ASSESSING AND CREATING A CLIMATE OF SUPPORT FOR STAFF MEMBERS IN ADDRESSING STUDENT CONDUCT

by

Stacey Rominski

An Education Leadership Portfolio submitted to the Faculty of the University of Delaware in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership.

Summer 2023

© 2023 Stacey Rominski
All Rights Reserved

ASSESSING AND CREATING A CLIMATE OF SUPPORT

FOR STAFF MEMBERS IN ADDRESSING STUDENT CONDUCT

by

Stacey Rominski

Approved: _____

Steve Amendum, Ph.D.
Interim Director of the School of Education

Approved: _____

Gary T. Henry, Ph.D.
Dean of the College of Education and Human Development

Approved: _____

Louis F. Rossi, Ph.D.
Vice Provost for Graduate and Professional Education and
Dean of the Graduate College

I certify that I have read this Education Leadership Portfolio and that in my opinion it meets the academic and professional standard required by the University as an Education Leadership Portfolio for the degree of Doctor of Education.

Signed: _____

Lauren P Bailes, Ph.D.
Professor in Charge of Education Leadership Portfolio

I certify that I have read this Education Leadership Portfolio and that in my opinion it meets the academic and professional standard required by the University as an Education Leadership Portfolio for the degree of Doctor of Education.

Signed: _____

Bryan A. VanGronigen, Ph.D.
Member of Education Leadership Portfolio Committee

I certify that I have read this Education Leadership Portfolio and that in my opinion it meets the academic and professional standard required by the University as an Education Leadership Portfolio for the degree of Doctor of Education.

Signed: _____

Elizabeth Soslau, Ph.D.
Member of Education Leadership Portfolio Committee

I certify that I have read this Education Leadership Portfolio and that in my opinion it meets the academic and professional standard required by the University as an Education Leadership Portfolio for the degree of Doctor of Education.

Signed: _____

Jennifer Hammer, Ed.D.
Member of Education Leadership Portfolio Committee

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

There are many people to acknowledge and thank for their encouragement, and support throughout this journey. First, to my parents, Linda and Al Rominski, and my brother, Jeff, whose unwavering support and love have encouraged in me a determination to accomplish whatever I set my mind to; and to Aunt Phyl, who has always supported my education from undergrad until now. Also, to Bridget Diehl and the rest of my "Prindle Court Family" who are always my biggest cheerleaders.

I would also like to acknowledge Dr. Jacquelyn Wilson, who started me on this journey, providing guidance in selecting classes and thinking through the problem for my Education Leadership Portfolio (ELP). To Dr. Lauren Bailes, who took me on as an advisee right in the middle of this project, I appreciate your patience and encouragement as I worked slowly but surely on my artifacts and writing more than you know. Your thorough feedback and comments challenged me to extend my thinking and ask thoughtful questions about my research. To Dr. Bryan VanGronigen, who supported me through the writing of my ELP proposal and literature review, and Dr. Elizabeth Soslau for suggesting a narrower focus for my ELP, which helped me to concentrate on more meaningful improvement strategies and solutions. Finally, to Dr. Jennifer Hammer, who is exactly the kind of leader I aspire to be. Thank you for your support both in this project and professionally.

To my CCPS colleagues Dr. Don Foskey and Dr. Catrina Long, and Katie Fortune, thank you for being in this boat with me! I am grateful for your friendship. And finally, to my BVES teammates who encouraged and supported me throughout,

the work of this ELP would not have been possible without your encouragement and support.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES viii
LIST OF FIGURES x
ABSTRACT xi

Chapter

1 INTRODUCTION 1

Document Organization and Description of Artifact Appendices 3

2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM 6

Organizational Context 6
Organizational Role 23
Statement of the Problem 26
Root Cause 29

3 IMPROVEMENT GOAL AND STRATEGIES 38

Improvement Goal 38
Measuring Progress for Attaining the Improvement Goal 40
Improvement Strategies 40

4 IMPROVEMENT STRATEGY RESULTS 43

Results for Improvement Strategy 1- Assessing School Climate 43
Results for Improvement Strategy 2- Communicate Expecations, Strategies and Resources 61
Results for Improvement Strategy 3- Professional Development 64

5 REFLECTIONS ON IMPROVEMENT STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION 65

Alignment and New Learnings 67
Recommendations for Future Work 72

6 REFLECTIONS ON LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT 77

Growth as a Scholar 78
Growth as a Problem Solver 79
Growth as a Partner 81
Final Thoughts 83

REFERENCES 84

Appendix

A ARTIFACT 1 – LITERATURE REVIEW 91
B ARTIFACT 2 – POLICY REVIEW 115
C ARTIFACT 3 – WHITE PAPER 141
D ARTIFACT 4 – SCHOOL CLIMATE HANDBOOK 150
E ARTIFACT 5 – STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK 180
F ARTIFACT 6 – PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN 232
G ARTIFACT 7 – COMMUNICATION PLAN 267

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1 CCPS Consequences and Interventions 9

Table 2 CCPS Recommended Range of Consequences for Elementary School 10

Table 3 Administrator Turnover at BVES 18

Table 4 BVES Discipline Referrals by School Year 33

Table 5 Training and Courses of Respondents by Experience Level 45

Table 6 Sample of Respondents Scores to Create Mindset Matrix 47

Table 7 Definition of Categories Used to Define Administrator Support 49

Table 8 Possible Consequences from a Staff Member in Response to Student Behavior 56

Table A1 Office Discipline Referrals and Exclusionary Consequences 99

Table B1 State-Level Legislative Changes to School Discipline 121

Table B2 COMAR and CCPS Policy Alignment 123

Table B3 CCPS Stakeholder Responsibilities 126

Table B4 CCPS Interventions and Consequences 129

Table B5 CCPS Recommended Range of Consequences for Elementary School 130

Table D1 Bay View BARK 152

Table D2 Character Trait Read Aloud by Month 156

Table D3 Restorative Practices Champions 162

Table D4 Kid Talk Protocol 175

Table E1 Student Interview Participants 186

Table E2 Race and Ethnicity of Student Interview Participants 186

Table E3 Student Interview Questions with Alignment to Research Questions 188

Table E4 Student Responses and Coding Example 190

Table E5 Experience Level of Survey Respondents 192

Table E6 Possible Consequences from a Staff Member in Response to Student Behavior 198

Table E7 Training and Courses of Respondents by Experience Level 202

Table E8 Definition of Categories Used to Define Administrator Support 206

Table F1 PD Plan Goals, Strategies and Alignment to ISSF 237

Table F2 PD Plan Scope and Sequence 240

Table F3 School Climate Committee Meetings and Agendas 264

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1 Preparedness by Experience Level: The training (courses or professional development) I have received as an educator have prepared me to address student conduct in my classroom 45

Figure 2 Level of Experience and Mindset 48

Figure D1 Classroom Dojo Set Up..... 163

Figure D2 Sample MIR 168

Figure D3 Sample ODR 169

Figure D4 Retriever Review and Reset 172

Figure E1 Preparedness by Experience Level: The training (courses or professional development) I have received as an educator have prepared me to address student conduct in my classroom 201

Figure E2 Level of Experience and Mindset 204

Figure F1 Punitive vs Restorative Mindset 246

ABSTRACT

School climate is a widely researched concept because of the influence that school climate can have on student outcomes such as academic achievement, attendance and discipline (Thapa et al, 2013;Wang & Degol, 2016;), as well as staff member outcomes such as job satisfaction and teacher retention (Cohen et al, 2009; Thapa et al, 2013). A positive school climate can result in better outcomes for students and staff members. School climate, however, is largely based on stakeholder perceptions, and therefore data must be collected from stakeholders to first assess the climate, and then design a plan to improve the school climate. This Education Leadership Portfolio (ELP), was designed to address the following problem: staff members perceive a lack of support from administration when addressing student misbehavior, which can negatively affect school climate. In order to address that problem, I designed three improvement strategies: 1) assess school climate, 2) communicate expectations, strategies, and resources, and 3) provide professional development to staff members. The results of this ELP demonstrate the need to continuously assess school climate through stakeholder feedback. The feedback gathered from staff members and student participants emphasizes the importance of consistent communication between staff members and administration, as well as staff members and students. Staff members identified additional measures that they viewed as support from administration in response to student discipline, including collaboration and exclusionary discipline measures. This study also highlights the importance of an integrated disciplinary framework that is multi-tiered and focused on prevention of student misconduct, and intervention rather than punishment in response to misconduct. Professional development was also identified as important for

improving school climate and increasing staff members' understanding of prevention- and intervention-focused responses to student misconduct.

The work of this ELP supports the existing literature on school climate, in that improving and maintaining a positive school climate is an on-going effort (Payne, 2018). I have identified several next steps as the result of this ELP, including: continued effort to use stakeholder feedback to assess school climate, consistent and clear communication to students and staff members regarding expectations for student behavior, clear expectations for staff member responses to student behavior, and professional development for staff members on prevention- and intervention-focused student discipline.

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

School climate is a concept that describes the overall environment of a school, however, the definition of school climate is multi-faceted and considers more than just the physical environment of the classroom or building (Cohen et al, 2009). Some researchers have defined it as the "heart and soul of the school," (Freiberg & Stein, p.11), or the "fabric of support that enables all members of the school community to teach and learn at optimum levels" (Freiberg, 1998, p.22). The study of school climate began with attempts to define the elements which encompass the environment of a school (Cohen, 2009). The elements of school climate have been categorized by researchers into four domains: teaching and learning, physical environment, safety, and relationships (Cohen, 2009, Thapa et al, 2013; Wang & Degol, 2016). Current research on school climate has now expanded to include the effect that school climate can have on teacher and student outcomes such as academic achievement, rates of student misconduct, teacher job satisfaction, and retention (Kuperminc et al, 2001;Wang & Degol, 2016; Zullig et al., 2010). Efforts to assess school climate include looking closely at individual elements of a school environment and considering their effect on the specific domains of school climate. This ELP was

designed to assess elements of school climate related to student behavior and school-wide discipline, and to assist school leaders in creating an environment of support for staff members including teachers who address student behavior. This ELP focuses on the climate and school-wide discipline framework of one elementary school, Bay View Elementary School (BVES), within Cecil County Public Schools (CCPS) in the state of Maryland. Throughout this ELP the terms student behavior and student conduct are used interchangeably. Student misconduct, or student misbehavior, are terms used to describe behaviors that do not meet the defined expectations for student behavior. A positive school climate, for the purposes of this ELP, refers to a climate where students understand the expectations for their behavior, and experience positive relationships with adults and peers at school and where staff members feel supported by administration and appropriately trained and prepared to address student behavior. A safe climate refers to a school environment where students and staff can engage in teaching and learning without fear of being physically harmed. I used qualitative and quantitative data collection tools—including interviews and a survey—to gather data for this ELP. These methods were best suited to the work of this ELP in order to gain an understanding of how teachers perceive school-wide discipline, and the degree to which they perceive support from school administrators.

The research questions that guided the work of this ELP are as follows:

1. Why do teachers perceive a lack of support from administrators when addressing student behavior?
2. How does this perceived lack of support influence teacher and student perceptions of school climate?
3. What steps can be taken to improve staff member perceptions of support and thereby increasing perceptions of overall school climate?

The findings from this ELP will be used to guide the school-wide discipline framework at BVES for the ultimate purpose of improving the school's climate.

Document Organization and Description of Artifact Appendices

The contents of this ELP are organized by first describing the context of my organization, and role within the organization. I then describe the problem, followed by an improvement goal and strategies to address the problem. There are seven appendices that include artifacts which support and substantiate the work of this ELP. Brief description of these artifacts follow in the order that they are presented in the ELP:

Appendix A. Artifact 1: Literature Review. As I defined the problem of practice for this ELP, it became evident that the use of exclusionary discipline practices in schools is often related to teachers' perception of ways that they experience support from school administrators. I completed a literature review in order

to learn about the use of exclusionary practices, the negative outcomes for schools and students, as well as alternatives to exclusionary discipline.

Appendix B. Artifact 2: Policy Review. The purpose of this artifact was to understand how national, state, and local policies on school discipline can implement discipline practices that are in place at the school level. I examined national, and state policies regarding exclusionary discipline, and discussed how they have informed CCPS discipline policies and practices. I then described how the CCPS policies are implemented at BVES.

Appendix C. Artifact 3: White Paper. The purpose of this white paper was to provide BVES staff members with literature regarding exclusionary discipline practices, the negative effects of those exclusionary practices on students, and promising alternatives to exclusionary discipline. The white paper used BVES behavior data and current literature to explain why exclusionary discipline is problematic for students and for school climate.

Appendix D. Artifact 4: School Climate Handbook. This handbook was created with staff members from BVES in order to clearly communicate and explain the expectations for student conduct at BVES. It also communicates the processes, and procedures for student discipline. This handbook demonstrates how the BVES discipline framework incorporates elements of Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS), Restorative Practices (RP), Social Emotional Learning (SEL), and trauma informed responses such as Life Space Crisis Intervention (LSCI).

Appendix E. Artifact 5: Stakeholder Feedback. The purpose of this artifact was to gain feedback from two stakeholder groups regarding student conduct and student discipline: BVES staff members and BVES students. Staff members responded to an anonymous survey that I distributed. I also selected a small sample of students to participate in interviews. The findings from this artifact indicate that students have an overall positive perception of school climate, largely due to the quality of their relationships with staff members and peers. I also found that staff members perceive the following administrator actions as supportive when they engage with student misbehaviors: collaboration, communication, responsiveness, and the use of exclusionary practices.

Appendix F. Artifact 6: Professional Development Plan. The purpose of this artifact is to outline the year-long program of professional development that I designed in alignment with the literature review, policy review, stakeholder feedback, and the school climate handbook. This plan includes slides from professional development presentations that were delivered to staff members at BVES.

Appendix G. Artifact 7: Communication Plan. This artifact is a presentation that I will deliver to BVES staff members in order to share the findings of this ELP. It includes a summary of survey and interview data from Artifact 5: Stakeholder Feedback. It also includes next steps that can be taken to further improve school climate.

Chapter 2

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Organizational Context

In this section I describe Cecil County Public Schools (CCPS) as an organization and highlight the policies which establish the expectations for student conduct across the district, as well as the training and supports that have been developed for student discipline. I then focus on one elementary school—Bay View Elementary School (BVES)—within CCPS and highlight the influence of district polices regarding student conduct and discipline, as well as supports and training at the school level.

District Level Context

CCPS is a public school district located in the northeast corner of Maryland. CCPS serves approximately 15,000 students in pre-school through 12th grade. There are 17 elementary schools in the district, with a total population of 6,986 students enrolled in preschool through fifth grade. In order to communicate clear expectations for student conduct, as well as a consistent process for discipline, the CCPS Board of Education developed a Code of Student Discipline and a Code of Student Conduct. The Code of Student Discipline outlines general expectations for students in order to demonstrate "good discipline and good citizenship" (CCPS, 2016), as well as expectations for parents, school staff members and community members in helping

students to meet these expectations. The Code of Student Conduct describes consequences and interventions for student discipline in further detail. These policy documents were originally drafted in 2003 and have been revised and updated by committees of educators throughout CCPS. These committees are selected by CCPS leadership and include a variety of stakeholders including teachers, parents, and CCPS leaders, including principals and assistant principals. The most recent update took place in 2018 and included revisions to reflect policy changes and requirements mandated by the state of Maryland. The revisions were made in order to create a CCPS policy that is aligned with Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR) and allows for discretion in discipline, and keeps students in school and connected to school (COMAR 13a.08.01.11, p.8). The Code of Student Discipline acknowledges that creating a safe and secure learning environment requires collaboration among school staff, parents and students, and also outlines expectations for the behavior of each of those groups. The Code of Student Conduct seeks to "establish standards of student conduct with appropriate consequences for violations" (CCPS Code of Student Discipline, 2018, p. 1). Demonstrating a commitment to keeping students in school, the Code of Student Conduct defines a range of interventions that may be used to address student conduct before utilizing suspension. (see Table 1). Table 1, taken from the CCPS Code of Conduct, outlines interventions and consequences that could be used by administrators, ranging in severity from 1-7, with one being the least severe

and 7 being the most severe consequence. Some of the consequences in this chart do not apply to elementary school students, including modified instructional placement (MIP). It is unclear at this time, why MIP is not utilized at the elementary school level, however one possible reason could be that elementary aged students would require more supervision and instructional support than middle or high school aged students, creating a need for additional staff in order to make this intervention possible in elementary school. For example, middle school students who participate in MIP, independently complete assignments from the classes they have been removed from with minimal instructional support from a staff member. Elementary aged students because of their age and ability to work independently, would likely require more instructional support from an adult to complete their assignments. The policy document also outlines the range of consequences that can be applied for each offense (see Table 2). Table 2 is a section of the table found in the CCPS Code of Student Conduct, showing only the portion relevant to elementary school. It matches conduct violations with a range of consequences that are described in Table 1. For example, if an elementary-aged student is bullying, interventions and consequences from level 2 to 7 could be considered appropriate, whereas a dress code violation might incur interventions and consequences on the lower end of the scale (e.g., levels 1, 2, or 3). As stated in the Code of Student Conduct, this table should be used by administrators to help determine appropriate interventions and consequences. The policy states,

"school administrators always have the discretion to use consequences at a lower range or utilize interventions, such as student reflection, counseling, restitution, referral to outside agencies, etc." (CCPS Code of Student Conduct, 2018, p. 1).

Table 1

CCPS Interventions and Consequences

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Classroom Interventions	**Conferences**	**Consequences**	**Alternative Placements**	**Short Term Suspension**	**Long Term Suspensions**	**Referral**
Implemented by Classroom Teacher	Conference with student	Time in Office	***MIP**	Suspension 1-3 days	Suspension 4-10 days	Referral to Superintendent
	Parent Contact	Loss of Privileges	*MIP Multiple Days			
	Bus Warning	Detention			Twilight Program	
	Referral to Support Staff	*MIP	Other Alternative Placement	Twilight Program		
	Confiscation and Return	Bus Suspension	Twilight Program			

***MIP Modified Instruction Program**

Table 2

Recommended Range of Consequences for Elementary School

Offense/Violation	Range of Consequences						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Academic Dishonesty/Cheating	X	X	X				
Alcohol			X	X	X	X	
Arson/Fire					X	X	X
Bullying		X	X	X	X	X	X
Chronic Minor Infractions		X	X	X			
Class Cutting	X	X	X	X			
Disrespect	X	X	X	X	X		
Disruption	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Dress Code Violation	X	X	X				
Drugs/Distribution			X	X	X	X	X
Explosives			X	X	X	X	X
False Alarm Bomb Threat				X	X	X	X
Fighting			X	X	X		
Firearms							X
Harassment	X	X	X	X			
Insubordination	X	X	X	X			

CCPS, like all school districts in Maryland, has committed to implementing Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) programs in all its schools. PBIS is a comprehensive approach to student discipline that focuses on communicating and teaching rules and expectations for student conduct, while providing an integrated system of interventions and supports for students who are unable to meet the standards of conduct (Osher et al., 2010). The PBIS programs at each school are the foundation that enables school leaders to create a positive and supportive school climate centered on student achievement both academically and socially. PBIS programs at each school include the specific practices of defining clear expectations for student behavior, procedures for teaching students the expectations for behavior, procedures for positive reinforcement when students demonstrate expected behavior, and interventions for supporting students who are not meeting expectations (Sugai & Horner, 2002). The interventions referenced in Table 1 above would be developed as a part of a school's PBIS program.

In addition to a district-wide commitment to PBIS, CCPS has taken additional steps to strengthen the consistency of implementation of discipline strategies across schools and provide school leadership and staff with training and strategies to support students with respect to conduct. The commitment to more interventions and in-school services was partially in response to legislation that was passed in Maryland in 2017. The Maryland Coalition to Reform School Discipline describes House Bill 425 and its

implications for schools: “The passage of SB651/HB425 bans the suspension and expulsion of pre-kindergarten through second grade students, except where the student would create an imminent risk of serious harm as determined by an administrator in consultation with a mental health professional” (2017, p.1). As described above, this legislation emphasizes the need for additional training to support teachers in grades PK-2 as they address challenging student conduct, since the option to remove students from school is limited by the passage of the bill. CCPS recognized the need to provide additional training to staff members that provided them with strategies to address student misbehavior while keeping students in school, which are described in the next paragraph.

In 2018, CCPS partnered with University of Maryland at College Park researchers who conducted research with the National Institute of Justice. This grant-funded research provided training to CCPS school leadership and all staff members which focused on additional classroom and school-based behavioral interventions in addition to those offered through PBIS. These interventions included trauma support for students, training in de-escalation techniques, as well as implementing progressive discipline and restorative practices. CCPS was able to provide training and professional development on Restorative Practices (RP) as well as Life Space Crisis Intervention (LSCI) to administrators and instructional staff in all schools. Restorative Practices is “a social science that studies how to build social capital and achieve social

discipline through participatory learning and decision making" (IIRP, 2021). Research on RP supports the belief that when students feel they are part of a community, they are less likely to engage in misbehavior (Gregory et al., 2020; Stewart Kline, 2016), as such the implementation of RP in a school setting helps educators switch from a punitive to a restorative mindset focusing on creating and maintaining positive communities and relationships instead of punishment (Costello et al, 2019, IIRP, 2021). Life Space Crisis Intervention (LSCI) is "a verbal strategy practiced immediately after a conflict becomes apparent in the life space of a child" (Grskovic & Goetze, 2005, p. 231). Students are encouraged to use words to work through the conflict to regain control of their emotions and actions, so they can think, through a situation or problem and respond calmly and appropriately (Grskovic & Goetze, 2005).

To further support student conduct and social emotional well-being, CCPS piloted the use of a Student Support Center (SSC) in some schools during the 2019-2020 school year. An SSC is a physical room within the school building where students can go to reflect, deescalate or focus on their school work. The SSC has three "zones" that students can utilize during their visit in order to achieve these goals: the reflection zone, the work zone and the zen zone. The SSC in each school is staffed with at least one Student Support Technician. These technicians are present full-time in the SSC and assist students while they are using the space. After a successful pilot

of SSCs across the district, CCPS fully implemented SSCs in all schools at the start of the 2020-2021 school year. An SSC Handbook was created, in August, 2019 by CCPS. The handbook was created for all CCPS staff to support consistent implementation and operation of the SSCs across schools within CCPS. The handbook outlines the purpose and goals of the SSC. The language in the handbook clearly communicates how the SSC supports students and aligns with other district initiatives:

> In Cecil County Public Schools it is the expectation that schools develop a positive climate where behavior expectations are taught and reinforced through PBIS. When students exhibit behavior that interferes with learning, we seek to understand the cause of the behavior through the essentials of Trauma Informed Care. The SSC is an integral part of understanding a student's needs and teaching behaviors that make learning possible. In the SSC, behavior is neither excused nor punished. A student's behavior is redirected and refocused so that learning can occur, and consequences, if appropriate, are applied in another setting after an understanding of the events is developed. Restorative practices are used when appropriate to repair the harm caused by a student's behavior (CCPS Student Support Center Handbook, p. 4).

The SSC was created to support students in redirecting and refocusing student behavior in order to learn and participate in the classroom. As described in the quote above, the structure of the SSC helps students to think about the reason for their

misbehavior and develop a plan to return to the classroom setting. The handbook also includes expectations for the layout of the SSC, and materials or equipment that should be available for students. The handbook also outlines the responsibilities of and required training for Student Support Technicians (SST). Students can access the SSC in several ways: teacher referral, self-referral, scheduled visit, counselor or administrator referral, and as an intervention. Schools are required to track their SSC visit data, noting the following data points for each visit: name of student, student's grade, student's classroom teacher, date, time of visit to SSC, behavior concern, intervention provided, time of departure from SSC, and length of stay in the SSC. These data are reported to school administrators and SSTs. They can be used to monitor the use of the SSC, for example, how students are most often being referred to the SSC, for what reason, as well as how long students are staying when they visit the SSC. This information can help to inform strategies that can be implemented school-wide. For example, a review of SSC data might indicate that student are frequently visiting the SSC to gain access to small items such as stress balls or putty to help them focus in the classroom. This could demonstrate a need to put a supply of these items in classrooms as an option for students. Reviewing SSC data can also provide information on an individual student level, for example, noticing that a student visits the SSC multiple times a day, may present an opportunity to schedule routine visits into the students' day.

This section described CCPS policies, interventions and supports regarding student conduct and discipline, the next section notes how the policies, interventions and supports are implemented at one elementary school within the CCPS district.

School Level Context

BVES is a Title I school with a current population of approximately 490 students. Seventy-six percent of the student population at BVES is White, 13% are Black or African American, 5% are two or more races, 2.6% Hispanic/Latino, and 1.8% Asian. Sixty-two percent of students receive free or reduced-priced meals and 10% of students experience homelessness. Eighteen percent of students are identified as students with disabilities who receive services through an Individualized Education Plan (IEP). Over the last several years, BVES has experienced a decrease in student enrollment. During the 2015-2016 school year, the population was 683 students. This declining enrollment has resulted in changes in the teaching staff, as the number of teachers and physical classrooms have been reduced to accommodate a smaller student population. There is a core of experienced and quality teachers at BVES. Experienced teachers are defined as those with tenure. Tenure is earned after three years of teaching experience; at BVES the majority (85%) of teachers have tenured status. Teacher quality is measured by a rating of effective or highly effective on the end of year evaluation, at BVES all (100%) teachers received effective or highly effective evaluations of the last three school years. At the start of the 2021-2022 school year,

there were seven (1.8%) teachers who were new to BVES. In 2020-2021 school year, there were two (<1%) teachers who were new to BVES. In the 2019-2020 school year there were five (1.2%). In addition to some turnover among teaching staff as illustrated above, BVES has also experienced a significant amount of turnover in the principal and assistant principal roles, as shown in Table 3. Over the last 10 school years, BVES has had five principals and seven assistant principals. Research highlights the negative effects of frequent principal turnover on student achievement, school climate, and improvement efforts naming the building principal as one of the most important forces in shaping a school (Cohen et al, 2009; Grissom et al, 2021). The frequent change in administration at BVES has affected the school climate because staff members feel that these changes are detrimental to continuity of school improvement efforts including academic achievement and student behavior. Research shows that when teachers have a positive perception of a principal's leadership, they are also likely to report a positive perception of the school climate (Ross & Cozzens, 2016). In order to improve the school climate, principals must know and understand the needs of the school, and develop a shared vision that empowers the teachers, staff and students to achieve it. (Kelley & Daugherty, 2005; Noonan, 2004; Payne, 2018). Frequent changes in leadership, such as those at BVES, can be detrimental to the creation and achievement of a shared vision and the ability of the principal to assess the needs of the staff. In summary, as it relates to the work of this ELP, leadership

turnover could have negatively influenced the commitment of BVES staff members to the strategies and supports CCPS has attempted to put in to place regarding student discipline.

Table 3

Administrator Turnover at BVES

School Year	Administrative Team
2011-2012	Principal A- Assistant Principal 1
2012-2013	Principal A- Assistant Principal 1
2013-2014	Principal A- Assistant Principal 1
2014-2015	Principal A- Assistant Principal 2
2015-2016	Principal A- Assistant Principal 3
2016-2017	Principal B-Assistant Principal 4
2017-2018	Principal B- Assistant Principal 4
2018-2019	Principal C- Assistant Principal 4
2019-2020	Principal D- Assistant Principal 5 *Virtual for students and staff beginning March 2020
2020-2021	Principal D-Assistant Principal 5 *Virtual for students and staff throughout the year
2021-2022	Principal E- Assistant Principal 6
2022-2023	Principal E-Assistant Principal 6

As a part of CCPS, BVES has benefitted from the district-level supports, described earlier in this section, regarding student conduct and discipline. BVES has implemented a PBIS program since the 2007-2008 school year. The program has been reviewed and modified over the years (for example, the addition of BARK badges to recognize student behavior occurred in 2019) but the core values—referred to as Bay View BARK—have remained consistent: Be prepared, Act responsibly, Respect the community, and Keep safe. BARK defines expectations for student behavior. Students who are prepared, responsible, respectful and safe are meeting the expectations for behavior. These expectations, as well as our work to clarify them and support all community members in meeting them, are further described in Artifact 4. In addition to shared expectations for student behavior, the district and school have also communicated expectations for teacher supports of student behavior with an array of professional learning initiatives.

For example, at the start of the 2019-2020 school year, all staff received initial training in Restorative Practices, which consisted of one full day of training that addressed changing mindsets from a punitive mindset to a restorative mindset. Training participants also learned to use three strategies outlined in Restorative Practices training: use affective statements, participate in connection circles and use restorative questions when addressing student conduct. Connection circles are used to build classroom community and allow members to connect with one another. The

International Institute for Restorative Practices describes these circles as an opportunity for students to "share feelings, ideas and experiences in order to build trust, mutual understanding, shared values and shared behaviors" (Mirsky, 2011, p. 6). Restorative questions are used by adults during restorative conferences with students in order to address misconduct that has been caused to the community. The questions are scripted and the same questions are used during each conference (e.g., "What happened? What were you thinking at the time? What needs to happen to make things right?") The questions asked during a restorative conference involve the person who committed the misconduct, as well as the person, or persons, who experienced harm. The questions help those involved to think about what happened, whom the action harmed or affected and how, and what can be done to repair the harm caused by the misconduct (Mirsky, 2011).

After the initial training, district-level administrators provided teachers with on-going coaching opportunities which were delivered by Akoben, an outside coaching agency. The purpose of these coaching sessions was to further the teachers' integration of Restorative Practices while meeting with teachers in small teams. A team of school staff members was identified to become Restorative Practices Champions and those individuals served as both supports for and models of RP implementation. All (100%) of instructional staff members also participated in a book study of *The Restorative Journey* by Malik Muhammed. After reading an assigned

chapter, small groups met to discuss the reading and implications for use with BVES students. Also during the 2019-2020 school year, BVES piloted the use of an SSC as part of ongoing student behavior interventions and supports. During the spring of the 2020-2021 school year, all instructional staff members received training in Life Space Crisis Intervention (LSCI). This training focused on deescalating students in crisis, in order to determine the cause of their conduct and create a plan for rejoining the learning environment.

In summary, professional learning at BVES has occurred to prepare teachers to approach student discipline from a more restorative mindset. Staff members who have completed these trainings should be able to use these strategies in their classrooms to address student misconduct (e.g., using the restorative questions after a conflict between students in the classroom). Effectiveness with using these strategies is measured by the teachers' ability to implement the strategies discussed in trainings, as well as their self-reported level of comfort with the strategies.

Over the course of the 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 school years, students and teachers have been further affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and resulting school closures. The Restorative Practices work that BVES started during the 2019-2020 school year came to a halt in March 2020 when schools across the United States closed for the pandemic. In the spring of 2021, when schools reopened to students, some of those students had not been in school for 13 months and needed explicit re-

teaching of the Bay View BARK and other expectations for appropriate conduct at school. Teachers felt the strain of virtual and hybrid instruction while trying to maintain safety and social distancing protocols in their classrooms.

The School Improvement Plan (SIP) at BVES guides school-wide improvement efforts. The BVES SIP includes five goal areas: Equitable and Rigorous Learning Opportunities, Safe Schools, Communication and Trust, Family Engagement and Recruitment and Retention of a High Quality Work Force. The work of this ELP aligns with the BVES SIP goal in the area of Safe Schools. The goal states: All students will learn in a safe and secure environment where all students understand the expectations for behavior, and Tier 1 strategies are implemented to address disruptive, disrespectful and unsafe student behavior. The Tier 1 strategies that will be implemented to meet this goal include aspects of PBIS and Restorative Practices. They are further described in the artifacts of this ELP (see Artifact 4 and Artifact 6). The SIP is written with feedback from the School Improvement Team (SIT) at the beginning of each school year. At BVES, all staff members serve on the SIT. As a subcommittee of the SIT, BVES has created a School Climate Committee. The committee meets monthly to review student discipline data, discuss the implementation of PBIS and RP, and plan for school-wide events that support the PBIS program. The committee shares minutes from their monthly meetings

with the entire staff at the beginning of every School Improvement Team (SIT) meeting.

BVES has two staff members who serve as Title 1 Resource Teachers. These teachers serve as additional teachers who salaries are paid for by Title 1 funding. In their role, they work to support grade levels with data collection, discussion about data and student academic and behavioral needs, these initial meetings about student progress are called Kid Talk meetings (further described in Artifact 4), and begin the process of putting academic and behavioral interventions in place. They also support administrators by assisting in the planning of professional development and implementation of the School Improvement Plan.

Organizational Role

I have worked as an educator in CCPS for over 20 years: I was a classroom teacher for nine years, an assistant principal for 10, and I am now a principal. Over the course of my career I have worked in four different school buildings, one as a classroom teacher, and three different schools as an assistant principal. In my role as a classroom teacher, I experienced the leadership of different principals. Each principal demonstrated their own style of leadership and strategies for addressing student conduct and discipline. Having experienced some turnover in leadership, I understand

the effect it can have on the climate of the school. The principal is responsible for communication of a vision to students and staff. This vision encompasses the shared goals and expectations for academic achievement, as well as behavior (Noonan, 2004; Wang & Degol, 2016). The priorities and goals of a school can change with each new leader, leaving staff and students unsure of expectations and procedures, for example, some principals are more likely to suspend students for all types of misbehavior (Grissom et al, 2021), while others are more likely to provide an intervention or consequence that allows the student a chance to change their behavior. These changes can be confusing to teachers if they are not communicated clearly. My experiences as a classroom teacher have positioned me to understand what the teachers at BVES experience with regard to frequent changes in school leadership. As a classroom teacher, I worked with eight different school leaders over the course of nine years, with either the principal or assistant principal changing each year. This has helped me to understand the confusion and frustration that teachers can experience when the process and expectations for student conduct and discipline are not communicated clearly.

During my service as an assistant principal in three different schools, I worked with four principals. One of my primary responsibilities as the assistant principal was to discipline students who had been sent to the school's main office for conduct that had violated the expectations set forth by the school or classroom. I spoke to teachers

about the students' conduct that they saw in their classrooms and the interventions put into place before students were referred to the office. I have also seen the implementation of PBIS interventions and supports at different schools within CCPS. At each school, I served as the co-chair of the PBIS committee, and worked with the school counselor and committee members to create an action plan for program implementation each year. I am positioned to understand the importance of student conduct as an element of school climate, and how programs such as PBIS, can support teachers in addressing student conduct.

As the assistant principal at BVES for two years, and now the current principal, I am positioned to understand the conduct of the students, as well as perceptions of teachers regarding student behavior, support from administration and the effects of these factors on the climate at BVES. I know the students and understand the patterns of student behavior on an individual student level. I also know what behaviors have been frequent and problematic on a school-wide level. I have knowledge of the interventions and consequences that have been successful or not successful in the past. I know which teachers are the most successful at implementing school-wide PBIS practices and at providing interventions in their classroom, and which teachers are likely to call for support as an immediate and first response to student misbehavior. Transitioning from the assistant principal to the principal has positioned me to understand the mission and philosophy that have guided BVES

discipline practices over the past two years. In addition, I have firsthand knowledge of the training and professional development that has occurred and can use my experiences to assess the needs of the teachers, staff members, and students. As the leader of the building I can ensure that the mission and philosophy of the school are focused on building a positive and safe climate, where teachers feel supported and equipped to address negative student conduct and subsequent discipline.

Statement of the Problem

Despite the multi-level supports (including a school-wide PBIS program, Restorative Practices, crisis response and intervention training, and the implementation of an SSC) that have been put in place districtwide and school-wide in order to address student conduct, teachers at BVES do not feel supported when it comes to addressing student misconduct. The perceived lack of support is demonstrated by teachers who express disagreement with the severity of consequences that follow student misconduct. This ELP will examine teacher perceptions of school climate specific to student conduct, including the level of administrative support with student discipline. First, I provide evidence to establish the perceived lack of strategies to deal with student conduct, and perceived lack of administrative support when addressing it. I then use evidence from empirical literature in order to establish the importance of school climate, student conduct as an element of school climate, and the principal's role in shaping school climate by creating contexts in which teachers have

the capacity to do their best work to facilitate students' learning. I then identify a potential root cause for the perceived lack of support by teachers. This section will end with a brief discussion of the significance of the problem and I identify several reasons for addressing student conduct and discipline and effects on school climate.

Evidence of Need

Staff members at BVES have reported they do not feel supported by administrators with respect to student conduct and student discipline. In recent years, it has been a CCPS practice to distribute a survey to school-based staff twice per year (January and May). The purpose of the survey is to gather feedback on school-based administrators and overall school climate. The survey is anonymous, and the results are specific to each school building. A review of survey data from BVES demonstrates the lack of support teachers feel regarding negative student conduct and the discipline to address it. I reviewed and summarized the responses taken from surveys conducted during the 2016-2020 school years. It is important to note that the COVID-19 pandemic caused a pause in the distribution of this survey. The survey responses I reviewed were answers to an open-ended prompt: "Additional Comments." With regard to the climate of the school, many teachers clearly stated that they "did not feel supported," specifically by administrators. One staff member stated that they perceived that student conduct and lack of discipline impacted the climate of the school:" We need to better identify and manage student behavior. These behaviors

affect all student learning and school climate." I identified three themes from the responses: weak communication and collaboration, lack of appropriate student consequences for misconduct, and lack of strategies for student discipline.

Theme 1 – Weak Communication and Collaboration

Communication, as it relates to student conduct and discipline, specifically refers to conversations between teachers and administrators regarding action that was taken to address the student conduct. Currently, administrators are required by the negotiated agreement between CCPS and the Cecil County Classroom Teachers Association to communicate to the referring teacher the results of discipline that has been handled by the office. This communication could occur via email, phone call, or in person. Survey responses from teachers and staff indicate that communication is an area in need of improvement. For example, one teacher states that "when a student is sent to the office with a referral, we often don't find out what happens unless we ask." Additional comments regarding communication indicate that teachers perceive a lack of collaboration with administrators when students are sent to the office, which means that teachers are not asked for input regarding consequences and are not invited to participate in disciplinary conversations with administration and the student.

Theme 2- Lack of Appropriate Consequences for Student Conduct

It is evident from the survey responses that teachers perceive that consequences are not appropriately used in response to student conduct. One teacher

stated, “I feel this year went well with the exception of how office discipline was managed.” Teachers cite a lack of discipline saying that administrators “blow off” discipline and send students back to class. Others perceive that the consequences are not severe enough to prompt a change in student behavior and would prefer that students be “removed from the classroom,” or “given an alternative placement”, as described in their survey responses.

Theme 3-Strategies for Student Discipline

Although some teachers articulated a concern about students being returned to or left in the classroom, they tended to recognize the need for additional training and strategies in order to address negative student conduct in their classrooms. They refer to the need for administration to “fill our tool boxes” with strategies. One teacher requested additional professional development to handle “defiant” students in the classroom.

Root Cause

I have identified a few factors as contributing to the perceived low level of support experienced by teachers when dealing with student conduct and discipline: frequent changes in administration, unclear integration of programs such as PBIS and RP (Grissom, 2021), and COVID-19 school closures. All of these factors are important, however, the most significant factor causing a perceived low level of support from administrators at Bay View Elementary School (BVES) is that staff

members are not fully committed to the shift from exclusionary to less punitive consequences and interventions such as Restorative Practices (RP) and Life Space Crisis Intervention (LSCI). Research shows that teacher beliefs about student behavior and discipline influence the decisions teachers make about classroom management (Feuerborn & Chin, 2012; Rimm-Kaufman et al., 2006). These beliefs are developed from a variety of influences such as politics, values and personal experiences in the classroom (Rimm-Kaufmann et al, 2006). Further, research indicates that teachers' beliefs can be reinforced or challenged by new learning and experiences; professional development is an essential tool in facilitating a shift in beliefs (Tsouloupas et al, 2014). As Cecil County Public Schools (CCPS) has adjusted its Code of Student Discipline and Code of Student Conduct to reflect more prevention-and-intervention focused strategies (e.g., PBIS, RP and LSCI), professional development is necessary for staff members to be able to implement these strategies. CCPS has provided training to all staff members at the district level; however, each school is responsible for continuing professional development in these areas. In addition to professional development, research also shows that support from principals and colleagues were important pieces in helping teachers to learn and maintain new skills and strategies (Tsouloupas et al, 2014). The frequent change in administration at Bay View Elementary School (BVES) has made it difficult to consistently focus on professional development that furthers staff members' understanding of and confidence to use

strategies such as RP and LSCI. This is highlighted in a study conducted in 2021 titled, *How Principals Affect Students and Schools: A Systematic Synthesis of Two Decades of Research* (Grissom et al., 2021). It discusses the negative effect principal turnover can have on student outcomes such as academic achievement, as well as school climate. Research shows that principal tenure has decreased in recent years, meaning principals are not staying in one school for as long a period of time. The study states, "falling tenures may have implications for principals' opportunities to implement changes in their schools" (Grissom et al., 2021). Further, COVID-19 school closures disrupted professional development that had been planned for the 2019-2020, and 2020-2021 school years. The inconsistent focus on school-wide discipline that is prevention- and intervention-focused could cause teachers and staff members to resort to the kinds of punitive and exclusionary discipline tactics (e.g., classroom and school removal) that have been used in the past.

