Implementing Reform: Success and Challenges

ROBERT MURPHY
How did we get here?
MSDE reports on student discipline

- Taskforce on School Safety 2007
- Taskforce to Raise Compulsory Attendance 2007
- Student Discipline - Review of Local Policies and Procedures December 2007
MSDE reports on student discipline

- African American Male Taskforce Report 2006 and 2008
- Taskforce on Multiple Suspensions 2009
- Taskforce on Suspensions 2010
Context of Discipline

DATA DRIVING CONVERSATIONS
What is the purpose of discipline?
School/ Classroom Suspension Outcomes

- Break from student
- Teach the student a lesson
- Get parents attention
Student Behavior that results in suspension

- Planned
- Reactionary
- Health
The story behind the data

- Proportion of suspension by group
- Transition between elementary/middle and middle/high
- Drivers of suspension increases
- Use of OSS vs. ISS
Alternative Explanations of Disciplinary Disproportionality

- Do black students misbehave more?
  - No supporting evidence
  - May in fact be treated more severely for same offenses
  - Student perceptions of disparity/fairness
  - Greater risk of receiving negative attitudes from their teachers (Spencer 2005)
Impact of student suspension on connectedness

- Isolation
- Characterization
- Alienation
In one experiment, those who felt excluded were less willing to donate money to a student fund, or to help a stranger following a mishap staged as a part of the experiment. They were also more inclined to take irrational, self-defeating risks, and to procrastinate, indulging themselves with pleasurable tasks when they needed to be studying for upcoming tests. (Excerpt from the book Loneliness: Human nature and the need for social connection)
The School community game

- **DO NOT LOOK AT YOUR CARD!**
- The Higher your card the more desirable it is to have lunch with you.
- High-cards Ace, Kings, Queens, Jacks

- Next group 10, 9, 8
- Next group 7, 6, 5
- Next group 4, 3, 2
Take a minute

- With your dominant hand write your full name as many times as you can in 30 seconds.
Take a minute

- With your non-dominant hand write your full name as many times as you can in 30 seconds.
Success

- Since 2006, suspension in Maryland has declined by 40%
- Suspension↓ over 37,000 since 2006
- Reduction for racial groups
  - White students 54%
  - Black students 40%
Reduction in Suspension

Chart Title

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unduplicated number of students suspended</th>
<th>Total number of suspension events</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>2006-2007</strong></td>
<td><strong>2012-2013</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>80,000</td>
<td>120,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>60,000</td>
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<td>0</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Success

- Cohort graduation rate has risen more than 1.5% since 2010
- African American male graduation has risen and cohort dropout rate has declined by over 1 percentage point.
How are work is divided

- Policy (Law, regulations, standards)
- Practice (Implementation)
- Preparation (Knowledge)
How

- Policy
- Practice
  - PBIS
  - Programs
  - MDS3
  - Restorative Practices
  - Dropout Resource Guide
  - Worked with MSEA on teacher skill
How

- Transparency
- Advocacy community
- Roadshow
Future

- Policy
- Practice
  - Best Practices document
  - Discipline Practice Guide
    - Educate parents and school staff on law pertaining to suspension
    - LSS interventions
  - Regional Conferences
- Preparation
Future-Suspension Committee

- Examine how Maryland schools manage suspension
- Develop several models for in-school suspension
- Examine ways to deliver educational services to suspended students
- Develop a practice standard on suspension
Challenges - Community

- Shape shifters
- Parents
- Legislators
- The message
In their own words
Until student standards and discipline are enforced, everything else we try to improved education will fail miserably. Misbehaving students should be provided a small school room with an indestructible computer and a window. With computer aided instruction, they should read a few paragraphs and then play an educational reinforcing game. Next, they repeat the process. This is computer aided funishment (spelling correct). When students see that standards are ENFORCED, the school culture and student characters will improve greatly, within five years.

SERIOUSLY, what job can these students ever have where they will have endless safety nets and no reprocussions for disrupting the work environment? We prepare them for life. There are consequences in life--- the rest of the class and school should not have to suffer consequences because of this!

Robert Murphy
2013
The new regulations severely do nothing to make students accountable for their actions. It is time to stop catering to these disruptive students and make them accountable for their actions. They need to learn that there are severe consequences to their actions!!

Robert Murphy
2013
Although I laud the goal of keeping children in school, many of the suggestions in this study would have a negative effect on well behaved students. Why coddle students with chronic behavior problems at the expense of others in the classroom. As you know, it only takes one troublemaker in a class to disrupt the learning process for the rest of the students.

To sum up my thoughts:
1. Talking back to teachers is entirely unacceptable and leads to chaos in the classroom. There should be no leniency here. A suspension is warranted. Without a severe penalty, students will and have lost respect for a teacher's authority.
2. Violence should warrant suspension and oftentimes expulsion. We live in a violent society, any hint of acceptance of violence (ie minimal punishment) sends the wrong message to students.
3. Bullying for any reason should lead to at least a suspension.
4. Instead of attempting to lower the suspension and expulsion rate of minorities and special ed students, more study should be done on the actual infractions themselves. If either group is more likely to be in a fight for example, then lowering the suspension/expulsion rate rate for that group makes no sense. Instead, increase educational programs to stop fighting, but do not lower the penalties for a particular group, this is discriminatory.

Please do not ruin the educational experience for the majority of well behaved and motivated students in order to baby sit a few bad apples.  

Robert Murphy 2013
The simple fact that you are considering further limiting suspensions and expulsions means you have spent NO real time in a school! Most school administrators pad their numbers so that their schools "bribery tactics to behave" (ex. PBIS) actually look like they work. Suspensions and expulsions don't happen often enough!!! A child's JOB is to behave and learn with no other incentive than good grades. If they cannot do that, then it's on them and their parents to fix the problem and make up the work they miss. The further the school systems get into "raising" children the worse off we as a society are.
Challenges - Policy

- Language
- Costs
- Implementation
  - Local control
  - Supports
Challenges-People

- Conservative v. Liberal
- Preparation
  - Philosophy
  - Where are we finding new teachers?
- Racial
Contact Information

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