



EFFECTIVE SCHOOL DISCIPLINE

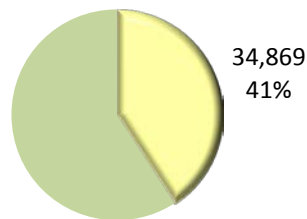
FOR MARYLAND

A Shared Approach to Keep Children in School and Learning

Problem

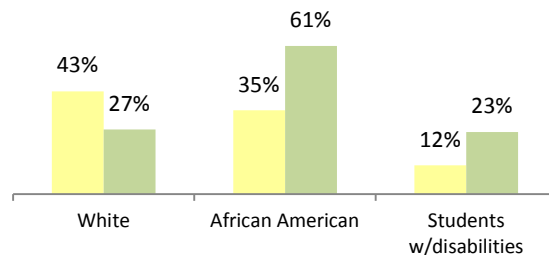
Zero tolerance policies with severe consequences have resulted in more than 50,000 Maryland students—particularly students of color and students with disabilities — being suspended, expelled or arrested annually. Research shows that students with disabilities were twice as likely to be suspended or expelled 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 restorative 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%.





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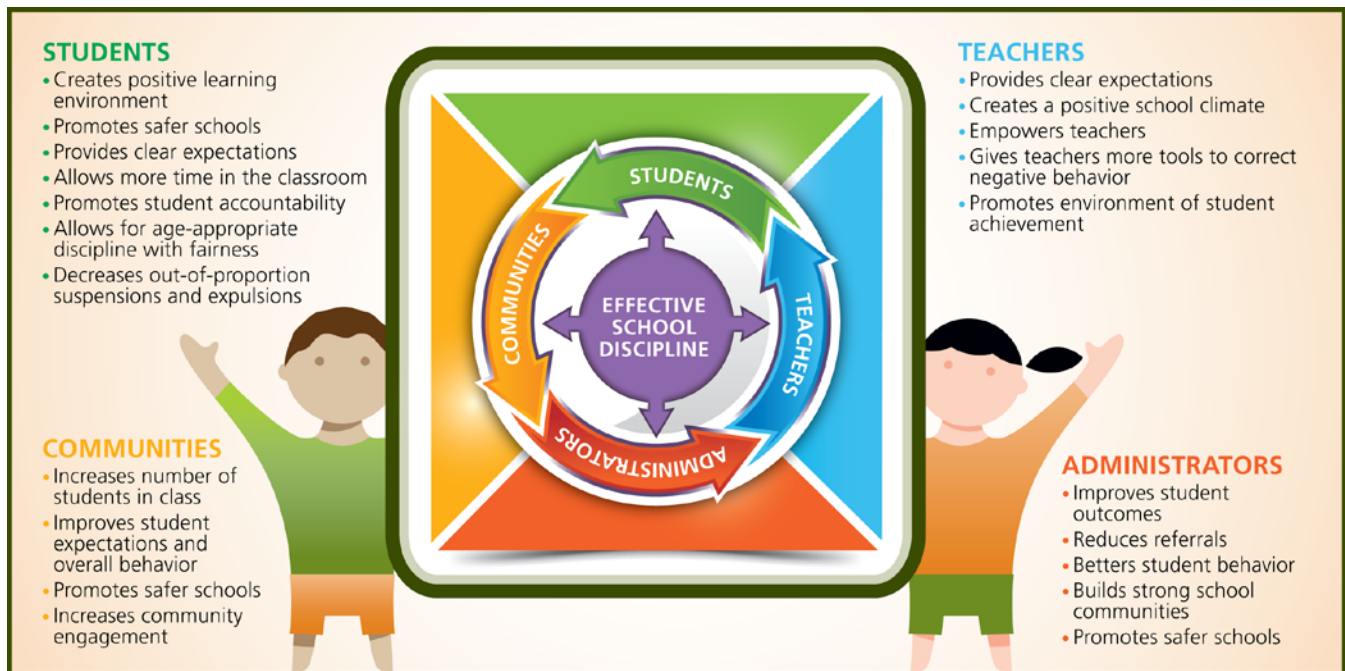
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Recommended Steps in Effective School Disciplinary Reform

1. **Build a Collaborative Team**—Include as many stakeholders as possible throughout all stages of the reform process; it is a great step toward cultivating a safe, supportive school climate and reducing problematic behavior.
2. **Use Data for Success**—Assess the school district's current disciplinary climate by taking a hard and honest look at the disciplinary statistics to identify areas of improvement.
3. **Evaluate Evidence-Based Alternatives**—Commit to building a positive school climate and examine disciplinary alternatives to out-of-school suspensions. Select those which are the best "fit" for schools.
4. **Implement Program and Professionally Develop Staff**—Ongoing staff training is critical to maintaining new disciplinary policies and sustainable implementation.
5. **Monitor Progress**—Evaluate progress regularly and adjust implementation as needed.

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.



For more information, resources and examples regarding Effective School Discipline for Maryland, please visit our comprehensive web tool at www.acy.org.