Shift from Exclusionary Consequences

The shift from exclusionary consequences to prevention-and-intervention focused measures such as Restorative Practices (RP) should be considered as a root cause for the lack of support experienced by teachers regarding student conduct and discipline. Staff members often rely on exclusionary measures such as time out or removal from the classroom as a consequence for student misbehavior. Research conducted by Maag (2012) explains that teachers are more likely to use interventions that take place

primarily outside of the classroom. This is supported by the idea that teachers indicated higher perceptions of school leadership when barriers to providing instruction, such as student misconduct, are removed (Allen et. al, 2015). Prior to the implementation of the updated Code of Student Conduct in CCPS and the included range of intervention and consequences, students were often removed from the classroom for conduct such as disrespect (talking back to the teacher), defiance (refusal to follow directions), or disruption (calling out or talking without permission). Teachers became accustomed to having students removed from their classroom for an extended period of time or suspended from school because this was the method used to address student misbehavior in the past. The reliance on removal as a consequence is demonstrated in Table 4, which shows high rates of suspension during the 2016-2017, 2017-2018 and 2018-2019 school years. With the passing of Maryland House Bill 425, suspension is no longer an option for many elementary school students, and as a result suspensions at BVES have drastically decreased (see Table 4). As described in the survey responses and summarized in this proposal, teachers are in favor of punitive consequences such as suspension, or at the very least removal from the classroom. A shift to what are viewed by teachers as less severe and ineffective consequences, such as a conference or restorative conversation, can be viewed as a lack of support from administration. Conferences and restorative conversations can feel less supportive by administration because these types of responses to student

behavior are most effective when led by the teacher than an administrator, because the teacher is a part of the classroom community.

Table 4

BVES Discipline Referrals by School Year

School Year	Enrollment	Minor Incident Report	Office Discipline Referral	Out of school suspension
2015-2016	617	560	251	14
2016-2017	593	745	684	28
2017-2018	539	691	404	24
2018-2019	520	418	274	26
2019-2020	476	280	130	3
2020-2021	408	0	5	0
2021-2022	469	40	27	1

Note. This table shows the total student enrollment and MIR, ODR and suspensions that occurred each year. It should be noted that 2019-2020, 2020-2021 school year counts are lower due to COVID school closures and students participating in online learning. The 2021-2022 school year data is for part of the year, from September 1 to December 21.

Frequent changes in administration contribute to the reluctance of teachers and staff to fully commit to a less punitive, or restorative, discipline philosophy. Research

shows that principals have a significant impact on climate (Cohen et al, 2009). The principal is responsible for setting a vision that promotes a climate where all members of the school feel safe (Bullock et al. 2017; Noonan, 2004). This includes setting clear expectations for student conduct and discipline that is understood by all school personnel. While district priorities remained consistent and a core of experienced teachers remained at BVES from 2015 until now, the frequent changes in administration seem to have negatively influenced the implementation and consistency of school-wide discipline programs. This is demonstrated by uncertainty from staff regarding procedural expectations with regard to student discipline. For example, one administrative team implemented scripts that were to be read when calling for assistance in the classroom. If the correct script was not used by a classroom teacher, no one responded to the call. When this administrative team left BVES, the new team no longer used the scripts. As a result, teachers have expressed uncertainty about what to say when they need assistance in the classroom. Faculty members' uncertainty is further evident in the ways that they document student behavior. Student conduct is classified in two ways: minor incidents and office managed discipline. Minor incidents are managed in the classroom by the teacher and documented on a minor incident report (MIR). Office-managed discipline requires support from administration and is documented on an office discipline report (ODR). Staff members have provided input as to how behaviors should be categorized; however, teachers frequently ask, "Is this

an MIR or an ODR?" Teachers often send students to the office with an ODR, when the conduct has been identified as classroom managed.

Teachers and staff could be experiencing a lack of commitment to less punitive discipline measures because they do not understand how this philosophy integrates with existing programs and supports. PBIS and the structures and supports it provides to students have been in place since the 2007-2008 school year at BVES. This program is familiar to staff, and the changes that are made from year to year have not been drastic. The training and implementation of Restorative Practices, as well as LSCI, are new. While they are meant to be one element of a school-wide system of supports for students, teachers seem to be having difficulty identifying how the programs can work together to support a positive school climate.

Finally, the disruption to school and to in-person learning caused by COVID-19, has contributed to the uncertainty and lack of support teachers perceive when dealing with student behavior. School closures during the spring of 2020 halted the on-going professional development that took place at BVES regarding Restorative Practices. The motivation and sense of urgency many teachers felt after receiving the initial RP training was interrupted by the school closure. When school reopened in the 2020-2021 school year, more than half of the student population at BVES remained virtual, so there were fewer incidents of student discipline. When school reopened for all students in September 2021, many students had been removed from the structure

and expectations of the school environment for 13 months. There has therefore been more focus on getting students acclimated to the classroom and making up for learning loss. It takes time to address behavior from a restorative mindset, and the disruption to school has reduced the desire and sense of urgency of some teachers to change their mindset.

Rationale and Significance

The perceived lack of support when dealing with student conduct has been an ongoing problem at BVES spanning several years and administrators. This perceived lack of support negatively influences the school climate. Interpersonal relationships and student conduct and discipline are aspects of a school environment that can negatively affect the school climate (Thapa et al., 2013; Cohen et al., 2009; Wang & DeGol, 2016; Zullig et al., 2010). If this problem is not addressed, the school climate could deteriorate, which in turn may result in negative outcomes for students. Those negative outcomes may include decreased engagement in teaching and learning and negative teacher-student relationships. Addressing this will assist in building a positive school climate where teachers feel supported in their work. The effects of a positive school climate may include positive outcomes for students, teachers and staff such as increased student achievement and engagement, student behavior and teacher retention (Kuperminc et al, 2001; Wang & Degol, 2016; Zullig et al., 2010).

In this section I identified the problem of focus for this ELP: teachers do not feel supported by administrators with regard to student conduct and student discipline. I also described a potential root cause for this perceived lack of support, which is a reluctance of staff members to shift their mindset from a punitive mindset to a restorative mindset. In summary, it is important to address this problem because it is negatively influencing the school climate at BVES.

Chapter 3

IMPROVEMENT GOAL AND STRATEGIES

Improvement Goal

The improvement goal of this ELP is as follows: BVES will have a positive organizational climate in which teachers and staff members feel supported by school administrators, and feel they have the appropriate training and strategies to proactively and preventatively address student discipline.

In order to design improvement strategies to meet the goal, I referred to research on school climate and principal leadership, especially as it pertains to organizational culture and climate. The National School Climate Center (NSCC) has worked to identify five indicators of a positive school climate (Ciccone & Freiberg, 2013):

- "The school and community have a shared vision and plan for promoting and sustaining a positive school climate.
- Policies are put into place to promote (a) the development and sustainability of social, emotional, ethical, civic and intellectual skills [alongside] (b) a comprehensive system to address barriers to teaching and learning and to engage students who have become disengaged
- The school's practices are identified and supported to promote learning and positive social and emotional development of students, enhance engagement in

teaching and learning, address barriers to learning and engagement, and develop and sustain capacity building for meeting this standard.

- The school creates an environment where all members are welcomed, supported and feel safe in school.
- The school community develops meaningful and engaging practices, activities and norms that promote social responsibilities and a commitment to social justice" (p. 2)

The authors of these standards suggest that they be used by schools to guide schools' efforts to enhance their organizational climate. The indicators also offer a way of conceptualizing accountability for school leaders and school improvement teams. The improvement strategies outlined below have been designed to align with the NSCC standards. Additionally, the behaviors and actions of the principal influence all areas of the school environment (Allen et al., 2015; Grissom et al., 2021). Research on school leadership suggests that the following actions taken by principals have a positive effect on school climate: creating a vision and clear goals, providing meaningful professional development, engaging stakeholders, and using data to make decisions (Grissom et al, 2021; Hallinger, 2005; Leithwood & Sun, 2012).

Measuring Progress for Attaining the Improvement Goal

The work of the School Improvement Team (SIT) and School Climate Committee provide the structure by which to measure progress toward the improvement goal. The School Improvement Plan (SIP) communicates the shared vision of the school and establishes the goals for the school year to address school safety, and academic progress. The goals are developed collaboratively with the SIT; at BVES all staff members serve on the SIT. The Professional Development Plan that is included in Artifact 6 of this ELP outlines professional development sessions that occur during SIT meetings. The focus of each of these sessions as well as evaluation measures for the sessions are further described in Artifact 6. The School Climate Committee, as a subcommittee of the SIT, will look closely at the data described in Artifact 6 (e.g., MIRs and ODRs) to measure progress toward this improvement goal such as student behavior data that includes MIRs and ODRs as well as consequences and interventions that are being used to address student misbehavior. Finally, staff members will give feedback via the survey administered by CCPS at the end of the school year. Since SIT meetings occur monthly, data will be reviewed at regular 30 day intervals. A review of data in September, will direct the focus for the SIT meeting in October. For example, if students are receiving many MIRs in the cafeteria, it would be beneficial to review cafeteria expectations in October and then closely monitor and reinforce these expectations over the next 60 and 90 days.

Improvement Strategies

The NSCC standards and extant research on improving school climate to make it more positive have been used to create improvement strategies that also address the strengths, priorities, and needs of BVES as described in the Evidence of Need section (p. 24) of this portfolio. These improvement strategies are listed below and then each one is described in further detail.

1. Gather information to assess school climate in ways that are specific to student conduct and discipline.
2. Communicate expectations, strategies and resources that teachers can utilize to address student conduct.
3. Provide school-based professional development for staff members related to student discipline and positive school climate

In order to improve the climate of a school, it is important to first assess it. (Cohen et. al, 2009, Freiberg, 1998). To assess the climate of BVES, I designed a study to gather information from stakeholders regarding their attitudes about student conduct and its effect on the school climate. Stakeholders included BVES instructional staff members and students. The feedback gained from students and staff members clearly indicated the need for communication from staff members to students and from administrators to staff members. First, they expressed the need for administrators to communicate clear expectations for student conduct, followed by the need to

communicate processes for addressing student misconduct which include interventions as well as consequences. Finally, it was evident that teachers and staff members needed to understand how school-based practices were designed and the reason for the shift from punitive or exclusionary measures to those that focus on prevention and intervention. I developed professional development modules for staff members as a means of enhancing communication between school administrators and staff. The professional development plan was designed to build understanding of the strategies that are central to BVES's school-wide framework for discipline. The PD modules also constituted an opportunity to practice those strategies and build capacity for their consistent use.

Chapter 4

IMPROVEMENT STRATEGY RESULTS

Results from Improvement Strategy 1- Assessing School Climate

In order to assess school climate, I focused on the perceptions of students and staff members. The following section will summarize the findings from data analysis of a staff survey and student interviews. Methodological details, including how the survey and interviews were conducted and analyzed, and findings are described in more detail in Artifact 3 of this ELP.

Findings from Instructional Staff Members' Feedback

Teachers and instructional staff were invited to complete a survey. The survey was sent through Google Forms in May, 2022; responses were collected anonymously. Survey participants were told that their responses would be used to inform the work of this ELP, but would also be used to influence school-wide discipline practices at BVES. Survey questions were designed to assess staff members' perceptions of student behavior, discipline, and support from administrators.

Staff Members' Preparedness to Address Student Behavior

Research shows that teachers identify management of student behavior as a major issue which influences their efficacy in the classroom, and that they often feel they do not have sufficient professional development to handle behavior effectively (Bullock et al, 2017; Maag, 2012). In order to assess preparedness to address student

misbehavior, staff members at BVES were asked to respond using a scale of strongly agree, agree, disagree or strongly disagree to this statement: The training (courses or professional development) I have received as an educator have prepared me to address student conduct in my classroom. No one selected "strongly disagree" and only one responded disagreed with the statement. The results, then, indicate that instructional staff members feel prepared to address student behavior (Figure 1). As a follow up question, I also asked instructional staff members to list the training that has helped to prepare them to address student behavior and these results are shown in Table 5. My analysis of the responses from these two questions showed that there were common training or professional development courses that span experience levels such as Life Space Crisis Intervention (LSCI), and Restorative Practices. This demonstrates the recent focus of CCPS on restorative discipline, and trauma-informed practices (see Artifact 2: Policy Review). PBIS training is commonly reported among teachers who have four to eight years of experience or more than 15 years of experience. However, these training experiences are less commonly reported among teachers with one to three years of experience, or between nine and 15 years of experience. This finding indicates that while PBIS has been an element of CCPS and BVES discipline practices for many years, some professional learning on PBIS is still needed to keep the theory and practices at the forefront of classroom and school-wide management.

Figure 1

Preparedness by experience level: The training (courses or professional development) I have received as an educator have prepared me to address student conduct in my classroom.

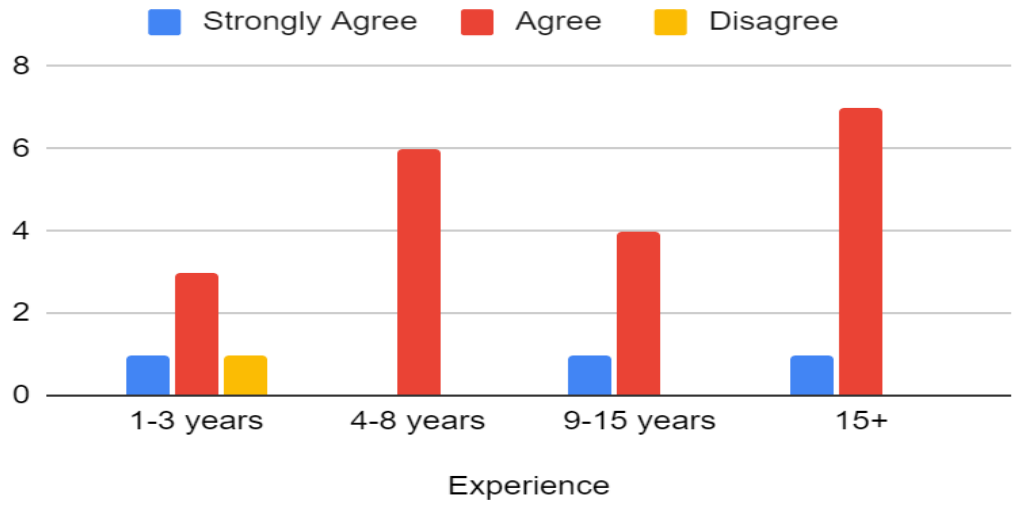


Table 5

Training and Courses of Respondents by Experience Level

1-3 Years	4-8 Years	9-15 years	More than 15 years
LSCI	LSCI	LSCI	LSCI
Restorative Practices	Restorative Practices	Restorative Practices	Restorative Practices
Flip-It	CPI	Effects of Trauma	CPI
CPI	Responsive Classroom	Responsive Classroom	Responsive Classroom
	PBIS		PBIS
			Kagan
			Champs
			Ruby Payne

I designed the next set of seven items on the survey to assess the disciplinary mindset of instructional staff members in terms of their inclination to be punitive or restorative. Staff members who approach discipline with a punitive mindset believe that misbehavior from students should result in punishment (e.g., sending a student to the office, taking away recess, or suspension). When a teacher approaches discipline from a punitive mindset, they are less likely to re-teach expected student behavior, and they are less likely to use an intervention in order to prevent the behavior from occurring again. In a restorative approach to discipline, consequences are likely to follow student misbehavior. The focus of that restorative approach is not on punishment, but instead on determining the reason for the misbehavior, how the behavior can be changed, and how to repair any harm that has been done to others as a result of the misbehavior (Costello et al, 2019; Mirsky, 2011; Stewart Kline, 2016). In order to code these survey responses, I gave each response a number which corresponded to the response to the Likert-type answer: responses of strongly agree (SA) were assigned a value of one, agree (A) a value of 2, (N) neutral a value of 3, (D) disagree a value of 4, and (SD) strongly disagree a value of 5. Due to the wording of the questions for questions 1 and 3, those items were reverse-scored (SA= 5, A=4, N=3, D=2, SD=1). I added the points from each question in order to give each respondent a score. A higher score demonstrates a more punitive mindset, while a

lower score demonstrates a more restorative mindset. Scores ranged from a high score of 20 points, demonstrating a punitive mindset, to 11, which demonstrates a restorative mindset. The scores were used to plot a point on the matrix (shown in Figure 2) based on the numerical score from the survey and level of experience. Level of experience is represented on the x-axis (1 to 3 years of experience =1, 4 to 8= 2, 9 to 15=3, and greater than 15=4). A sample of respondent's scores are shown in Table 6.

Table 6

Sample of Respondents' Scores to Create Matrix

	Respondent A	Respondent B	Respondent C	Respondent D
Misconduct should be addressed by removing the student from the classroom	3	3	3	2
I have a responsibility to help students get back on track.	1	2	1	1
Fear of punishment is a useful strategy in deterring student misconduct.	2	5	3	5
Students who are breaking rules should be treated with dignity and respect.	2	1	1	2
A student should have a voice in determining consequences of his or her misconduct.	2	2	4	2
A conversation about the students' behavior can be an appropriate consequence.	1	4	2	2
Consequences should help students to change their behavior.	2	1	2	2
Total score	**13**	**18**	**16**	**16**

As the matrix demonstrates, the disciplinary mindset of teachers varies from restorative to punitive, however it does not seem to be influenced by the staff member's level of experience.

Figure 2

Level of experience and mindset

Staff Members' Perception of Administrative Support

Because research (Bullock et al, 2017) shows that discipline is an area where staff members often perceive below average support from administrators, three questions on my survey asked staff members to define support from administrators and to provide examples of times that they felt supported as well as unsupported by

school administrators. The following categories emerged: communication, strategies for behavior management, exclusion, response, and collaboration. Each of these categories are defined in Table 7.

Table 7

Definition of categories used to define admin support

Category	*Definition*
Communication	Administrators listening to the teacher Administrators sharing the result of disciplinary action with staff members
Strategies	Administrators offering suggestions and strategies as to how the teacher can prevent or respond to the behavior to avoid removal from the classroom.
Exclusion	Administrators removing the student from the classroom setting
Collaboration	Administrators allowing the teacher an opportunity to provide suggestions and including the teacher in follow up conversations with the student and parent
Response	Administrators responding physically to the classroom when called for assistance

Communication. Staff members described communication in two different ways: administrators listening to teachers and administrators sharing the outcome of the disciplinary action with them. First, staff members would like administrators to listen to their account of the student's behavior. This means administrators ask what happened, and hear all sides of the situation as well as the teacher's ongoing concerns regarding the student. After the administrator has listened to staff members and addressed the behavior with the student, staff members would like administrators to share the resolution of the disciplinary action with them. For example, if a student is sent to the office and a phone call is made to the child's family, staff members would like to be informed of the discussion with the parent. Similarly, if the consequence for student behavior includes administrators having a conference with the student, staff members would like to be made aware of what was discussed. There are times when this type of communication may not be appropriate (e.g., a student discloses confidential information during the course of conference) and so the teacher may not be able to know that information.

Strategies. When administrators offer strategies for addressing student behavior in the classroom, teachers feel supported. One teacher, Respondent J, said they appreciate the opportunity to "brainstorm strategies to implement in the classroom," another, Respondent B, said they wanted "concrete strategies" that can be

implemented right away, but did not give any examples of helpful strategies they have been offered.

Exclusion. When asked to provide examples of a time they felt supported, eight staff members provided an example in which the administrator removed a student from the classroom for an extended period of time. In some of these examples, students were demonstrating unsafe or aggressive behavior. However, respondent S described removal for continually disrupting instruction as a perceived support, and stated they felt supported "when students who are causing constant disruptions are removed from the classroom until a time when they can prove they can handle being back in the classroom." Staff members who named exclusion as a supportive action from administration spanned all experience levels; five of the 12 staff members (42%) who named exclusion as support had more than 15 years of experience. One staff member (8%) had 9-15 years of experience, four (33%) had 9-15 years of experience, and two (16%) had 1-3 years of experience. This supports the finding described above, that experience does seem to influence a staff members' mindset regarding punitive measures of discipline, like exclusion.

Staff members also cited examples of students being returned to the classroom, or not removed at all, as evidence of a lack of administrator support. This includes times when students are removed for a few minutes but then brought back to class to complete work, or times when students were returned to class before their behaviors

have deescalated. One staff member explained that students are sometimes returned before staff members are ready for them to come back: “a student was being verbally insulting towards me. The administrator took the student out for a talk, but I never received any acknowledgement from the student that they had done anything wrong. There was no sense that the student had taken any responsibility or faced anything they recognized as a consequence.” Instructional staff responses demonstrate that exclusion—that is, removal from the classroom—is perceived as support from an administrator. This mindset is problematic because it is in direct contrast to the restorative mindset advocated by CCPS and BVES, and exclusionary practices can have a negative impact on student outcomes such as achievement, and perceptions of school climate (Anyon et al, 2018; Skiba & Losen, 2016).

Collaboration. Responses from staff members indicate that they would also like to be a part of conversations which address student behavior and to help determine consequences. Staff members provided examples of times when administrators responded to classrooms and supervised the class so that teachers could step out and have a conversation with the student. Other examples of collaboration include times when staff members were asked to be a part of conferences with parents regarding student behavior. Staff members also indicated that collaboration regarding student discipline helps them to feel empowered. One staff member said, “As a classroom teacher I felt supported when my administrator talked to me about what

happened and asked for my input in regard to next steps. I can remember a particular student one year had trouble completing work and would often refuse. We came up with a plan that after a certain amount of time he would go work in the office. This worked well because he did not want to leave the classroom, so after a while his work completion in the classroom improved." Staff members' responses regarding collaboration indicate they would like to be included in the discipline process, and in determining consequences for students.

Response. When administrators respond to teachers' calls for assistance in their classrooms, staff members view this as support. This means that administrators go to the classroom to address the behavior. Staff members provided examples of times when calls for assistance were ignored, which means that no one came to the classroom at all or dismissed the student's behavior "not a big deal."

These results are consistent with the feedback from staff members that was summarized in Chapter 1 of this document.

Findings from Student Feedback

In order to gather student feedback, I randomly selected a sample of 17 of BVES's 190 (9%) students to participate in one-on-one interviews. It was important to gather students' perspectives because research has shown that students who feel connected to their school demonstrate more positive behaviors as well as academic growth (McEvoy & Welker, 2000), and are less likely to engage in misconduct

(Battistich & Horn, 1997, Gregory et al, 2010). I asked students a number of questions in order to help me understand their perceptions of student conduct and discipline at BVES. The interview followed a semi-structured protocol which allowed me to ask students follow up questions and to make the interview seem less formal and more conversational. The protocol is included in Artifact 3.

Student Perceptions of School Climate

Student responses indicated a generally positive perception of school climate. Students used words such as "great," and "amazing" to describe their school and indicated this was largely due to the relationships they had with their peers and staff members. One student (grade 5, female) said, "It's a good school and I wouldn't want to leave because the teachers make you want to come. They greet you every morning." Other students stated they liked their school because, "you can trust pretty much everyone, and make friends quickly" (grade 4, male), without "feeling pressured" (grade 5, male). These findings are consistent with school climate research which suggests that students who can identify positive relationships with peers or adults at school perceive school climate more positively and are less likely to engage in misconduct (Anyon et al., 2018; Way, 2021; Welsh, 2000).

Student Understanding of Behavior Expectations and Consequences

When asked to discuss how they know how to act at school, students reported that they understood that there are expectations or rules for their behavior, however

not all students were able to identify BARK as the common set of expectations. Only five of the 17 students interviewed said they knew how to act at school because of BARK. Students who did not mention BARK explained that their teacher tells them what to do, for example "I was told in Kindergarten" (grade 4, male) or "the teachers do make it very clear that certain behavior is not allowed in classrooms or at recess" (grade 5, male), but did not provide any specific information about what these expectations are. This finding demonstrates that BVES administrators and staff members must work to more clearly identify BARK as the school rules, because researchers have found that rule clarity is an indicator of positive school climate and a predictor of incidents of student misbehavior (Hernandez & Seem, 2004; Huang et al., 2021; Mallett, 2016; Welsh, 2000). Other findings from student interviews show that students only know they are following the rules when, "you don't get yelled at" (grade 4, male). This demonstrates that teachers only point out negative student behavior but do not emphasize or positively reinforce appropriate student behavior. When asked how consequences are determined, students did not demonstrate a clear understanding of this. Student responses identified four types of possible consequences from teachers including: school office visit, documentation using minor incident report (MIR) or office discipline referral (ODR), conversation, and loss of privileges (as shown in Table 3). These student responses indicate that teachers rely heavily on support from the office to handle behaviors that occur in the classroom. However, students were not

able to describe how administrators determine consequences either. Two students mentioned suspension as a consequence when students are sent to the office, and one suggested that administrators call home to inform parents of the student's misbehavior. These student responses are problematic because they demonstrate a limited understanding of the staff members' commitment to teaching students appropriate behavior as a response to misconduct, and to provide an intervention instead of a punishment.

Table 8

Possible Consequences from a Staff Member in Response to Student Behavior

Type of Consequence	Student Response
School office visit	I get in trouble and might go down to the office. And my parents will be really mad when I get home.
	You'll get in trouble, get sent to the office or get an MIR
	They might send you down to the principal's office or something, or maybe an MIR if it was bad enough.
	You either, the teacher talks to you, or you get sent down to the office and they talk to you and it gets resolved.
	You have to go to the office and you can't say no
	The staff will say something to you, if it's really bad you will get sent to the office, if its smaller they just might say stuff
	Either call their parents or give them an MIR or you like send them to the office and you talk to them, sometimes they get in really bad trouble.
	You decide by how bad it is, how bad the problem is. If it's a bad, bad one, you might get suspended or you might an office referral
Conversation	I think they will pull you aside and ask you why you did it or say not to do it again because it's a rule that you are not supposed to be breaking and I'm sure they went over it.
	You have to talk to the teacher and think about what you did wrong
	They like to talk to you to figure out what happened and like figure out as much as they can to try to help you

Table 8 (continued)

Loss of privileges	Then, like owing recess, or having a talk and stuff like that
	You might get an MIR or an ODR, or you could get recess time taken away if it's like something minor, or privileges taken away like drawing or free writing

Summary of Key Findings

This summary of findings is organized in response to three research questions. Each question is listed below with a brief summary, further details of these findings can be found in Artifact 5.

How Do Students Perceive the Climate of Bay View Elementary?

Based on student interview responses, students perceive the climate at Bay View Elementary School (BVES) positively. Students described BVES as a good, great and amazing school. Students largely attributed their positive feelings about school to relationships with adults at school and with peers. This finding indicates that the school-wide discipline plan at BVES should continue to include strategies that strengthen relationships at school. These include Restorative Practices such as circles and restorative conversations, as well as morning meetings, and Social and Emotional Learning (SEL).

To What Degree do Students Understand the Behavior Expectations and Consequences for Not Meeting Those Expectations?

Students demonstrated an understanding that there is an expectation for their behavior at school, however, not all students were able to clearly state those expectations as BARK. This is surprising given that BARK expectations have been consistent for many years, BARK is posted prominently around the school and in classrooms, and is recited on the announcements each morning. This finding demonstrates the need to revisit BARK with students and make a clear connection that BARK is the code of conduct or set of rules. This could be accomplished by revising existing lessons, and creating new lessons for classroom teachers to use to reteach and revisit the BARK.

Students also demonstrated uncertainty about consequences that may follow student misconduct. Students cited conversations with teachers, loss of recess and removal to the office as possible consequences for misbehavior in the classroom, however, they were not able to explain which behaviors would result in each type of consequence (e.g. refusing to do work results in being sent to the office). Further, most students seemed to believe that if they did something wrong they would be sent to the office. This finding further demonstrates a reliance on exclusionary discipline that results in removal from the classroom environment. This is significant because it demonstrates the lack of strategies being used by staff members in the classroom

setting to manage student behavior. This implicates a need to provide staff members with professional development on the alternatives to classroom removal that are expectations at BVES, and further clarify the expectation that these strategies be implemented before students are sent out of the classroom.

To What Degree do Staff Members Feel Equipped to Address Student Behavior?

Staff members clearly indicated they felt prepared to address student behavior in the classroom, and mentioned professional development sessions and training that contributed to their preparedness, but also indicated that they need more strategies in order to do this. This conflicting data could be attributed to the reliance on removal from the office as a main strategy for addressing misbehavior in the classroom. This finding indicates again, the need for professional development, and communication of clear expectations for student conduct and student discipline.

To What Degree do Staff Members Feel Support from Administration When Dealing with Student Misconduct?

All but two staff members who responded to the survey were able to identify a time when they felt supported by administration when addressing student behavior. Staff members were not asked the degree to which they felt supported by administration and were only asked to provide one example. The majority of staff members were able to mention an example of support. While this is not a conclusive

indication of the degree to which they feel supported by administrators, staff members' responses provide a starting point for further discussion and data collection.

How Can Administrators Better Support Students and Teachers?

Examples of the types of support identified included administrators physically responding to the classroom to provide assistance, collaborating with staff members to address the behavior, communication with administration about incidents of student discipline, and more strategies for addressing behavior in the classroom. It should be noted that the only concreate measure of administrative support able to be identified by teachers was exclusion from the learning environment. Since removal is detrimental to students (see Artifact 1) it will be important to devise structures that make other measures of support (e.g., communication) more concrete. Examples might include scheduled conferences between administrators and teachers to discuss ODRs and resulting discipline. Further discussion of these supports and how administrators can engage in more of these supportive measures are described in the improvement strategies below and subsequent ELP Artifacts.

Results for Improvement Strategy 2: Communicate Expectations, Strategies and Resources

Survey responses from staff members in prior years and results from the study conducted for this ELP indicate that communication around student conduct and discipline is not clear, or consistent. This includes communication about consequences for student conduct, but also includes administrators' communication about discipline practices and expectations for student conduct at BVES. Research shows clear expectations regarding student conduct, and fair, consistent implementation of these expectations is necessary for a positive school climate (Haynes et al, 1997; Hernandez & Seem, 2004; Lashley & Tate, 2009). Four of the artifacts developed for this ELP were created to provide more clear communication regarding expectations for student behavior, and strategies and resources for teachers. First, a School Climate Handbook was created for staff members (see Artifact 4). The goal of this handbook was to communicate expectations for student behavior, describe processes for addressing student behavior through discipline, and to describe resources that support a proactive and preventative approach to discipline. This handbook was created with input from teachers. We revised, edited and made additions to a PBIS handbook that was used previously at BVES in order to create the new School Climate Handbook (Artifact 4). This handbook has been referenced throughout the year in conversations with staff members regarding student discipline resulting in a successful strategy for the

communication around student behavior and discipline. Second, a policy review (see Artifact 2) was created to enhance staff members' understanding of school discipline policies on national, state and district levels, as well as how these policies inform the discipline practices used at BVES. This policy review has not yet been shared with the staff members at BVES, however, it will be used during a future professional development session in order to build understanding of potential consequences and interventions as well as understanding of why certain consequences are not appropriate. The third artifact is a white paper (see Artifact 3) which communicates the negative effects of exclusionary discipline practices, as well as alternatives to exclusion that can be used in schools instead. This artifact builds on the understandings of policy established in the policy review. When I shared this white paper as a communication tool, it successfully helped teachers to reflect on how they have handled student behavior in their classroom. This is evidenced by conversations between staff members regarding incidents of student behavior that resulted in exclusion, and what alternatives might be used in the future. The fourth artifact, a communication plan with presentation slides, shared the findings of this ELP, including survey and interview responses. Teachers and staff members will have an opportunity to rate communication on a survey at the end of the school year through the survey administered by CCPS.

Results for Improvement Strategy 3: Professional Development

As described in the Organizational Context section, teachers and staff members have received training on school-wide PBIS interventions and supports, Restorative Practices and LSCI. An important aspect of this third improvement strategy was demonstrating how these three supports work together as elements of the discipline framework at BVES. Huguley and colleagues (2020) highlight the importance of integrated behavior systems in a model they term the Just Discipline Model. They acknowledge that schools commonly incorporate more than one program to address student needs, assert that these programs should be seen as "distinct and complimentary components to school climate reform" (p. 197), and suggest that schools should use an integrated approach to strengthen school climate. This means that all programs and supports work together to support appropriate student conduct and discipline. Teachers and staff members, through the implementation of this PD plan, may be better able to understand the integrated supports at BVES in order to use them more frequently and consistently as a part of their classroom management. The consistent use of strategies and supports will be evident in how staff members address student behavior moving forward and in future survey responses from staff rating support from administration. Staff members have provided informal feedback regarding the professional development sessions and have indicated that they are beneficial. For example, staff member feedback following the professional

development session in October demonstrated that staff appreciated the time dedicated to meaningful discussion about student behavior, responses included: “I enjoyed talking through behavior issues with a team of people. It gives a different perspective/great ideas to dealing with behavior.” Staff members also provided positive feedback from the professional development session on restorative questions, such as “The presentation reviewing restorative questions was informative and helpful.” Overall staff responses indicate that time to collaborate and discuss with colleagues is a meaningful way to participate in professional development, citing “break out groups, opportunities for discussion, collaboration and communication between teams” as things that went well during professional development. This plan will be used as a framework for professional development in future school years. Specifically, artifacts that were described as part of Improvement Strategy 2, have or will also be used as tools for professional development. For example, Artifact 4-School Climate Handbook, was viewed and discussed by teachers during a professional development session at the beginning of the school year.

.

Chapter 5

REFLECTIONS ON IMPROVEMENT STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION

In order to support a positive climate and increased feelings of support for teachers, I first designed a plan to assess student and staff members' perceptions of school climate specific to one element: student conduct and discipline. In assessing these perceptions I was able to determine what staff members view as supportive measures, actions, and communications from school administrators, and then create a plan to provide these supportive measures to school personnel in my role as the principal at Bay View Elementary School (BVES). This included (a) setting clear expectations for student conduct and processes for discipline, (b) communicating the defined expectations to stakeholders (students, staff members, and parents, and (c) providing professional development to enhance staff members' understanding of and capacity to address student misconduct. While creating and maintaining a more supportive and positive school climate will require a sustained and ongoing effort, the implementation of the improvement strategies in this ELP have helped me as the school leader to understand where to focus school improvement efforts. This work will be driven by the School Improvement Plan (SIP) and carried out by the School Improvement Team (SIT). As the principal, I will work to ensure the SIP goals communicate the vision for student behavior and how specific school-wide strategies

will help to meet the SIP goal (e.g. counting BARK badges earned by students to ensure expectations are positively reinforced)

As the result of communication of the School Climate Handbook (see Artifact 4), and policy review (see Artifact 2) staff members have demonstrated a better understanding of school-wide discipline practices. The policy review will be presented to staff members in order to help them better understand the driving forces behind these practices. Specifically, the policy review provides information about policies enacted by the state of Maryland that direct the consequences and interventions Cecil County Public Schools (CCPS) and Bay View Elementary School (BVES) are able to implement. For example, Maryland House Bill 425 passes in 2017, prohibits the suspension of students in grades PK to 2. This resulted in the need to include interventions for students as an alternative to suspension, such as Restorative Practices (RP) and a focus on social emotional learning (SEL). Further, Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR) has directed that school district and thereby school discipline policies are designed to keep students in school, and reflect a philosophy that is based on teaching and acknowledging positive student behavior (COMAR 13A.08.01.11). This regulation highlights the need for a multi-tiered framework for student discipline that is explained in the School Climate Handbook (Artifact 4). Additionally, the white paper (see Artifact 3) assisted in making staff aware of the negative effects that

exclusionary discipline can have on students and school climate, as well as alternative approaches that focus on prevention and intervention.

The implementation of the professional development plan (see Artifact 6) has worked in collaboration with the above mentioned artifacts to build staff members' understanding of school-wide discipline. This plan has built the foundation for ongoing professional development regarding student discipline, interventions and consequences.

Alignment and New Learnings

Alignment with Literature

The findings from this ELP align with existing research on school climate. First, a positive school climate is associated with positive outcomes for students and staff members. These outcomes include higher academic achievement and attendance, as well as higher rates of job satisfaction and retention (Capp et al, 2020; Payne, 2018) This finding supports the work of this ELP because improving student and staff member understanding of behavior expectations and school-wide discipline practices could result in more positive student achievement and attendance. Research further shows that school climate is influenced by student and staff perceptions of safety (Thapa et al, 2013; Wang & Degol, 2016). While ELP did not directly assess perceptions of safety, perceptions of safety are reinforced when students meet

behavior expectations and challenged when students engage in misconduct (Welsh, 2000). Therefore it is necessary to communicate clear expectations for student conduct (Hernandez & Seem, 2004; Sugai & Horner, 2002). Further, exclusionary discipline, while seen as a supportive measure from teachers, is detrimental to school climate and can cause negative outcomes for students including increased risk of future incidents of negative behavior, lower academic achievement, and disconnection from the school community (Skiba & Losen, 2016).

The measurement of school climate is largely based on the perceptions of stakeholders including students, parents, and staff members (Bear et al. 2011; Bradshaw et al., 2021; Zullig et al, 2010). In order to assess the perceptions of school climate of students and staff members, I designed a student interview protocol and staff survey (see Artifact 5) that are aligned with school climate research which supports interviews and surveys as typical ways to collect data in order to measure school climate. For example, the student interview questions were modeled after survey questions from the Delaware School Climate Survey- Student version (DSCS-S). This survey tool developed by Bear, Gaskins, Blank and Chen (2011) was created as a "valid and reliable self-report survey that schools could use to asses student perceptions" of school climate (p.158).The survey aims to assess aspects of a school-wide framework that utilizes aspects of Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) which is also being used in Cecil County Public Schools (CCPS) and at Bay

View Elementary School (BVES). Specific examples of DSCS-S items that informed my student interview questions include: “School rules are fair,” “Teachers let you know when you are doing a good job,” “Consequences for breaking rules are fair,” “I like my school.” “I am proud of my school” (Bear et al, 2011, p. 167).

The survey I designed for staff members was based on research conducted by Capp et al. (2018) that acknowledged the importance of staff member feedback when assessing school climate. This research identified years of experience, training, student behavior, and support as characteristics that influence staff members’ perceptions of school climate (p. 110). When I designed my survey for staff, I created a question to address each of these areas.

Literature on school climate suggests that relationships are an important factor in student and staff perceptions of school climate (Cohen, 2009; Gage et al, 2016; Thapa et al, 2013; Wang & Degol, 2016). This is evident in my research as students mentioned relationships with peers and staff members as the best thing about their school. Research suggests that students are more likely to respect the rules of the school and the classroom when teachers, students, and administrators demonstrate caring relationships by valuing and supporting one another (Anyon et al, 2018; Gage et al, 2016; Wang & Degol, 2016). Staff members’ perceptions of school climate are influenced by relationships with students, colleagues and administrators (Capp et al, 2021). This finding aligns with the work of my ELP, because when staff members do

not feel supported by administrators it can negatively influence their perception of school climate.

The literature also suggests that schools should implement integrated and multi-tiered systems of support for students instead of punitive and exclusionary discipline. A multi-tiered framework that communicates clear expectations for student conduct, allows for discretion in disciplinary action, focuses on building relationships, and includes supports for students and teachers is widely mentioned in research as an alternative to exclusionary discipline. Several examples of studies with salient findings include: "Just Discipline in Schools: An Integrated and Interdisciplinary Approach," (Huguley et al, 2020) "Eliminating Disparities in School Discipline: A Framework for Intervention," (Gregory et al, 2017), and "Moving Away From Disproportionate Exclusionary Discipline: Developing and Utilizing a Continuum of Preventative and Instructional Support," (Nese et al, 2021). This ELP supports that literature by explaining how one school has integrated the supports and strategies designed by a school district to support staff in managing student conduct and discipline.

Extensions of the Literature

The field of school climate literature establishes the principal as having a major influence over the climate of a school (Bullock et al, 2017; Grissom et al, 2021). Further, school climate literature defines steps that principals can take to improve the overall climate of a school. These include collaborative decision making, providing

resources and “attempting to remove obstacles that prohibit teachers from focusing on instruction” (Allen et. al, 2015, p. 4). Further, principals must know and understand the needs of the school, and develop a shared a vision that empowers the teachers, staff and students to achieve it. (Kelley et al., 2005; Noonan, 2004; Payne, 2018). The work of this ELP extends literature on how principals can improve school climate by applying the research specifically to improving school climate around student behavior and student discipline. For example, Gregory (2017) and Payne (2018) describe the importance of involving teachers in problem solving and collaboration. The improvement strategies designed in this ELP include evidence of collaborative decision making by collecting stakeholder feedback and using the feedback to collaboratively create a *School Climate Handbook* that describes the vision for school discipline at Bay View Elementary. Additionally, research shows that professional development is a productive strategy to improve school climate (Ross & Cozzens, 2016). Professional development described in this ELP aims to improve school climate by clarifying expectations for student behavior, and school-wide discipline, and provides teachers with strategies to use in their approach to classroom management.

Divergence from the Literature

The findings of this ELP are largely in alignment with the literature on school climate, principal leadership and student discipline, however, there is one divergence

that should be noted. Literature on student behavior, classroom management and teacher perceptions of student behavior indicate that, overall, teachers and staff members do not feel prepared to address student behavior. However, the staff members at Bay View Elementary have indicated that they do feel prepared and sufficiently trained to handle student behavior. One potential reason for this divergence is that staff members may rely too heavily on administrators to address classroom discipline issues. This is supported by the finding that even though staff members indicated that they felt prepared to address behavior in the classroom, they also indicated a need for more strategies to do so.

