

Rethink School Discipline:

School District Leadership
Summit on Improving School
Climate and Discipline



- Superintendents from 40 School Districts from Around the Country
- Speakers Including Education Secretary Arne Duncan and Attorney General Loretta Lynn
- Expert Presenters Including;

Attorneys from DOJ and Department of Education

Academic Experts from UCLA, NYU, Stanford, Indiana

Specialists in School Climate, Restorative Justice, Juvenile law.

Breakout Workshops

Identifying the Root Causes of Discipline Disparities (attended by Superintendent HT Sánchez)

Developing Effective Codes of Conduct
(attended by General Counsel Julie Tolleson)

Alternatives to Exclusionary School Discipline (attended by Senior Director of Desegregation Martha Taylor)

The Problem:

Disproportionately high suspension/expulsion rates for students of color (a national crisis)

Though not a TUSD practice, increasing suspension of PRESCHOOL children and primary grade children across the country

Excessive referrals to law enforcement for conduct violations

Disparities in identification of students of color and ELLs as special education students.

Timeline

Leading up to the conference we had invited DOJ to consult with us about our discipline data and our code of conduct. Teleconf w/DOJ and Deseg staff (April-May).

June 4-5th, 2015 in person session with Superintendent, Teaching and Learning leaders, and Desegregation staff and DOJ team.

June 6th, 2015, invitation to Dr. Sánchez to attend the Convening and bring two team members.

Preconvening Assignments – Review Discipline Data, Identify and Confer with “Discipline Working Group”

July 17th, 2015 Deadline for District Template to U S Dept. of Education



Tucson Unified School District

District's School Discipline Key Initiatives

- Discipline data examined once a month at SLT
- Develop accountability system for administrators for static or regressive discipline data.
- Develop programs to keep students in school when suspended: ISI and DAEP

Questions for Stakeholders & Other Districts

- Who at central office is in charge of discipline across your district? Is there a dedicated position for this responsibility?
- What strategies have been used to affect positive changes in your discipline data?
- How have community members been engaged in efforts to show positive change in school discipline?

District Challenges Identified by Central Administration

- No accountability system in place for follow-through when areas of improvement are identified through data analysis.
- Loose span of control regarding oversight for follow-through.
- Organization of departments and habits of communication should be reexamined.

Team Summit Goals

The TUSD team hopes to:

- Learn specific and successful strategies other districts have utilized to improve discipline data.
- Learn techniques for implementing and monitoring new initiatives.
- Identify proven plans of action from large urban school districts.

Additional Links & Resources

<http://ocrdata.ed.gov/>

(Please add: Additional links and documents that describe your district's efforts here.)

Demographics

(check one box)

- Urban
- Suburban
- Rural



Tucson Unified School District

District Challenges Identified by School Discipline Working

- **Participant: Middle School Principal**
 - The minority and socioeconomic demographics.
 - Educating the parent/guardian on the benefits of Advanced Placement classes.
 - A consistent discipline plan that is fair and firm among all TUSD stakeholders.
 - Educational funding.
 - Providing a fair and firm consequence where the victim of the violation feels that their rights are being supported.
- **Participant: Parent**
 - Lack of resources and alternatives for minority students who have been disciplined for violations.
 - Higher rate of police involvement when minority students are disciplined versus Anglo students committing the same violations.
 - Even though the district has implemented the PBIS, which is a more standardized disciplinary guideline, there is a perception of little oversight or follow-through which leaves room for discrimination and the ability for administrators to push out students who they might perceive as troublesome.
- **Participant: Students**
 - A survey of minority and white students across the district who have and have not experienced school discipline stated that most of the surveyed don't agree with suspension, but agreed that there ought to be an alternative form of discipline—something more restorative than banning a student from campus. Misbehavior cannot go unpunished, and oftentimes suspension is implemented for school safety reasons. But suspension is not a problem-solver, particularly for minorities/poor youth. For many TUSD students, improvements in goals, grades, and behavior could be made through alternative methods. The current disciplinary protocols are not beneficial in all cases. The Teen Court model is something to consider emulating. With a district as large and diverse as ours, there is room to implement some of its strategies in teaching troubled youth.

Next Steps:

Expand and Improve Structure of Discipline Data Review

Use Working Group to evaluate need for top-to-bottom rewrite of student code of conduct

District-wide training in Positive Behavioral Intervention & Support (PBIS)

More closely align MTSS process with positive behavioral supports and interventions, not just academic intervention

Ensure that school climate and discipline improvement tasks are properly assigned and staffed within the leadership team with proper accountability.

Work to involve the public, site administrators, teachers, and students in forming and implementing an improved vision for school climate and student conduct.

AFTER our participation in White House Summit for Superintendents and School Leaders on Supportive School Climate and Discipline on July 22, 2015, our team will commit to continuous growth and progress by:

Meeting regularly with our working group to implement and refine our comprehensive strategy for improving school climate and discipline;

Partnering with local stakeholders such as students, parents, community members, and local officials (law enforcement, mental health professionals, and judges) to ensure they are engaged participants in our efforts whose input is incorporated in future conversations about changes to discipline policies and practices;

Developing a comprehensive and transparent strategy that focuses on continuous review of discipline data and monitors progress of newly implemented discipline policies and practices...

- “Convening Commitments” for participating superintendents