



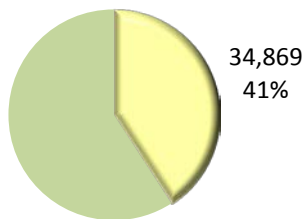
# EFFECTIVE SCHOOL DISCIPLINE FOR MARYLAND

A Shared Approach to Keep Children in School and Learning

## Problem

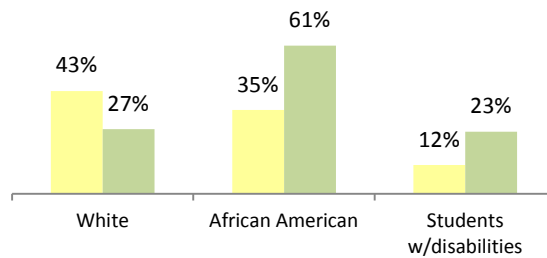
Zero tolerance policies with severe consequences have resulted in more than 50,000 Maryland students—particularly students of color and students with disabilities — being suspended, expelled or arrested annually. Research shows that students with disabilities were twice as likely to be suspended or expelled while African-American students were three times as likely. This difference in suspension rates is known as disproportionality. In addition, many out-of-school suspensions were often for minor offenses that were once handled in school, such as disrespect, insubordination, disruption, and possessing portable communication devices.

### Why are students being suspended?



- Other offenses → ex. possession of weapons, dangerous substances, arson, attacks, fighting and sexual harassment
- Minor offenses → ex. disrespect, insubordination, disruption and portable communications devices

### Who is being suspended in MD?



- % of total student population
- % of all out-of-school suspensions

## Solution:

How do we hold students accountable for their behavior while keeping them in school and actively learning? Maryland is leading the charge to reduce the number and disproportionality of suspensions and expulsions. Accomplishing this goal begins with a commitment to keep more children in the classroom and actively learning. For discipline reform to be effective, it requires a shift in perspective. Safe and supportive learning environments and fair disciplinary policies and practices **are not** mutually exclusive.

What are the benefits of school disciplinary reform?

- Reduces the high rate of out-of-school suspensions
- Addresses disproportionality
- Holds students accountable in a more **effective** manner

What are the characteristics of effective school discipline?

- Uses an alternative approach; less punitive
- Limits the use of out-of-school suspensions
- Keeps in students in school and actively learning

### Examples of Effective School Discipline:

- *Anne Arundel County School District (MD)*: The district committed to building positive school climates and instituting an accountability and assistance system from the central office for all middle and high schools → Soft offenses were reduced by 27%. Expulsions for African American students decreased by 37%.
- *Lincoln High School (WA)*: This rural alternative school made a commitment to creating a supportive environment in which administrators got to the core of the issues the student was having and aimed to find solutions while still holding the student accountable for their actions → Suspensions reduced by 85%.

For more information, resources and examples regarding Effective School Discipline for Maryland, please visit our **comprehensive web tool** at [www.acy.org](http://www.acy.org).



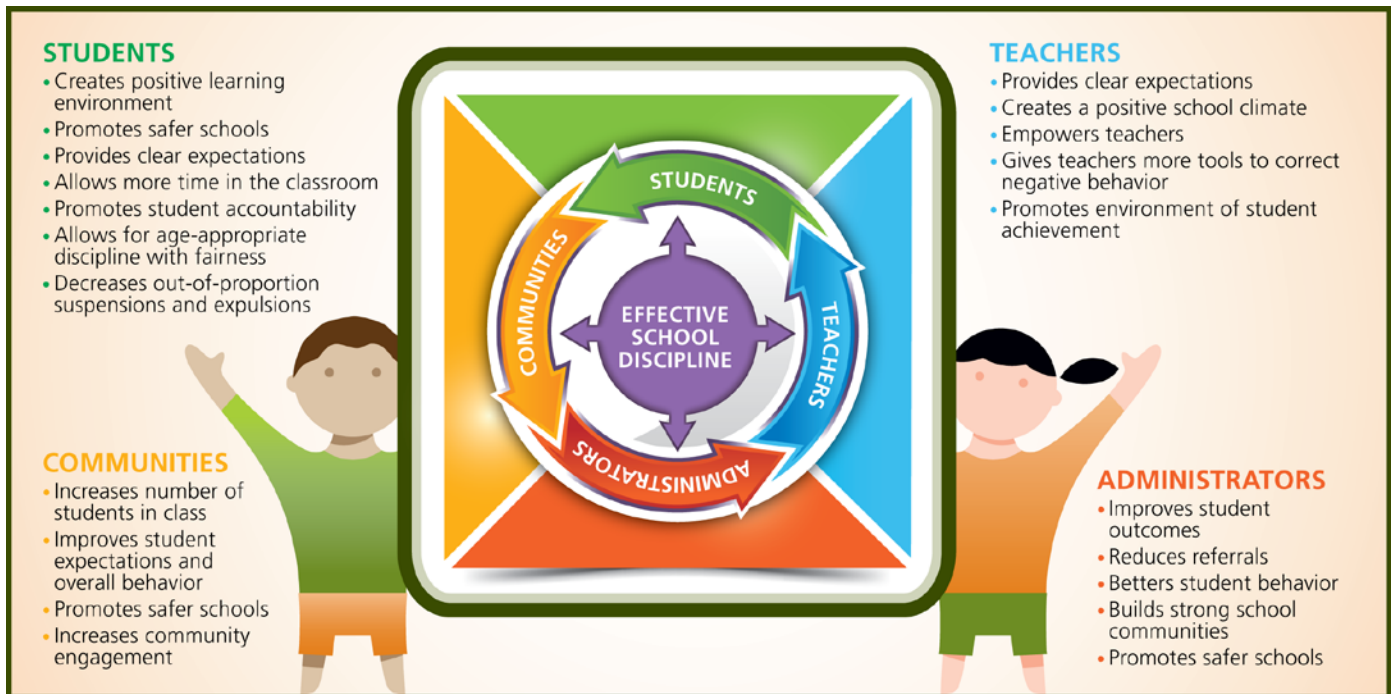
# EFFECTIVE SCHOOL DISCIPLINE

FOR MARYLAND

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## Effective School Discipline Benefits:

Effective school discipline practices and policies improve the learning, teaching and social environment for students, teachers, administrators and the community. Below is a list of benefits for each group.



## Improving Disciplinary Policy

**Local Policy:** To ensure that effective discipline becomes a part of the school culture, the entire system must align with governing policies. Positive school climates can be fostered by improving local student codes of conduct and alternative disciplinary practices. These changes are key to keeping more students connected to school and held accountable for their actions.

**State Policy:** The Maryland State Board of Education (MSBE) recognizes that zero-tolerance policies are not effective in teaching students appropriate behavior and has proposed revisions to the disciplinary regulations. The proposed revisions outline new parameters for out-of-school suspensions and expulsions. In addition the regulations encourage districts and schools to foster an environment of positive school climates and alternative disciplinary practices. The proposal includes an accountability system that aims to decrease the disproportionality of out-of-school discipline for students of color and students with disabilities.

**Federal Policy:** The U.S. Department of Education tracks out-of-school discipline for every school in the country. To find out more information on your school or district, go to <http://ocrdata.ed.gov/>.