Recommendations for Future Work

Throughout this ELP, I focused on creating a positive school climate in which teachers feel supported with regard to student discipline. One of the improvement strategies was to assess the current school climate through staff member and student feedback. Future work on the improvement strategies of this ELP would be to include obtaining feedback from parents and families. This would provide valuable information as to how well parents understand the behaviors that are expected from their students while at school, as well as how well they understand the interventions and consequences that are used to change student behavior. A survey could be designed and sent via email to parents. These results would then be analyzed to

determine improvement strategies that would support communication of expectations and discipline to parents, as well as what types of learning they need to better understand the discipline framework at school. Further, parents could be invited to participate on the School Climate Committee to share ideas and suggestions.

The professional development plan that was designed as a part of this ELP will be an ongoing project that will continue to grow in response to the needs of staff, specifically with regard to level of support from administration. Now that I have identified strategies to increase administrator support when addressing student behavior, I will seek further feedback from staff regarding additional needs to support responses to student misbehavior. One way that I might accomplish this is by more frequently surveying staff to determine specific strategies they would like professional development on. Because CCPS's focus influences what happens at the school level, it is important to make the connection for staff members that the input they me as the principal, helps BVES to focus in on specific aspects of the CCPS plan. This plan was effective in providing information to staff members regarding some of the components of the school-wide discipline framework: for example, PBIS, and RP. Because of the work conducted through this ELP, I was able to determine that additional professional development should take place which focuses on the theory and background of PBIS. As evidenced by my data collection, new teachers have not has specific training on

PBIS. This could result in a lack of understanding of the purpose and importance and therefore effect their implementation of school-wide PBIS practices.

Providing PBIS training for staff at BVES is a step that could have a positive influence on the school-wide discipline program at BVES. This is also something that the CCPS could chose to focus on based on the findings of my research and the work that we do at BVES. There was not enough time to focus on SEL or more aspects of RP. SEL and RP should be identified as areas of focus as a professional development plan is drafted for next school year. One consideration for future professional development is the development of Professional Learning Communities (PLCs). PLCs have been found to be an effective tool used by instructional leader to increase learning and collaboration (Grissom et al, 2021). PLCs could be offered on various topics related to the discipline framework at BVES, including PBIS, RP and LSCI or SEL. Staff members could select a topic based on their interest and knowledge and literature would be selected to suit the topic of the group. For example, a PLC on RP might use the text, *The Restorative Practices Handbook for Teachers, Disciplinarians and Administrators* by Costello et al. (2019). The text could be used to facilitate discussion about RP among members of the PLC; the group would look at data to monitor and assess the implementation of RP strategies. For example, when reading about connection circles, the PLC group could collect and analyze data about the

frequency of connection circles at BVES. They could also discuss the quality of connection circles based on readings from the text.

The evaluation of professional developments sessions will be used to assess the efficacy of each PD session. It will also be important to provide teachers with an opportunity to rate their own comfort level and efficacy with each of the tools and strategies that are focused on during PD sessions. For example, after a PD on connection circles, teachers would have an opportunity to reflect on their own efficacy with these types of circles in their classrooms. This could then become a point of discussion between administration and teachers, as well as a focus during classroom observations. These conversations would help teachers to make connections between their perceived efficacy with strategies, and how they are actually being implemented in their classrooms.

Additionally, this ELP did not explore the types of behaviors that the students exhibit and the specific consequences or interventions that are used to address individual student behaviors. For example, the School Climate Committee could lead the work of the School Improvement Team (SIT) to look at discipline data categorized by specific behaviors such as refusal to complete work, look at the response to each incident of this type of behavior, and discuss potential interventions that would prevent this type of behavior from occurring again. This is an area that I would like to explore as I continue my work at Bay View Elementary.

As discussed throughout this ELP, school climate is an important aspect of school improvement, with many elements that contribute to its perception. This ELP focused on one small aspect, student discipline and the effects it can have on perceptions of climate, specifically, how staff members perceive support from administration. There is much more work that can be done to address perceptions of school climate regarding student discipline and I have just described some of the ways I might accomplish this in the future.

Chapter 6

REFLECTIONS ON LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

I have worked in Cecil County Public Schools for my entire career as an educator. As a classroom teacher who was strong in classroom management and building relationships with students, I felt confident in addressing student misconduct in my classroom without having much need for support from administration. When I became an assistant principal, it became evident that management of student behavior was not a skill in which all teachers were equally prepared and capable, and that when teachers felt unable to address student behavior in classroom they required support from school administrators. It also became evident that when teachers did not feel support from school administrators, it resulted in them experiencing feelings of overwhelming frustration which in turn often led to teachers feeling ineffective and unhappy in their work. When I enrolled in the Ed.D. program at the University of Delaware, I knew that I wanted to focus my research on improving student conduct through school discipline practices. During my second year of the program I became a school principal. This new role focused my attention on school climate and the impact of school leadership. As a result of the work done through the Ed.D. program and research for my ELP I have grown as a principal and leader.

Growth as a Scholar

The courses in the Ed.D. program were beneficial in helping me to think as a researcher. Research in Educational Decision Making- EDUC 828, was the first class that I took as a student in the program. This class was essential in helping me to understand how to read and process information as a researcher. I learned how to evaluate sources and locate sources of research. We spent time reading and analyzing empirical research, and determining how the findings of a study could be used to support an argument or claim. We also thought about how we might design a study to address a problem. This provided an experience that was similar to the type of work that would be necessary to complete the ELP. The research proposal I designed for this class helped me to think about how I might collect feedback from students and staff members. Writing the proposal, though not as extensive as the proposal written for this ELP was also beneficial in thinking through my organization context and role, as well as determining a problem of practice to focus on. During the spring 2021 semester, I was able to participate in a seminar class as an elective. This course, entitled Narrative Inquiry & Discourse Analysis Methods for Education Equity, provided me with a wonderful opportunity to participate collaboratively in qualitative research study. As a part of this class we worked together to read extant literature on educational equity, interview teachers about their experiences as educators of color, code those responses and report our findings. Participating in this seminar course

provided me the opportunity to experience the entire research process, from start to finish, including reviewing literature, conducting interviews, and making connections between the literature and research findings, and writing up these findings and connections These experiences were extremely useful when it was time to conduct my own research, for example the process that I used to organize and code research in this class guided the process I used for this ELP research, such as how to organize and code interview and survey data.

Growth as a Problem Solver

As a problem solver, I have grown in my ability to define a problem and identify potential root causes as first steps in the improvement process. Through the process of designing and implementing this ELP I have learned that it is often necessary to focus on one area of a problem at a time. When I entered the Ed.D. program at the University of Delaware, I knew that I wanted to focus my research and ELP on student discipline. As I read some of the literature on student discipline, it became evident to me that this broad topic would need to be narrowed to a more specific facet of school discipline. As I started to think about my own organizational context and role, I started to think about the role that school staff members have in disciplining students, and further about how the way staff members approach student discipline can influence the overall climate of a school. With a more defined focus, I began doing research on school climate and student discipline. As a principal in a

school district with a defined approach to student discipline and clearly defined policies, I knew that I would also need to research the programs and strategies that are currently used in my school (e.g. Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) and Restorative Practices (RP)). Literature on school climate, PBIS and RP provided me with background information that helped me to understand how school discipline and school climate are related. I then thought about what this meant for my organization and my role as principal. In my school, it was evident from prior staff surveys that staff members were not satisfied with the level of support from administration as it pertains to student discipline. As an administrator who spends a great deal of time addressing student discipline that occurs in the classroom, this was confusing and frustrating to me. I wanted to learn more about what staff members viewed as support, and what I as the principal could do to help them feel more supported. This led me to research measures of school climate and empirical studies that had attempted to assess staff member perceptions of student discipline. I then designed the survey and interview protocols that were used to collect data for this ELP.

Initially, I had identified several root causes that contributed to staff members' perceived lack of support from administration; my committee encouraged me to focus on just one. This valuable advice was beneficial to the end product of my ELP, but has also been helpful in my role as a school principal. As the leader of a school, it is often

a quick reaction to jump in and provide a solution without first considering the causes and unpacking the problem. Asking questions, revising existing research and literature, analyzing data and taking the time to consider all of the possible angles is helpful when identifying one place to start and often results in best solution. The process of this ELP has helped me to become equipped to make evidence based decisions on a school level. Specifically, identifying which data to collect and analyze, and using the findings to set a goal and strategies for improvement. This process is one that I will continue to use to engage my school based leadership team in setting goals for school improvement and designing strategies achieve them.

Growth as a Partner

The completion of this program and ELP have helped me grow as a partner. First, I further understand that importance of gaining feedback from stakeholders when identifying a problem and its causes, as well as potential solutions. For example, as I designed my ELP proposal and began to conduct research, I hypothesized that a difference in discipline philosophy could be a root cause for the perceived lack of support experienced by staff members. After reading literature on school climate, I learned that gaining staff member feedback, through a survey could provide me with specific data about what staff members viewed as support from administration. Once I understood for example, that teachers often resort to exclusionary discipline measures (e.g. removal from the classroom to the school office) due to a lack of other strategies

to address student behavior, it helped me to identify some things that I could do as the school principal (e.g. provide more professional development on alternative discipline strategies) to support the staff members in my building. Further, gaining student perspective was important in helping me to determine if students understand the expectations for acceptable behavior at school, and further how they perceive consequences for not meeting these expectations. The ability to see an issue from my own perspective, but to also gain perspective from others has been a valuable outcome of this experience. As I began the process of designing my ELP, my hypothesis was that teachers viewed removal from the classroom as a supportive measure from the principal, however, by asking teachers to describe additional measures that felt supportive, I was able to gain insight regarding communication and collaboration between the principal and staff members when addressing behaviors. The completion of this ELP has helped me to better understand that being a school leader does not mean I need to solve all of the problems on my own. Most problems that arise on a school based level require collaboration and a team approach to problem solving.

Finally, as a school principal in Cecil County Public Schools (CCPS), I am fortunate to work in a supportive system with established policies and best practices to guide student discipline in schools. As I worked through the process of completing this ELP, I spent a lot of time reviewing documents created by CCPS including discipline policies, handbooks, and professional development materials. I am

appreciative of the work that has been done to support student discipline and prevention-and-intervention focused alternatives to exclusionary discipline practices. I hope that the work of my ELP will continue to further what has already been accomplished by my colleagues in CCPS.

Final Thoughts

The problem that was addressed in this ELP is a persistent issue faced by many school principals. While the work I did throughout this project addresses one small part of improving school climate and addressing student behavior, there is much more work to be done at BVES in building and maintaining a positive school climate. I have grown as a scholar, problem solver and partner. These skills are applicable to my role as school principal and the growth I have made will make me better at the work I do each day in my school.

The Ed.D program at the University of Delaware has been a tremendous experience that has provided me with opportunities to challenge myself, and persevere through that challenge. It has also encouraged me to reflect on my strengths and areas for growth as a leader

REFERENCES

Allen, N., Grigsby, B., & Peters, M. L. (2015). Does leadership matter? examining the relationship among transformational leadership, school climate, and student achievement. *International Journal of Educational Leadership Preparation, 10*(2), 1-22. Retrieved from https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1083099

Anyon, Y., Atteberry-Ash, B., Yang, J., Pauline, M., Wiley, K., Cash, D., Downing, B., Greer, E., & Pisciotta, L. (2018). It's all about the relationships": Educators' rationales and strategies for building connections with students to prevent exclusionary school discipline outcomes. *Children & Schools*, *40*(4), 221–230. https://doi.org/10.1093/cs/cdy017

Battistich, V., & Horn, A. (1997). The relationship between students' sense of their school as a community and their involvement in problem behaviors. *American journal of public health*, *87*(12), 1997–2001. https://doi.org/10.2105/ajph.87.12.1997

Bear, G. G., Gaskins, C., Blank, J., & Chen, F. F. (2011). Delaware school climate Survey—Student: Its factor structure, concurrent validity, and reliability. *Journal of School Psychology, 49*(2), 157-174. doi:https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jsp.2011.01.001

Bradshaw, C. P., Cohen, J., Espelage, D. L., & Nation, M. (2021). Addressing school safety through comprehensive school climate approaches. *School Psychology Review*, *50*(2-3), 221–236. https://doi.org/10.1080/2372966x.2021.1926321

Bullock, L. M., Zolkoski, S. M., Lusk, M. E., & Hovey, K. A. (2017). Educators' perceptions of school-based factors that impact their effectiveness in working with students with challenging behaviors: A pilot investigation. *World Journal of Education, 7*(3), 92-102. Retrieved from https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1157683

Capp, G., Astor, R. A., & Gilreath, T. D. (2018). Advancing a conceptual and empirical model of school climate for school staff in California. *Journal of School Violence*, *19*(2), 107–121. https://doi.org/10.1080/15388220.2018.1532298

Cecil County Public Schools, Code of Student Conduct (2018). Retrieved from https://go.boarddocs.com/mabe/cecil/Board.nsf/Public#

Cecil County Public Schools Code of Student Discipline (2016). Retrieved from https://go.boarddocs.com/mabe/cecil/Board.nsf/Public#

Cecil County Public Schools Student Support Center Handbook (2021).

Ciccone, P. A., & Freibeg, J. A. (2013). School Climate and the National School Climate Standards. *National School Climate Center*.

Cohen, J. (2009). Transforming school climate: Educational and psychoanalytic perspectives. *Schools*, *6*(1), 99–103. https://doi.org/10.1086/597659

Cohen, J, McCabe, Michelli, Nicholas, Pickeral, N.M. (2009). School climate: Research, policy, teacher education and practice. Teachers College Record. Vol 111. 180-213. 10.1177/016146810911100108.

Collier, N. L., Brown, S. J., Montes, A. N., Pesta, G. B., Mears, D. P., & Siennick, S. E. (2018). Navigating get-tough and support-oriented philosophies for Improving School Safety: Insights from school administrators and School Safety Staff. *American Journal of Criminal Justice*, *44*(5), 705–726. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12103-018-9462-6

Costello, B., Wachtel, J., & Wachtel, T. (2019). *The restorative practices handbook: For teachers, Disciplinarians and administrators*. International Institute for Restorative Practices.

Cornell, D. G., & Mayer, M. J. (2010). Why Do School Order and Safety matter? *Educational Researcher*, *39*(1), 7–15. https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189x09357616

Feuerborn, L., & Chinn, D. (2012). Teacher perceptions of student needs and implications for positive behavior supports. *Behavioral Disorders*, *37*(4), 219–231. https://doi.org/10.1177/019874291203700403

Freiberg, H. J. (1998). Measuring school climate: Let me count the ways. *Educational Leadership, 56*(1), 22-26.

Freiberg, H. J., & Stein, T. A. (2010). Measuring, Improving and Sustaining Healthy Learning Environments. In *School climate: Measuring, improving and sustaining healthy learning environments* (pp. 11–28). RoutledgeFalmer.

Gage, N. A., Larson, A., Sugai, G., & Chafouleas, S. M. (2016). Student Perceptions of School Climate as Predictors of Office Discipline Referrals. *American Educational Research Journal*, *53*(3), 492–515. https://doi.org/10.3102/0002831216637349

Grasley-Boy, N., Gage, N., & Lombardo, M. (2019). Effect of SWPBIS on disciplinary exclusions for students with and without disabilities. *Exceptional Children*, *86*(1), 25–39. https://doi.org/10.1177/0014402919854196

Grazia, V., & Molinari, L. (2020). School climate multidimensionality and measurement: A systematic literature review. *Research Papers in Education*, *36*(5), 561–587. https://doi.org/10.1080/02671522.2019.1697735

Gregory, A., Cornell, D., Fan, X., Sheras, P., Shih, T.-H., & Huang, F. (2010). Authoritative school discipline: High school practices associated with lower bullying and victimization. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, *102*(2), 483–496. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0018562

Gregory, A., Skiba, R. J., & Mediratta, K. (2017). Eliminating Disparities in School Discipline: A Framework for Intervention. Review of Research in Education, 41(1), 253–278. https://doi.org/10.3102/0091732X17690499

Gregory, A., Ward-Seidel, A. R., & Carter, K. V. (2020). Twelve indicators of restorative practices implementation: A framework for educational leaders. *Journal of Educational and Psychological Consultation*, *31*(2), 147–179. https://doi.org/10.1080/10474412.2020.1824788

Grskovic, Janice & Goetze, Herbert. (2005). An evaluation of the effects of Life Space Crisis Intervention on the challenging behavior of individual students. Reclaiming Children and Youth. 13. 231-235.

Hallinger, P. (2005). Instructional leadership and the school principal: A passing fancy that refuses to fade away. *Leadership and Policy in Schools, 4*(3), 221-239.

Haynes, N. M., Emmons, C., & Ben-Avie, M. (1997). School climate as a factor in student adjustment and achievement. *Null, 8*(3), 321-329. doi:10.1207/s1532768xjepc0803_4

Hernández, T. J., & Seem, S. R. (2004). A Safe School Climate: A Systemic Approach and the School Counselor. *Professional School Counseling*, *7*(4), 256–262. http://www.jstor.org/stable/42732589

Huang, F., & Anyon, Y. (2020). The relationship between school disciplinary resolutions with school climate and attitudes toward school. *Preventing School Failure, 64*(3), 212-222. doi:http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/1045988X.2020.1722940

Huguley, J. P., Wang, M.-T., Pasarow, S., & Wallace, J. M. (2020). Just discipline in schools: An integrated and interdisciplinary approach. *Children & Schools*, *42*(3), 195–199. https://doi.org/10.1093/cs/cdaa012

IIRP. (n.d.). *What Is Restorative Practices? | Restorative Practices*. Www.Iirp.Edu. Retrieved December 20, 2021, from https://www.iirp.edu/restorative-practices/what-is-restorative-practices

Kelley, R.C., Thornton, B.W., & Daugherty, R.F. (2005). Relationships between Measures of Leadership and School Climate. *Education 3-13, 126*, 17.

Kuperminc, G. P., Leadbeater, B. J., & Blatt, S. J. (2001). School social climate and individual differences in vulnerability to psychopathology among middle school students. *Journal of School Psychology, 39*(2), 141–159. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0022-4405(01)00059-0

Lashley, C., & Tate, A. S. (2009). A Framework for Educative, Equitable, and Empowering Disciplinary Practice. *Journal of Special Education Leadership*, *22*(1).

Leithwood, K., & Sun, J. (2012). The Nature and Effects of Transformational School Leadership: A Meta-Analytic Review of Unpublished Research. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, *48*(3), 387–423. https://doi.org/10.1177/0013161X11436268

McEvoy, A., & Welker, R. (2000). Antisocial behavior, academic failure, and school climate: A critical review. *Journal of Emotional and Behavioral Disorders, 8*(3), 130–140. https://doi.org/10.1177/106342660000800301

Mallett, C. A. (2016). The school-to-prison pipeline: From school punishment to rehabilitative inclusion. *Preventing School Failure: Alternative Education for Children and Youth*, *60*(4), 296–304. https://doi.org/10.1080/1045988x.2016.1144554

Maag, J. W. (2012). School-wide discipline and the intransigency of exclusion. *Children and Youth Services Review*, *34*(10), 2094-2100. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2012.07.005

Martinez, S. (2009). A system gone berserk: How are zero-tolerance policies really affecting schools? *Preventing School Failure: Alternative Education for Children and Youth*, *53*(3), 153–158. https://doi.org/10.3200/psfl.53.3.153-158

Maryland Coalition to Reform School Discipline. (2017, April 10). *MARYLAND GENERAL ASSEMBLY PASSES BILLS TO BAN SUSPENSION OF YOUNG LEARNERS AND TO CREATE A COMMISSION TO STUDY RESTORATIVE PRACTICES* [Press release]. https://disabilityrightsmd.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/CRSD-hb425hb1287pressfinal.pdf

Mirsky, L. (2011). Restorative Practices: Giving Everyone a Voice to Create Safer Saner School Communities. *The prevention researcher, 18*, 3-6.

Muhammad A.-M. (2019). *The restorative journey. book one the theory & application of restorative practices*. Akoben.

Nese, R. N., & McIntosh, K. (2016). Do school-wide positive behavioral interventions and supports, not exclusionary discipline practices. *Instructional Practices with and without Empirical Validity*, 175–196. https://doi.org/10.1108/s0735-004x20160000029009

Nese, R. N. T., Nese, J. F. T., McCroskey, C., Meng, P., Triplett, D., & Bastable, E. (2021). Moving away from disproportionate exclusionary discipline: Developing and utilizing a continuum of preventative and instructional supports. *Null, 65*(4), 301-311. doi:10.1080/1045988X.2021.1937019

Noonan, J. (2004). “School Climate and the Safe School: Seven Contributing Factors.” *Educational Horizons*, vol. 83, no. 1, 2004, pp. 61–65.

Osher, D., Bear, G. G., Sprague, J. R., & Doyle, W. (2010). How Can We Improve School Discipline? *Educational Researcher*, *39*(1), 48–58. https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X09357618

Payne, A. A. (2018). Creating and Sustaining a Positive and Communal School Climate: Contemporary Research, Present Obstacles, and Future Directions. US National Institute of Justice. ojp.gov/pdffiles1/nij/250209.pdf

Rimm-Kaufman, S. E., Storm, M. D., Sawyer, B. E., Pianta, R. C., & LaParo, K. M. (2006). The teacher belief Q-sort: A measure of teachers' priorities in relation to disciplinary practices, teaching practices, and beliefs about children. *Journal of School Psychology*, *44*(2), 141–165. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jsp.2006.01.003

Sugai, G., & Horner, R. (2002). The evolution of discipline practices: School-wide positive behavior supports. *Child & Family Behavior Therapy*, *24*(1-2), 23–50. https://doi.org/10.1300/j019v24n01_03

Skiba, J. (2000). Zero Tolerance, Zero Evidence: An Analysis of School Disciplinary Practice. Policy Research Report. In *Indiana Education Policy Center* (RR-SRS2).

Skiba, R.J., & Losen, D.J. (2016). From Reaction to Prevention: Turning the Page on School Discipline. *The American Educator, 39*, 4.

Stewart Kline, D.M. (2016). Can Restorative Practices Help to Reduce Disparities in School Discipline Data? A Review of the Literature. *Multicultural Perspectives, 18*, 102 - 97.

Thapa, A., Cohen, J., Guffey, S., & Higgins-D’Alessandro, A. (2013). A Review of School Climate Research. *Review of Educational Research*, *83*(3), 357–385. https://doi.org/10.3102/0034654313483907

Tsouloupas, C. N., Carson, R. L., & Matthews, R. A. (2013). Personal and school cultural factors associated with the perceptions of teachers’ efficacy in handling

student misbehavior. *Psychology in the Schools*, *51*(2), 164–180. https://doi.org/10.1002/pits.21739

Wang, M.-T., & Degol, J. L. (2016). School climate: A review of the construct, measurement, and impact on student outcomes. *Educational Psychology Review, 28*(2), 315–352. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10648-015-9319-1

Way, S. M. (2011). School Discipline and Classroom Disruptive Behavior: The Moderating Effects of Student Perceptions. *The Sociological Quarterly*, *52*(3), 346–375. http://www.jstor.org/stable/23027541

Welsh, W. N. (2000). The Effects of School Climate on School Disorder. *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, *567*(1), 88–107. https://doi.org/10.1177/000271620056700107

Zullig, K. J., Koopman, T. M., Patton, J. M., & Ubbes, V. A. (2010). School Climate: Historical Review, Instrument Development, and School Assessment. *Journal of Psychoeducational Assessment*, *28*(2), 139–152. https://doi.org/10.1177/0734282909344205

Appendix A

ARTIFACT 1 – LITERATURE REVIEW

This literature review describes the harmful effects of exclusionary discipline practices, which are defined as consequences that remove the student from the learning environment such as suspension, or extended time outside of the classroom (Nese & McIntosh, 2016; Nese et al., 2021). The purpose of this artifact is understand that exclusionary discipline, including suspension and removal from the classroom environment, is harmful to students and the climate of the school. This paper reviews research that explores the history of exclusionary discipline and why it has become so popular in schools. It also examines the attitudes and beliefs of educators that keep these practices in use. Finally, it explores alternatives to exclusion and removal from the classroom. This artifact is essential to my Education Leadership Portfolio (ELP) because it acknowledges that teachers view exclusionary discipline as support from administrators and alternatives to exclusionary practices as less supportive and permissive of student misbehavior. When districts such as Cecil County Public Schools (CCPS) and schools including BVES, shift their policies to incorporate less exclusive discipline practices a perceived lack of support from administration can be problematic for school climate. This artifact, together with Artifact 2- Policy Review, explains the alternatives to exclusion and how instructional staff and administration can work together to support their implementation.

Introduction

School discipline policies are an integral element of a school's climate (Thapa et al, 2013; Wang & Degol, 2016). Discipline policies also constitute the framework for addressing student misconduct through discipline. Expectations for student conduct provide a standard for acceptable student behavior within the classroom and school building. Discipline policies describe who is responsible to handle student misconduct and provide a range of acceptable consequences. These consequences include things such as time out, time in a school administrators' office, detention, and suspension, can be problematic because they often result in exclusion or removal of students from the learning environment (Collier et al., 2018; Grasley-Boy, et al., 2019; Maag, 2012). Recently, school systems across the nation have started to alter discipline polices to move away from exclusionary discipline practices and instead incorporate a multi-tiered approach to discipline that includes strategies such as increased focus on social emotional learning (SEL), Restorative Practices and trauma informed methods, and school-wide frameworks such as Positive Behaviors Interventions and Supports (PBIS). This shift in practices and approaches reflects a changing philosophy in school discipline (Maag, 2012; Mallet, 2016; Martinez, 2009; Osher et al., 2010; Nese & McIntosh, 2016; Skiba & Losen, 2016). The goal of creating a safe and positive learning environment remains the same however a multi-tiered approach focuses on discipline that is proactive, fair, and uses consequences that

fit the infraction (DeMitchell & Hambacher, 2016; Martinez, 2009). These new approaches to student discipline have been met with criticism. These criticisms from community members such as parents and even teachers include the belief that allowing students to stay in school after incidents of misconduct means that discipline is not taken seriously; conversely exclusion from school sends the message that misconduct will not be tolerated (Martinez, 2009; Skiba, 2000; Teske, 2011).

The purpose of this literature review is to build understanding of research on exclusionary practices and how they can negatively affect students. It will then describe alternative approaches to exclusionary discipline practices and describe why these approaches can be better for BVES students. Finally, this literature will examine educators' role in implementing alternative approaches to discipline.

What are Exclusionary Discipline Practices?

Exclusionary discipline is the practice of using consequences in response to student misconduct which cause students to be removed from the learning environment. They include suspension, expulsion, and extended removal from the classroom such as time in the school office, or time out (Nese & McIntosh, 2016; Nese et al., 2021). The use of exclusionary discipline policies that utilize suspension and expulsion as primary consequences became prevalent in schools due to the adoption of zero tolerance legislation. Zero tolerance legislation began in the 1980's as an effort to deter illegal drug distribution in the United States. In the case of drug enforcement

anyone found crossing the US border with any amount of drugs was charged in federal court. The purpose was to send a message that drug trafficking would not be tolerated and would be punished severely (American Psychological Association Zero Tolerance Task Force, 2008; Skiba, 2000; Teske, 2011). Zero tolerance policies "mandate the application of predetermined consequences, most often severe and punitive in nature" (American Psychological Association Zero Tolerance Task Force, 2008, p. 852). They became widely used in schools in response to increasing fears for school safety and became nationwide policy in 1994 when Congress passed the Gun Free Schools Act (GFSA). GFSA mandated a one year expulsion for possession of a gun in school (Lashley & Tate, 2009; Mongan & Walker, 2012; Nese et al., 2021; Skiba, 2000; Way, 2011). Subsequent amendments to this law expanded it to cover weapons of any kind (Skiba, 2000). Since the implementation of the GFSA, zero tolerance policies have been instituted at the local school district level in order to address misconduct offenses such as: weapons, violence, drugs and disruption of the learning environment (Skiba, 2000). These policies call for the immediate removal of students who violate these rules. Those in support of zero tolerance policies see them as necessary for protecting students, promoting a safe learning environment, and holding students accountable for their conduct (Lashley & Tate, 2009; Way, 2011). The idea that the most effective way to hold students accountable for misconduct is removal from the learning environment has led to wider use of exclusionary practices such as

suspension and extended removal from the classroom as consequences. This includes removal for minor incidents of misconduct such as disrespect and noncompliance (Skiba, 2000; Nese et. al, 2021).

What are the Negative Effects of Exclusionary Discipline?

While some might draw the conclusion that removing unsafe or disruptive students from the school or classroom makes sense, there are negative effects for students who experience these consequences. One of the most concerning effects is the inequity that is perpetuated by these types of consequences. Research on the use of suspension and expulsion shows that students who are identified as racial or ethnic minorities are disproportionately suspended or expelled (Cornell & Mayer, 2021; Curran & Finch, 2021; Gregory et al., 2017; Lashley & Tate, 2011). Similarly, students with disabilities are more frequently removed from the classroom learning environment than their nondisabled peers (Lashley & Tate, 2011; Osher et al., 2010; Stewart Kline, 2016). Frequent removal from the learning environment has been shown to contribute to lower test scores, higher dropout rates, and predicts future contact with the juvenile and/or criminal justice system (Cornell & Mayer 2021; Gregory et al., 2017; Osher et al., 2010; Stewart Kline, 2016).

Additionally, research has shown that suspension and expulsion cause students to disconnect from the school community (Huguley et al., 2020, Maag, 2012; Osher et al., 2010) and negatively affect school climate. Schools that rely on exclusionary

discipline have been found to spend more time handling disciplinary matters; further, schools with high suspension rates are more likely to see the suspended students repeat behaviors that are likely to get them suspended again (APAZTF, 2008; Skiba et al, 2006). This is further explained by Mongan and Walker (2012) who examine zero tolerance policies, and thereby exclusionary discipline, through the perspective of Hirchi's (1969) social control theory. Social control theory has four components: attachment, commitment, involvement and belief. In their analysis they explain that zero tolerance discipline has a negative effect on three of the four components of social control: commitment which is "the desire to increase status through socially acceptable means" (p. 234), involvement, meaning "the participation in socially acceptable activities" (p. 234) and belief which is the "agreement with the rules, values and norms" of society (p. 234). Exclusion from school can diminish a students' commitment, involvement and belief in school and cause a higher risk of repeating problematic behavior that goes against the norms of school. Additional research has shown that removal from the classroom environment for misconduct, does little to change a student's future behavior, in fact students who have been excluded are more likely to be excluded for similar incidents in the future (American Psychological Association Zero Tolerance Task Force, 2008; Maag, 2012; Skiba & Losen, 2015). In order for exclusion to make an impact, the classroom or school must be the preferred environment for the student (Chin et al., 2012; Nese, et al., 2021), yet research shows

that students who are frequently excluded do not view school, and/or the classroom as the preferred environment (Chin et al., 2012; Maag, 2012). This means the student would rather be sent home, or sent to the school office instead of staying in the classroom (Chin et al., 2012). Chin et al., (2012) describe this further by citing U.S. Census data which show that students who are frequently suspended are more likely to come from homes where parents are less likely to provide the supervision and support due to other factors such as poverty, single parent homes, or the parents own negative experiences with school. This lack of supervision and support could make suspension seem fun, or like a day off to a student, prompting them to repeat the behavior that caused them to be suspended. Similarly, if a student is removed from the classroom to the school office, they are getting a break from the demands of the classroom such as work expectations, and negative teacher interactions. Exclusionary practices are ineffective at stopping student misbehavior and can negatively influence student outcomes such as academic achievement and school connectedness, as well as the overall climate of a school.

Why Do We Still Rely on Exclusionary Discipline Practices?

This literature review has described the negative effects and ineffectiveness of removal from the learning environment as a discipline strategy. However, exclusionary consequences continue to be frequently used for non-violent or threatening behavior such as disruption and disrespect (Maag, 2012; Moreno &

Scaletta, 2018). The table below (Table A1) highlights office discipline referral data and consequences that resulted in exclusion (from school or the classroom) at BVES over the past eight years. It is important to note that “time in office” describes a consequence where the student was removed from the classroom and spent a significant amount of time in the office. This consequence functioned like an in school suspension, while time out indicates that they were removed from the classroom for a shorter period of time and then returned to class. It is also important to note that the 2019-2020 data were affected by COVID school closures. The 2019-2020 school year data reflects the period of time from September through March. Schools closing in March instead of June resulted in a lower number of referrals for the year. The 2020-2021 school year data shows discipline data for only 25% of the population, as most students remained virtual for that school year. In 2021-2022, students were required to maintain a social distance of three feet while wearing masks and six feet when not wearing a mask which could have resulted in a lower number of referrals. Some reasons for a lower number of referrals include students having fewer interactions with peers due to masking and social distancing, and teachers being able to better able to address the behavior of a smaller number of students in the classroom. The data included for the 2022-2023 school year includes September through January. A review of this data shows an inconsistent yet increasing reliance on exclusion from the classroom as a consequence for misbehavior.

Table A1

Office Discipline Referrals and Exclusionary Consequences

School year	Enrollment	ODR	Out of school suspension	Time in office	Time out	% of consequences resulting in exclusion
2015-2016	617	251	14	5	8	11
2016-2017	593	684	28	148	80	39.5
2017-2018	539	404	24	74	70	42
2018-2019	520	274	26	51	24	37
2019-2020	476	130	3	83	4	69
2020-2021	408	5	0	4	1	100
2021-2022	469	96	2	45	1	50
2022-2023	482	232	3	52	6	26

Exclusionary consequences are used frequently because they are easy to implement, require fewer resources than do interventions, and reduce the amount of time spent dealing with student misconduct (Cornell & Mayer, 2021; Lashley & Tate, 2009) Exclusionary consequences are seemingly efficient, because they stop the behavior from occurring on an immediate and short-term basis (Lashley & Tate, 2009;

Nese & McIntosh, 2016). If a student is fighting in school, the problem is quickly addressed by suspending the student; similarly, a student who is constantly disrupting a lesson by calling out is removed to the school office. Removal from the learning environment accomplishes three goals: provides relief and or/protection to the teacher and students, punishes the misbehavior, and gets the attention of parents (AAP, 2003; Dupper et.al, 2009; Nese & McIntosh, 2016). Maag (2012) explains the use of exclusionary practices as an example of negative reinforcement and explains that while teachers and administrators understand removing a student from the learning environment does nothing to correct the behavior, the temporary resolution makes it feel like the problem has been solved, thus reinforcing the use of removal for future incidents of the same behavior. However, this does not solve the problem that has been caused by the student behavior, and in many cases has exacerbated the problem. As noted, exclusionary practices reinforce the idea that students who disrupt the learning environment should be removed from it as a punishment. This is an example of a punitive disciplinary mindset. This mindset coincides with the belief that all incidents of misbehavior should have a defined and enforced consequence.

Alternatives to Exclusionary Practices

Alternatives to exclusionary discipline practices constitute a growing area of study. Current research has shown that strategies which focus on prevention and intervention are effective in decreasing incidents of exclusionary discipline and related

negative outcomes (Anyon et al., 2014; Gregory et al., 2017; Martinez, 2009; Nese et al., 2021). School-wide Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (SWPBIS) programs are one example of a framework that can be used as a successful alternative to exclusionary discipline (Cornell & Mayer, 2010; Maag, 2012; Mallet, 2016; Martinez, 2009; Osher et al., 2010; Nese & McIntosh, 2016; Skiba & Losen, 2016). The comprehensive approach of SWPBIS teaches and rewards positive behavior in order to improve school climate and decrease undesired behavior (Osher et al, 2010). Similarly, social and emotional learning (SEL) has been recommended by research as an alternative to exclusionary discipline (Cornell & Mayer, 2010; DeMitchell & Hambacher, 2016; Huguley et al., 2020; Mallet, 2016; Martinez, 2009; Osher et al., 2010). SEL is a recommended alternative because it provides instruction to students which helps to increase students' "awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision making" (Osher et al., 2010. p. 51) in an effort to help them demonstrate more desirable and prosocial behaviors. Another recommended alternative approach to exclusionary discipline is the use of Restorative Practices (RP) (Mallet, 2016; Skiba & Losen, 2016; Stewart Kline, 2016). RP are strategies that can be used in schools to address student misbehavior. They represent a shift in mindset from punishment, to building and maintaining positive school communities (Costello et al, 2019).

More specific findings from research conducted by Gregory and colleagues (2017) points to strategies such as supportive relationships between students and staff, respectful environments where staff are aware of bias, and teaching students appropriate behavior as useful in preventing exclusionary discipline. Other research indicates that disciplinary frameworks should teach students to value education, provide instruction in the areas of social and emotional learning, recognize that consequences are not one size fits all rather based on the needs of the student, and allow students to take responsibility for their behavior (Lashley & Tate, 2009). A study conducted in 2018 by Wiley et al., suggests a three dimensional framework for school discipline: they state that there are technical, political and normative aspects of discipline to consider. The technical components of their framework include professional development opportunities for staff, allowing time in the instructional day to build school community, and budgeting for resources that support discipline strategies such as: additional staff and family resources. The normative components reiterate the need for a school commitment to prevention of misbehavior over consequences, for staff to understand that suspension is not an effective consequence for changing student behavior, and highlights the importance of a focus on relationships. The political components of their framework include the need for school administrators to consistently reinforce expectations for staff members' handing of disciplinary issues, as well as hiring and maintaining staff members whose beliefs

reflect the culture of the school (2018). Other research indicates the importance of collecting and analyzing student discipline data. Teams of teachers and administrators can then use the data to guide collaborative discussions in order to determine appropriate strategies to prevent misbehavior, and appropriate responses to student behavior (Huguley et al., 2020). A comprehensive review of zero tolerance policies and the effects on students and schools was conducted by the American Psychological Association Zero Tolerance Task Force (APAZTF, 2008). The APAZTF published a report in 2008 which summarized their findings and offered recommendations to schools. The recommendations from the task force are in alignment with the research cited above and also include some additional strategies for school policy makers and administrators. Some of the recommendations are listed below:

- Define all infractions, whether major or minor and train all staff in appropriate means of handling each infraction.
- Evaluate all school discipline strategies to ensure that interventions, program or strategies benefit students
- Replace one size fits all discipline with graduated systems of discipline where consequences are geared to the seriousness of the infraction
- Implement preventative measures that can improve school climate and improve the sense of school community and belongingness (APAZTF, 2008, p. 857-859).

This section has summarized research on alternatives to exclusionary discipline practices including SWPBIS programs, RP and SEL. The next section will address the key roles and responsibilities of school staff members in implementing the alternatives to exclusionary discipline described in the previous section, as well as attempts to incorporate these alternatives at BVES.

Staff's Role in Implementing Alternative Practices

The policies and practices that are used within a school to address student conduct and discipline are often influenced by national, state, and local level policies. These policies can dictate the programs and strategies that are implemented at a school-wide level. However, classroom management systems and classroom teachers are the first to set expectations and standards for acceptable student behavior in the classroom, teach the expectations, reinforce positive behavior, and implement consequences (DeMitchell & Hambacher, 2016; Sugai & Horner, 2002). School-wide programs provide guidance and expectations for teachers when designing classroom management systems. At BVES, the PBIS system is the foundation for the school-wide behavior management system. Restorative Practices (RP) and Social Emotional Learning (SEL) are added to enhance the PBIS program. These three programs work together to assist in the implementation of alternative discipline strategies, limiting the reliance on exclusionary practices. They collaboratively set clear expectations for

student behavior, and provide instruction and interventions to students who need additional support.

Adopt a Mindset that Focuses on Prevention and Intervention, not Punishment

A study conducted by Feuerborn & Chin in 2012 examined the effects of teacher beliefs and attitudes toward student behavior on the success of the implementation of a School-wide Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports (SWPBIS). The findings of this study conducted by affirmed the findings of previous research on a similar topic conducted by Dutton Tillery et al., (2009). For example, findings in both studies support the idea that teacher perceptions and beliefs about student behavior, as well as knowledge of behavior management strategies, and belief in the management system influence the way school-wide practices are implemented (Feuerborn & Chin, 2012). The studies mentioned above focused exclusively on SWPBIS, however, this can also be applied to the implementation of other programs such as Restorative Practices (RP) and Social Emotional Learning (SEL). In Cecil County Public Schools, RP and SEL are used together with SWPBIS programs to build integrated systems of support for students. The integrated systems, such as the one implemented at BVES require a belief that student misconduct can be prevented, that we can teach students appropriate behaviors, and that interventions that support students' needs are more effective at changing behavior than punishment.

Increase Focus on Positive Behavior

One of the main components of a SWPBIS program is the Tier 1 practice of teaching expected behaviors. Once these behaviors have been taught to students, positive reinforcement is used as a strategy for encouraging students to continue meeting the expectations. Positive reinforcement, in the form of behavior specific praise, or tangible rewards is a common practice in schools that implement PBIS programs (Nese & McIntosh, 2016; Sugai & Horner, 2002). Praise and reinforcement are often criticized aspects of PBIS programs because some educators believe that providing rewards for positive behavior could decrease students' intrinsic motivation, however research shows that positive feedback through praise and rewards can help students to feel more confident in their ability to meet behavior expectations resulting in improved self- efficacy (Bruhn et al, 2014). At BVES we use Classroom Dojo points and BARK badges (these are more clearly defined in the School Climate Handbook) to reinforce student behavior. Research indicates a ratio of 5:1—that is, five positive interactions to every negative interaction—is the most effective formula to encourage positive behavior (Flora, 2000).

