percentage (Free/Reduced)	11/12 Ethnicity Percentage (White/Hispanic/Black/Asian)	11/12 Low SES Percentage (Free/Reduced)
Advanced Placement	74/19/1/6	20	69/22/1/8	24	69/19/1/11	23
Honors	70/20/4/6	32	73/19/2/6	27	77/18/1/4	23
Reading (180/44)	21/65/8/6	92	32/39/24/5	89	24/54/15/7	85
Mathematics Lab	27/56/12/5	80	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Special Ed. Support Classes	30/48/19/3	81	39/39/20/2	87	36/43/17/4	83
Vocal Dimensions	62/38/0/0	25	81/13/0/6	6	92/8/0/0	16
Theater/Forensics/Debate	74/21/5/0	28	76/19/5/0	33	N/A	N/A
Symphony Orchestra	59/29/5/7	33	69/17/2/12	25	68/21/2/9	24
Jazz Band	98/1/0/1	1	68/23/0/9	14	75/17/0/8	17
Band	54/38/4/4	45	60/35/3/2	47	59/35/3/3	42
Choir	37/42/17/4	62	36/51/11/2	68	53/36/7/4	50
Orchestra	56/27/6/11	40	60/27/5/8	44	61/25/3/11	35
Advanced Art	N/A	N/A	69/25/0/6	38	75/19/0/6	19
Independent Study	74/15/0/11	22	70/22/4/4	26	74/16/5/5	23
Dual Enrollment	91/0/0/9	0	100/0/0/0	0	83/0/0/17	0
National Honors Society	92/7/0/1	9	78/13/0/9	16	73/12/0/15	10

Appendix C

Permission Form

May 12, 2014

███████████████████

Dear Superintendent ██████:

I am currently enrolled in the Grand Valley State University (GVSU), Advanced Studies in Education Program, and I am writing a Master's Project for the completion of my Master's Degree in Educational Leadership. My project focuses on disproportionate rates of minority suspension. While I will not include the names of any specific district entities, employees, or student; I am requesting permission to use district discipline and program participation data. Your signature below indicates ████████████ consent to the use of district discipline and program participation data in my project.

Sincerely,

Son Tung Le-Nguyen
Son Tung Le-Nguyen

28 East 25th Street Holland, MI 49423
Email: tunglnguyen@gmail.com

PERMISSION IS GRANTED to Son Tung Le-Nguyen to include the requested materials in his GVSU Master's of Education Project. *Exclusions as noted above in addition to not naming the District/* ██████████ *source info was obtained.*

Permission granted by:

Name: ██████████████   Title: SUPERINTENDENT

Signature: _____   Date: 5/14/14