Provide Opportunities for Students to Correct Their Behavior

Setting clear expectations for behavior and teaching appropriate behaviors across all school settings is a main tenant of a SWPBIS program. However, even with this practice firmly in place, students will still demonstrate instances of misconduct. It

is important that consequences for student misbehavior are connected to the behavior, allow students to take responsibility for their actions (Lashley & Tate, 2009), and focus on the individual needs of students (Chin et al, 2012; Lashley & Tate, 2009). Restorative Practices provide tools and strategies, such as restorative questions and conferences that can be used by teachers and staff to help students understand the harm their actions have caused to others in the school community. At BVES we use Restorative Questions and affective statements as tools to help students understand how their actions and misbehavior affect their classmates and classroom community. Similarly, SEL programs, such as the Second Step program used at BVES, can help students build skills in the area of self- management, and responsible decision making, as well as relationship skills. All of which would be beneficial in helping a student change their behavior, and/or their response to behavior.

Build Classroom Community and Relationships with Students

Students who feel that they are a valued and important part of their school community are less likely to engage in misbehavior (Stewart Kline, 2016). Circles, an RP strategy, play an essential role in building classroom community. They provide every student with an opportunity to share and express feelings, therefore building trust and shared understanding between members of the classroom community, including students and teachers (Mirsky, 2011; Skyrzpek et al., 2020). Additionally, research shows the student-teacher relationship is an important predictor of student

misbehavior. Studies conducted on school discipline have found that students who perceive positive relationships with adults at school are less likely to engage in problem behaviors; the absence of positive relationships with adults can result in depression, low self-esteem and low academic performance (Anyon et al., 2018; DeMitchell & Hambacher, 2016; Huguley et al., 2020; Way, 2011; Wiley et al., 2018). Strong relationships between students and adults at school are important in helping students to feel cared for, additionally when a student feels a connection with an adult, it may influence their behavior choices for fear of disappointing or upsetting the adult. Teachers can use their relationships with students to better understand the cause of student behavior, considering factors such as context, intent, and history before issuing a consequence (Anyon et al.; 2018; DeMitchell &Hambacher, 2018). Some strategies that may be used to facilitate strong relationships include greeting students in the morning as they enter the building, daily morning meetings, and staff visibility (Anyon et al.; 2018).

Communicate with Parents and Families

Parents and caregivers are key stakeholders in supporting positive student behavior at school. It is essential that families first understand what is expected of their student at school, as well as the less punitive approach to discipline (Skiba & Losen, 2016). This can be achieved by regular communication from teachers, and school administrators. Communication of the expectations at BVES is communicated

to parents through the distribution of the Cecil County Public Schools Student Rights and Responsibilities Handbook; BVES expectations are communicated at the beginning of the year during open house events and reinforced through recognition of students who meet the expectations (e.g., student of the month). Positive phone calls from teachers and administrators can reinforce student behavior and contribute to positive student-staff relationships (Anyon et al., 2018; APAZTF, 2008).

Participate in Professional Development

Research acknowledges that teachers often resort to exclusionary consequences out of frustration and uncertainty of how to handle the student behavior (DeMitchell &Hambacher, 2016; Moreno & Scaletta, 2018). For this reason professional development around classroom management and school-wide behavior systems is essential to the success of implementation. Further, professional development that is focused on improving school climate and classroom management has been found to support positive outcomes for students and teachers including improved student engagement in instruction and staff retention (Mallett, 2016).

Conclusion

This literature review has provided an overview of the history of exclusionary consequences, as well as the harm they can cause for students. Further, it has explained alternatives to exclusionary discipline including integrated school-wide

systems that include elements of PBIS, RP, and SEL, and outlined strategies that teachers and staff can use to support these alternatives.

References

Anyon, Y., Atteberry-Ash, B., Yang, J., Pauline, M., Wiley, K., Cash, D., Downing, B., Greer, E., & Pisciotta, L. (2018). It's all about the relationships": Educators' rationales and strategies for building connections with students to prevent exclusionary school discipline outcomes. *Children & Schools*, *40*(4), 221–230. https://doi.org/10.1093/cs/cdy017

Anyon, Y., Gregory, A., Stone, S., Farrar, J., Jenson, J. M., McQueen, J., Downing, B., Greer, E., & Simmons, J. (2016). Restorative interventions and school discipline sanctions in a large Urban School District. *American Educational Research Journal*, *53*(6), 1663–1697. https://doi.org/10.3102/0002831216675719

American Psychological Association Zero Tolerance Task Force. (2008). Are zero tolerance policies effective in the schools?: An evidentiary review and recommendations. *American Psychologist*, *63*(9), 852–862. https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066x.63.9.852

Bruhn, A., Gorsh, J., Hannan, C., & Hirsch, S. E. (2014). Simple Strategies for Reflecting on and Responding to Common Criticisms of PBIS. *Journal of Special Education Leadership*, *27*(1), 13–25.

Costello, B., Wachtel, J., & Wachtel, T. (2019). *The restorative practices handbook: For teachers, Disciplinarians and administrators*. International Institute for Restorative Practices.

Chin, J. K., Dowdy, E., Jimerson, S. R., & Rime, W. J. (2012). Alternatives to suspensions: Rationale and recommendations. *Journal of School Violence*, *11*(2), 156–173. https://doi.org/10.1080/15388220.2012.652912

Cornell, D. G., & Mayer, M. J. (2010). Why Do School Order and Safety matter? *Educational Researcher*, *39*(1), 7–15. https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189x09357616

Curran, F. C., & Finch, M. A. (2021). Reforming School Discipline: Responses by School District Leadership to Revised State Guidelines for Student Codes of

Conduct. Educational Administration Quarterly, 57(2), 179–220. https://doi.org/10.1177/0013161X20925893

DeMitchell, T.A., & Hambacher, E. (2016). Zero tolerance, threats of harm, and the imaginary gun: Good intentions run amuck. Brigham Young University Education & Law Journal, 1, 1-23.

Dupper, D. R., Theriot, M. T., & Craun, S. W. (2009). Reducing out-of-school suspensions: Practice Guidelines for School Social Workers. *Children & Schools*, *31*(1), 6–14. https://doi.org/10.1093/cs/31.1.6

Dutton Tillery, A., Varjas, K., Meyers, J., & Collins, A. S. (2009). General Education Teachers' perceptions of behavior management and intervention strategies. *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions*, *12*(2), 86–102. https://doi.org/10.1177/1098300708330879

Feuerborn, L., & Chinn, D. (2012). Teacher perceptions of student needs and implications for positive behavior supports. *Behavioral Disorders*, *37*(4), 219–231. https://doi.org/10.1177/019874291203700403

Flora, S. R. (2000). Praises magic reinforcement ratio: Five to one gets the job done. *The Behavior Analyst Today*, *1*(No. 4), 64–69.

Gregory, A., Skiba, R. J., & Mediratta, K. (2017). Eliminating Disparities in School Discipline: A Framework for Intervention. Review of Research in Education, 41(1), 253–278. https://doi.org/10.3102/0091732X17690499

Huguley, J. P., Wang, M.-T., Pasarow, S., & Wallace, J. M. (2020). Just discipline in schools: An integrated and interdisciplinary approach. *Children & Schools*, *42*(3), 195–199. https://doi.org/10.1093/cs/cdaa012

Lashley, C., & Tate, A. S. (2009). A Framework for Educative, Equitable, and Empowering Disciplinary Practice. *Journal of Special Education Leadership*, *22*(1).

Mallett, C. A. (2016). The school-to-prison pipeline: From school punishment to rehabilitative inclusion. *Preventing School Failure: Alternative Education for Children and Youth*, *60*(4), 296–304. https://doi.org/10.1080/1045988x.2016.1144554

Maag, J. W. (2012). School-wide discipline and the intransigency of exclusion. *Children and Youth Services Review*, *34*(10), 2094-2100. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2012.07.005

Martinez, S. (2009). A system gone berserk: How are zero-tolerance policies really affecting schools? *Preventing School Failure: Alternative Education for Children and Youth*, *53*(3), 153–158. https://doi.org/10.3200/psfl.53.3.153-158

Mirsky, L. (2011). Restorative Practices: Giving Everyone a Voice to Create Safer Saner School Communities. *The prevention researcher, 18*, 3-6.

Mongan, P., & Walker, R. (2012). "The road to hell is paved with good intentions": A historical, theoretical, and legal analysis of zero-tolerance weapons policies in American Schools. *Preventing School Failure: Alternative Education for Children and Youth*, *56*(4), 232–240. https://doi.org/10.1080/1045988x.2011.654366

Moreno, G., & Scaletta, M. (2018). Moving away from zero tolerance policies: Examination of Illinois educator preparedness in addressing student behavior. *International Journal of Emotional Education*, *Special Issue Volume 10*(2), 93–110.

Nese, R. N., & McIntosh, K. (2016). Do school-wide positive behavioral interventions and supports, not exclusionary discipline practices. *Instructional Practices with and without Empirical Validity*, 175–196. https://doi.org/10.1108/s0735-004x20160000029009

Nese, R. N. T., Nese, J. F. T., McCroskey, C., Meng, P., Triplett, D., & Bastable, E. (2021). Moving away from disproportionate exclusionary discipline: Developing and utilizing a continuum of preventative and instructional supports. *Null, 65*(4), 301-311. doi:10.1080/1045988X.2021.1937019

Osher, D., Bear, G. G., Sprague, J. R., & Doyle, W. (2010). How Can We Improve School Discipline? *Educational Researcher*, *39*(1), 48–58. https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X09357618

Skrzypek, C., Bascug, E. W., Ball, A., Kim, W., & Elze, D. (2020). In their own words: Student perceptions of restorative practices. *Children & Schools*, *42*(4), 245–253. https://doi.org/10.1093/cs/cdaa011

Sugai, G., & Horner, R. (2002). The evolution of discipline practices: School-wide positive behavior supports. *Child & Family Behavior Therapy*, *24*(1-2), 23–50. https://doi.org/10.1300/j019v24n01_03

Skiba, J. (2000). Zero Tolerance, Zero Evidence: An Analysis of School Disciplinary Practice. Policy Research Report. In *Indiana Education Policy Center* (RR-SRS2).

Skiba, R.J., & Losen, D.J. (2016). From Reaction to Prevention: Turning the Page on School Discipline. *The American Educator, 39*, 4.

Stewart Kline, D.M. (2016). Can Restorative Practices Help to Reduce Disparities in School Discipline Data? A Review of the Literature. *Multicultural Perspectives, 18*, 102 - 97.

Teske, S. C. (2011). A study of zero tolerance policies in schools: A multi-integrated systems approach to improve outcomes for adolescents. *Journal of Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Nursing*, *24*(2), 88–97. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1744-6171.2011.00273.x

Thapa, A., Cohen, J., Guffey, S., & Higgins-D'Alessandro, A. (2013). A Review of School Climate Research. *Review of Educational Research*, *83*(3), 357–385. https://doi.org/10.3102/0034654313483907

Wang, M.-T., & Degol, J. L. (2016). School climate: A review of the construct, measurement, and impact on student outcomes. *Educational Psychology Review, 28*(2), 315–352. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10648-015-9319-1

Way, S. M. (2011). School Discipline and Classroom Disruptive Behavior: The Moderating Effects of Student Perceptions. *The Sociological Quarterly*, *52*(3), 346–375. http://www.jstor.org/stable/23027541

Wiley, K. E., Anyon, Y., Yang, J. L., Pauline, M. E., Rosch, A., Valladares, G., Downing, B. J., & Pisciotta, L. (2018). Looking Back, Moving Forward: Technical, Normative, and Political Dimensions of School Discipline. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, *54*(2), 275–302. https://doi.org/10.1177/0013161x17751179

Appendix B

ARTIFACT 2 – POLICY REVIEW

This policy review examines the Student Code of Conduct for Cecil County Public Schools (CCPS). This review is written for school staff members, and provides an overview of the Student Code of Conduct and a record of the ways in which it was influenced by national and state level conduct policies. This review also examines current trends in school discipline reform and their influence on discipline policy within CCPS and more specifically at the school level. A policy review fits within the context of my ELP because teachers and staff often feel unsupported, as evidenced by survey data, (Artifact 3) when they do not understand how students are disciplined on a school level. This perception of a lack of support from school administrators can harm school climate by eroding trust between teachers and administration, increasing feelings of frustration among teachers, and therefore hindering their willingness to address student behavior in the classroom (Dutton Tillery et al., 2010; Feuerborn& Chin, 2012). These perceptions and feelings negatively influence the quality of positive relationships within the building. Positive relationships are an essential element of a positive school climate (Huang & Anyon, 2020; Huang et al., 2021 Thapa et al., 2013; Wang & Degol, 2016).

Policy Review: The Code of Student Conduct and Code of Student Discipline

Introduction

This policy review describes the student conduct and discipline policies developed and used in Cecil County Public Schools (CCPS), as well as ways in which the student conduct portion of the district's policy was influenced by disciplinary reforms on national and state levels. Finally, it will describe how the CCPS policy has influenced the school-based policies and practices at Bay View Elementary (BVES). The purpose of this review is to build knowledge about Maryland and CCPS discipline policy in order to ensure alignment between BVES school policy and the district's policies. The goal of this review is to help BVES staff members' understand why and how students are disciplined.

Background and Context

Schools should be safe environments where students can learn. School conduct and discipline policies exist to set standards of acceptable behavior as well as consequences for misconduct (American Psychological Association Zero Tolerance Task Force, 2008; Curran & Finch, 2021; Skiba & Losen, 2016; Way, 2011). Over time, educators have learned more about the methods for maintaining safe and orderly learning environments, which has resulted in changes to policies and philosophy (Curran & Finch, 2021; Gregory et al., 2017; Skiba & Losen, 2016).

Consequences like suspension and expulsion are examples of exclusionary discipline. Exclusionary discipline describes any disciplinary action that removes students from the learning environment and or instruction (Nese et al, 2021). Most of the research on exclusionary discipline focuses on the effects of suspension and expulsion, (American Psychological Association Zero Tolerance Task Force, 2008; Anyon et al., 2016; Gregory et al., 2017; Skiba & Losen, 2016; Way, 2011) however, literature has begun to address less severe but still harmful measures of exclusionary discipline, such as extensive time outs and removal from the classroom Any type of exclusion from the classroom community and learning environment can have negative effects on students and school climate (Nese, et al, 2021; Maag, 2012). The American Psychological Association Zero Tolerance Task Force examined the assumption that exclusionary practices (e.g., suspension, expulsion, and removal from the learning environment) created a more positive school climate conducive to learning. The APA determined that schools with higher rates of suspension experience fewer positive ratings of school climate, spend more time dealing with disciplinary matters, and demonstrate lower rates of academic achievement (American Psychological Association, 2008). Further, the task force determined that while exclusion from the learning environment is intended to prevent incidents of misbehavior, higher rates of exclusion instead predict higher rates of future misbehavior (American Psychological Association, 2008).

The consequences of exclusionary discipline are particularly evident in the history of zero-tolerance school discipline policies. Beginning in the 1970's and extending through 1980, zero-tolerance policies were the primary method for addressing unsafe or undesired behavior in schools (Cornell & Mayer, 2010; Curran & Finch, 2021; Gregory et al., 2017; Skiba & Losen, 2016). Zero tolerance policies call for immediate removal of a student, by suspension or expulsion, from the learning environment as a response to their undesirable conduct. Zero tolerance policies have typically been used in response to behaviors such as bringing guns or weapons to school, or engaging in gang- or drug-related activities. While these policies were intended to keep schools safe, the resulting increases in suspensions and expulsions have proven to negatively affect students by interfering with academic progress, creating a disconnect between the school and student, and increasing the likelihood of later contact with the juvenile justice system (Wiley et. al, 2018). Minoritized groups of students, including Black, Latino, and Native American students experience these effects at disproportionate and higher rates than do their white peers (Curran & Finch, 2021; Gregory et. al, 2017; Lashley & Tate, 2009; Osher et. al, 2010; Skiba & Losen, 2016; Stewart Kline, 2016; Wiley et. al, 2018). This disproportionality extends to students with disabilities, who are suspended twice as often as their non-disabled counterparts. Similarly, students who live in poverty are also disproportionately

excluded from school via suspension or expulsion (Lashley & Tate, 2009; Maag, 2012; Skiba & Losen, 2016).

Nationwide Policy Reform

Research showing the ineffectiveness and negative effects of exclusionary discipline has resulted in a focus on discipline policy reform at a national and local level (Curran & Finch, 2021; Moreno & Scaletta, 2018; Skiba, 2000; Skiba & Losen, 2016). Recent federal guidance including the Supportive School Discipline Initiative, is informed by research on discipline policies. Examples of this research, such as the American Psychological Association Zero Tolerance Task Force Report (2008) and The School Discipline Consensus Report (2014), focus on a shift from exclusionary discipline practices to policies designed to prevent student misconduct. Those strategies include working together with families and the community, setting clear expectations for behavior, focusing on relationships in school, providing strategies for intervention such as tiered interventions for students that focus on examining contributing factors, and encouraging students to take responsibility for their actions so that students remain in class in the learning environment (American Psychological Association Zero Tolerance Task Force, 2008; Curran & Finch, 2021; Gregory et al, 2017; Morgan et al., 2014; Skiba & Losen, 2016). This shift is important because research has shown that the most frequent disciplinary infractions occur for minor disruptions and disrespect. These include behaviors such as lateness to class, leaving

an area without permission, and non-compliance. These are not behaviors that pose a risk to student safety (Maag, 2012; Mallet, 2016; Nese et al., 2021; Skiba, 2000). These minor behaviors are problematic because they are more subject to bias by teachers and administrators, and can therefore further disproportionately affect minority students (Maag, 2012; Mallet, 2016; Stewart Kline, 2016). Research highlights several states that were first to implement discipline reform in alignment with this new guidance. California (2014), Colorado (2011, 2012), Georgia (2014), Massachusetts (2014-2015), and Oregon (2014) have taken action to revise codes of conduct, implement school-wide programs such as Positive Behaviors Interventions and Supports (PBIS) and Restorative Practices (RP), and limit the ability to suspend students in primary grades. Although suspensions occur more frequently for students in upper grades, limiting suspensions in grades K-2 is intended to allow students more opportunities to learn appropriate behaviors and benefit from interventions, instead of being excluded from school. Examples of these revisions are summarized in Table B1 below (Gregory et al, 2017; Skiba & Losen, 2016).

Table B1

State-level Legislative Changes to School Discipline

State	Changes
California	In 2014, a bill was passed to limit the suspension of students in K-3 for violations under the category of *disruption* or *defiance*.
Colorado	In 2011, a bill was passed to promote the adoption of school-wide training in Restorative Practices (RP). RP is one alternative to exclusion that schools are implementing to proactively approach student discipline.
Georgia	In 2014, the state school board was authorized to develop model codes of discipline in schools. These codes include the use of practices that promote positive interventions rather than exclusionary discipline in response to student misconduct.
Massachusetts	During the 2014-2015 school year, long-term suspensions were limited unless alternatives (e.g., positive behavior improvement strategies [PBIS] and conflict resolution) were first attempted and documented at the school level.
Oregon	In 2014, state law required school boards to develop codes of conduct defining expectations for student conduct and promoting positive learning environments.

State-level Policy Reform in Maryland

Maryland has also begun initiating reforms of its school discipline policies. In 2008, a high school student received a long term suspension for fighting. Her family appealed the decision, and although it was upheld, this case *(C. Antanya v. Dorchester County Board of Education*, 2009) prompted the Maryland Board of Education (MBOE) to study the effects of exclusionary practices on students. MBOE considered stakeholder input, national and statewide data, and reviewed each local, school district

policies throughout the state. MBOE then shared the findings of its review and rationale for discipline reform. These reforms were implemented beginning in 2014 when MBOE adopted new regulations regarding discipline policy reform (Curran & Finch, 2021). They are explained in Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR) 13A.08.01.11, which directed all local boards of education to revise student discipline policies by the beginning of the 2014-2015 school year. It includes specific indicators that must be addressed in each district's policy. They are listed here as they appear in COMAR 13A.08.01.11. (p. 8). Each policy must:

- "Reflect a discipline philosophy based on the goals of fostering, teaching, and acknowledging positive behavior;
- Be designed to keep students connected to school so that they may graduate college and career ready;
- Describe the conduct that may lead to in-school and out-of-school suspension or expulsion;
- Allow for discretion in imposing discipline."

The next section of this review will describe additional influences on CCPS discipline and conduct policies.

Maryland Policy and CCPS

The Cecil County Public Schools (CCPS) *Code of Student Discipline* and *Code of Student Conduct* has been influenced by policy at the state level, including the Maryland Board of Education (MBOE) reforms that began in 2009. The goals set forth by the state of Maryland through COMAR have influenced the elements of the *CCPS Code of Student Discipline* and *Code of Student Conduct* which align with each of the

four indicators of the COMAR regulation. This alignment is illustrated in the Table B2 below.

Table B2

COMAR and CCPS Policy Alignment

COMAR Indicator	CCPS
Discipline philosophy that fosters, teaches, and acknowledges positive behavior.	Implementation of PBIS programs in all schools. These school-wide programs must include tiers of supports for students.
Keep students connected to school, in order to prepare them for college and career.	Implementation of PBIS, RP, instruction in Social Emotional Learning (SEL) at all schools. Defined expectations for stakeholders as shown in Table 2.
Describe the conduct that could lead to suspension or expulsion.	CCPS Code of Student Conduct, and CCPS Code of Student Discipline. Infractions and consequences are shown in Tables 4 and 5.
Allow for discretion in discipline	School based discipline policies that are based off of CCPS Code of Student Conduct and Code of Student Discipline.

Along with the guidelines defined above, the state of Maryland also introduced and passed House Bill 425 in 2017. This bill banned suspension for students in PK-2nd grade unless the student is determined by an administrator and mental health professional to be an imminent threat to others. A student is an imminent threat when a student could cause imminent, serious physical harm or bodily injury to self or others. Bodily injury is defined by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act

(IDEA) as a substantial risk of death, extreme physical pain, disfigurement, or loss or impairment of a bodily function, organ or mental faculty. (U.S. Department of Education Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, 2022). The legislature's reasons for passing this bill as well as additions to the policy were described in a press release provided by The Maryland Coalition to Reform School Discipline, in which the Coalition states:

> In the 2015-2016 school year, 2,363 children in pre-kindergarten through second grade were suspended or expelled; nearly a quarter of those removals were for a vague category of behavior called "disruption." These exclusions from school deny children critical opportunities to learn academic and social skills during a foundational time in their development, and lead to negative consequences both in school and later in life, including increasing the likelihood of involvement in the juvenile justice system (p.1).

The Coalition goes on to say that, "research demonstrates that problematic childhood behaviors are better addressed through classroom management, positive behavior supports, and other evidence-based interventions, and that suspension does not change behavior or make schools safer" (Maryland Coalition to Reform School Discipline, 2017, p.1). These words summarize the intent of policy makers to create disciplinary policies that keep students in school. The limitations set on primary grade

out of school suspensions further emphasize the commitment to prevention and intervention strategies, instead of exclusionary methods.

The influence of federal and statewide policy reforms resulted in the creation of discipline and conduct policies in the state of Maryland that are responsive and supportive of student needs, and that focus on prevention and intervention. The next section will review some key components of the CCPS policy documents.

Cecil County Discipline Policy

Cecil County Public Schools (CCPS) has developed two policy documents that communicate expectations for student conduct and discipline in schools: the *Code of Student Conduct* and *Code of Student Discipline*. These two documents work in conjunction with one another to ensure all stakeholders (staff, parents, community organizations, and students) have a common understanding of expectations for sustaining safe and secure learning environments, acceptable student conduct in schools, and actions that could follow student misconduct. The *Code of Conduct* and *Code of Student Discipline* are distributed annually to parents and students in a single document called *The Student Rights and Responsibilities Handbook*. A signature page is included in the back of the handbook. Parents and students are expected to sign and return this page, which signals agreement and adherence to the policy. The handbook can also be found on the CCPS website.

Stakeholder Roles and Responsibilities

Research and the subsequent policy guidance from both federal and state governments indicate that a partnership must exist between families and the school community, in order to implement the supports that seek to proactively prevent student misconduct. Cecil County Public Schools (CCPS) acknowledges this and defines the expectations and responsibilities of all stakeholders. These responsibilities are communicated via *The Student Rights and Responsibilities Handbook* they are cited directly from the handbook in Table B3 (CCPS, 2021).

Table B3

CCPS Stakeholder Roles and Responsibilities

Students in grades K-12 are expected to: • Be accountable for their actions and learning, • Abide by laws, policies, school/class rules, and regulations. • Come to school ready to learn with materials appropriate to the educational program. • Attend school regularly and on time. • Participate in a manner that demonstrates ownership of and investment in their education. • Respect each other's differences and seek to gain a greater understanding of others.
Parents are asked to: • Ensure that their children attend school regularly, on time, and ready to learn with materials appropriate to the educational program. • Provide their children with a nurturing, structured, and healthy environment. • Support and encourage student participation in academic and extra-curricular activities. • Model positive and appropriate means of problem solving and the display of appropriate behavior. • Reinforce appropriate school behavior expectations. • Work with the school principal, teachers, and other staff to address any academic or behavioral concerns regarding their child. • Respect each other's differences and seek to gain a greater understanding of others. • Respect other students' privacy rights.

Table B3 (continued)

Staff should: • Set and maintain high standards for student conduct and academic performance. • Develop and implement curriculum with scope and sequence appropriate to the needs of the students and the community. • Develop and implement high quality, rigorous lessons that engage and challenge students, while minimizing opportunities for disruption. • Maintain a safe and orderly environment conducive to learning. • Participate in formulation of school policies and regulations. • Communicate with parents, students, school personnel, and others to support the success of all students. • Cooperate with and participate in teams designed to improve student behavior, attendance and achievement. • Explicitly teach, reteach and model clear behavior expectations to all students. • Intervene early to deescalate behavior. • Respect each other's differences and seek to gain a greater understanding of others. • Identify and respond effectively to students' social, emotional, and/or behavioral health needs, including referring students for additional supports when necessary.
Community organizations should: • Assist and participate in violence prevention, substance abuse prevention, character education, and school safety initiatives. • Serve as a resource to families and students. • Provide or sponsor after-school programs for students. • Become partners with schools to assist with or provide mentoring or career related programs. • Serve as learning and/or employment sites for students. • Respect each other's differences and seek to gain a greater understanding of others.
Administrator responsibilities • All of the responsibilities listed for school staff • Review the circumstances surrounding each situation and exercise their discretion to assign interventions/consequences in the best interest of the individual student and the entire school community. • Apply the Code of Conduct accurately, consistently, and in a non-discriminatory manner, including providing students with opportunities to respond, notifying parent/guardian when disciplinary action is taken, and recording all disciplinary action in the district student information system.

Interventions and Consequences

The Code of Student Conduct outlines interventions and consequences that can be used or applied when students fall short of the school's expectations for conduct. The document outlines seven levels of interventions and consequences, which range in increasing severity from level 1 (the least severe) to level 7 (the most severe). This range of consequences is important because COMAR 13A.08.01.11 stipulates that discipline and conduct policies allow for staff to use discretion in discipline. The range of consequences and interventions are taken from the CCPS *Code of Student Conduct*, and shown in the table below. Some of the consequences in the table do not apply to elementary school students, including modified instructional placement (MIP) and participation in the Twilight Program. These consequences are alternatives to out of school suspension, and provide students with an alternative setting in which they may continue to receive instruction and complete relevant school work. Both of these interventions require students to work independently with minimal adult support and would not be appropriate for elementary age students.

Table B4

CCPS Interventions and Consequences

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Classroom Interventions	**Conferences**	**Consequences**	**Alternative Placements**	**Short Term Suspension**	**Long Term Suspensions**	**Referral**
Implemented by Classroom Teacher	Conference with student	Time in Office	***MIP**	Suspension 1-3 days	Suspension 4-10 days	Referral to Superintendent
	Parent Contact	Loss of Privileges	*MIP Multiple Days			
	Bus Warning	Detention			Twilight Program	
	Referral to Support Staff	*MIP	Other Alternative Placement	Twilight Program		
	Confiscation and Return	Bus Suspension	Twilight Program			

As seen in Table B4, the lowest level of intervention begins in the classroom. Classroom interventions are implemented by the classroom teacher and could include actions such as a conference between the student and the teacher, completion of a student reflection sheet, or visit to a calm down area in the classroom. The calm down space might include tools such as breathing strategies, thinking prompts, and items such as stress balls or putty for students to use. In level 2, conferences could include conferences with the student and a parent. Level 3 might include consequences such as time in the school office, loss of privileges, such as choice of a seat at lunch, or detention. This pragmatic approach to discipline, allows discretion in how the behavior is addressed, as well as an opportunity to consider not only the reason for the

behavior, but the student's prior experiences At the end of the *Code of Student Conduct*, tables are included to demonstrate how the range of consequences can be applied to actions that would be considered violations (See Table B5). There is a table for each level: elementary, middle and high. The table matches conduct violations with the range of consequences that are described in Table B4. For example, academic dishonesty at the elementary level could receive a consequence in range 1, 2 or 3. Insubordination could receive a consequence from level 1 to level 4, while a verbal or physical threat to another would merit a consequence from level 3 to 7, as shown in Table B5 below.

Table B5

Recommended Range of Consequences for Elementary School

Offense/Violation	Range of Consequences						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Academic Dishonesty/Cheating	X	X	X				
Alcohol			X	X	X	X	
Arson/Fire					X	X	X
Bullying		X	X	X	X	X	X
Chronic Minor Infractions		X	X	X			
Class Cutting	X	X	X	X			
Disrespect	X	X	X	X	X		
Disruption	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Dress Code Violation	X	X	X				
Drugs/Distribution			X	X	X	X	X
Explosives			X	X	X	X	X
False Alarm Bomb Threat				X	X	X	X
Fighting			X	X	X		
Firearms							X
Harassment	X	X	X	X			
Insubordination	X	X	X	X			

The guidance provided in Tables B4 and B5 can be used by a teacher or school leader to assign an intervention or a consequence to the student that is designed to dissuade the student from repeating the behavior. If a student disrupts class one time, for example, an administrator might select a level 1 consequence, but if the student continues to be disruptive, the severity of the consequence could increase from a level 1 to a level 5. As shown in Table B5, the consequences for fighting range from level 3 to level 5. If two students begin pushing each other at recess, they might receive a level 3 consequence; if a student punches a classmate in the face for calling him a name, they might receive a level 5 consequence. The range of consequences and process, which begins in the classroom with the teacher and for more severe and/or repeated offenses involves administrators, for determining an appropriate consequence demonstrates alignment of CCPS discipline policies with current discipline form efforts. It establishes clear expectations for student conduct, and offers graduated responses to misconduct, instead of a standard, or automatic disciplinary action (Mallet, 2016).

How do the policies and Practices at BVES align with CCPS and Maryland?

As a public school located in Cecil County, Maryland, Bay View Elementary School (BVES) policies must align with state and county policy. The CCPS *Code of Student Conduct* and *Code of Student Discipline* were written in alignment with

Maryland law and MBOE policies, and therefore, these CCPS policies must be used as a guide to inform BVES policies and practices. Further, research suggests that comprehensive, integrated frameworks for discipline should be designed to support all students. These frameworks should include strategies that focus on relationship-building, social emotional learning, and intervention (Curran & Finch, 2021; Gregory et al, 2017; Huguley et al., 2020; Osher et al, 2010; Skiba & Losen, 2016). BVES has created multi-tiered and integrated system that is in place to communicate expectations for student conduct and define a process for student discipline, while focusing on intervention, positive relationships, and social emotional learning. BVES has created a School Climate Handbook that describes the multi-tiered system of supports in detail (Artifact 4). However, a summary of the system is described below. Each heading in the summary is derived from an element of COMAR guidance outlined in Table 2.

BVES has a program that clearly communicates expectations for student conduct and recognize positive student behavior.

Maryland and CCPS policy dictate that school discipline programs clearly define the expectations for student conduct. At BVES, we teach students to demonstrate appropriate behaviors through the BVES BARK, or code of conduct. The behaviors outlined in the BARK include: **B**e prepared, **A**ct responsibly, **R**espect the community, and **K**eep safe. These behaviors were determined, by a school based team during the implementation of PBIS at BVES in 2008, to be core behaviors that

contribute to a positive environment that is conducive to learning. All staff members, including teachers, administrators, and support staff, participate in school-wide practices that recognize and reinforce when students act according to the BARK. These practices include BARK badges, student of the month recognition, whole class incentives and school-wide celebrations.

Student misconduct is categorized by severity and a range of consequences is considered.

Student misconduct is categorized into minor or major infractions. A procedure exists for proper documentation of each type of behavior. Major infractions are documented using an office discipline referral (ODR), and minor infractions are documented using a minor incident report (MIR). Office discipline referrals are handled in the office by an administrator, who investigates the incident and provides an intervention or consequence. Minor incidents are handled in the classroom. An intervention or consequence is determined by the classroom teacher. This system of categorizing behavior helps teachers and students to understand how discipline infractions should be addressed. Students understand that an ODR is the result of more serious behavior than that which is handled in the classroom. Similarly, teachers can use it as a tool to determine if a behavior should be handled in the classroom, or if they need assistance from members of the school's administration.

There is room for discretion in student discipline.

When student conduct does not align with the expectations communicated by the BARK and necessitates the use of disciplinary action, such as a consequence or intervention, the consequences can be determined by the classroom teacher, or by an administrator. The consequences imposed by the teacher should be selected from the recommendations outlined in Table B4 and Table B5, and include things such as conferences and detention. Consequences from the office may include parent conferences and detention, but could also include time in the school office, or in some limited cases, suspension. In addition to consequences, some interventions are available to help students who have difficulty meeting the expectations for respectful and safe conduct.

In addition to consequences, an intervention may also be initiated. In opposition to the one-size-fits-all philosophy of zero-tolerance policies, effective and equitable discipline reform calls for a the implementation of a muti-tiered system of supports (MTSS) as well as both academic and behavioral interventions (Gregory et al., 2017; Osher et al.,2010; Skiba & Losen, 2016). BVES provides a tiered system of interventions that offers the most support to the students who need it most, (Tier 3) but also provides universal structure and supports for all students (Tier 1). This tiered system of supports follows the framework of a Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) program. Osher and colleagues say that the primary aim of school-

wide PBIS programs is “to decrease problem behavior in schools and classrooms and to develop integrated systems of support for students and adults at the school-wide, classroom and individual student levels” (Osher et al., 2010, p.50). The interventions provided to students at BVES aim to teach students how to follow the BARK, and to help them to act in ways that demonstrate preparedness, responsibility, respect and safety.

Some of these interventions include small group meetings with the counselor and Check-In, Check-out (CICO). CICO is a structured check-in between a student and an adult mentor. Students check in with their mentor at the beginning of the day and set goals for appropriate conduct. At the end of the day the student and mentor check-out. The check-out meeting includes a review of the student’s day and celebrating successes. The student’s behavior goals are set ahead of time and monitored using a point chart throughout the day. Individualized behavior goals are designed by a team of educators including the school counselor, teachers, and administrators, for students who require additional support.

It keeps students connected to school by focusing on relationships.

Caring and respectful relationships between students and adults in school have positive effects on student behavior, and reduce the use of exclusionary practices (Gregory et al., 2017; Skiba &Losen, 2016). Research shows that when students feel supported by teachers and adults at school, they are more engaged in school and less

likely to engage in misconduct (DeMitchell & Hambacher, 2016; Gregory et al, 2017; Way, 2011). Supportive relationships include feelings of connectedness, as well as feeling like an adult cares about their well-being and wants them to be successful. Additionally, positive peer relationships are important in helping students to feel connected to the community (Nese et al., 2021). Restorative Practices (RP) are one tool that school districts are using to build relationships. BVES has implemented the use of RP at a school-wide level since the 2019-2020 school year. The main tenet of the implementation of RP is the switch from a punitive mindset to a restorative mindset. This switch in mindset takes the emphasis off of punishing students for their behavior, and instead emphasizes helping students to understand how their actions can cause harm to others and the school community.

In summary, BVES has developed an integrated plan that is focused on providing students with opportunities to demonstrate positive behavior, provides interventions for students in need of support and focuses on the importance of positive relationships.

Conclusion

This policy review has provided a summary of national, state, and local reforms and how these reforms have guided the written student conduct and discipline policies that are used in CCPS. Understanding how and why these policy decisions are made is important to shaping school-wide practices and procedures.

References

American Psychological Association Zero Tolerance Task Force. (2008). Are zero tolerance policies effective in the schools?: An evidentiary review and recommendations. *American Psychologist*, *63*(9), 852–862. https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066x.63.9.852

Cecil County Public Schools, Code of Student Conduct (2018). Retrieved from https://go.boarddocs.com/mabe/cecil/Board.nsf/Public#

Cecil County Public Schools Code of Student Discipline (2016). Retrieved from https://go.boarddocs.com/mabe/cecil/Board.nsf/Public#

Cecil County Public Schools Student Support Center Handbook (2021).

Cornell, D. G., & Mayer, M. J. (2010). Why Do School Order and Safety matter? *Educational Researcher*, *39*(1), 7–15. https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189x09357616

Curran, F. C., & Finch, M. A. (2021). Reforming School Discipline: Responses by School District Leadership to Revised State Guidelines for Student Codes of Conduct. Educational Administration Quarterly, 57(2), 179–220. https://doi.org/10.1177/0013161X20925893

DeMitchell, T. A., & Hambacher, E. (2015). Zero tolerance, threats of harm, and the imaginary gun: Good intentions run amuck. *Brigham Young University Education and Law Journal*, *2016*(1), 1–23. https://digitalcommons.law.byu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1378&context=elj

Gregory, A., Skiba, R. J., & Mediratta, K. (2017). Eliminating Disparities in School Discipline: A Framework for Intervention. Review of Research in Education, 41(1), 253–278. https://doi.org/10.3102/0091732X17690499

Huang, F., & Anyon, Y. (2020). The relationship between school disciplinary resolutions with school climate and Attitudes Toward School. *Preventing School Failure: Alternative Education for Children and Youth*, *64*(3), 212–222. https://doi.org/10.1080/1045988x.2020.1722940

Huang, F. L., Olsen, A. A., Cohen, D., & Coombs, N. (2020). Authoritative school climate and out-of-school suspensions: Results from a nationally-representative survey of 10th grade students. *Preventing School Failure: Alternative Education for Children and Youth*, *65*(2), 114–123. https://doi.org/10.1080/1045988x.2020.1843129

Huguley, J. P., Wang, M.-T., Pasarow, S., & Wallace, J. M. (2020). Just discipline in schools: An integrated and interdisciplinary approach. *Children & Schools*, *42*(3), 195–199. https://doi.org/10.1093/cs/cdaa012

Lashley, C., & Tate, A. S. (2009). A Framework for Educative, Equitable, and Empowering Disciplinary Practice. *Journal of Special Education Leadership*, *22*(1).

Maag, J. W. (2012). School-wide discipline and the intransigency of exclusion. *Children and Youth Services Review*, *34*(10), 2094-2100. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2012.07.005

Mallett, C. A. (2016). The School-to-Prison Pipeline: From School Punishment to Rehabilitative Inclusion. *Preventing School Failure: Alternative Education for Children and Youth*, *60*(4), 296–304. https://doi.org/10.1080/1045988x.2016.1144554

Maryland Coalition to Reform School Discipline. (2017, April 10). *MARYLAND GENERAL ASSEMBLY PASSES BILLS TO BAN SUSPENSION OF YOUNG LEARNERS AND TO CREATE A COMMISSION TO STUDY RESTORATIVE PRACTICES* [Press release]. https://disabilityrightsmd.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/CRSD-hb425hb1287pressfinal.pdf

Mirsky, L. (2011). Restorative Practices: Giving Everyone a Voice to Create Safer Saner School Communities. *The prevention researcher, 18*, 3-6.

Moreno, G. & Scaletta, M. (2018). Moving away from zero tolerance policies: Examination of Illinois educator preparedness in addressing student behavior. International Journal of Emotional Education. 10. 93-110.

Morgan, E., Salomon, N., Plotkin, M., & Cohen, R. (2014). *The School Discipline Consensus Report: Strategies from the field to keep students engaged in school*

and out of the juvenile justice system. The Council of State Governments, Justice Center.

Nese, R. N. T., Nese, J. F. T., McCroskey, C., Meng, P., Triplett, D., & Bastable, E. (2021). Moving away from disproportionate exclusionary discipline: Developing and utilizing a continuum of preventative and instructional supports. *Null, 65*(4), 301-311. doi:10.1080/1045988X.2021.1937019

Osher, D., Bear, G. G., Sprague, J. R., & Doyle, W. (2010). How Can We Improve School Discipline? *Educational Researcher*, *39*(1), 48–58. https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X09357618

Skiba, J. (2000). Zero Tolerance, Zero Evidence: An Analysis of School Disciplinary Practice. Policy Research Report. In *Indiana Education Policy Center* (RR-SRS2).

Skiba, R.J., & Losen, D.J. (2016). From Reaction to Prevention: Turning the Page on School Discipline. *The American Educator, 39*, 4.

Stewart Kline, D.M. (2016). Can Restorative Practices Help to Reduce Disparities in School Discipline Data? A Review of the Literature. *Multicultural Perspectives, 18*, 102 - 97.

Thapa, A., Cohen, J., Guffey, S., & Higgins-D'Alessandro, A. (2013). A Review of School Climate Research. *Review of Educational Research*, *83*(3), 357–385. https://doi.org/10.3102/0034654313483907

U.S. Department of Education Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services. (2022). Questions and answers: Addressing the needs of children with disabilities and IDEA s discipline provisions (July 19, 2022). Retrieved from https://sites.ed.gov/idea/idea-files/qa-addressing-the-needs-of-children-with-disabilities-and-idea-discipline-provisions/

Wang, M.-T., & Degol, J. L. (2016). School climate: A review of the construct, measurement, and impact on student outcomes. *Educational Psychology Review, 28*(2), 315–352. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10648-015-9319-1

Way, S. M. (2011). School Discipline and Classroom Disruptive Behavior: The Moderating Effects of Student Perceptions. *The Sociological Quarterly*, *52*(3), 346–375. http://www.jstor.org/stable/23027541

Wiley, K. E., Anyon, Y., Yang, J. L., Pauline, M. E., Rosch, A., Valladares, G., Downing, B. J., & Pisciotta, L. (2018). Looking Back, Moving Forward: Technical, Normative, and Political Dimensions of School Discipline. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, *54*(2), 275–302. https://doi.org/10.1177/0013161x17751179

Appendix C

ARTIFACT 3 – WHITE PAPER

The purpose of this artifact is communicate the findings of Artifact 1: Literature Review, into an easily readable format for teachers and staff members at Bay View Elementary School (BVES). This white paper explains the negative outcomes that can be caused by exclusionary practices. It also explains alternatives to exclusionary practices that can be used by staff members in response to student misbehavior. This white paper is included as an artifact in order to summarize information from the Literature Review (Artifact 1) and Policy Review (Artifact 2) more reader friendly for the staff at Bay View Elementary.

School Discipline and Exclusion

White Paper

Stacey Rominski

Introduction

Schoowide discipine policies set the expectations for acceptable student conduct, they also outline potentional consequences for student misbehavior. The expectations for student behavior, and consequences that are used to address this behavior contribute to student and staff percpetions of school climate. Recently, nationwide and local discipline policies are shifting away from punitive consequences, such as exclusionary discipline, and moving toward restorative measures that include instruction and intervention. If school staff memberbs do not understand this shift it can negatively influence the school climate. This white paper will describe the history and negative effects of exlcusionary practices, as well as some alternative practices.

Discipline and School Climate

School climate is described as "the fabric of support that enables all members of the school community to teach and learn at optimum levels" (Freiberg, 1998, p.22). Recent research on school climate describes it as a multi-dimensional construct with four domains (Cohen, 2009; Thapa et al, 2013; Wang & Degol, ,2016).

- Teaching and Learning
- Institutional Environment
- Relationships
- Safety

Elements of school wide discipline policies, such as expectations for student behavior, and the subsequent consequences fit into the safety domain of climate. However, school disicipline can also influence teaching and learning. For example, if students do not understand the expectations for behavior, they might act in a way that is disrputive to instruciton. Further, if the consequences are not designed to change student behavior, students may repeat the same disrputive behaviors. In the past, exclusionary discipline measures have been used as a way to address student misbehavior.

What are exclusionary discipline practices?

Any action that removes a student from the learning environment as a response to misbehavior, is considered exclusionary discipline. Traditionally, exclusionary discipline refers to suspension or expulsion, but also includes extended removal from the classroom, such as time in the school office, or time out (Nese & McIntosh, 2016; Nese et al, 2021). Exclusionary practices come from zero tolerance policies (ZTP) that mandate removal from school for certain behavior

such as violence, weapons and drugs (Skiba, 2000). The use of exclusionary discipline practices persist because of individuals' beliefs about behavior and consequences. When individuals believe that removal from the learning environment is the only way to maintain a safe learning environment, exclusionary practices are also more likely to be used for less serious offenses, such as disrespect and noncompliance (Skiba, 2000; Nese et al, 2021).

Negative Effects of Exclusion

- Racial and ethnic minorities are exluded from school at a disproprortionate rate relative to their white peers (Cornell & Mayer, 2021; Curran & Finch, 2021; Gregory et al, 2017; Lashley & Tate, 2011)
- Students with disabilities are more frequently removed from the classroom than nondisabled peers (Lashley & Tate, 2011; Osher et al, 2010).
- Students who are removed from the learning environment experience lower test scores and drop out at higher rates.
- Suspension and expulsion predict future contact with the junvenile or criminal justice system, and this is known as the "school to prison pipeline" (Cornell & Mayer, 2021; Gregory et al., 2017; Osher et al, 2010; Stewart Kline, 2016).
- Removal from the classroom or school may cause students to disconnect, which could also make them more likely to repeat the problem behavior (Chin et al, 2012; Nese et al, 2021).

2022- 2023 Bay View Elementary School Discipline Data

Exclusionary Consequences used at BVES

- Suspension- Removal from school for one day or longer
- Time in Office- Removal from the classroom to the school office for an extended period of time
- Time Out- Removal from the classroom or class activity to another area of the school (another classroom, school office)

26%

The percentage of BVES referrals that resulted in an exclusionary consequence

62%

The percentage of BVES Office Discipline Referrals for students with disbilities

37%

The percentage of BVES referrals for students who are a racial or ethinic minority. Only 23% of the total school population are identified as minoritized students.

Why do we still use exclusionary practices?

Despite the negative effects of exclusionary practices, they continue to be used in many schools as responses to student behavior. This is due to the fact that they are easy to implement and require fewer resources than interventions (Cornell & Mayer, 2021; Lashley & Tate, 2011). Exclusionary consequences are also seemingly efficient in that they provide immediate relief for the teacher from the problem behavior, and give the impression that the behavior has stopped (Lashley & Tate, 2011; Nese & McIntosh ,2016). While the temporary fix that removal from the environment can provide feels like a solution, it does not help to prevent the problem behavior from reoccurring.

Alternatives to Exclusionary Discipline

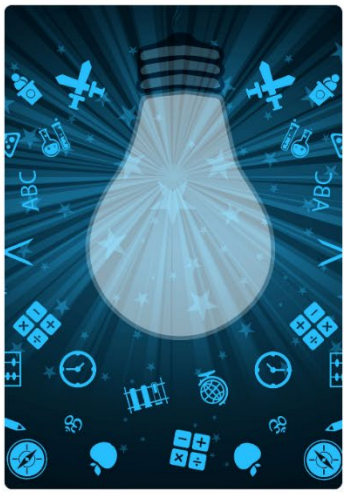
Discipline policies and practices that focus on prevention and intervention are replacing the use of exclusionary discipline (Anyon et al., 2014; Gregory et al, 2017; Martinez, 2009; Nese et al, 2021). The alternatives include Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS), which has been in place at BVES since 2009. PBIS provides a framework for teaching behavior expectations to students, as well as positive reinforcement, and interventions for those not meeting expectations (Osher et al, 2010). Social and emotional learning programs (eg, Second Step which is also used at BVES,) provide instruction to students to increase their emotional awareness, relationship and decision making skills (Osher et al., 2010). Restorative Practices (RP) provide strategies to address student misbehavior in a way that focuses on building and maintaining positive classroom and school communities (Costello et al., 2019). These alternatives provide students with an opportunity to learn social skills, increase their own self-awareness, and build positive relationships within the school community. These alternatives work together to provide students with opportunities to learn in a safe and inviting school environment (Gregory et al, 2017). Research has highlighted some important aspects of school wide discipline frameworks that are prevention-and- intervention-focused.

The American Psychological Association Zero Tolerance Task Force (APAZTF, 2008) recommends:

- Defining behavior infractions as major and minor
- Evaluation of all discipline strategies to ensure that they benefit all students
- Replacing one-size-fits-all disicpline with graduated systems where consequences fit the seriousness of the infraction
- Implementation of preventative measures that will improve school climate (APAZTF, 2008, p 857-859).

Further research-based recommendations to address exclusionary practices include:

- **Collecting and analyzing data** to guide decisions about school wide practices (Huguley et al, 2020).
- Allow time in the instructional day for **community-building in the classroom** (Wiley et al, 2008).
- Provide **professional development to staff** about addressing student behaivor and consequences (Wiley et al, 2008).
- Provide **support for parents** to understand student behavior expectations so they can **reinforce** them **at home** (Wiley et al, 2008).



How can staff members support alternatives to exclusion?

It is important to believe that prevention and intervention are more effective in addressing student misbheavior than punishment. A study conducted in 2012 found that teachers' knowledge of behavior managment strategies, as well as belief in the management system, influence the fidelity of their implementation (Feuerborn & Chin, 2012).

Increase focus on positive behavior. Research shows this helps students to build confidence also results in improved self-efficacy (Bruhn et al, 2014; Flora, 2000.)

Provide opportunties for students to learn from their behavior and correct it. This includes allowing students to take responsbility for their actions. The use of a restorative circle or discussion using restorative questions can be helpful with this (Lashley & Tate, 2009).

Help students to feel valued and connected to their class and school so they are less likely to engage in misbehavior (Stewart Kline, 2016). Morning meetings and classroom circles are ways to build a community where students feel connected. These practices may provide students with opportunities to express their feelings and build trust with classmates and teachers (Mirsky, 2011; Skyrzpek et al, 2020).

Ensure that families understand what is expected of their student at school through regular communication regarding student conduct and consequences. Positive phone calls from teachers and/or administrators can also help to reinforce positive behavior and increase home and school collaboration (Anyon et al, 2018; APAZTF, 2008).

School leaders should plan and staff members should actively participate in professional development that provides the training needed to implement the strategies and alternatives described throughout this paper (DeMitchell &Hambacher, 2016; Mallet, 2016; Moreno & Scaletta, 2018).

References

Anyon, Y., Atteberry-Ash, B., Yang, J., Pauline, M., Wiley, K., Cash, D., Downing, B., Greer, E., & Pisciotta, L. (2018). It's all about the relationships": Educators' rationales and strategies for building connections with students to prevent exclusionary school discipline outcomes. *Children & Schools*, *40*(4), 221–230. https://doi.org/10.1093/cs/cdy017

American Psychological Association Zero Tolerance Task Force. (2008). Are zero tolerance policies effective in the schools?: An evidentiary review and recommendations. *American Psychologist*, *63*(9), 852–862. https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066x.63.9.852

Bruhn, A., Gorsh, J., Hannan, C., & Hirsch, S. E. (2014). Simple Strategies for Reflecting on and Responding to Common Criticisms of PBIS. *Journal of Special Education Leadership*, *27*(1), 13–25.

Chin, J. K., Dowdy, E., Jimerson, S. R., & Rime, W. J. (2012). Alternatives to suspensions: Rationale and recommendations. *Journal of School Violence*, *11*(2), 156–173. https://doi.org/10.1080/15388220.2012.652912

Cohen, J, McCabe, Michelli, Nicholas, Pickeral, N.M. (2009). School climate: Research, policy, teacher education and practice. Teachers College Record. Vol 111. 180-213. 10.1177/016146810911100108.

Cornell, D. G., & Mayer, M. J. (2010). Why Do School Order and Safety matter? *Educational Researcher*, *39*(1), 7–15. https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189x09357616

Curran, F. C., & Finch, M. A. (2021). Reforming School Discipline: Responses by School District Leadership to Revised State Guidelines for Student Codes of Conduct. Educational Administration Quarterly, 57(2), 179–220. https://doi.org/10.1177/0013161X20925893

DeMitchell, T.A., & Hambacher, E. (2016). Zero tolerance, threats of harm, and the imaginary gun: Good intentions run amuck. Brigham Young University Education & Law Journal, 1, 1-23.

Feuerborn, L., & Chinn, D. (2012). Teacher perceptions of student needs and implications for positive behavior supports. *Behavioral Disorders*, *37*(4), 219–231. https://doi.org/10.1177/019874291203700403

Flora, S. R. (2000). Praises magic reinforcement ratio: Five to one gets the job done. *The Behavior Analyst Today*, *1*(No. 4), 64–69.

Freiberg, H. J. (1998). Measuring school climate: Let me count the ways. *Educational Leadership, 56*(1), 22-26.

Gregory, A., Skiba, R. J., & Mediratta, K. (2017). Eliminating Disparities in School Discipline: A Framework for Intervention. Review of Research in Education, 41(1), 253–278. https://doi.org/10.3102/0091732X17690499

Huguley, J. P., Wang, M.-T., Pasarow, S., & Wallace, J. M. (2020). Just discipline in schools: An integrated and interdisciplinary approach. *Children & Schools*, *42*(3), 195–199. https://doi.org/10.1093/cs/cdaa012

Lashley, C., & Tate, A. S. (2009). A Framework for Educative, Equitable, and Empowering Disciplinary Practice. *Journal of Special Education Leadership*, *22*(1).

Mallett, C. A. (2016). The school-to-prison pipeline: From school punishment to rehabilitative inclusion. *Preventing School Failure: Alternative Education for Children and Youth*, *60*(4), 296–304. https://doi.org/10.1080/1045988x.2016.1144554

Moreno, G., & Scaletta, M. (2018). Moving away from zero tolerance policies: Examination of Illinois educator preparedness in addressing student behavior. *International Journal of Emotional Education*, *Special Issue Volume 10*(2), 93–110.

Nese, R. N., & McIntosh, K. (2016). Do school-wide positive behavioral interventions and supports, not exclusionary discipline practices. *Instructional Practices with and without Empirical Validity*, 175–196. https://doi.org/10.1108/s0735-004x20160000029009

Nese, R. N. T., Nese, J. F. T., McCroskey, C., Meng, P., Triplett, D., & Bastable, E. (2021). Moving away from disproportionate exclusionary discipline:

Developing and utilizing a continuum of preventative and instructional supports. *Null, 65*(4), 301-311. doi:10.1080/1045988X.2021.1937019

Osher, D., Bear, G. G., Sprague, J. R., & Doyle, W. (2010). How Can We Improve School Discipline? *Educational Researcher*, *39*(1), 48–58. https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X09357618

Skrzypek, C., Bascug, E. W., Ball, A., Kim, W., & Elze, D. (2020). In their own words: Student perceptions of restorative practices. *Children & Schools*, *42*(4), 245–253. https://doi.org/10.1093/cs/cdaa011

Skiba, J. (2000). Zero Tolerance, Zero Evidence: An Analysis of School Disciplinary Practice. Policy Research Report. In *Indiana Education Policy Center* (RR-SRS2).

Skiba, R.J., & Losen, D.J. (2016). From Reaction to Prevention: Turning the Page on School Discipline. *The American Educator, 39*, 4.

Stewart Kline, D.M. (2016). Can Restorative Practices Help to Reduce Disparities in School Discipline Data? A Review of the Literature. *Multicultural Perspectives, 18*, 102 - 97.

Thapa, A., Cohen, J., Guffey, S., & Higgins-D'Alessandro, A. (2013). A Review of School Climate Research. *Review of Educational Research*, *83*(3), 357–385. https://doi.org/10.3102/0034654313483907

Wang, M.-T., & Degol, J. L. (2016). School climate: A review of the construct, measurement, and impact on student outcomes. *Educational Psychology Review, 28*(2), 315–352. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10648-015-9319-1

Wiley, K. E., Anyon, Y., Yang, J. L., Pauline, M. E., Rosch, A., Valladares, G., Downing, B. J., & Pisciotta, L. (2018). Looking Back, Moving Forward: Technical, Normative, and Political Dimensions of School Discipline. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, *54*(2), 275–302. https://doi.org/10.1177/0013161x17751179

Appendix D

ARTIFACT 4 – SCHOOL CLIMATE HANDBOOK

My ELP examines the role of school leaders in creating a positive climate regarding student conduct and discipline. School leaders must ensure that teachers feel and equipped to address student misconduct, while maintaining an environment conducive to student learning. One way to ensure this is to communicate clear expectations for student conduct, as well as consequences for student misconduct. This handbook is a tool for communicating with staff.

This artifact is a School Climate Handbook that was developed at Bay View Elementary School (BVES). It was developed by a committee of stakeholders including general and special education teachers, the school counselor, and school administrators. This version of the handbook was revised to create a comprehensive guide explaining the multi-tiered systems of supports and interventions to support positive student conduct. It also explains how BVES will incorporate the use of Restorative Practices (RP) and focus on Social Emotional Learning (SEL).
Recent research on school discipline policies and school discipline reform call for "a tiered system that considers the severity of the infraction and the circumstances under which it occurred" (Curran & Finch, 2021, p. 181). This handbook outlines the tiered system of supports and interventions that support positive student conduct at BVES.

Introduction

This staff handbook describes the multi-tiered system of supports and interventions that exist at Bay View Elementary school to create a positive school climate that is conducive to learning and student success. The foundation of this system is a Positive Behavior Intervention System (PBIS), a tiered framework that supports students behaviorally, socially and academically. This handbook is a guide for staff that presents and describes behavioral supports and interventions for students. There are three tiers. Tier 1 includes universal school-wide strategies for all students; Tier 2 includes targeted supports for some students, who have demonstrated a need for additional support; and Tier 3 includes intensive interventions for few students. Students in Tier 2 and Tier 3 are identified by the frequency of incidents of misbehavior.

Tier 1 – Universal School-wide Strategies

The universal school-wide strategies described in this section are designed for all students. Tier I strategies are preventative and proactive. They are the foundation of the school-wide discipline program and designed to demonstrate behavior expectations for students, as well as how appropriate behavior that meets expectations should look at school (Nese et al., 2016).

Teaching and Modeling the Bay View BARK

The code of conduct (Bay View BARK) must be shared, and taught to students by classroom teachers at the beginning of the school year. This will be reviewed with all staff during August professional development. Below (Table D1), please find some questions to consider to help guide your discussion with your students. BARK posters will be displayed in common areas throughout the building.

Table D1

Bay View BARK

	Be Prepared	*Act Responsibly*	*Respect Our Community*	*Keep Safe*
Classroom	How will I be prepared to learn each day? What supplies will I need? How can I show I am prepared?	What does it mean to be responsible? As a student, what am I responsible for in this room? How will my teacher see that I am responsible?	How can I respect my supplies? How can I respect my classmates and school staff? How can I respect the classroom space?	What safety procedures are important for our classroom?
Cafeteria	How will I make sure I have everything I need for lunch?	How do I get an adult's attention if I need help?	Is my area clean? Where will my trash go?	How can I eat my lunch and stay safe?
Bathroom	Go, Flush, Wash, Leave			
Bus	What do I need to be ready to board the bus? What time should I be at my stop?	How do I act responsibly on the bus?	How can I show my bus driver and students respect?	How do I keep myself and those around me safe?
Playground	What do I need to have fun and be safe with my friends at recess?	How do I act responsibly on the playground?	How can I show respect to my classmates and the school community while playing?	How do I play safely and have fun?

Classroom Rules

It is important to take time at the beginning of the school year to develop classroom rules with your students. It is an expectation that classroom rules be developed with students to build classroom community and to help students understand what each of the BARK expectations look like in their classroom. A blank poster template will be shared with each classroom teacher. Your classroom rules should be added to the poster and displayed in your classroom. Classroom rules should be developed for each area of the BARK, for example, students might determine that raising their hand to speak or share an idea is a rule that demonstrates how they can respect the school community. A sample process for creating classroom rules with students can be found here: https://www.educationworld.com/a_curr/pbis-set-positive-behavior-expectations.shtml

Cafeteria Expectations

The Assistant Principal will review the how students can demonstrate the BARK in cafeteria during the first week of school. Once the expectations have been reviewed and discussed with students, a poster that is specific to cafeteria expectations will be displayed in the cafeteria. The Assistant Principal will review the cafeteria BARK with students at the beginning of each marking period. Classroom teachers

should review the expectations daily with students as they are preparing for lunch. The questions shown in Table D1 can be used to guide the review of expectations.

Social and Emotional Learning

In addition to learning the BARK as a common set of school-wide expectations, all students will benefit from instruction in Social Emotional Learning (SEL). SEL has been found to improve behavior outcomes for students including "an increased ability to manage stress and depression, and better attitudes about themselves, others and school" (*Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning CASEL,* 2022, n.p.). At BVES classroom teachers will provide Tier 1 SEL supports through the implementation of morning meetings, instruction using the *Second Step* curriculum, by teaching and modeling a monthly character trait and using frequent "pulse checks" to gauge student well-being.

Morning Meetings

Morning meetings will occur daily in each homeroom from 9:00-9:15. The purposes and benefits of these morning meetings include: helping students transition from home expectations to school expectations, building positive peer relationships and a positive classroom community, assisting staff in building positive relationships with students, and building students' confidence. This is also a great opportunity for teaching and reinforcing our monthly character traits and Bay View BARK. Students should be arranged in a circle during morning meeting to support building a positive

classroom community. Circles build classroom community by promoting engagement, equality and inclusion. The structure of a circle allows everyone to be seen and participate equally (Muhammad, 2019). Classroom teachers are responsible for planning and facilitating morning meetings.

Second Step

We will use *Second Step* as SEL curriculum, in accordance with CCPS expectations. *Second Step* instruction will be an expectation in all classrooms. On Monday mornings, each homeroom teacher will teach a lesson from the Second Step curriculum. These scripted lessons will be taught in the order outlined by the Second Step curriculum. It is understood that some lessons may take more than the allotted time of one morning meeting period. You may stretch the lesson across two days if needed. Second Step lessons should begin on September 12, 2022. PreK and K classrooms will follow their curriculum and pacing guides for SEL.

Teaching and Modeling the Monthly Character Trait

Each month a character trait has been identified by the School Climate Committee as the main trait of focus. A read aloud has been purchased to highlight each character trait. One grade level representative has possession of your set of books. Please plan to read the book with your students sometime during the month. This is a great morning meeting activity. Table D2 outlines the month, assigned character trait, and assigned read-alouds.

Table D2

Character Trait and Read Aloud by Month

Month	Character Trait	Read Aloud
September	Kindness	****Have You Filled a Bucket Today?* and *The Power of One*
October	Empathy	*The Hallo-Wiener* and *Stand in my Shoes*
November	Cooperation	*Prince and Pirate* and *Up the Creek*
December	Self-Discipline	*The Bad Seed* and *Interrupting Chicken*
January	Determination	*After the Fall* and *Izzy Gizmo*
February	Honesty	*The Empty Pot* and *Lying Up a Storm*
March	Respect	*The Sneetches* and *Do Unto Otters*
April	Confidence	*The Dot* and *Giraffes Can't Dance*
May/June	Understanding	*Don't Touch my Hair* and *The Rabbit Listened*

***Most classrooms have a copy of this book. Ask the school counselor if you would like to borrow a copy.

A video message will be shared with classroom teachers. The videos will be created by the school climate committee and shared before the first day of each month. Classroom teachers will view the video with students at the beginning of each month to kick off the new character trait.

At the close of each month, ALL students will receive a bracelet or trinket representing the monthly character trait. There is no criteria to "earn" it. This bracelet can serve as a reinforcement for the excellent character shown within the month as well as a reminder to continue showing the trait in the months ahead. This is a great opportunity for reflection and conversation with your students. For example, students

might be asked to think of a time during the past month that they demonstrated the character trait, or give an example of something a classmate did to show the trait. Students could also think of the characters in books they have read, and how characters in the stories may have demonstrated the trait. The goal of these conversations is for students to identify real life examples of the character trait, and replicate these examples in school and at home.

Pulse Checks

These quick checks can and should be used frequently throughout the day to monitor student well-being, similar to the way a teacher would check for understanding during a lesson. The information below describes how Pulse Checks can be used as a tool to monitor the emotions of students and the classroom community. The following is cited directly from the CCPS Integrated Student Services Framework (ISSF) Implementation Guide (p. 30):

> "Pulse checks are a quick way to gauge the emotional well-being of students in your classroom community, to increase connections within the community, and to provide an opportunity for emotional regulation. Just as you take a moment to check for understanding of instructional content, it can be helpful to check for emotional well-being before, during, and/or after a lesson or activity."

This can be done by periodically taking an intentional pause to assess how students feel at that moment. This could be done before (as part of connection before content), during (as a brain break), or at the end of a lesson (as a closure or exit ticket).

Resources for Implementing Pulse Checks.

How are we feeling? Take a moment to acknowledge your emotional state to students and then ask for 3 - 5 other people to share where they are on the emotions wheel (or try it using emojis). Do this when things are going smoothly and when things are choppy.

What's your Weather? Ask students to share their internal "weather" in the moment

Fist to Five. Before you begin instruction (or an activity), ask students to share how they are feeling with a fist to five. A zero or fist says, "I'm feeling pretty bad," and holding up five fingers says, "I'm feeling really great." You can then proceed as needed. If you have a lot of zeroes, maybe you need to take a moment to breathe, watch a funny animal video, or plan for a class meeting.

Call and Response. Devise a call and response routine with the students that allows them to let you know they are with you and ready to keep learning

Brain Break. Brain breaks are nothing new. However, if you are intentional to reference that we are doing one to reset ourselves emotionally and connect as a community they can be even more powerful than they already are.

How are you showing up for yourself and the community? Share where you are emotionally in that moment, and then ask students to identify their emotional state/ feelings in that moment and how that is showing through their behavior & attitude in that moment. Have all students share with a partner and then ask 3-5 students to share with the whole class (do your best to vary who responds over the week/month).

Building Positive Relationships

Positive relationships between members of the school community are an important component of a positive school climate. The following section describes how the BVES school community will build positive student to student and student to staff relationships.

Restorative Practices

Restorative Practices (RP) are ways of proactively developing relationships and community, as well as repairing community when harm is done. Restorative Practices are not a separate program. They are strategies and practices that reflect a mindset that is focused on community and relationships. All staff members have

received initial training in RP which focused on the difference between a punitive and restorative mindset and identified practices that should be used to build community and address student misconduct.

The Practices.

Circles. A circle is community meeting, where participants sit in a circle. The structure of sitting in a circle helps to build community by encouraging engagement and participation, as well as allowing everyone to see all the members of the community. There are proactive and responsive circles**.** Morning meetings are an example of a proactive community building circle that will occur daily in each classroom. Circles can be used anytime throughout the day to build classroom community. Responsive circles are held in response to a problem within the classroom community (Costello et al, 2019; Muhammad, 2019).

Affective Statements. These statements express feelings and emotions and can be used to help someone see how their behavior affects others in the community. They are "I" Statements that express emotion and are connected to behavior (for example: I feel scared when you raise your voice) (Costello et al, 2019).

Restorative Questions. These questions help us respond and "unpack thoughts, emotions, accountability and need" (Muhammad, 2019, p. 102). They are useful in approaching a situation from a restorative mindset; they remove blame and help us to consider the harm caused to the community, and how it can be repaired. The following

are examples of different kinds of restorative questions that may be used as part of a coherent restorative practice.

Narrative Question: What happened?

Antecedent Question: What were you thinking at the time?

Remorse Question: What have you been thinking about since?

Shame Question: Who has been affected/impacted and how?

Repair Question: What needs to happen to make things right? (Muhammad, 2019).

For more information about these practices, there are some resources that have been purchased by BVES. *Circle Forward: Building a Restorative Community* has been purchased for each grade level, as well as *The Restorative Practices Handbook for Teachers, Disciplinarians, and Administrators*. Each staff member has a copy of *The Restorative Journey*.

Restorative Practices Champions are staff members who have been selected by school administrators because those staff members have demonstrated a strong commitment to the restorative mindset and implementation of the practices described above. Our building-based Restorative Practices Champions are listed in Table d3. These Champions have participated in coaching sessions with Akoben, the organization which is contracted to provide RP coaching in CCPS. The Champions will support us throughout the year by sharing their experiences with RP strategies in their classrooms. You can reach out to the Champions with questions or for ideas. We

will also work with Dr. Crystal Butler, a Restorative Practices Practitioner. She will visit BVES quarterly and provide assistance throughout the school year.

Table D3

Restorative Practice Champions

Restorative Practices Champions		
Stacey Rominski	Kayla Ragan	Jason Wallace
Mark Barczewski	Wanda Strickland	Nicole Crowe
Dana Schaeffer	Ruth Branham	Delka White

Recognizing Students for Meeting Expectations

Class Dojo

Classrooms may use Class Dojo for point tracking and positive reinforcement. Only use student first names and you may not use Dojo to communicate with parents. Students can earn Dojo points for demonstrating the Bay View BARK, as well as monthly character traits. Each class or grade level will develop a menu for students to cash in points in order to earn rewards. You may choose to cash in weekly or bi-weekly in your classroom. For grade levels that share students, this should be consistent across classrooms. Dojo points **cannot be taken away** when students make negative choices. Reminder points are permitted with a point value of zero. A menu of school-wide options will be shared on a Google doc, with a sign-up sheet. The sign-up

sheet will allow you to schedule school-wide options, and ensure there is not a conflict. Please name your classes with the following guidelines for title.

Grade Level - Teacher Last Name. (For example, K - Hulbert, 1 - Schaeffer, etc). See Figure D1 below for an example.

Figure D1

Sample Class Dojo Setup

Oreo's Treats and Whole Class Positive Reinforcement

In order to recognize classes who are demonstrating the BARK, students can earn "treats" for our school mascot, Oreo. Each classroom will receive a plastic treat jar, and some bone shaped treats. When classes are meeting expectations they can earn a treat for the jar. Classroom treat jars will be dumped weekly into the large school-wide jar. At the end of the month we will measure the treats to see how many treats Oreo will receive. We will track the amount and display the monthly earnings. Oreo and his treat jar will be located in the display case next to the art room. If the treat jars weighs the same or more than month before, a school-wide reward will be given to students. These include things such as extra recess, or a movie at lunch.

BARK Badge

Students will receive BARK Badges for demonstrating the designated monthly character trait or BARK expectations. When students receive BARK badges, they will write their name and homeroom on the back of the badge and place it into the large wheel located outside of the cafeteria. Each Friday, administrators will appear on the weekly news to draw ten winners. Students who are selected can choose a prize from the prize cart. In addition, when students receive a BARK badge, students should practice "Get 1, Give 1" when possible. When a student receives a BARK Badge, it will now be their responsibility to find someone else following our BARK or demonstrating our character trait and give them a BARK badge.

While BARK badges can be used to positively reinforce actions that align with the monthly character trait, it is important to note that students must earn BARK badges. The monthly incentives to highlight each character trait are given to all students.

Student of the Month

Each month, homeroom teachers will select the names of two students per homeroom who will be nominated as Student of the Month. They will then provide an opportunity for students to vote anonymously from the two nominees to determine the winner. These students' names will be displayed on the wall outside of the cafeteria and will receive a certificate to take home. The second candidate will receive a

nomination certificate as well. Please use these certificates as a way to talk with your students about the positive behaviors these children showed that earned them the nominations and they can be recorded on the back of the certificate as a keepsake for the student. The school counselor will keep track of student winners on a spreadsheet to ensure that different students are nominated each month.

Spontaneous Celebrations

These brief celebrations will be held monthly. We will inform teachers ahead of time, in order to prepare for these celebrations. These will include activities that can occur in the classroom such as, "snowball fights," dance parties, etc. These events will be planned by the School Climate Committee.

End of Marking Period Celebrations

These celebrations will occur at the end of each marking period. End of Marking Period celebrations will be large scale celebrations such as assemblies, movies and popcorn, or an obstacle course to celebrate the hard work of all students. These events will also be planned by the School Climate Committee.

Staff Recognition

We will recognize staff on a regular basis in a variety of ways. Recognition could be on a whole group or individual level. These may include:

BARKS of Appreciation. Using the cards provided, write a note to a colleague and put it in the wheel. Cards are located in each copy room throughout the building. The

wheel is located in the office copy room. Two BARK of Appreciation cards will be drawn each Friday on the morning announcements. The winners can select a prize from the drawer.

Dress Down Days. All staff can wear jeans on Pay Day Fridays and other spirit days throughout the year.

Sunshine cart. The sunshine cart will be located in the office each Friday. Staff can help themselves to a treat.

TIER 2 -Targeted Supports for Some Students

Tier 2 supports and interventions are in place for students who need support beyond the universal strategies. Tier 2 interventions occur in addition to Tier 1 strategies. This section will provide detailed information about Tier 2 strategies.

Types of Student Misconduct

Student behavior can be classified into two categories: classroom-managed and office-managed behaviors.

Classroom-Managed Behaviors. It is the principal's expectation that the management of all behaviors begin in the classroom. This starts with communicating clear rules and expectations and building positive relationships with students. Some examples of classroom-managed behaviors include: minor disruptions, such as calling out or talking during instruction; defiance, such as refusal to complete work or follow directions; and inappropriate comments such as unkind words to a peer.

Office-Managed Behaviors. Some behaviors rise to a more severe level and when these behaviors that cannot be handled in the classroom, they should be addressed by the office. These behaviors include: repeated incidents of classroom managed behavior, fighting with peers, bullying, inappropriate language (using curse words) or threats, and unsafe or aggressive behavior such as throwing or kicking furniture or classroom materials. There is a process for documenting both types of student misconduct. It is described in the next section.

Writing Discipline Reports

Minor Incident Reports (MIR) and Office Discipline Referrals (ODR) are two tools that assist staff in documenting student misconduct as well as resulting consequences and/or interventions. Directions for completing each type of form are written below. Please remember that MIRs (Figure D2) are used to document minor misconduct that can be managed in the classroom, while ODRs (Figure D3) are used to document more severe misconduct that must be managed by an administrator in the office.

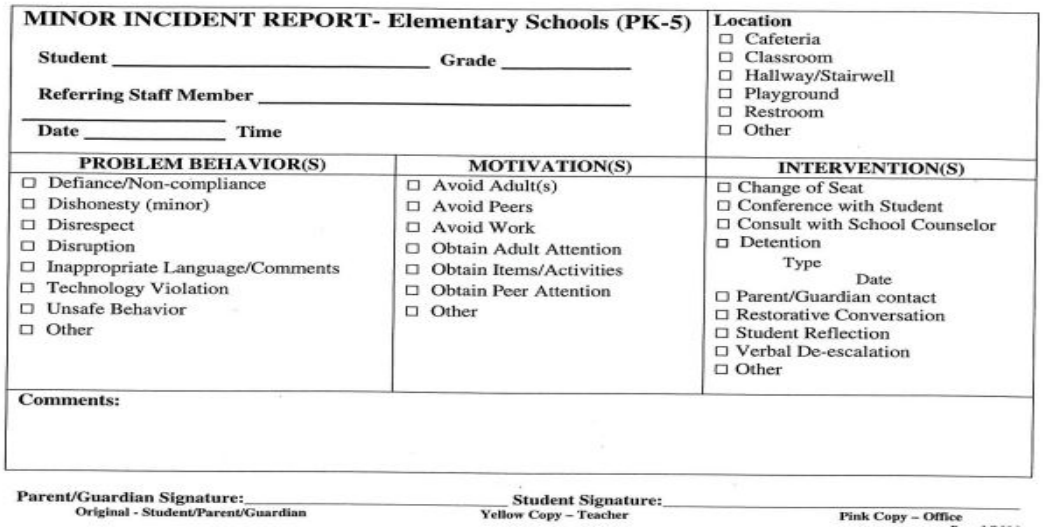
Steps for writing an MIR:

1. Fill out the form completely.
2. Use the first and last name of the student.
3. Record the date and time of the incident.
4. Identify ONE behavior for which the MIR is being written.
5. Identify one motivation for the behavior based on your observation and conversation with the student.
6. Identify one consequence for the behavior.
7. Be concise in the comment section, do not include judgements or opinions.
8. Do not include other students' names.
9. Make contact with the parent/guardian

If you send an email be sure not to include specific information about the incident. Consider sending something like this: "I sent an MIR home with (student name) this evening. Please confirm that you received it." If further discussion is warranted, a phone call is the best option. You may also schedule a conference.

Figure D2

Sample MIR



MINOR INCIDENT REPORT- Elementary Schools (PK-5)

Student _____ **Grade** _____

Referring Staff Member _____

Date _____ **Time**

Location
- ☐ Cafeteria
- ☐ Classroom
- ☐ Hallway/Stairwell
- ☐ Playground
- ☐ Restroom
- ☐ Other

PROBLEM BEHAVIOR(S)	MOTIVATION(S)	INTERVENTION(S)
☐ Defiance/Non-compliance	☐ Avoid Adult(s)	☐ Change of Seat
☐ Dishonesty (minor)	☐ Avoid Peers	☐ Conference with Student
☐ Disrespect	☐ Avoid Work	☐ Consult with School Counselor
☐ Disruption	☐ Obtain Adult Attention	☐ Detention
☐ Inappropriate Language/Comments	☐ Obtain Items/Activities	Type
☐ Technology Violation	☐ Obtain Peer Attention	Date
☐ Unsafe Behavior	☐ Other	☐ Parent/Guardian contact
☐ Other		☐ Restorative Conversation
		☐ Student Reflection
		☐ Verbal De-escalation
		☐ Other

Comments:

Parent/Guardian Signature:_____ **Student Signature:**_____

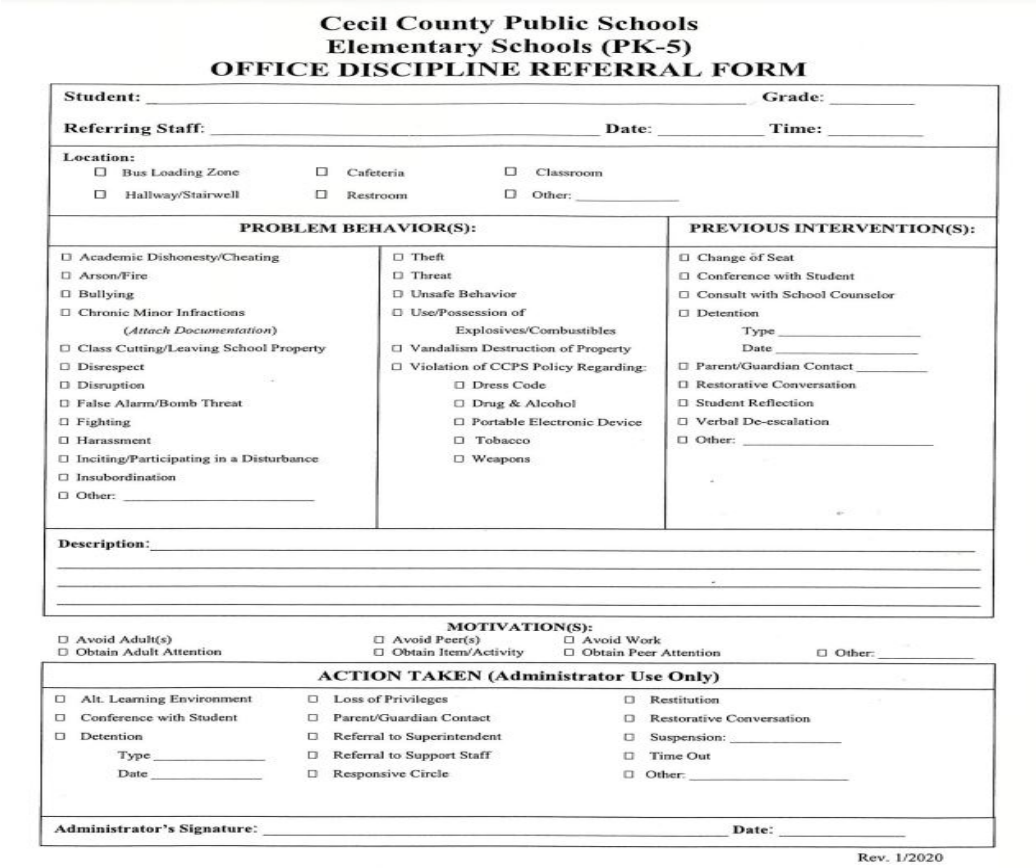
Original - Student/Parent/Guardian | Yellow Copy – Teacher | Pink Copy – Office

Steps for writing an ODR

1. Fill out the form completely.
2. Use the first and last name of the student.
3. Record the date and time of the incident.
4. Indicate what occurred prior to the infraction.
5. Identify ONE behavior for which the ODR is being written.
6. Identify one motivation for the behavior based on your observation and conversation with the student.
7. Be concise in the comment section, do not include judgements or opinions.
8. Do not include other students' names on the referral.
9. Submit the office referral to an administrator's mailbox in a timely fashion.

Figure D3

Sample ODR



Cecil County Public Schools
Elementary Schools (PK-5)
OFFICE DISCIPLINE REFERRAL FORM

Student: _____ **Grade:** _____

Referring Staff: _____ **Date:** _____ **Time:** _____

Location:
☐ Bus Loading Zone ☐ Cafeteria ☐ Classroom
☐ Hallway/Stairwell ☐ Restroom ☐ Other: _____

PROBLEM BEHAVIOR(S):

☐ Academic Dishonesty/Cheating
☐ Arson/Fire
☐ Bullying
☐ Chronic Minor Infractions
(*Attach Documentation*)
☐ Class Cutting/Leaving School Property
☐ Disrespect
☐ Disruption
☐ False Alarm/Bomb Threat
☐ Fighting
☐ Harassment
☐ Inciting/Participating in a Disturbance
☐ Insubordination
☐ Other: _____
☐ Theft
☐ Threat
☐ Unsafe Behavior
☐ Use/Possession of
Explosives/Combustibles
☐ Vandalism Destruction of Property
☐ Violation of CCPS Policy Regarding:
☐ Dress Code
☐ Drug & Alcohol
☐ Portable Electronic Device
☐ Tobacco
☐ Weapons

PREVIOUS INTERVENTION(S):

☐ Change of Seat
☐ Conference with Student
☐ Consult with School Counselor
☐ Detention
Type _____
Date _____
☐ Parent/Guardian Contact _____
☐ Restorative Conversation
☐ Student Reflection
☐ Verbal De-escalation
☐ Other: _____

Description: _____

MOTIVATION(S):
☐ Avoid Adult(s) ☐ Avoid Peer(s) ☐ Avoid Work
☐ Obtain Adult Attention ☐ Obtain Item/Activity ☐ Obtain Peer Attention ☐ Other: _____

ACTION TAKEN (Administrator Use Only)

☐ Alt. Learning Environment
☐ Conference with Student
☐ Detention
Type _____
Date _____
☐ Loss of Privileges
☐ Parent/Guardian Contact
☐ Referral to Superintendent
☐ Referral to Support Staff
☐ Responsive Circle
☐ Restitution
☐ Restorative Conversation
☐ Suspension: _____
☐ Time Out
☐ Other: _____

Administrator's Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Rev. 1/2020

Process for Calls for Classroom Assistance

When students do not follow school-wide expectations, calls for support from additional staff or administrator assistance may be needed. The teacher may have a discussion with the student to determine what supports are needed. Please continue to use the walkie talkie to call for assistance to your classroom. This year, we will implement a color code to ensure you get the assistance that you need.

Assistance needed-Green

If the type of assistance needed in your classroom is another adult, use the walkie to say: "Assistance is needed in (location)-Green" The Title I Resource Teacher (TRT) at your grade level will be the first to respond. If they are unavailable the school counselor or an administrator will respond. You might call for Green when a student is disrupting the classroom or demonstrating minor misbehaviors. Another adult responding to the classroom will continue instruction and monitor the other students, to give you an opportunity to have a restorative conversation with the student either in the classroom or another quiet location.

Assistance needed-Orange:

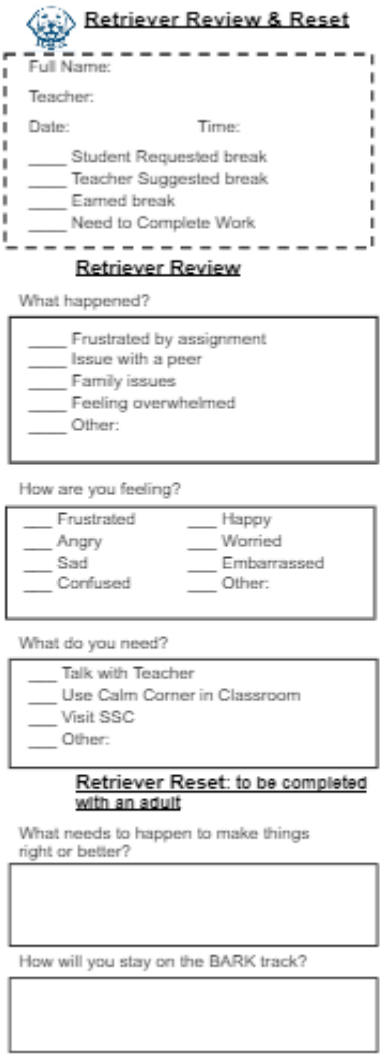
If a student is demonstrating unsafe behavior (e.g., aggressive or dangerous), use the walkie to say: "Assistance is needed in (location) - Orange." In this case, the school counselor and/or an administrator will respond to your classroom.

Retriever Reset & Review

All classrooms are expected to use our Retriever Review & Reset Pass. This will guide a restorative conversation with the student. This sheet will then be used as the student's pass to the Student Support Center **(SSC), Office, or other location** if needed. The pass MUST be completed WITH the student. Students can fill out the pass on their own, but the questions in the Retriever Review section must be completed with an adult before they leave the classroom to go to the SSC. You should expect the student to return with the Retriever Reset portion of the pass completed by the Student Support Technician (SST), School Counselor, or Administrator. The Retriever Reset and Review is pictured in Figure D4.

Figure D4

Retriever Reset and Review



Student Support Center (SSC)

Students may access the SSC in a variety of ways.

Teacher Referral

Teachers can direct students to visit the SSC when students are exhibiting behaviors that require **reflection or regulation** and only after all appropriate prevention and pre-correction strategies have been implemented. Prevention strategies would include all Tier 1 supports, including reviewing BARK expectations and reinforcing positive behavior. Pre-correction strategies would include things such as offering the student a short break in the classroom, using an affective statement, or a quick conversation between the student and teacher using restorative questions.

Self-Referral

Students who are exhibiting signs of heightened stress may request a referral. Students should be granted access to the SSC if their behaviors demonstrate a need for reflection or regulation. The teacher, SSC staff, counselor, and/or administrator will address issues of students who request the SSC frequently. Classroom calm down spaces should be used first.

Scheduled Visit

Students may have scheduled times to go to the SSC in cases where refocusing prior to a test or other stressor is necessary. A Retriever Review/Reset is not necessary for scheduled visits since the SST will be expecting the student.

Intervention

As part of a behavior or student success plan, students may be provided access to the SSC at scheduled intervals. A Retriever Review & Reset is not necessary for scheduled visits since the SST will be expecting the student.

School Counselor or Administrator Referral

Students who are in need of calming or refocusing may be referred by school counselors or administrators. A Retriever Review & Reset will be completed.

Kid Talk

The purpose of Kid Talk meetings is to discuss students who are having difficulty with Tier 1 supports and may require implementation of specific Tier 2 interventions such as Check in Check Out. Kid Talk meeting dates are included on the BVES google calendar and also on the printed meeting schedule that was distributed at the beginning of the school year. Kid Talk meetings will occur monthly. The Kid Talk team consists of general education and special education teachers at each grade level, as well as the principal and assistant principal. Kid Talk meetings will be facilitated by the Title I Resource Teacher (TRT) assigned to each grade level. Each grade level with work with their assigned TRT to create an agenda for each meeting. A Kid Talk form will need to be completed for each student discussed at Kid Talk. We will add notes to the original form each time the student is revisited or discussed. These forms can be found in Google drive. During the Kid Talk meeting we will follow the protocol outline in Table D4. This process comes from the Masonic Model Student Assistance Program (MMSAP). The MMSAP is research based model developed by Newman/Stecher International in cooperation with the National Masonic Foundation for Children.

Table D4

Kid Talk Protocol

Case Discussion	Who	How	Time
Information Sharing Concerns Strengths	Referring teacher	Teacher shares student performance data and other information without interruptions. The rest of the team listens without asking questions	2-3 minutes
Additional Information	Other team members	Other team members share additional information	1-2 minutes
Questions	Other team members	Other team members ask any questions they have regarding the information shared	1-2 minutes
Brainstorming	All team members	Team members share ideas without judging or evaluating	1-2 minutes
Action Plan	All team members	The facilitator summarizes the ideas from brainstorming. The team selects one or more strategies to formulate an action plan and timeframe for review	2-3 minutes

Check In/Check Out

CICO will occur as a Tier II behavior intervention for students identified through the MTSS process. Student CICO goals will be developed to meet the student's needs, and to align with the BARK. This will be created in collaboration with the school counselor and/or appropriate MTSS team, and a mentor will be assigned.

TIER 3 -Intensive Supports for Few Students

Tier 3 supports are individualized interventions for students who are not meeting expectations through the use of Tier 1 or Tier 2 supports and interventions. This section explains Tier 3 supports that are implemented at BVES.

Referral to Student Services Team (SST)

If a student is not responding to Tier 1 or Tier 2 supports and interventions, as evidenced by continued incidents of misconduct, it is necessary to consider more intensive interventions. These interventions will be identified and planned by the SST. The SST meets twice per month on Thursday from 8:15-10:00. The SST consists of the principal, assistant principal, school counselor, students services support teacher, school nurse, special education building coordinator, school psychologist, classroom teacher, and school counselor. The school counselor schedules students for SST meetings based on a referral from the Kid Talk team.

Student Success Plan

A Student Success Plan (SSP) is an individualized plan that is created by the SST. An SSP includes a specific goal and strategies to address student need. Plans can be written to address academic or behavior need. These plans are drafted based on teacher input and informal data collection. Plans are monitored regularly at SST meetings to assess student progress. The classroom teacher will inform parents about the goals and strategies that are placed on the SSP.

Behavior Modification Plan

A Behavior Modification Plan (BMP) can also be developed by the SST. These plans are individualized to areas of student need and are more formal than an SSP. Implementation of a BMP requires parent permission. Specific goals are set to address problem behaviors based on classroom observation and data collection.

Referral to Special Education

If a student is believed to have a disability that is impacting their behavior and success at school, the SST may decide to refer the student to special education. The first step in this process is an IEP meeting where the team will determine if a disability is suspected.

Individualized Counseling Services

CCPS works in collaboration with Upper Bay and Advantage counseling services. If it is determined by parent request or by the SST that a student requires

individual counseling through one of these agencies, the school counselor will provide the parents with information about the services and submit a referral.

References

Boyes-Watson C. & Pranis K. (2015). *Circle forward : building a restorative school community*. Living Justice Press.

Cecil County Public Schools (2022). Integrated student services framework implementation guide.

Costello, Bob, et al. *The Restorative Practices Handbook: For Teachers, Disciplinarians and Administrators*. International Institute for Restorative Practices, 2019.

Curran, F. C., & Finch, M. A. (2021). Reforming School Discipline: Responses by School District Leadership to Revised State Guidelines for Student Codes of Conduct. Educational Administration Quarterly, 57(2), 179–220. https://doi.org/10.1177/0013161X20925893

Muhammad A.-M. (2019). *The restorative journey. book one the theory & application of restorative practices*. Akoben.

Nese, R. N. T., Nese, J. F. T., McCroskey, C., Meng, P., Triplett, D., & Bastable, E. (2021). Moving away from disproportionate exclusionary discipline: Developing and utilizing a continuum of preventative and instructional supports. *Null, 65*(4), 301-311. doi:10.1080/1045988X.2021.1937019

Nese, R.N.T & McIntosh, K. (2016). Do school-wide positive behavioral interventions and supports, not exclusionary discipline practices. In B. G. Cook, M. Tankersley, and T. J. Landrum (Eds.), Advances in learning and behavioral disabilities (p. 175-196). Bingley, UK: Emerald Group Publishing.

What does the research say? CASEL. (2022, May 26). Retrieved November 12, 2022, from https://casel.org/fundamentals-of-sel/what-does-the-research-say/

Appendix E

ARTIFACT 5 – STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK

This artifact describes a study that was designed to gain stakeholder feedback about student discipline and school climate at Bay View Elementary School (BVES). Feedback was solicited from two groups of stakeholders: members of the instructional staff members and a random selection of students in grades three through five. The purpose was to gain students' perspectives about school climate, student conduct, and discipline. Research shows that involving students in rule- and expectation-setting helps them to feel respected and connected to the school environment (Hernandez & Seem, 2004; Welsh, 2000). The students' responses will help to build an understanding of how well students understand the expectations for conduct in school and how adults make decisions about disciplinary consequences. The information gathered through these data collection efforts can then be used to guide the planning and implementation of the school-wide discipline framework.

I gathered teacher feedback using an anonymous survey. The survey asked teachers to describe their teaching experience and professional development history regarding classroom and behavior management. Finally, teachers were asked about the level of support that they expected and received from administrators when addressing student behavior. This information will be used to create a professional development

plan for classroom and school-wide discipline. It will also help to inform school leadership best practices for responding to student behavior and supporting teachers.

Introduction

Student behavior is a contributing factor to the way teachers, students and parents perceive the overall climate of a school (Thapa et al, 2013; Wang & Degol, 2016; Zullig et al, 2010). Clearly defined expectations for student conduct, as well as clear consequences for misconduct, contribute to students' and staff members' feelings of overall safety at school. When students feel safe at school, they perceive the school climate more positively (Welsh, 2000). At BVES, expectations for student conduct are communicated to all school community members through the Bay View BARK. Each letter in the word *BARK* stands for a behavioral expectation: **B**e Prepared, **A**ct Responsibly, **R**espect our community, **K**eep Safe. These expectations have been in place since BVES began a school-wide Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) program in 2009. BARK is explicitly taught to students each year during the first days of the school year by classroom teachers. Teachers review BARK expectations for their classrooms and other areas of the building, such as the cafeteria, bus, bathroom and hallways. BARK expectations are displayed visually throughout the building. Because BARK reflects the foundational expectations for student conduct at BVES it is important that students have knowledge of BARK. Student interviews were designed to elicit data regarding students' understanding of BARK, and their understanding of how consequences are designed for students who are not meeting BARK expectations.

Staff members perceive school climate more positively when they feel safe (Hernandez & Seem, 2004) and when student behavior does not disrupt teaching and learning (Bullock et al, 2017). Discipline for student conduct begins in the classrooms (DeMitchell & Hambacher, 2016; Sugai & Horner, 2006). Teachers initiate the response to student conduct through their classroom management practices and procedures. A study conducted in 2017 by Bullock et al. found that classroom and school discipline were identified by teachers as main issues in their work. Classroom management strategies, professional development on these strategies, and support from administrators when handling discipline are among the biggest challenges faced by teachers (Bullock et.al, 2017; Maag, 2012). Therefore, staff members must understand the elements of school-wide discipline practices and how to implement them in classrooms; in addition to PBIS, school-wide strategies include the use of Restorative Practices (RP) and Social Emotional Learning (SEL). Restorative Practices are tools that can be used to build community and repair harm, while SEL provides instruction to students on how to recognize their emotions and solve problems. Implementing these strategies and practices in the classroom requires professional development, and staff members must also believe that these strategies can influence or change student behavior (Bullock et al, 2017). When teachers feel unprepared to address student behavior, they might experience feelings of frustration, expect that students should be removed from the classroom, or perceive a lack of

support from administration when students remain in the classroom (Maag, 2012; McCluskey et al., 2011).

Key Questions

Feedback from stakeholders is necessary to assess, improve, and maintain efforts to improve school climate (Bear et al, 2011; Bradshaw et al., 2021; Capp et al, 2021; Freiberg, 1998; Zullig et al, 2010). This study was designed to assess the student and teacher perceptions of school discipline at BVES, and how those perceptions influence the overall school climate. This artifact addressed the following research questions:

> How do students feel about the climate of Bay View Elementary?
> To what degree do students understand the behavior expectations (code of conduct) and consequences for not meeting these expectations?
> To what degree do staff members feel equipped to address student behavior?
> To what degree do staff members feel support from administration when dealing with student misconduct?
> How can administrators better support students and teachers?

Research Design and Methodology

Student Feedback

I gathered student feedback using a semi-structured interview protocol. I selected interviews as the method for collecting data from students because I wanted the ability to interact with them face to face. A semi-structured interview protocol

gave me the opportunity to use probes, or ask follow up questions to gain more information from students (Fraenkel et al., 2012)

Sample of Participants

To select the participants for this study, I used a cluster random sampling process (Fraenkel et al., 2012). I determined that students in grades three through five would provide the best responses and have the most to say about the school, student conduct and consequences. These students have been at the school longer than students in grades PK-2, and have had the most opportunities to learn about BARK, interact with staff members and peers, and form opinions about the school climate. In order to gather this sample, I created lists in Excel for grades three, four, and five. I then used a random number generator to select students. I selected five students from grades 3 and 4, and ten students from grade 5. Grade 5 had a much larger population (n=88 students) compared to grades 3 (n=66) and 4 (n=52), so more students were selected from grade 5. Out of the 20 students selected randomly, 11 students agreed to participate in the interviews and interview candidates were added using the previously created lists as well as the random number selection process. All of the students who were interviewed completed at least two years of school at BVES. Sixteen out of the 17 (94%) students who were interviewed have attended BVES since PK. The demographics of the 17 interview participants are shown in Table E1 and E2 below.

Table E1

Student Interview Participants

	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Total
Boys	1	3	4	8
Girls	3	1	5	9
Total Students	4	4	9	17

Table E2

Race and Ethnicity of Student Interview Participants

GENDER	WHITE	BLACK	HISPANIC
BOYS	6	2	0
GIRLS	7	1	1

Data Sources and Data Collection Procedures

I designed a semi-structured interview protocol in order to ask follow up questions and prompt students to expand on their responses if necessary. The interview consisted of nine questions that were designed to address student perceptions of school-wide discipline and overall school climate. The questions were designed after reviewing examples of validated survey tools which focused on student perceptions of school climate such as the Delaware School Climate Survey- student version (DSCS-S), the Maryland Safe and Supportive School Survey, and the

California School Climate Scale (CSCS) (Bear et al., 2011; Grazia & Molinari, 2021). When reviewing empirical research to assess school climate, surveys are the most widely used method to measure perceptions, however I wanted to interact with students and have the ability to ask follow up questions in order to gain the best understanding of student perception. An interview provided me with an opportunity to ask for elaboration, so I could gain specific examples of what students understood about expectations, rules and consequences. A survey would have given me a generic response. Because survey instruments such as the DSCS-S and the Maryland Safe and Supportive School survey include valid and reliable items to assess school climate, I used the survey items as motivation for the student interview questions (Bear et al., 2011). The domains of school climate are academic, physical environment, safety, and relationships (Thapa et al., 2013; Wang & Degol, 2016). Each of the selected surveys include items that assess the safety domain or relationships domain of school climate because those are the domains that are aligned to the work of this ELP. For example, the DSCS-S items assess teacher and student relationships, as well as fairness and clarity of rules (Bear et al., 2011; Grazia & Molinari, 2021). The student interview questions are included in Table E3 in order to demonstrate their alignment to student focused research questions. The interview protocol is included at the end of this artifact.

Table E3

Student Interview Questions with Alignment to Student-Related Research Questions

Research Questions	*Student Interview Questions*
How do students feel about the climate of Bay View Elementary?	If someone asked you to talk about your school what would you tell them? Is there anything else you would like to tell me about Bay View Elementary?
Do students understand the behavior expectations? ***Do students understand the consequences for not meeting these expectations?***	How do you know how to act at Bay View Elementary? How do your friends know how to act? What happens to you if you break a classroom rule? How do adults (teachers, principal, assistant principal) decide what happens if a rule is broken? What can a teacher do to help a student who keeps breaking the school or classroom rules? How do you know if you are following the rules? What is the biggest behavior problem at Bay View Elementary?

Student interviews were conducted in a one-on-one setting in the principal's office at BVES. I sat across from each student interview subject. Some student appeared to be nervous while speaking with the principal in the office, however, I assured students that they were not in trouble and explained I was interviewing them to get information to help our school. I recorded the interviews using the voice recorder on my phone and also took handwritten notes to record student responses during the interview. Two students declined to have their interview recorded. The

average interview time was 5 minutes and 9 seconds. The shortest interview lasted 3 minutes 23 seconds and the longest 6 minutes and 20 seconds.

Data Analysis

I used the interview recordings to transcribe each student's interview. The interview transcripts and my hand-written notes were used to manually code the interview responses. In order to code the responses, I reviewed each transcript individually and wrote down possible themes for each response to the interview questions. After reading each response I made a list of initial codes using an inductive coding approach. From this list I was able to determine pattern codes (Saldana, 2016) based on commonalities found in student responses. I then created an Excel spreadsheet with a row for each student interview subject, and a column for each question. I added a column with my first round of handwritten coded. I reviewed the responses and first round codes, and my second round of coding helped me to see patterns in students' responses (Saldana, 2016). For example, students were asked how they know how to act when they are at school. I have included a sample of student responses and how I coded them in Table E4 below.

Table E4

Student Responses and Coding

Student Response	Initial Codes	Pattern Code
I know how to act because my parents show me how to act at home	Parents teach	Learn at home
I know how to act be really good because I don't want to get sent to the principal's office, and it's just really fun to be nice all the time and listen	Avoid trouble, fun to be good	Avoid consequence
Umm I know how to act, because I was told in Kindergarten.	Teachers teach	Learn at school
Because teachers and you, and AP tell us. Be respectful, be good, listen to teacher, if they tell you to do something do it	AP/P teach	Learn at school
Like, a respectful and listening kid because of the Bay View BARK, and also the thing we do every morning, the announcements, the BARK pledge	BARK	BARK
I act focused because umm I am one of the great students in my class and when someone is trying to distract me I just ignore them because I don't like getting in trouble and I just want to follow the teachers rules .	Avoid trouble, teachers tell us	Avoid consequence, Learn at school

Methodological Limitations

Timing of Data Collection

Student interviews were conducted across a long period of time. Some students were interviewed at the end of the 2021-2022 school year, while some were interviewed at the beginning of the 2022-2023 school year. Students who were interviewed at the beginning of the 2022-23 school year had the additional benefit of

further instruction on BARK and conduct expectations, which could have influenced their responses. For example, student surveyed at the beginning of the 2022-2023 school year would have received instruction on the BARK in September, potentially making them more likely to cite it specifically in their responses.

Instructional Staff members Feedback

I gathered feedback from instructional staff members using an anonymous survey that was distributed through Google Forms.

Sample of Participants

The survey was sent to all instructional staff members. Instructional staff members including classroom teachers, the school counselor, special education teachers, special area teachers, related service providers, and the building coordinator for special education. At the time this survey was administered, there were 40 instructional staff members at BVES. The survey yielded 24 (60%) complete responses. The years of experience of each respondent are displayed in Table E5. Level of teaching experience is the only demographic information collected on the survey in order to maintain anonymity of staff members responses; asking for additional demographic information such as gender or grade level, would have made it easy for me to identify the respondents.

Table E5

Experience Level of Survey Respondents

Years of Experience	Number of Respondents
1-3 Years	5
4-8 Years	6
9-15 Years	5
More than 15 years	8

Data Sources and Data Collection Procedures

I sent the survey to instructional staff members in May of the 2021-2022 school year. This time frame was selected because it aligned with the Cecil County Public Schools' (CCPS) practice of surveying school staff members in the spring of each school year. The survey was created using Google Forms, and sent to staff members via email. Instructional staff members were informed in the text of the email that this information would be used for my doctoral program research, and that it could also be used to influence the school-wide discipline framework and best practices at BVES.

Data Analysis

In order to analyze the data from the survey, staff members' responses were imported into an Excel spreadsheet. I coded the responses for each question manually. For the first round of coding, I reviewed each response and identified key words. For example, phrases in teacher responses such as "time out" or "break out the classroom." I then used the key words to form categories. The categories for questions about administrator support were informed by the themes that I identified and described in the Organizational Content section (p.) of this ELP. Reponses that did not fit into these categories were coded using an inductive coding method (Saldana, 2016).

Methodological Limitations.

Timing of Data Collection. One limitation of this study is the timing of data collection. Instructional staff members were surveyed at the end of the 2021-22 school year. The end of the school year was selected as the time to administer this survey because it aligns with school district procedure, and because the end of the school year is often a good time for reflection, however the timing of this survey does not account for staff member turnover. Some staff members left Bay View Elementary school at the end of the 2021-22 school year, and new staff members were added for the 2022-23 school year. While the responses are still meaningful, not all current BVES staff members are represented in the responses.

Findings

The findings of this study have provided some useful insights regarding staff members and student perceptions about school climate and student discipline at BVES. In summary, students have positive perceptions of the climate at BVES although they were not able to clearly state common expectations for their behavior, or a clear understanding of consequences and who determines consequences. The positive student perception of BVES can be attributed to student relationships with peers and adults throughout the building. Instructional staff were able to identify times when they felt supported by school administrators in addressing student behavior, as well as times they were not supported. Instructional staff identified measures of exclusionary discipline as support, as well as communication, collaboration, offering strategies and suggestions, and responding to calls for help. These findings will be analyzed according to the key research questions beginning with student feedback and then I will analyze the findings from instructional staff members.

Findings from Student Feedback

Student perceptions of school climate

The initial interview questions (e.g. How is your day going so far? Tell me one good thing that happened today?), were designed to set a positive tone for the interview, and establish a conversational rapport with students. They were not designed specifically to assess student perceptions of school climate, but the responses

provided some insight into general student feelings about their school. When asked about their day, all students shared that they were having a "good" day so far. Students were easily able to tell me something good that had happened in their day; most shared details about lunch, or fun with friends at recess. One student shared that they had earned a special prize in the classroom that day. Students were next asked to describe what they would tell someone about their school; all students indicated a positive response describing BVES as a "good," "great," or "amazing" school, with a "good atmosphere". They used words such as "nice," "friendly," and "kind" to describe their friends and adults throughout the building. One student, (grade 3, female) responded, "I would tell them it is a very great school, and I like that Bay View has very kind kids, and I have a lot of friends here!" Another student (grade 5, female) said, "It's a good school and I wouldn't want to leave because the teachers make you want to come. They greet you every morning." Students further explained relationships with people in the school sharing that, "you can trust pretty much everyone, and make friends quickly," (grade 4, male), without "feeling pressured" (grade 5, male). One student mentioned that teachers and staff members cared about his opinion (grade 5, male). These findings are consistent with school climate research that suggests students who can identify positive relationships with peers or adults at school perceive school climate more positively and are less likely to engage in misconduct (Anyon et al., 2018; Welsh, 2000; Way, 2021). While student responses indicated positive

feelings around relationships with peers and staff members, one student mentioned that kids are definitely "going to learn" (grade 4, male) while attending BVES.

Student understanding of behavior expectations and consequences

The next questions in the interview were asked to help solicit responses regarding students' understanding of expectations for their conduct at BVES. Through student interview responses it was evident that students are aware that there are expectations for their behavior at school, however, not all students were able to identify BARK as the common set of expectations used throughout the school. When asked the questions, "How do you know how to act at BVES?" and "How do your friends know how to act?" only five of the 17 students interviewed said they knew how to act at school because of BARK. One student clearly stated BARK as the expectations for behavior: "Because we have this BARK rule that says be prepared, act responsible, respect others and keep safe" (grade 5, female). Another student was able to recite the BARK pledge that is read on the morning news each day; two other students referenced the pledge. One student (grade 5, female) said, the principals shared expectations at the beginning of the year because "they do the BARK and stuff." Two students were able to name some of the behaviors that are specifically named in BARK, such "respectful" and "responsible," but did not specifically name BARK as the common set of expectations within the school. Students who did not mention BARK seemed to understand that there were rules at school, explaining that

their teacher tells them what to do, for example “I was told in Kindergarten” (grade 4, male) or “the teachers do make it very clear that certain behavior is not allowed in classrooms or at recess” (grade 5, male), but did not provide any specific information about what these expectations are.

Research on school climate clearly identifies clarity of rules as an indicator of positive school climate, and a predictor of incidents of student misbehavior; clearer rules result in fewer incidents of student misbehavior (Hernandez & Seem, 2004; Huang et al., 2021; Mallett, 2016; Welsh, 2000). When asked, “How do you know if you are following the rules?” students seemed unsure. Only three students referenced school-wide measures of positive reinforcement including BARK badges and special prizes. Other responses to this question demonstrated that students know they are meeting behavior expectations only when they are not corrected or reminded about behavior from their teacher. These included responses such as, “when I don’t get corrected by the teacher” (grade 3, female), or “you don’t get yelled at” (grade 4, male). Another student (grade 5, female) said, “if a teacher says you can’t do this, you do that instead.” This demonstrates that teachers only point out negative student behavior, and then students know they should not do that and try something different (e.g., a teacher points out a student who is talking while working, then students know they shouldn’t talk while working). When asked how consequences are determined, students did not demonstrate a clear understanding of this. Student responses

identified four types of possible consequences from teachers including: school office visit, documentation using minor incident report (MIR) or office discipline referral (ODR), conversation, and loss of privileges as shown in Table E6. These student responses indicate that teachers rely heavily on support from the office to handle behaviors that occur in the classroom.

Table E6

Possible Consequences from a Teacher in Response to Student Behavior

Type of Consequence	Student Response
School office visit	I get in trouble and might go down to the office. And my parents will be really mad when I get home.
	You'll get in trouble, get sent to the office or get an MIR
	They might send you down to the principal's office or something, or maybe an MIR if it was bad enough.
	You either, the teacher talks to you, or you get sent down to the office and they talk to you and it gets resolved.
	You have to go to the office and you can't say no
	The staff will say something to you, if it's really bad you will get sent to the office, if its smaller they just might say stuff
	Either call their parents or give them an MIR or you like send them to the office and you talk to them, sometimes they get in really bad trouble.
	You decide by how bad it is, how bad the problem is. If it's a bad, bad one, you might get suspended or you might an office referral
Conversation	I think they will pull you aside and ask you why you did it or say not to do it again because it's a rule that you are not supposed to be breaking and I'm sure they went over it.
	You have to talk to the teacher and think about what you did wrong
	They like to talk to you to figure out what happened and like figure out as much as they can to try to help you
Loss of privileges	Then, like owing recess, or having a talk and stuff like that
	You might get an MIR or an ODR, or you could get recess time taken away if it's like something minor, or privileges taken away like drawing or free writing

When asked how teachers can help students who continue to break the rules, only one student said that a teacher could "help them to learn the rules," and two other students responded that talking to students about breaking the rule could be helpful in preventing it from happening again. Student responses also included sending the student somewhere else for assistance; for example, three students mentioned that students could go to the Student Support Center (SSC), and one other student said that students could go to the school counselor for help. This supports the finding that teachers require support from outside the classroom in order to address student behavior.

When considering how administrators determine consequences for students who are sent to the office, students said that the principal and assistant principal try to understand what happened before issuing a consequence. A fourth grade student said, "I think you two talk to each other and decide what you are going to do, or you already have something written out like what you are going to do as a punishment for that certain thing," while another said, "I think you hear out what happened and how it happened and figure out like, what to do in the situation" (grade, 5 male). Two students mentioned suspension as a consequence when students are sent to the office, and one suggested that administrators call home to inform parents. These student responses demonstrate a limited understanding of the desire to teach students appropriate behavior, and to provide an intervention or supportive response.

Findings from Instructional Staff Members' Feedback

Staff members' preparedness to address student behavior

A study conducted by Bullock et al., (2017) found student behavior to be a major issue faced by educators. In this study the teachers surveyed indicated that they felt prepared to address student behavior, but also indicated their professional development in classroom management strategies to be below average. Two questions were included on my teacher survey in order to assess teacher perceptions of their preparedness to address behavior, and to assess their level of training to do so. First, staff members were asked to respond using a scale of strongly agree, agree, disagree or strongly disagree to this statement: The training (courses or professional development) I have received as an educator have prepared me to address student conduct in my classroom. Results (shown in Figure E1) indicate that instructional staff members feel prepared to address student behavior, with no one selecting "strongly disagree" and only one respondent disagreeing with the statement. Instructional staff members were also asked to list training that has helped to prepare them to address student behavior, these results are shown in Table E6. Instructional staff members with more than 15 years of experience feel the most prepared to address student behavior. This is indicated by the number of respondents selecting agree or strongly agree. Teachers with more than 15 years of experience, also indicated the most training or professional development. Teachers with 1-3 years of experience listed

fewer courses or professional development experiences which they perceived had prepared them to handle student behavior. Research shows that teachers' common training or professional development across experience levels include topics such as LSCI, and Restorative Practices, demonstrating the recent focus of CCPS on restorative discipline and trauma informed practices (see Artifact 2: Policy Review). PBIS training is evident in teachers at the 4-8 year experience range, and in teachers with more than 15 years of experience, but not often among teachers in the 1-3 years or 9015 years band.

Figure E1

Preparedness by Experience Level

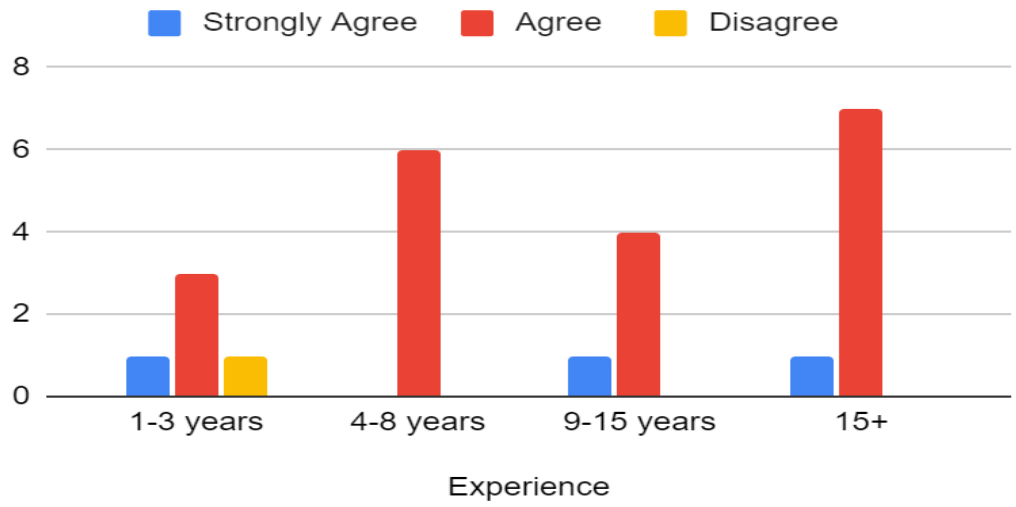


Table E7

Training and Courses of Respondents by Experience Level

1-3 Years of Experience	4-8 Years	9-15 years	More than 15 years
LSCI	LSCI	LSCI	LSCI
Restorative Practices	Restorative Practices	Restorative Practices	Restorative Practices
Flip-It	CPI	Effects of Trauma	CPI
CPI	Responsive Classroom	Responsive Classroom	Responsive Classroom
	PBIS		PBIS
			Kagan
			Champs
			Ruby Payne

The next set of seven items on the survey were designed to help determine the disciplinary mindset of instructional staff members. There are two disciplinary mindsets: punitive and restorative. A punitive mindset asserts that students should be punished for misbehavior. These consequences, in a school setting often include the use of exclusionary measures, including removal from the classroom and/or school. A restorative mindset may include consequences for student misbehavior, however, the consequences are focused on helping students to take accountability for their misbehavior and consider how their actions affected the classroom or school community (Gonzalez, 2012). Responses to these items on the survey were given a corresponding number according to a Likert scale: responses of strongly agree (SA) were assigned a value of one, agree (A) a value of 2, (N)neutral a value of 3, (D)

disagree a value of 4 and (SD) strongly disagree a value of 5. Due to the wording of the questions for questions 1 and 3, the scale was reversed (SA= 5, A=4, N=3, D=2, SD=1). By adding up the points from each question, respondents were given a score. A higher score demonstrates a more punitive mindset, while a lower score demonstrates a more restorative mindset. Scores ranged from a high score of 20 points, demonstrating a strong punitive mindset, to 11 demonstrating a strong restorative mindset. The scores were used to plot a point on the matrix (shown in Figure 2) based on the numerical score from the survey and level of experience. Level of experience is represented on the x-axis (1to 3 years of experience =1, 4 to 8= 2, 9 to 15=3, and greater than 15=4). The result of the questions indicate that more teachers at BVES approach student discipline with a restorative mindset. With regard to experience, there were no teachers with fewer than four years of experience whose responses indicated a punitive approach to discipline; this could be the result of CCPS's efforts to shift discipline policy and frameworks to a more restorative model. Conversely, it seems that teachers with nine to more than 15 years of experience are not as likely to have a restorative mindset, although they have received the same training.

Figure E2

Level of experience and mindset

Note: The does on this matrix represent survey respondents. The numbers along the x-axis show a restorative (11) to punitive (20 mindset. The numbers on the y-axis show level of experience 1=1-3 years, 2= 4-8 year, 3= 9-15 years, and 4= more than 15 years. The quadrants are labeled to show how experience relates to mindset on the matrix; the upper left quadrant indicates participants with more experience and a restorative mindset.

Instructional staff members were also asked to respond to open-ended questions regarding discipline, student behavior, and means for determining consequences. When asked to identify the biggest problem behavior in their

classroom, three behaviors were noted by staff members: disruption, disrespect, and unsafe behavior. These same problematic behaviors were mentioned as the biggest problem behaviors which pervade the school. Staff members were not able to clearly define a process for how administrators determine consequences for student behavior. Three teachers were able to identify district policy and guidelines as the basis for decision making, however they were unclear as to what the policy said. Others cited administrators communicating with the student and teacher to gain an understanding of the situation. Only one staff member cited that administrators selected consequences in order to change a student's behavior. Two staff members indicated that consequences should be connected to school-wide practices such as Restorative Practices and social emotional learning.

Staff Members' Perception of Administrative Support

Three questions on the survey were asked in order to solicit responses regarding staff members' perceptions of how they perceived administrative support when addressing student behavior. Bullock et al., (2017) noted that "educators' perceptions of the school climate are greatly influenced by their administrator's leadership" (p. 98). In this study teachers were asked to rate their administrator's support in various areas. Discipline was an area where teachers perceived below-average support, citing things such as lack of consistency, no clear vision for student behavior, and administrators being out of touch with student needs as evidence. Staff

members at BVES were asked to define support from administrators, and to provide examples both of times they felt supported and unsupported by school administrators. I determined the following categories when coding responses: communication, strategies for behavior management, exclusion, and collaboration. Each of these categories are defined in Table E8.

Table E8

Definition of Categories Used to Define Administrator Support

Category	*Definition*
Communication	Listening to the teacher Sharing the result of disciplinary action
Strategies	Offering suggestions and strategies as to how the teacher can prevent or respond to the behavior
Exclusion	Removing the student from the classroom setting
Collaboration	Allowing the teacher an opportunity to provide suggestions and including the teacher in follow up conversations with the student and parent
Response	Responding physically to the classroom when called for assistance

Communication. Staff members described communication in two different ways: administrators listening to teachers and administrators sharing the outcome. First, staff members would like for administrators to listen to their account of the behavior. This means administrators ask what happened and hear all sides of the situation as well as ongoing concerns regarding the student. After the administrator has listened to staff members, and addressed the behavior with the student, staff

members would like administrators to share the resolution with them. For example, if a student is sent to the office and office personnel call the student's home, staff members would like to be informed of the discussion with the parent. Similarly, if the consequence for student behavior includes administrators having a conference with the student, staff members would like to be made aware of what was discussed. There are times when this type of communication may not be appropriate, for example, if a student discloses confidential information during the course of conference, the teacher may not be able to know that information.

Strategies. When administrators offer strategies for addressing student behavior in the classroom, teachers feel supported. One teacher, respondent J, said they appreciate the opportunity to "brainstorm strategies to implement in the classroom," another, respondent B, said they wanted "concrete strategies" that can be implemented right away, but did not give any examples of helpful strategies they have been offered.

Exclusion. When asked to provide examples of a time they felt supported, eight staff members provided an example where the administrator removed a student from the classroom. In some of these examples, students were demonstrating unsafe or aggressive behavior. However, respondent S described removal for continually disrupting instruction as support, stating they felt supported "when students who are causing constant disruptions are removed from the classroom until a time when they

can prove they can handle being back in the classroom." Staff members also cited examples of students being returned to the classroom, or not removed at all, as evidence of a lack of administrator support. This includes times when students are removed for a few minutes but then brought back to class to complete work, or times when students were returned to class before their behaviors or emotions have deescalated. One staff member explained that students are sometimes returned to classrooms before that staff member is ready for them to come back: "a student was being verbally insulting towards me. The administrator took the student out for a talk, but I never received any acknowledgement by the student that they had done anything wrong. There was no sense that the student had taken any responsibility or faced anything they recognized as a consequence." Staff members who named exclusion as a supportive action from administration spanned all experience levels; five of the twelve staff members (42%) who named exclusion as support had more than 15 years of experience, four (33%) had 9-15 years of experience, and two (16%) had 1-3 years of experience. This supports the finding that experience does not seem to influence a staff members' mindset regarding punitive measure of discipline, like exclusions. The idea among instructional staff that exclusion, such as removal from the classroom, constitutes support from an administrator is problematic. It is in direct contrast to the restorative mindset that CCPS and BVES are trying to engender among faculty because exclusionary practices can have a negative impact on student outcomes and

other stakeholders' perceptions of school climate (Gregory et al, 2017; Huguley et al, 2020; Nese et al, 2021; Reaves et al, 2018).

Collaboration. Responses from staff members indicate that they would also like to be a part of the conversation to address student behavior and determine consequences. Staff members provided examples of times when administrators responded to classrooms and supervised the class so they could step out and have a conversation with the student. Other examples of communication include times when staff members were asked to be a part of conferences with parents regarding student behavior. Staff members also indicated that collaboration regarding student discipline helps them to feel empowered. One staff member said, "As a classroom teacher I felt supported when my administrator talked to me about what happened and asked for my input in regard to next steps. I can remember a particular student one year had trouble completing work and would often refuse. We came up with a plan that after a certain amount of time he would go work in the office. This worked well because he did not want to leave the classroom, so after a while his work completion in the classroom improved."

Response. When administrators respond to calls for assistance to their classroom, staff members view this as support. This means administrators go to the classroom to address the behavior. Staff members provided examples of times when

calls for assistance were ignored, meaning no one came to the classroom at all, or dismissed as the behavior "not a big deal."

Overall Climate

Staff members and student alignment. Students and staff members were not asked the same questions, which does not allow for a direct comparison to see how their perceptions of climate align. However, staff members and students seem to have different impressions of problematic behavior that might disrupt the climate of the school. While both students and staff members noted disruption to learning as an issue, staff members seemed more concerned about aggressive or unsafe behavior. Only two students mentioned incidents of aggression or unsafe behavior, such as hitting or kicking, while six staff members mentioned these behaviors as the biggest issue at school. Both students and staff members could not clearly describe how consequences are determined for student misbehavior. Overall, students have a positive view of the climate at BVES. Staff members were not asked directly how they felt about the school climate, however, all but two staff members were able to describe a time when they felt supported. While this is not a direct measure of a positive school climate, support from colleagues –administrators in the context of this ELP-is a factor that can influence staff member's perceptions of school climate. The responses from staff indicate that most felt positively about school climate and student discipline at least once.

Discussion of Findings and Application to ELP

This study was designed to assess perceptions of school climate among students and instructional staff members, while also determining the level of perceived administrative support among instructional staff members at Bay View Elementary School (BVES). I will first discuss the findings related to student perceptions of climate. Overall, the results of the study indicate positive student feelings about the climate at BVES. These feelings are largely attributed to the positive relationships with peers and adults at school. This is consistent with research on school climate that identifies relationships as a key element of school climate (Cohen et al., 2009). Relationships help students to feel connected to the school community and they are therefore less likely to engage in undesirable behaviors (Battistich & Horn, 1997; Gregory & Cornell, 2009). Further studies suggest that students are more likely to respect the rules of the school and the classroom when teachers, students, and administrators demonstrate caring relationships by valuing and supporting one another (Gage et al., 2016). Additionally, when students perceive the presence of a caring adult at school, the number of office referrals decrease significantly (Gage et al., 2016). Research on school climate also makes a connection between exclusionary discipline and the ability of students to build positive relationships, specific findings explain that students who are frequently participating in misbehavior that results in removal from the classroom have less time to build relationships with classmates and

teachers. This research suggests that instead of removal, students should be given more opportunities for increased involvement in the classroom setting (Reaves et al, 2016). This finding highlights the importance of elements of the school-wide discipline framework at BVES that support relationship building between students and their peers, and students and staff members, such as Restorative Practices RP).

Another important finding of this study is that students do not understand that BARK is the set of rules or expectations for their behavior at school. This is problematic because clear expectations for student conduct is an essential piece of a school-wide discipline framework (Chin et al., 2012; Hernandez & Seem, 2004; Welsh, 2000). Research indicates that the clarity of rules, and fairness of consequences can influence how students perceive school climate. Student responses also indicate that students are unsure of consequences that might follow misbehavior, and also of how these consequences are determined. Teaching the BARK expectations is already an established practice and expectation, however, this finding demonstrates a need to connect BARK to rules. For example, classroom rules should be developed to align with BARK, this means each class will have rule stating what it means to be prepared in the classroom etc. This will also extend to other areas of the building such as the cafeteria and hallways. It is also necessary for students to understand the possible consequences for both minor incidents of misbehavior and for behavior that rises to the level of an office referral. Since student responses indicated that most behavior

should be addressed in the office, it may also be necessary to clarify how behaviors can first be addressed in the classroom. This can be accomplished by helping teachers to understand the range of consequences that are outlined in the CCPS Student Rights and Responsibilities Handbook (explained in detail in Artifact 2) and considering how they could be integrated into their classroom management systems. Teachers will then communicate the range of consequences to students.

Research shows that staff members' perceptions of school climate are strongly influenced by the principal (Bullock et al., 2017). With regard to student behavior, this is evident in the responses given by staff members. Staff members' responses indicate that exclusionary discipline practices such as removal from the classroom are viewed as support from administrators. Maag cites research on exclusionary discipline practices over nearly 35 years, which demonstrates that teachers are more likely to make use of interventions that occur outside of the classroom (2012). When students are removed from the classroom, the teacher stops the behavior from disrupting the learning environment, "therefore, teachers are more likely to continue removing students from the classroom" (Maag, 2012). This aligns with the findings of my study because staff members have indicated that they feel prepared to address student behavior in the classroom, however, responses from staff members and students indicate that teachers are largely dependent on calling the office to address student misbehavior in the classroom. This could be due to the belief that removal or

exclusion from the classroom is the only meaningful consequence. As such, professional development that informs staff members of the potentially harmful effects of exclusionary discipline, as well as alternative responses to behavior is a major implication of this research. Exclusionary discipline was not the only supportive measure that staff members were able to identify; they also identified communication and collaboration as support from administration. Staff members stated they would like to feel a part of the discipline process. This finding suggests the importance of including staff in the drafting of school discipline frameworks. Work to develop these frameworks would include setting rules and expectations for student conduct, and potential consequences for student misconduct. It is also necessary to develop a process to allow teachers to share their insight on student misbehavior when it occurs in the classroom, and to communicate how the misbehavior was addressed or resolved. Currently, small groups of staff members are included in the planning and revision of school-wide discipline practices and strategies, however this finding from the research indicates that all staff members would value being involved. Further, involving teachers in defining and revising school-wide practices would increase the ownership of all staff members, which would increase their understanding of why

The findings of this research fit into the larger context of my ELP because research on school climate indicates clear steps that principals can take to improve the overall climate in a school. My ELP focuses on the effect that school discipline can

have on school climate, and this artifacts suggests that the following steps—supported by research on school climate—will help to improve the level of support felt by staff members when addressing school discipline: communicating a strong mission and vision, supporting staff members through professional development, and empowering staff members through collaboration. The data collection and analysis have highlighted some implications for the improvement of school climate at Bay View as it relates to student conduct and discipline. I turn to each of these implications in the next sections.

Communicating a Clear Vision.

Staff members and student responses indicate a lack of a strong understanding of the process used to determine consequences when a rule has been broken. It will be important to clarify expectations for student behavior, and for staff members to understand the policies and guidelines that help to guide the selection of interventions or consequences. Additionally, it is important to clarify the role of school-wide practices such as PBIS, Restorative Practices, and SEL and how these elements fit together in the framework of school-wide discipline. Clearly planning and communicating how the strategies and tools in each program will be used may help to create and support an integrated approach that is the most effective in building a positive school climate (Hernandez & Seem, 2004; Osher et al,2010). The priorities of building a safe climate should be clear and visible so that they are known to all, they

should be appropriate to the needs of the school, they should be accepted as a priority by teachers and staff, and they should be actively supported and modeled by the principal (Hallinger, 2005).

Professional Development.

A study on competencies of effective school leaders, conducted by Ross and Cozzens (2016) determined that professional development had a significant influence on teacher perceptions of school climate. This is compatible with the leadership behaviors described in research by Hallinger (2005) and Leithwood and Sun (2013). A study conducted by Bullock et al. (2017) determined that teachers do not feel adequately trained in the area of classroom management (Bullock et al., 2017). My findings determined that teachers do feel prepared, but often resort to calling support from the office to address the misbehavior as a strategy. Calling for assistance from administrators could be heavily relied on as a strategy because of the belief in a punitive mindset, as described above. It could also be attributed to a lack of strategies to address student misbehavior in the classroom. As the first to address student misconduct that occurs in the classroom, teachers need strategies and skills to be able to effectively handle student misbehavior. In order to provide teachers and staff members with useful strategies, principals must be aware of the needs of their staff with regard to classroom management, and provide opportunities for training and professional development. For example, teachers who are expected to use RP to

address student misconduct would require professional development on strategies such as restorative conferences. Professional development should be ongoing and in accordance with a philosophy of continuous improvement, meaning professional development to address student misconduct and discipline should be ongoing and aligned to the needs of the school (Hallinger, 2005).

Collaboration.

Research conducted on how principals can create and sustain a positive school climate states that when "principals engage teachers in decision-making processes and encourage faculty innovation and collaboration, they can create a professional culture of trust and support which, in turn, can increase teachers' satisfaction and commitment" (Payne, 2018, p. 17). If staff members are involved in designing the discipline practices they will be more likely to "buy in" to the need for support and intervention, rather than excluding students. This is consistent with my research because teachers at BVES stated that they viewed collaboration between administrators and staff members as support. Further, they specifically stated that they would like to collaborate with administrators to address student misbehavior, specifically that they would like to be asked to share their account of the student behavior in the classroom, and consulted about a possible resolution or solution to the misbehavior. Gregory et.al, 2017, term this a problem-solving approach to discipline and describe it as "community members coming together to identify contributors to

discipline incidents and jointly develop plans to help resolve those incidents" (p. 267). This problem solving approach is evident in some of the practices already used at BVES. For example, the School Climate Committee provides an opportunity for staff members to look at student data and discuss frequently occurring behaviors, as well as the consequences that have been tried to address the student behavior. Research indicates however that opportunities to analyze student behavior data should occur regularly and should include the entire staff (Gregory et al, 2017). At BVES, the School Climate Committee reviews student behavior data each month, however, it is not presented to the staff at regular intervals; moving forward, review of student data will be scheduled as a part of monthly school improvement team (SIT) meetings. A problem-solving approach is also evident at BVES during the Kid Talk and Student Support Team (SST) meetings (further described in Artifact 4). At these meetings a team, that includes classroom teacher, special education teachers, administrators, school counselor and school psychologist, discusses individual students and reviews data to create individual plans to support student behavior. The collaborative problem-solving approaches to discipline described above are not in immediate response to student behavior, the School Climate Committee and SIT meetings, as well as Kid Talk and SST meetings are scheduled to occur monthly. It is evident from the responses to the survey that teachers are also looking for on-going collaboration and problem-solving discussions that happen as a more immediate response to classroom

misbehavior. One way to implement this type of support would be for administrators, the principal or assistant principal, to meet with teachers following an office discipline referral for a student. During this meeting the administrator could listen to the teachers' account of student misbehavior and interventions or consequences that were given in the classroom before a student was referred to the office. The administrator could then share some possible strategies with the teacher to try next time, and then explain how the students' misbehavior was handled in the office.

Conclusion

This artifact describes a study I designed to gather feedback on student and staff members' perceptions of one element of school climate: student discipline. The feedback provided me with information regarding the overall positive perception of school climate at Bay View Elementary School (BVES). Students' feedback provided a focus on two areas for improvement: clarification of school rules, and clarification of consequences for misbehavior. Staff members' feedback helped to identify what staff members' perceive as supportive measures from school administration. This feedback and extant literature on school climate and school improvement helped to identify strategies to improve communication, professional development, and collaboration.

References

Allen, N., Grigsby, B., & Peters, M. L. (2015). Does leadership matter? examining the relationship among transformational leadership, school climate, and student achievement. *International Journal of Educational Leadership Preparation, 10*(2), 1-22. Retrieved from https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1083099

Anyon, Y., Atteberry-Ash, B., Yang, J., Pauline, M., Wiley, K., Cash, D., Downing, B., Greer, E., & Pisciotta, L. (2018). It's all about the relationships": Educators' rationales and strategies for building connections with students to prevent exclusionary school discipline outcomes. *Children & Schools*, *40*(4), 221–230. https://doi.org/10.1093/cs/cdy017

Battistich, V., & Horn, A. (1997). The relationship between students' sense of their school as a community and their involvement in problem behaviors. *American journal of public health*, *87*(12), 1997–2001. https://doi.org/10.2105/ajph.87.12.1997

Bear, G. G., Gaskins, C., Blank, J., & Chen, F. F. (2011). Delaware school climate Survey—Student: Its factor structure, concurrent validity, and reliability. *Journal of School Psychology, 49*(2), 157-174. doi:https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jsp.2011.01.001

Bradshaw, C. P., Cohen, J., Espelage, D. L., & Nation, M. (2021). Addressing school safety through comprehensive school climate approaches. *School Psychology Review*, *50*(2-3), 221–236. https://doi.org/10.1080/2372966x.2021.1926321

Bullock, L. M., Zolkoski, S. M., Lusk, M. E., & Hovey, K. A. (2017). Educators' perceptions of school-based factors that impact their effectiveness in working with students with challenging behaviors: A pilot investigation. *World Journal of Education, 7*(3), 92-102. Retrieved from https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1157683

Capp, G., Astor, R. A., & Gilreath, T. D. (2021). Exploring patterns of positive and negative school climate experiences among staff members in California. *Journal of School Violence*, *20*(2), 153–166. https://doi.org/10.1080/15388220.2020.1862673

Chin, J. K., Dowdy, E., Jimerson, S. R., & Rime, W. J. (2012). Alternatives to suspensions: Rationale and recommendations. *Journal of School Violence*, *11*(2), 156–173. https://doi.org/10.1080/15388220.2012.652912

Cleveland, R. E., & Sink, C. A. (2017). Student happiness, school Climate, and school improvement plans: implications for school counseling practice. *Professional School Counseling*. https://doi.org/10.1177/2156759X18761898

Cohen, J, McCabe, Michelli, Nicholas, Pickeral, N.M. (2009). School climate: Research, policy, teacher education and practice. Teachers College Record. Vol 111. 180-213. 10.1177/016146810911100108.

Cornell, D. G., & Mayer, M. J. (2010). Why Do School Order and Safety Matter? *Educational Researcher*, *39*(1), 7–15. https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X09357616

DeMitchell, T. A., & Hambacher, E. (2015). Zero tolerance, threats of harm, and the imaginary gun: Good intentions run amuck. *Brigham Young University Education and Law Journal*, *2016*(1), 1–23. https://digitalcommons.law.byu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1378&context=elj

Fraenkel, J. R., Wallen, N. E., & Hyun, H. H. (2012). *How to design and evaluate research in Education*. McGraw-Hill.

Freiberg, H. J. (1998). Measuring school climate: Let me count the ways. *Educational Leadership, 56*(1), 22-26.

Gage, N. A., Larson, A., Sugai, G., & Chafouleas, S. M. (2016). Student Perceptions of School Climate as Predictors of Office Discipline Referrals. *American Educational Research Journal*, *53*(3), 492–515. https://doi.org/10.3102/0002831216637349

Garnett, B., Moore, M., Kidde, J., Ballysingh, T. A., Kervick, C. T., Bedinger, L., Smith, L. C., & Sparks, H. (2020). Needs and readiness assessments for implementing school-wide restorative practices. *Improving Schools*, *23*(1), 21–32. https://doi.org/10.1177/1365480219836529

González, T. (2012). Keeping Kids in Schools: Restorative Justice, Punitive Discipline, and the School to Prison Pipeline. *Journal of Law and Education, 41*(2), 281-335. https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-

journals/keeping-kids-schools-restorative-justice-punitive/docview/1008167526/se-2

Gottfredson, G. D., & Gottfredson, D. C. (2001). What schools do to prevent problem behavior and promote safe environments. *Journal of Educational and Psychological Consultation*, *12*(4), 313–344. https://doi.org/10.1207/s1532768xjepc1204_02

Grazia, V., & Molinari, L. (2020). School climate multidimensionality and measurement: A systematic literature review. *Research Papers in Education*, *36*(5), 561–587. https://doi.org/10.1080/02671522.2019.1697735

Gregory, A., Cornell, D., Fan, X., Sheras, P., Shih, T.-H., & Huang, F. (2010). Authoritative school discipline: High school practices associated with lower bullying and victimization. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, *102*(2), 483–496. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0018562

Gregory, A., Skiba, R. J., & Mediratta, K. (2017). Eliminating disparities in school discipline: A framework for intervention. *Review of Research in Education*, *41*(1), 253–278. https://doi.org/10.3102/0091732x17690499

Hallinger, P. (2005). Instructional leadership and the school principal: A passing fancy that refuses to fade away. *Leadership and Policy in Schools, 4*(3), 221-239.

Hartzell, G. N., & Petrie, T. A. (1992). The Principal and Discipline: Working with School Structures, Teachers, and Students. *The Clearing House*, *65*(6), 376–380. http://www.jstor.org/stable/30185841

Hauserman, C. P., & Stick, S. L. (2013). The Leadership Teachers Want from Principals: Transformational. *Canadian Journal of Education / Revue Canadienne de l'éducation*, *36*(3), 184–203. http://www.jstor.org/stable/canajeducrevucan.36.3.184

Hernández, T. J., & Seem, S. R. (2004). A Safe School Climate: A Systemic Approach and the School Counselor. *Professional School Counseling*, *7*(4), 256–262. http://www.jstor.org/stable/42732589

Huang, F., & Anyon, Y. (2020). The relationship between school disciplinary resolutions with school climate and attitudes toward school. *Preventing School Failure, 64*(3), 212-222. doi:http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/1045988X.2020.1722940

Huang, F. L., Olsen, A. A., Cohen, D., & Coombs, N. (2021). Authoritative school climate and out-of-school suspensions: Results from a nationally-representative survey of 10th grade students. *Preventing School Failure: Alternative Education for Children and Youth*, *65*(2), 114–123. https://doi.org/10.1080/1045988x.2020.1843129

Huguley, J. P., Wang, M., Pasarow, S., & Wallace, J. M. (2020). Just discipline in schools: An integrated and interdisciplinary approach. *Children & Schools, 42*(3), 195-199. doi:10.1093/cs/cdaa012

Leithwood, K., & Sun, J. (2012). The Nature and Effects of Transformational School Leadership: A Meta-Analytic Review of Unpublished Research. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, *48*(3), 387–423. https://doi.org/10.1177/0013161X11436268

Maag, J. W. (2012). School-wide discipline and the intransigency of exclusion. *Children and Youth Services Review, 34*(10), 2094-2100. doi:10.1016/j.childyouth.2012.07.005

Mallett, C. A. (2016). The School-to-Prison Pipeline: From School Punishment to Rehabilitative Inclusion. *Preventing School Failure: Alternative Education for Children and Youth*, *60*(4), 296–304. https://doi.org/10.1080/1045988x.2016.1144554

McCluskey, G., Kane, J., Lloyd, G., Stead, J., Riddell, S., & Weedon, E. (2011). 'teachers are afraid we are stealing their strength': A risk society and restorative approaches in school. *British Journal of Educational Studies*, *59*(2), 105–119. https://doi.org/10.1080/00071005.2011.565741

Osher, D., Bear, G. G., Sprague, J. R., & Doyle, W. (2010). How Can We Improve School Discipline? *Educational Researcher*, *39*(1), 48–58. https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X09357618

Payne, A. A. (2018). Creating and Sustaining a Positive and Communal School Climate: Contemporary Research, Present Obstacles, and Future Directions. US National Institute of Justice. ojp.gov/pdffiles1/nij/250209.pdf

Reaves, S., McMahon, S. D., Duffy, S. N., & Ruiz, L. (2018). The test of Time: A meta-analytic review of the relation between school climate and problem

behavior. *Aggression and Violent Behavior*, *39*, 100–108. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.avb.2018.01.006

Saldaña Johnny. (2016). *The coding manual for qualitative researchers*. SAGE Publications Ltd.

Sugai, G., & Horner, R. (2002). The evolution of discipline practices: School-wide positive behavior supports. *Child & Family Behavior Therapy*, *24*(1-2), 23–50. https://doi.org/10.1300/j019v24n01_03

Thapa, A., Cohen, J., Guffey, S., & Higgins-D'Alessandro, A. (2013). A Review of School Climate Research. *Review of Educational Research*, *83*(3), 357–385. https://doi.org/10.3102/0034654313483907

Wang, M.-T., & Degol, J. L. (2016). School climate: A review of the construct, measurement, and impact on student outcomes. *Educational Psychology Review, 28*(2), 315–352. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10648-015-9319-1

Way, S. M. (2011). School Discipline and Classroom Disruptive Behavior: The Moderating Effects of Student Perceptions. *The Sociological Quarterly*, *52*(3), 346–375. http://www.jstor.org/stable/23027541

Welsh, W. N. (2000). The Effects of School Climate on School Disorder. *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, *567*(1), 88–107. https://doi.org/10.1177/000271620056700107

Zullig, K. J., Koopman, T. M., Patton, J. M., & Ubbes, V. A. (2010). School Climate: Historical Review, Instrument Development, and School Assessment. *Journal of Psychoeducational Assessment*, *28*(2), 139–152. https://doi.org/10.1177/0734282909344205

Student Interview Protocol

Project Title: Assessing and Creating a Climate of Support for Teachers in Addressing Student

Target Participant Group: Current students grades 3-5

Thank you for agreeing to talk with me today. I am going to ask you some questions about our school, and the rules and consequences. You can be honest when you are answering the questions because this information will be used to help us make our school even better! I am going to keep track of what you are saying, but don't worry. I will keep your answers confidential, which means I will not share them with anyone.

Opening Questions:

How has your day been so far? Tell me one good thing that happened today.

If someone asked you to talk about your school what would you tell them?
How do you know how to act at Bay View Elementary? How do your friends know how to act? What happens to you if you break a classroom rule?

How do adults (teachers, principal, assistant principal) decide what happens if a rule is broken?

Probes: How do teachers decide what happens if a rule is broken?,
How do the principal and assistant principal decide what happens if a rule is broken?

What can a teacher do to help a student who keeps breaking the school or classroom rules?

How do you know if you are following the rules?

What is the biggest behavior problem at Bay View Elementary?

Is there anything else you would like to tell me about Bay View Elementary?

ASSENT TO PARTCIPATE IN RESEARCH

Title of Study: Assessing and Creating a Climate of Support for Teachers in Addressing Student

Principal Investigator(s): Stacey Rominski, Dr. Lauren Bailes (advisor)

I am asking if you want to be part of a research study. This form tells you what the study is about, what you will be asked to do if you want to be in the study, and the possible bad and good things about this study.

WHAT IS THIS RESEARCH ABOUT?

This research study is to learn more about the climate of our school, and to find out information regarding student behavior and discipline. As a part of this study, I will be asking students and teachers about the school rules, classroom rules, consequences, and relationships between students and teachers.

I am asking you if you want to be in it because it is important to know what the students at Bay View Elementary think about school rules, and discipline. Discipline is what might happen if a student breaks a rule.

WHAT WILL YOU BE ASKED TO DO?

If you want to participate we will ask you to participate in a short interview. During the interview you will be asked questions about Bay View Elementary and your classroom. The interview will take about 15 minutes, and I will bring you to my office to ask you some questions. I will record your answers and take some notes.

WHAT ARE THE POSSIBLE BAD THINGS ABOUT THIS RESEARCH?

I do not think participating in this study will make you uncomfortable or hurt you. The information will help me to learn more about what students think of our school.

WHAT ARE THE POSSIBLE GOOD THINGS ABOUT IT?

This study will provide me with valuable information about our school. The information will be used to help us make decisions about how to improve our school.

You will not benefit directly from being in the study. We hope to learn new things during this study that would help to better teach other children how to follow the rules at school. We also hope to learn new things that will help teachers to discipline students in a fair way, and for school administrators to help teachers work with students.

WHO WILL KNOW THAT YOU PARTICIPATED IN THIS RESEARCH?

No one other than the investigators and your parents will know that you were in this study. If we tell other people about the research we will not use your name.

I also must let you know that if you tell us that someone has done or is doing bad things to you or other children, we will tell people who can help.

WILL YOU GET ANYTHING FOR PARTICIPATING?

No, there is no compensation for participating in this study.

YOU CAN CHANGE YOUR MIND ABOUT BEING IN THE STUDY

You do not have to say yes. Taking part in this research study is up to you. If you choose to take part, you can change your mind and stop at any time. If you decide not to participate or if you decide to stop taking part in the research later, nothing bad will happen to you and no one will be upset with you. If, at any time, you decide to stop please let us know by telling one of the researchers.

If you decide not to take part in this research, your choice will not affect your grades or your relationship with your classmates and your teachers.

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

This research study has been reviewed and approved by the University of Delaware Institutional Review Board (UD IRB). If you have any questions or concerns about your rights as a research participant, you may contact the UD IRB at hsrb-research@udel.edu or (302) 831-2137.

CONTACT INFORMATION

If you have any questions about the purpose, procedures, or any other issues related to this research study you may contact the Principal Investigator, Stacey Rominski at (410) 996-6230 or slromo@udel.edu. *If the researcher is a student, include the contact information for the academic advisor/supervisor.*

If you want to participate, and we have answered all of your questions about it, please write your name below.

_____	_____
Printed Name of Participant Date	Signature of Participant and Parent
_____	_____
Person Obtaining Consent (PRINTED NAME)	Person Obtaining Consent (SIGNATURE)

School Climate and Support

This research project aims to assess one element of school climate: safety at Bay View Elementary School. This will be assessed by examining teacher perceptions of administrative support when addressing student conduct, and subsequent discipline. The information gathered in this study will be used to continue to improve the climate at Bay View Elementary. It will focus on leadership behaviors and strategies that can be implemented by school leaders to shape a school climate where teachers feel supported in addressing student conduct.

Please complete the following survey. Your responses will remain anonymous and confidential. Completing the survey serves as consent to participate in the project.

* Required

1. How long have you been an educator?

Mark only one oval.

- ◯ 1-3 years
- ◯ 4-8 years
- ◯ 10-15 years
- ◯ More than 15 years

2. The training (courses or professional development) I have received as an educator have prepared me to address student conduct in my classroom.

Mark only one oval.

- ◯ Strongly Agree
- ◯ Agree
- ◯ Disagree
- ◯ Strongly Disagree

3. Rate the following statements on a scale of 1-5. 1=Strongly agree, 5=Strongly disagree *

Mark only one oval per row.

	1- Strongly Agree	2- Agree	3- Neutral	4- Disagree	5- Strongly Disagree
Misconduct should be addressed by removing the student from the classroom	⬭	⬭	⬭	⬭	⬭
I have a responsibility to help students get back on track.	⬭	⬭	⬭	⬭	⬭
Fear of punishment is a useful strategy in deterring student misconduct.	⬭	⬭	⬭	⬭	⬭
Students who are breaking rules should be treated with dignity and respect.	⬭	⬭	⬭	⬭	⬭
A student should have a voice in determining consequences of his or her misconduct.	⬭	⬭	⬭	⬭	⬭
A conversation about the students' behavior can be an appropriate consequence.	⬭	⬭	⬭	⬭	⬭
Consequences should help students to change their behavior.	⬭	⬭	⬭	⬭	⬭

4. List the names of any professional development you have received as a CCPS/BVES employee on student discipline.

5. What does it mean for administrators to support teachers when handling student discipline?

6. Describe a time when you felt supported by administrators in handling student misconduct.

7. Describe a time when you felt unsupported by administrators in handling student misconduct.

8. What is the most problematic behavior you see from students in your classroom?

9. What is the most problematic behavior you see from students in your school?

10. Based on the information you have, how do you that administrators determine consequences for students?

11. How do you determine consequences for students who break classroom rules?

Appendix F

ARTIFACT 6 – PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

This plan for professional development (PD) is designed to provide a coherent sequence of PD sessions to make evident the alignment of the components (frameworks, programs and strategies) of the school-wide discipline program at BVES. These components are described in detail in Artifact 4 of this ELP, and the alignment to the Cecil County Public Schools discipline policy is further described in Artifact 2. This PD plan is essential to my ELP because it outlines the training and professional development required to implement the school-wide discipline program at Bay View Elementary School. The school-wide discipline plan is a critical element to the climate of the school.

Introduction

A study on competencies of effective school leaders conducted by Ross and Cozzens (2016) determined that professional development has a significant influence on teacher perceptions of school climate. This is compatible with the leadership behaviors described by Hallinger (2005) and Leithwood and Sun (2013). Teachers do not feel adequately trained in the area of classroom management (Bullock et al., 2017), however they are often the first to address student misconduct. Principals must be aware of the needs of their staff with regard to classroom management, and provide opportunities for training and professional development. Professional development (PD) should be ongoing and in accordance with a philosophy of continuous improvement, meaning that professional development to address student misconduct and discipline should be ongoing and aligned to the needs of the school (Hallinger, 2005). The following sections of this document outline a plan for professional development that aligned to the needs of the school and local school system and provides strategies for teachers to address student misbehavior. The focus of this PD plan were determined based on staff member on school climate survey (Artifact 5) where staff members indicated they wanted further development on strategies to address student behavior in the classroom. The PD sessions in this plan are also aligned with Cecil County Public Schools (CCPS) discipline and student conduct

policies (see Artifact 2), and includes strategies and supports that are expected to implemented throughout CCPS, including Positive Behaviors Interventions and Supports (PBIS) as well as Restorative Practices (RP).

Contextual Information

The components of school-wide discipline at BVES include Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS), Restorative Practices (RP), crisis intervention such as Life Space Crisis Intervention (LSCI) and Social Emotional Learning (SEL). Each of these components and their relevance to professional development at BVES will be briefly described below.

PBIS is the foundation for the school-wide discipline framework at BVES. PBIS programming sets the expectations for student conduct, at BVES this is defined as BARK, as well as the standards and expectations for positive reinforcement of student behavior and tiered supports and interventions that are available to students who are not meeting expectations (Osher, et al., 2010; Sugai & Horner, 2002). The PBIS program at BVES was established in 2009. Each year the program has been revised by school administrators and a voluntary team of teachers, revisions include small changes such as methods of positive reinforcement for students. However, the core elements such as the student code of conduct (BARK, see Artifact 4) have remained the same despite revisions to the PBIS program.

Social Emotional Learning is instruction that focuses on teaching students "awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills and responsible decision making" (Osher et al., 2010, p. 51). At BVES we use the Second Step curriculum to provide SEL to students in all grade levels. This is a pre-packaged curriculum with a scope of lessons addressing different skills and character traits that are part of a developmentally-appropriate set of social emotional competencies. Teachers delivers these lessons are weekly on Mondays from 9:15-9:30 during a whole class morning meeting. .

Restorative Practices (RP) is a proactive approach to discipline that focuses on relationships and building community (Costello et al., 2019; Muhammad, 2019). The entire staff at BVES received training in RP at the beginning of the 2019-2020 school year. This training was provided by an outside organization, called Akoben. The training focused on restorative mindsets (that is, approaches to student behavior) and on RP strategies such as circles, affective statements, and restorative questions. In addition to this initial training, all instructional staff at BVES participated in a book study on *The Restorative Journey* by Malik Muhammad (2019). The use of RP has been inserted into all tiers of the PBIS framework.

Life Space Crisis Intervention (LSCI) is a "therapeutically-oriented strategy designed to solve social-emotional conflicts within the classroom" (Grskovic & Goetze, 2005, p. 1). LSCI utilizes verbal strategies to assist students in working

through a problem in order to help them think and act differently when faced with future conflicts (Grskovic & Goetze, 2005). Instructional staff members and administrators at BVES received LSCI training during the 2019-2020 or 2020-2021 school year. CCPS has made an effort to ensure all staff who are new or new to schools have received these trainings. CCPS offers yearly training in RP and LSCI for new instructional staff members who may have missed the training at the time it was originally offered. The quality of this training is assessed by evaluations completed by participants at the end of each session. Additionally, schools provide ongoing professional development in these areas in alignment with the needs of their specific building and School Improvement Plan goals. The CCPS Student Services department also provides resources that can be used for professional development. The quality of school based professional development is assessed by evaluations completed by participants at the end of each session.

Each of these components are evident in the school-wide discipline program at BVES, however, this professional development plan will focus on the PBIS and RP component, as PBIS is the foundation for the school-wide discipline framework. The focus on RP is necessary to continue to shift away from punitive consequences. This focus was determined by a committee that I led in my role as the building principal. This committee of eight teachers worked over the summer before the 2022-2023 school year to determine goals and strategies for school-wide discipline during the

school year. These goals are shown in Table F1 below and were communicated to the entire staff as an Integrated Student Support Framework (ISSF).

Table F1
PD Plan Goals, Strategies and Alignment to Integrated Student Support Framework

Goal	**Strategy**	**Alignment with Component of School-wide discipline framework**
Proactive Climate and Culture (Students)	Formation of a School Climate Committee that meets monthly and reviews student data	PBIS
Positive Staff Culture and Climate	Staff incentives	PBIS
Supporting Positive School Climate and Culture	Community building-Morning meeting and circles	Restorative Practices
	Teach Student Expectations	PBIS
Responding to Staff Need	Reinforce expectations for school-wide discipline	PBIS
	Review Restorative Practices Training	Restorative Practices

Professional Development Plan Scope and Sequence, 2022-2023 School Year

Background Information

The professional development (PD) sessions outlined in this plan are aligned to the goals and components displayed in Table F1, as well as the BVES School Improvement Plan (SIP) goals for creating a safe and secure learning environment. The goal is written as follows:

Goal: All students will learn in a safe and secure environment where all students understand the expectations for behavior, and strategies are implemented to address disruptive, disrespectful and unsafe student behavior. In order to achieve this goal, BVES will implement Tier 1 supports to help students understand and demonstrate behavior expectations. The Tier 1supports referenced in this goal include the school-wide PBIS plan, and the use of RP strategies such as affective statements and restorative questions. The PD sessions were informed by research on effective professional development: that research shows that effective professional development allows teachers to be active learners (e.g., analyze data, discuss, act as presenters), is coherent with school and district policy, and promotes collective participation (Desimone, 2011). Similarly, Darling-Hammond et al. (2017) state that, in addition to allowing active participation and collaboration, effective PD should also be of sustained duration and use models of effective practice. The BVES plan is based on the elements of collective staff participation, collaboration, active participation and sustained duration. Because school-based professional development at BVES takes place during School Improvement Team meetings, all staff are participants. The PD sessions provide time for participants to collaborate through discussion with their grade level teammates and colleagues. Staff members are active participants in professional development sessions during discussion with colleagues. Further, this plan employs models of Kagan Cooperative Learning structures to engage participants

in discussion and collaboration. Kagan Cooperative Learning structures are simple small group or partner activities that can be used in any lesson to promote learning and engagement (Kagan & Kagan, 2009). I decided to use Kagan structures as tools in some of the PD sessions in order to provide models and examples that teachers could also use in their classrooms. The sessions support sustained duration because the sessions in this PD plan are aligned to the SIP goal described above, and therefore remain a focus throughout the entire school year.

As the building principal, I determined the topic and timeline for each PD session. However, members from the School Climate Committee who have had training as Restorative Practices Champions (see Artifact 4) were invited to co-present, also promoting active participation. Table F2 presents an overview and brief description of each PD session. Sessions 1-6 were delivered to the instructional staff at the times noted on the table. The remaining session is planned for the end of the school year, but has not yet been delivered. The topic of this session may change based on feedback from staff and the needs that become evident after reviewing student behavior data.

Table F2

PD Plan Scope and Sequence

Session Number	Topic & Description
1 August 2022	Purpose Setting and Introduction to School Climate Handbook
2 September 2022	Review of Restorative Mindset vs Punitive Mindset
3 October, 2022	School Climate and Student Behavior Review During this session, student behavior data was shared, expectations for classroom vs. office managed behavior were reviewed, staff members participated in an activity to discuss how they would manage an example of student behavior.
4 January, 2023	Restorative Questions Review Two staff members from the School Climate Committee presented information about the purpose of and use of Restorative Questions
5 February, 2023	School Improvement Team Meeting Staff members were given an opportunity to discuss strategies that are currently being implemented (RP and PBIS) and provide feedback.
6 April, 2023	Consequences for Student Misbehavior The purpose of this session will be to review data related to student behavior, specifically office discipline referrals and consequences.
7 May, 2023	BVES Discipline Policy and CCPS Discipline Policy The purpose of this session is to provide an overview of CCPS discipline policy in order to demonstrate how school policy and practices have been developed.

Session 1

Purpose Setting and Introduction to School Climate Handbook

This session occurred during the opening meetings at the start of the 2022-2023 school year. The purpose of this was to introduce the revisions to the school-

wide program and inform staff members of the intent of each revision by pointing out the alignment to the goals set by the School Climate Committee (as shown in Table F1). This PD session was presented by the principal and assistant principal, and instructional staff members were participants. After reviewing the goals and briefly introducing the additions to the School Climate Handbook (Artifact 4), staff members worked in cooperative groups to read the handbook thoroughly using the Kagan Cooperative Structure, Jot Thoughts. Jot Thoughts asks participants to complete a task independently, jot down thoughts on post-it notes, one thought per note, and place the notes in the middle of the table for the group to review together. During this session, each staff member was asked to read the handbook independently, and jot down their thoughts or questions on post-its specifically things they liked and found helpful, and questions about items in the handbook. Each small group reviewed and discussed the thoughts from their small group, and then each group shared one thing they liked, and all of the questions they had about the handbook. This provided an opportunity for clarification and further discussion. At the end of this PD session, staff members reviewed the School Climate Handbook (Artifact 4). The key takeaway from this session is an understanding of the Tier 1supports used at BVES to teach and reinforce appropriate student behavior, as well as the Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions that will be used to support students who need additional support to meet behavior expectations.

BVES Integrated Plan

Proactive Climate and Culture

Planning for Implementation of Cycles: School Climate Committee (meets monthly), regularly scheduled MTSS meetings (includes all parts of the process)

Monitoring School-wide Implementation & Fidelity: Regular review of schoolwide data (School Climate Committee- will be shared during SIT)

BVES Integrated Plan

Proactive Climate and Culture

Supporting Positive Staff Culture & Climate: Staff BARK badges (write and put in wheel), Sunshine Cart in office (with drinks and snacks), Spirit Days, "What's Up Wednesdays" (very positive feedback about this- voluntary, agenda shared, mindful of time)

BVES Integrated Plan

Proactive Climate and Culture

Supporting Positive Student Culture & Climate:
We will continue with: Circles and morning meetings, teaching students BARK expectations and classroom rules (a blank BARK matrix will be shared with you), Second Step (weekly on Monday), Character Traits by Month (we have added new books), End of Marking Period Celebrations, Retriever of the Month, Positive Recognition through BARK badges and Bus BARKs

New additions: Oreo's BARK bones, Pulse Checks

BVES Integrated Plan

Response and Intervention

Responding to Staff Need:
Review and Refresh Restorative Practices training, Reinforce expectations for school wide discipline, prioritize restorative conversations between staff and students.

Responding to Student Need:
SSC pass, reflection area and calm down tools in classroom, Check-In, Check-Out (goals tied to BARK)

BVES School Climate Handbook

Spend 10 minutes reading through the handbook on your own.

We will use the jot thoughts Kagan Structure

*As you read, jot down your thoughts-one thought per sticky note.
*Place your notes in the middle of the table as you write them. Thoughts can include: questions, positive comments, suggestions, concerns

BVES School Climate Handbook

Spend 15 minutes discussing the notes at your table.

*Choose someone to read the notes/thoughts out loud.

*Discuss as you go

*As a group decide on three ideas you want to share with the whole group (these can be questions, praise, or suggestions)

*Select a spokesperson to speak for your group.

Session 2

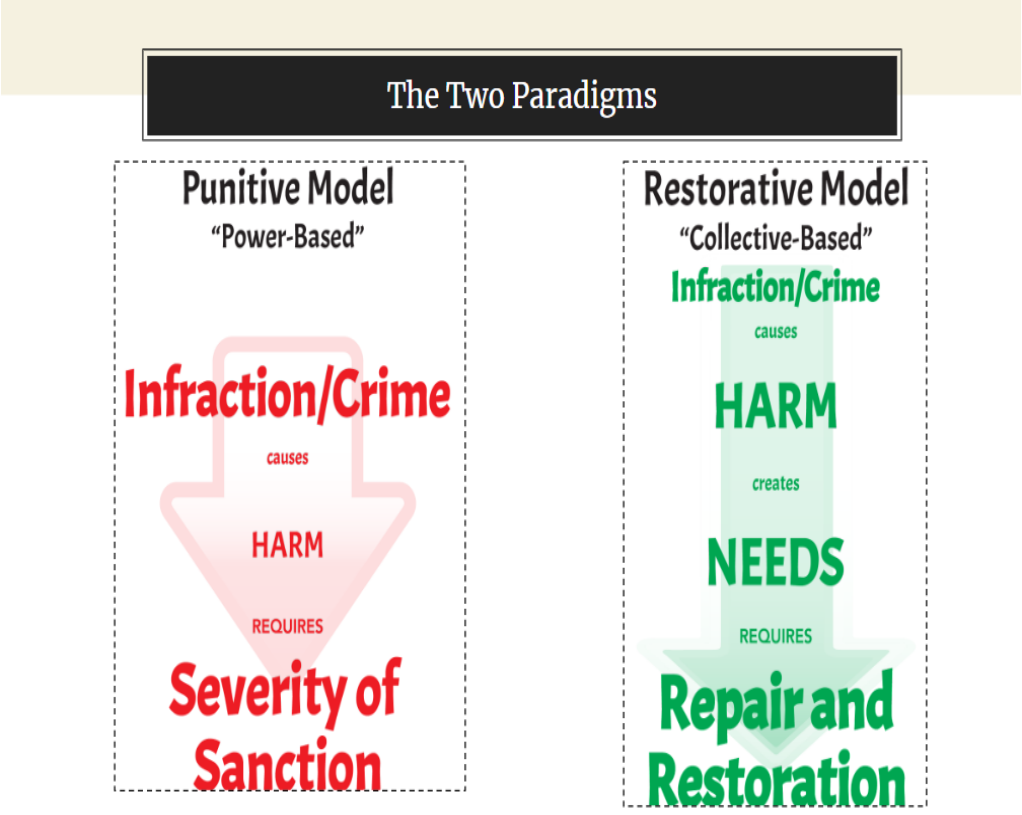
Restorative vs. Punitive Mindset Review

Adopting a restorative mindset is imperative to the implementation of RP (Muhammad, 2019). While many staff members received initial RP training in the 2019-2020 school year, many staff members still view exclusionary discipline measures and punishment as the best means to address student behavior. In order to sustain the commitment and duration of PD related to RP, I believed it was beneficial to review the punitive vs. restorative mindset paradigm. A trainer from the Akoben organization presented this PD to staff members. Slides from this presentation are not available, however the presentation and discussion centered on the content presented in Figure F1 (Muhammad, 2019, p. 28). Staff members were active participants in this session as they discussed disciplinary mindset with their colleagues and asked questions of the presenter This PD session was useful in reminding staff that a restorative mindset is necessary for addressing student misbehavior in the classroom. For some staff members, this shift in mindset is difficult. As such, continued professional development that reminds staff members of the expectation to approach discipline from a restorative mindset will continue to be necessary. For example, PD on the negative outcomes that can result from punitive (e.g. exclusionary discipline such as extended removal from the classroom) could be useful in helping resistant staff members to shift their mindset. The key take away from this session was to

continue to encourage staff members to approach discipline from a restorative mindset.

Figure F1

Restorative vs. punitive mindset



Session 3

Classroom and Office Managed Behavior

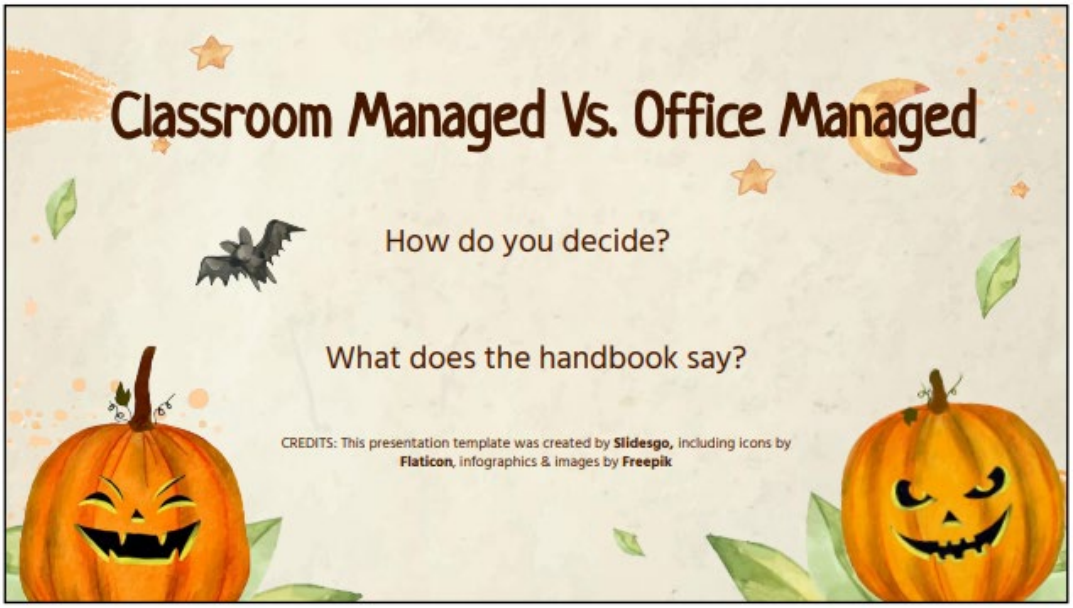
This session was presented by the principal and assistant principal. The goals of this session were to share student behavior data and to review the expectations for

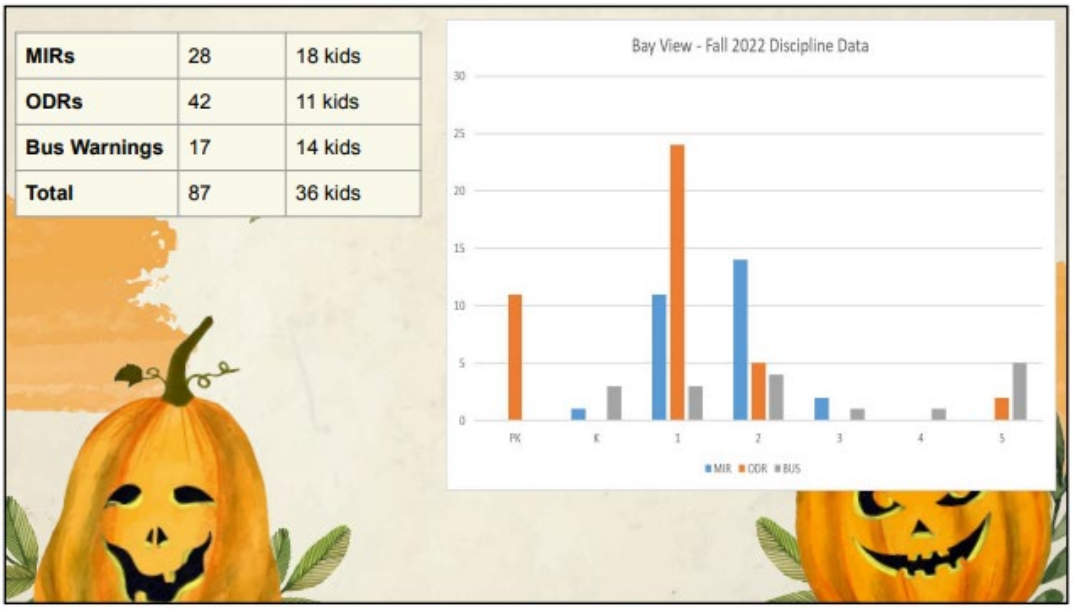
classroom- and office-managed behavior. The session was planned to include facilitation of and time for discussion as a whole staff, as well as discussion among grade level teams. The whole group discussion centered around the behavior data presented on the slides below. Staff members acknowledged that much of the discipline data was being generated by few students. We also discussed the types of behaviors that were being documented. After the whole staff discussion, grade level teams worked cooperatively to discuss behavior scenarios. The purpose of these grade level discussions was for team members to share how they would have handled each incident of student behavior, specifically, if they would have called for assistance from the office, or how they would have addressed it at the classroom level. The scenarios were pulled from actual behavior incidents that had occurred during the school year. They are listed here:

- A student runs out of the classroom and runs right back in.
- A student accidentally kicks another student as they are walking by.
- A student intentionally pushes another student but does not knock them down.
- A student knocks over their desk in anger.
- A student refuses to sit in their seat during instruction.
- A student is running around the room and will not stop even when redirected.
- A student will not complete their assignment.
- A student is screaming while other are trying to work.

This session resulted in rich discussion around office managed and classroom managed behaviors, as well as strategies that teachers should use at the classroom

level to address student behavior. It also helped to identify the mindsets of staff members when approaching student behavior. For example, when discussing the scenario of a student knocking their desk over, some teachers felt that this student should be removed to the office; other staff members shared strategies that they would use in the classroom before calling for assistance from the office, such as a break in the classroom, followed by a restorative conversation with the student. This session further demonstrates the need to continue professional development to help staff members shift from a punitive mindset, and to increase staff member's knowledge of and proficiency with management strategies, such as RP, in the classroom.


Classroom Managed Vs. Office Managed
How do you decide?
What does the handbook say?
CREDITS: This presentation template was created by Slidesgo, including icons by Flaticon, infographics & images by Freepik


MIRs 28 18 kids
ODRs 42 11 kids
Bus Warnings 17 14 kids
Total 87 36 kids
Bay View - Fall 2022 Discipline Data
30
25
20
15
10
5
0
PK
K
1
2
3
4
5
MIR
ODR
BUS

Behaviors	ODR	Unsafe behavior	42		Consequences	Phone/Email Parent
	MIR	Defiance/Non-Compliance	9			Loss of Privileges
		Disrespect	2			Lunch Detention
		Disruption	6			Other
		Other	1			Parent Conference
		Unsafe Behavior	10			Student Conference
	Bus	Unsafe Behavior	14			Time In Office/Time Out
		Disrespect	3			

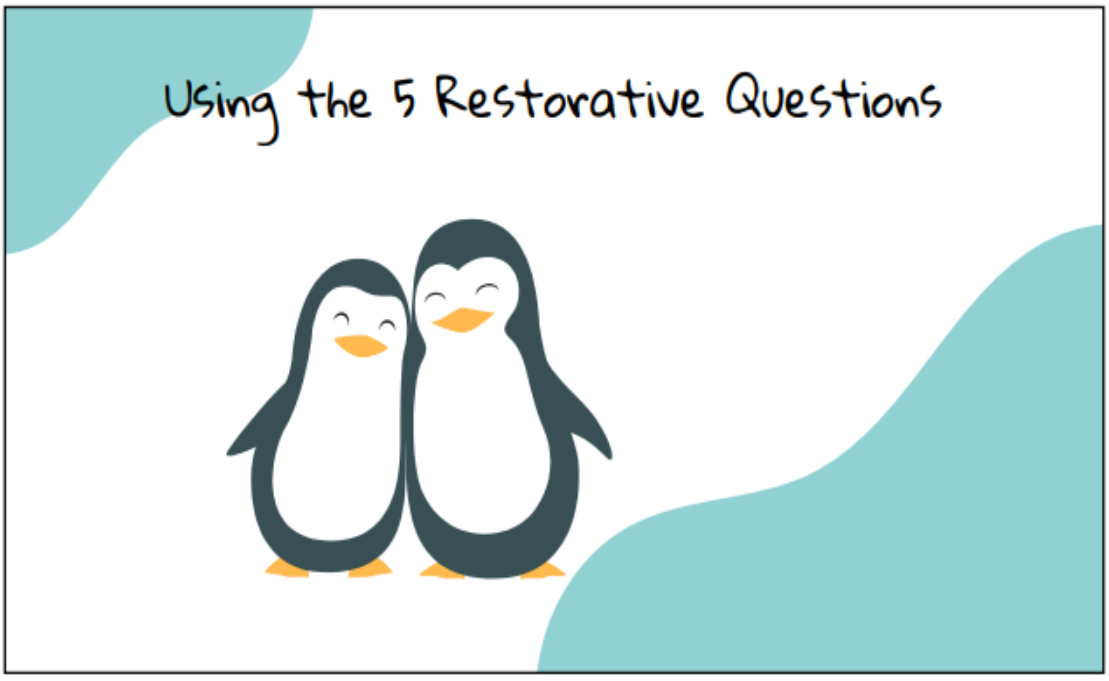
Kagan Strategy- Fan and Pick

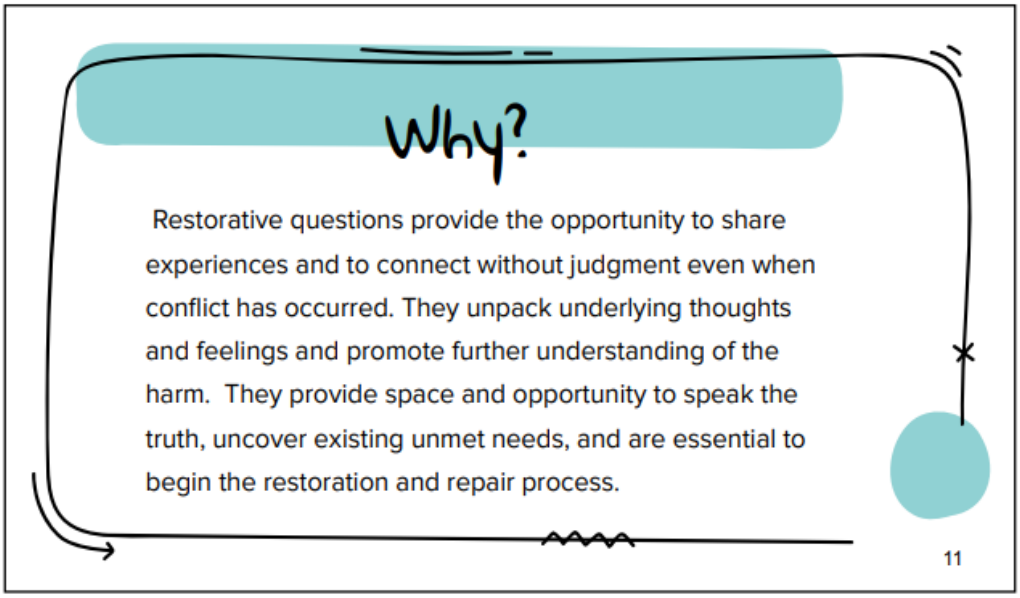
- Get into groups of 4
- Each person gets a job- Fan, Pick, Polish, Praise
- Rotate through the roles, until each of the scenarios has been discussed

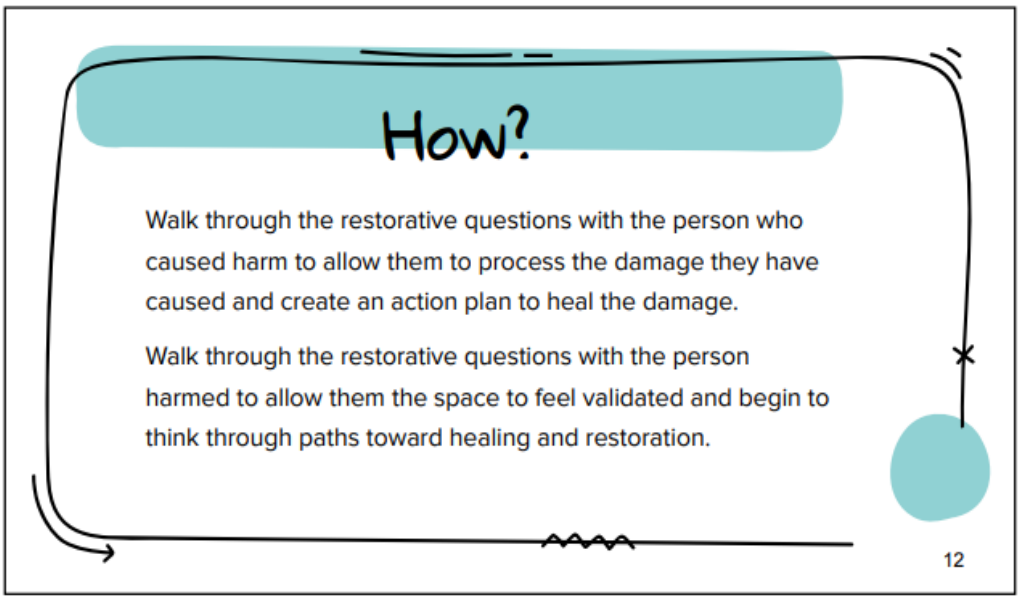
Session 4

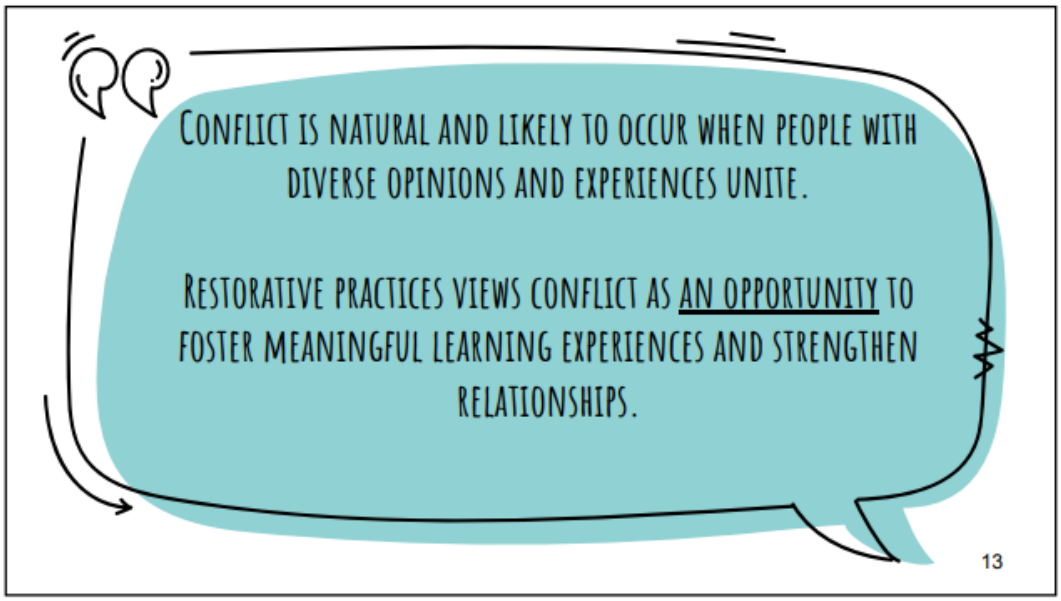
Restorative Questions Review

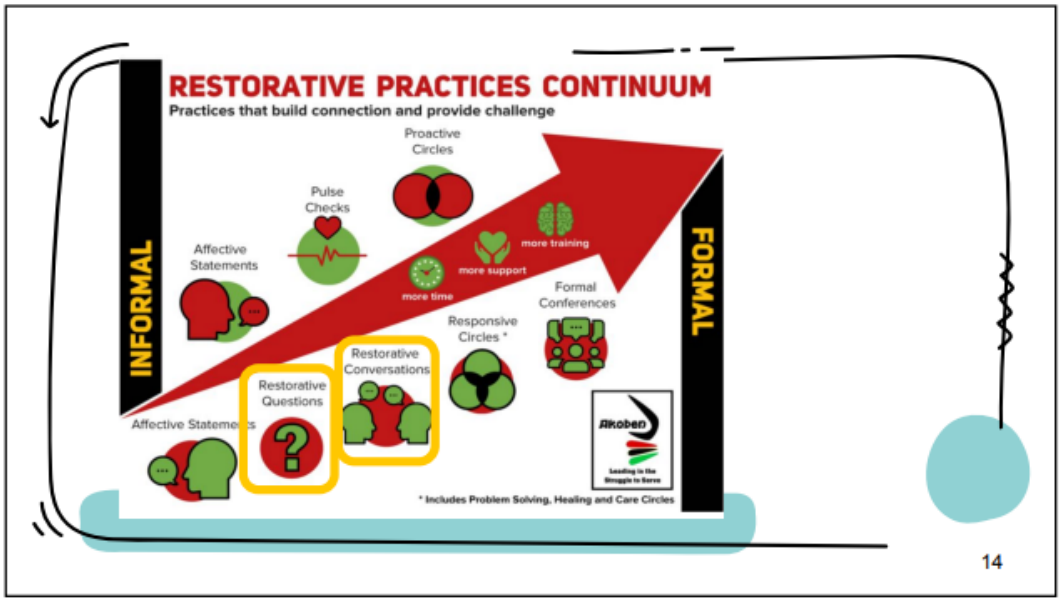
Staff members were asked to provide feedback on a one-question survey which asked which RP tool they would like to receive professional development on: restorative circles, affective statements, or restorative questions. Most staff members indicated that they wanted to learn more about the use of restorative questions. Two staff members from the School Climate Committee then volunteered to present information on restorative questions in the fourth professional development session. These slides were adapted from a presentation that was created by Cecil County Public Schools Restorative Practices Practitioners for use during school-based professional development. The slides in this presentation highlight the overall purpose of restorative questions, the goal of each restorative question, and how the questions should be used with students to resolve conflict. After the presentation, staff members were able to share times when they had been successful at using the restorative questions, and a time when they had not been successful. Staff members shared that the review of the restorative questions was helpful in building their understanding and reminding them to use them with students. They also appreciated hearing stories of success from their colleagues.

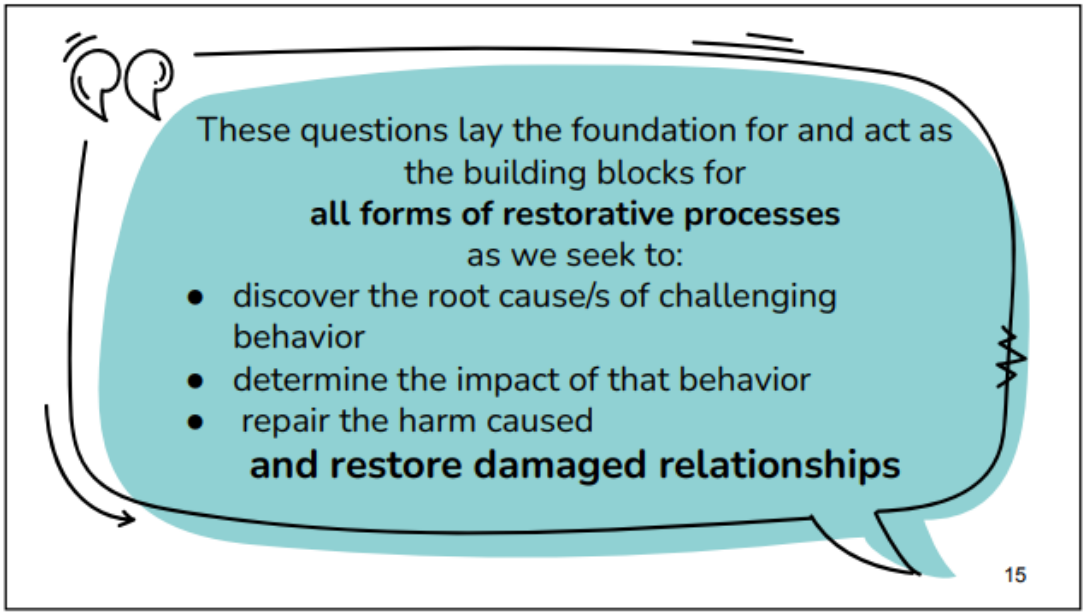

Using the 5 Restorative Questions

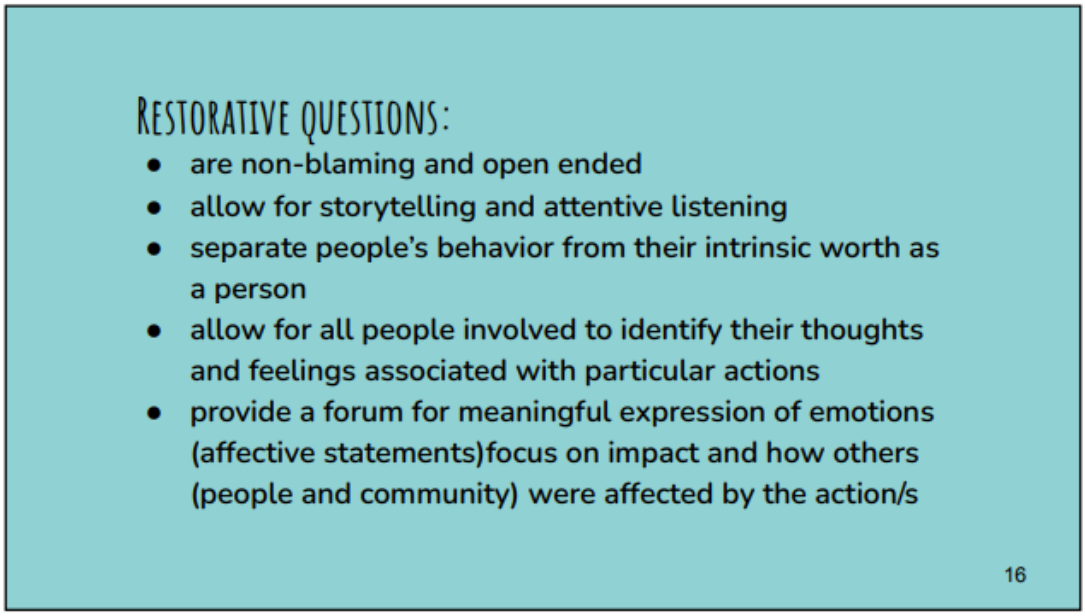

Why?
Restorative questions provide the opportunity to share experiences and to connect without judgment even when conflict has occurred. They unpack underlying thoughts and feelings and promote further understanding of the harm. They provide space and opportunity to speak the truth, uncover existing unmet needs, and are essential to begin the restoration and repair process.
11


How?
Walk through the restorative questions with the person who caused harm to allow them to process the damage they have caused and create an action plan to heal the damage.
Walk through the restorative questions with the person harmed to allow them the space to feel validated and begin to think through paths toward healing and restoration.
12


CONFLICT IS NATURAL AND LIKELY TO OCCUR WHEN PEOPLE WITH DIVERSE OPINIONS AND EXPERIENCES UNITE.
RESTORATIVE PRACTICES VIEWS CONFLICT AS AN OPPORTUNITY TO FOSTER MEANINGFUL LEARNING EXPERIENCES AND STRENGTHEN RELATIONSHIPS.
13


RESTORATIVE PRACTICES CONTINUUM
Practices that build connection and provide challenge
INFORMAL
FORMAL
Proactive Circles
Pulse Checks
Affective Statements
more training
more support
more time
Formal Conferences
Responsive Circles *
Restorative Conversations
Restorative Questions
Affective Statements
* Includes Problem Solving, Healing and Care Circles
14


These questions lay the foundation for and act as the building blocks for
all forms of restorative processes
as we seek to:
• discover the root cause/s of challenging behavior
• determine the impact of that behavior
• repair the harm caused
and restore damaged relationships
15


RESTORATIVE QUESTIONS:
• are non-blaming and open ended
• allow for storytelling and attentive listening
• separate people's behavior from their intrinsic worth as a person
• allow for all people involved to identify their thoughts and feelings associated with particular actions
• provide a forum for meaningful expression of emotions (affective statements)focus on impact and how others (people and community) were affected by the action/s
16

Restorative questions:

- are an inclusive and collaborative approach to problem solving, **emphasizing finding solutions rather than assigning blame**
- holds people accountable
- requires people to take responsibility for their actions
- attends to the needs of those harmed and those causing harm
- resolves underlying issues that act as the root cause of challenging behavior

17

Restorative Questions

For the one causing Harm:

- What Happened?
- What were you thinking at the time?
- What have you been thinking about since?
- Who was impacted and in what way?
- What needs to happen now in order to make things right/better?

18

Restorative Questions

- What happened?
  Provides the opportunity to share experience and to connect without judgment; also key to de-escalation
- What were you thinking at the time?
  Unveils reasoning, mindset, triggers and interpretations
- What have you been thinking about since?
  Addresses mindset "postmortem"; furthers self-reflection; helps gauge where person is on the remorse continuum

For the One Causing Harm

19

Restorative Questions

- Who was impacted and in what way?
  Provides the opportunity to share experience and to connect without judgment; also key to de-escalation
- What needs to happen now in order to make things right or better?
  Unveils reasoning, mindset, triggers and interpretations

For the One Causing Harm

20

Restorative Questions

For the one harmed:

- What happened?
- What did you think when you realized what happened?
- What impact has this had on you and others?
- What has been the hardest thing for you?
- What needs to happen now in order to make things right/better?

Restorative Questions

- What happened?
  Offers validation; allows person to review the full scope of events
- What did you think when you realized what happened?
  Unpacks underlying thoughts and feelings, including reflections of any responsibility
- What impact has this had on you and others?
  Helps to further understand the ripple effect and weight of the harm

For the One Harmed

22

Restorative Questions

- What has been the hardest thing for you?
  Provides space and opportunity to speak truth; uncovers the needs essential to the restoration journey
- What needs to happen now to make things right or better?
  Begins the restore and repair process
-

For the One Harmed

23

Talk with your team...

When have you successfully used these questions?

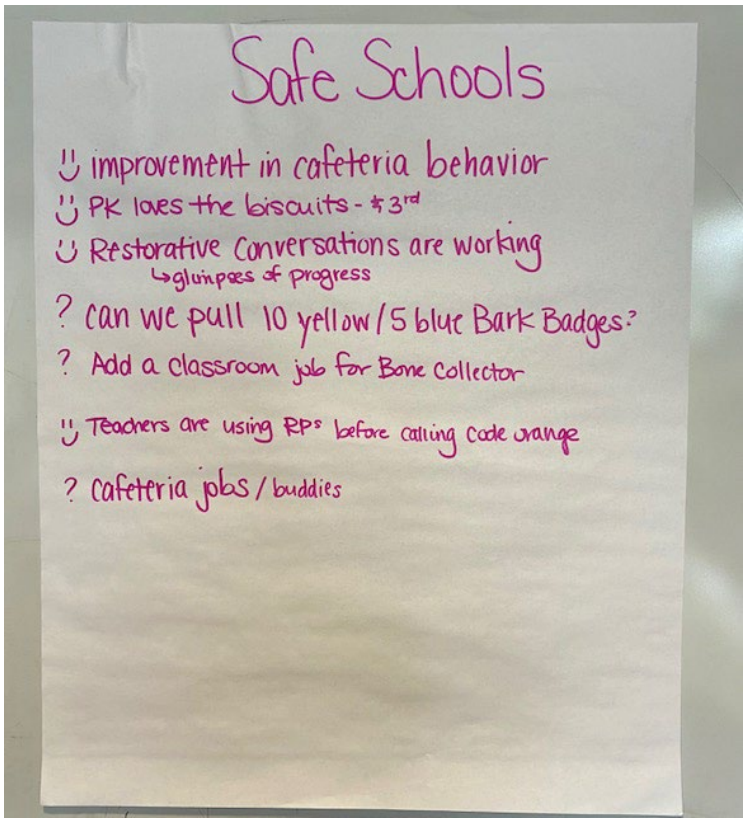
What are some barriers to using these questions?

Session 5

School Improvement Plan Goal Feedback

This professional development session provided staff members with an opportunity to discuss strategies used school-wide by staff members to the support the School Improvement Plan (SIP) goal described earlier in this professional development plan. During this session, staff members reviewed the SIP goal as it was written in the SIP. Next, they discussed the strategies that have been implemented to support the achievement of the goal. Staff members were asked to discuss three questions in small groups: 1) "What strategies are working well?" 2) "What questions do you have about the strategies?" and 3) "What strategies should be added to the plan in order to achieve the goal?" This discussion was informed by staff members experiences implementing the strategies outlined in the School Climate Handbook (Artifact 4), student discipline data, and frequency of positive reinforcement as evidenced by the number of BARK badges earned. The photograph below is a sample of staff members' feedback. After each group shared their discussion and reviewed the staff feedback, it is evident to me, that staff members feel positively about the strategies that are in place to create a safe and engaging learning environment for students. For example, one group discussed ways that restorative conversations are taking place in the classroom before calling for assistance from the office. This is noted on the photograph below. Staff members had suggestions about increasing

positive reinforcement through BARK badges, including selecting more badges out of the prize wheel to be read on the morning announcements. The staff members also shared a desire to build community across classrooms by implementing "buddy classrooms." Each classroom would be paired with another homeroom with which they might participate in activities such as reading books or creating posters that reiterate BARK expectations. These suggestions have been implemented, and buddy classrooms will be added to the School Climate Handbook to be implemented at the beginning of the 2023-2024 school year.



Session 6

Consequences for Student Behavior

The purpose of this session was to give staff members an opportunity to analyze data that show the consequences that are used to address student misbehavior. Student behavior data, documented by office discipline referrals and minor incident reports, showed a heavy reliance on exclusionary measures such as removing a student from the classroom to the school office or other time out of the classroom. These data, along with student interview responses (see Artifact 3), were shared with staff members. Staff members also spent time reading and discussing the potential harm of exclusionary consequences (see Artifact 1 and Artifact 5). This session resulted in discussion by staff members about the need to reinforce preventative Tier 1 classroom management strategies such as clear rules and expectations and the use of positive reinforcement. The session also helped staff members to acknowledge that students believe discipline happens outside of the classroom and takes place mostly in the school office, this led to a discussion about outlining classroom consequences and interventions, and the need for students to explain what consequences or interventions might result from misbehavior in the classroom. This is an area that will require additional discussion and further professional development. This discussion and planning for future professional development could be a task assigned to the School Climate Committee.

School Climate Committee

In addition to the session described above, the School Climate Committee is instrumental in guiding and planning the work around the school-wide discipline program. The committee meets monthly to review student discipline data, discuss the implementation of PBIS and RP, and plan for school-wide events that support the PBIS program. The committee shares minutes from their monthly meetings with the entire staff at the beginning of every School Improvement Team (SIT) meeting. Staff members have an opportunity to ask questions about the minutes and give suggestions. The School Climate Committee is co-chaired by the school counselor and assistant principal. Staff members who serve on the School Climate Committee signed up for the committee based on their interest at the beginning of the school year. An additional subset of the School Climate Committee includes restorative practices champions. These are staff members who demonstrated a proficiency in using the restorative practices with their students, as determined by the principal and assistant principal. They have also demonstrated an interest in serving in this role. A list of School Climate Committee meeting dates, as well as agenda items is shown in Table F3. The School Climate Committee is important to this professional development plan because, as an established committee that meets monthly, it is able to remain focused on the implementation of PBIS and RP. Discussion that occurs during the School Climate Committee meetings can inform the focus for additional professional

development, or highlight a need for clarification on the implementation of school-wide strategies. For example, during the January meeting, the team determined that more positive reinforcement was needed in the cafeteria. This resulted in the addition of blue BARK badges that can only be earned in the cafeteria. This decision was made by the School Climate Committee and then shared with staff members during the School Improvement Team meeting.

Table F3
School Climate Committee meeting dates and agendas

Meeting Date	Agenda Items
September 14, 2022	Plan PBIS Pep Rally to teacher expectations and kick off the school year BARK expectations BARK trivia
October 12, 2022	Review of student behavior data and reflection
December 14, 2022	No meeting due to Winter Break
January 25, 2023	PBIS Updates Review expectation for BARK bones Addition of cafeteria BARK badges Planning for the end of MP celebration
March 8, 2023	Review of Student Behavior Data Discussion about use of Restorative Questions and the Student Support Center pass Planning for end of MP celebration

References

Bullock, L. M., Zolkoski, S. M., Lusk, M. E., & Hovey, K. A. (2017). Educators' perceptions of school-based factors that impact their effectiveness in working with students with challenging behaviors: A pilot investigation. *World Journal of Education, 7*(3), 92-102. Retrieved from https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1157683

Costello, B., Wachtel, J., & Wachtel, T. (2019). *The restorative practices handbook: For teachers, Disciplinarians and administrators*. International Institute for Restorative Practices.

Darling-Hammond, L., Hyler, M.E. & Gardner, M. (2017). Effective teacher professional development. Learning Policy Institute. Retrieved January 14, 2018 from: https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/sites/default/files/product-files/Effective_Teacher_Professional_Development_BRIEF.pdf

Desimone, L. (2011). A Primer on Effective Professional Development. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 68-71.

Grskovic, Janice & Goetze, Herbert. (2005). An evaluation of the effects of Life Space Crisis Intervention on the challenging behavior of individual students. Reclaiming Children and Youth. 13. 231-235.

Hallinger, P. (2005). Instructional leadership and the school principal: A passing fancy that refuses to fade away. *Leadership and Policy in Schools, 4*(3), 221-239.

Kagan, M., & Kagan, S. (2009). *Kagan Cooperative Learning*. Kagan Publishing.

Leithwood, K., & Sun, J. (2012). The Nature and Effects of Transformational School Leadership: A Meta-Analytic Review of Unpublished Research. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, *48*(3), 387–423. https://doi.org/10.1177/0013161X11436268

Muhammad, A.-M. (2019). *The restorative journey*. Akoben.

Osher, D., Bear, G. G., Sprague, J. R., & Doyle, W. (2010). How Can We Improve School Discipline? *Educational Researcher*, *39*(1), 48–58. https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X09357618

Sugai, G., & Horner, R. (2002). The evolution of discipline practices: School-wide positive behavior supports. *Child & Family Behavior Therapy*, *24*(1-2), 23–50. https://doi.org/10.1300/j019v24n01_03

Vega, V. (2015, November 1). *Teacher development research review: Keys to educator success*. Edutopia. Retrieved March 11, 2023, from https://www.edutopia.org/teacher-development-research-keys-success

APPENDIX G

ARTIFACT 7 – COMMUNICATION PLAN

This artifact includes a presentation to the staff at Bay View Elementary School (BVES) that shares the student feedback gained from interviews and staff member feedback gained from a survey (see Artifact 5). The purpose of this artifact is to communicate the findings of this ELP and next steps that will be implemented to improve the level of support from administration to staff members when addressing student misconduct at BVES. This artifact is important to my ELP because it summarizes the findings of my research and how it is relevant to improving one element of school climate at BVES.

Student Behavior, Support and School Climate

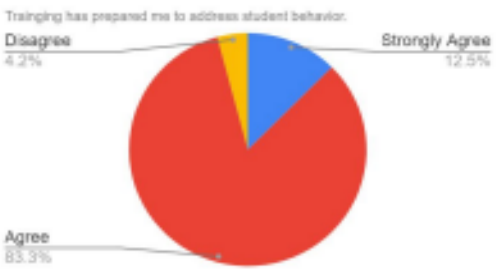
A Presentation for BVES Staff and CCPS Leadership

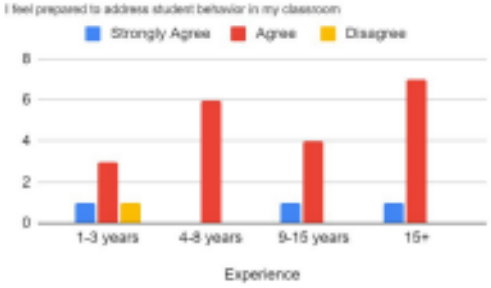
Purpose and Objectives

The purpose of this presentation is to present data that I have collected in order to assess one aspect of the school climate at Bay View Elementary School (BVES). This is necessary because student and staff member perceptions of school climate influence student achievement and success (Bullock et al, 2017; Wang & Degol, 2016). At BVES staff members perceive a lack of support from administration when addressing student behavior.

In addition to presenting data, this presentation also includes a plan for next steps to improve teacher perceptions of school climate and of support from administration.

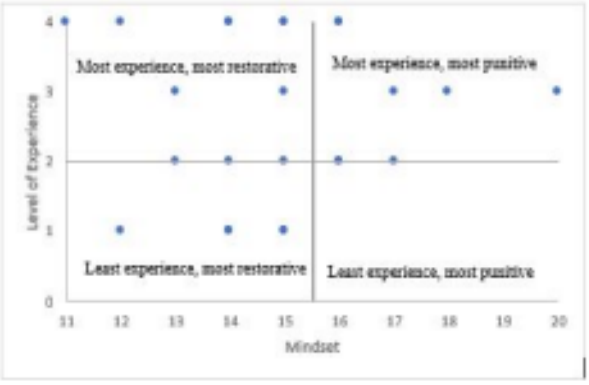
BVES Survey Data- Staff Members' Preparedness





95.8% of BVES staff members feel prepared to address student behavior in the classroom. However, staff members still express a need for support from administration when addressing student behavior. When an administrator is involved the behavior is no longer classroom managed.

BVES Survey Data- Staff Members' Mindset About Discipline



As this matrix shows, staff members' mindset regarding consequences ranges from punitive to restorative. With the school wide discipline framework being on the more restorative end of the continuum, this points to a root cause for staff members perceived lack of support from administration.

For example, if staff are expecting punitive consequences such as exclusion, anything less could feel unsupportive.

BVES Survey Data- Staff Member's Definitions of Support

Category	Definition
Communication	Listening to the teacher Sharing the result of disciplinary action
Strategies	Offering suggestions and strategies as to how the teacher can prevent or respond to the behavior
Exclusion	Removing the student from the classroom setting
Collaboration	Allowing the teacher an opportunity to provide suggestions and including the teacher in follow up conversations with the student and parent
Response	Responding physically to the classroom when called for assistance

Category	What is already in place to support this?	What can be added or changed?
Communication	Staff members and administration can discuss situations when administrator responds to classrooms.	Conferences between teachers and administrators to review ODRs, discuss the result, and discuss strategies to address future incidents of behavior
Strategies	Professional development during SIT meetings	More professional development Look more closely at data to provide PD on strategies to support specific student behaviors
Exclusion	Removal to school office Time in student support center	Provide information about the negative effects of removal from the classroom. Prepare students to return to class in a shorter period of time Provide opportunities for the students and staff to talk before returning to class
Collaboration	Code Green- provides an opportunity for teacher and administrator or responder to work together to address student behavior and need	Provide more opportunities to discuss student behavior during professional development sessions Increase conversations with teachers after ODR's, or students are sent to the office
Response	Code Green and Code Orange responses when calls are made for assistance to classrooms	Be more visible throughout the building to proactively respond to student behavior

Student Interview Findings

Finding	Next Steps
Students expressed positive feelings about BVES- largely due to relationships with peers and staff members	Continue to focus on building community and relationships through RP and SEL
Students could not name the BARK as the "code of conduct" or set of rules that set the expectations for their behavior at school.	Revisit and reteach BARK. Tell students that BARK are the school rules, ensure alignment of classroom rules to BARK
Students were not able to clearly describe what would happen next if a rule was broken. Students were not able to describe how consequences are determined in the classroom or in the office.	Tell students what consequences might result in breaking a classroom rule, and what might happen when they are sent to the office for discipline. This information is shared with parents at the beginning of the school year

Summary

Student behavior has an effect on school climate. When student behavior disrupts the ability to of students and staff to teach and learn, school climate can be perceived negatively by those stakeholders.

Feedback from staff and students have pointed to some clear steps that can be taken to improve school climate through:

*Communication

*Collaboration

*Professional development

Communication

- School Climate Handbook that communicates expectations for student behavior, as well as school-wide supports, interventions and discipline processes.
- Improve communication between administrators and staff members regarding the outcomes of student discipline that is handled outside of the classroom through conferences.

Collaboration

- School Climate Committee and School Improvement Team collaborate to regularly review student discipline data.
- Code Green and Code Orange calls for support encourage collaboration between classroom teachers, staff members and administrators.
- MTSS meetings such as Kid Talk provide an opportunity for staff members to collaboratively discuss problems and solutions to student misbehavior.

Professional Development

- Provide professional development that increases staff members' knowledge and understanding of alternatives to punitive measures of discipline.
- Increase PD sessions that focus on strategies teachers can implement in classrooms to prevent and address student misbehavior.

References

Cohen, J, McCabe, Michelli, Nicholas, Pickeral, N.M. (2009). School climate: Research, policy, teacher education and practice. Teachers College Record. Vol 111. 180-213. 10.1177/016146810911100108.

Freiberg, H. J. (1998). Measuring school climate: Let me count the ways. *Educational Leadership, 56*(1), 22-26.

Thapa, A., Cohen, J., Guffey, S., & Higgins-D'Alessandro, A. (2013). A Review of School Climate Research. *Review of Educational Research, 83*(3), 357–385. https://doi.org/10.3102/0034654313483907

Wang, M.-T., & Degol, J. L. (2016). School climate: A review of the construct, measurement, and impact on student outcomes. *Educational Psychology Review, 28*(2), 315–352. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10648-015-9319-1

Zullig, K. J., Koopman, T. M., Patton, J. M., & Ubbes, V. A. (2010). School Climate: Historical Review, Instrument Development, and School Assessment. *Journal of Psychoeducational Assessment, 28*(2), 139–152. https://doi.org/10.1177/0734282909344205