



Managing Behavioral Disruptions in Early Grades

Reversing the Rising Frequency and Intensity of Student Misbehavior

District Leadership Forum

EAB: Making Education Smarter

Who We Are

▶ **2007**
Year founded

▶ **1,400+**
Institutions served

▶ **1,200+**
Dedicated
EAB Staff

How We Serve

Identify **proven best practices** for the **most critical challenges** facing education leaders

Provide customized, **on-demand research** to help members meet their immediate needs

Help leaders **engage key stakeholders and accelerate progress** on key initiatives

Introducing the District Leadership Forum

▶ **2017**
Year founded

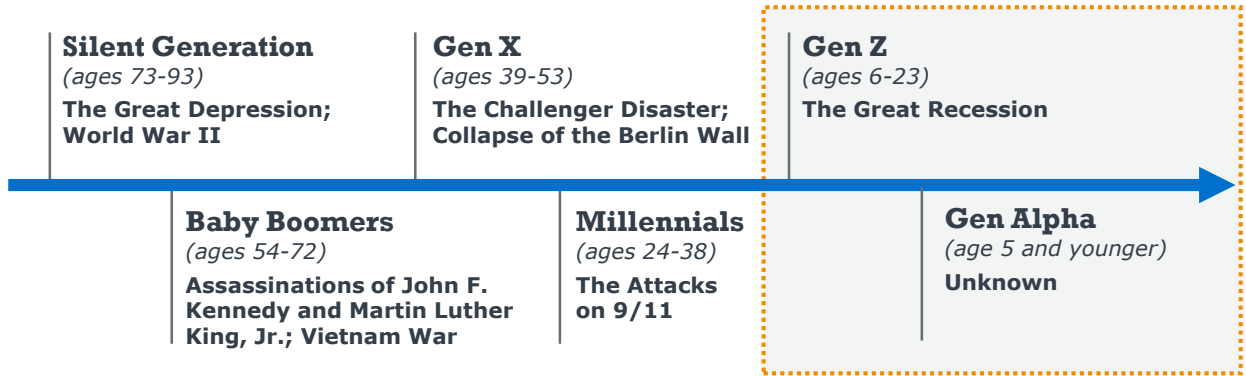
▶ **101**
Member districts

▶ **29**
States represented

Talking 'bout My Generation

Generations Commonly Shaped by Defining Moments

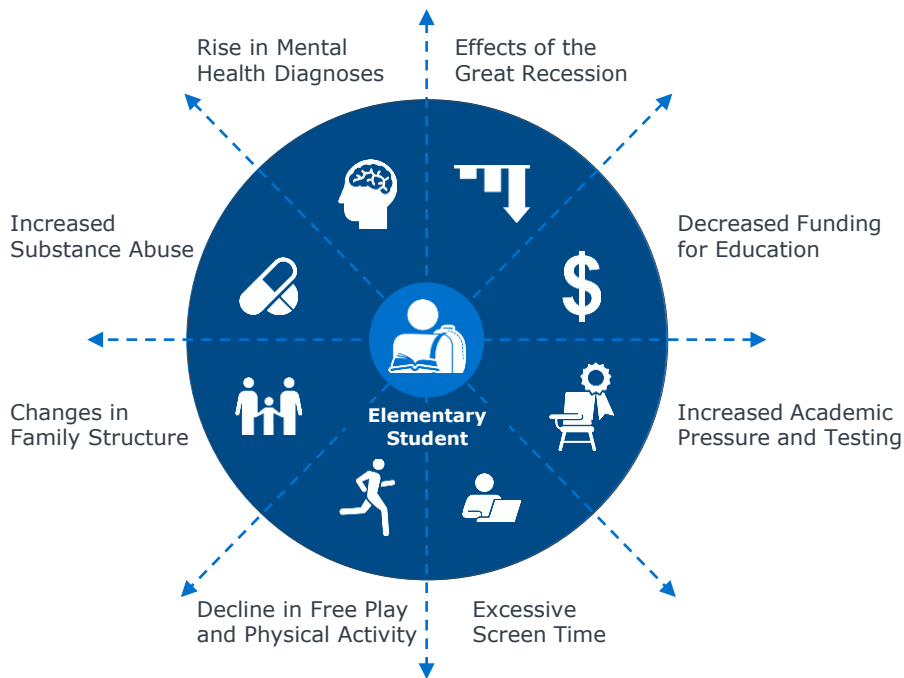
Examples of Historical Events that Defined the Formative Years of Generations



Beloit Mindset List

- Was first created by Tom McBride, former director of public affairs at Beloit College, in 1998
- Has become an annual tradition, enumerating many of the distinguishing characteristics of that year's incoming freshman class
- Is circulated internationally among educators as a reminder of the cultural traits and realities of the generation they are now teaching

Students Surrounded by Distractions and Distress



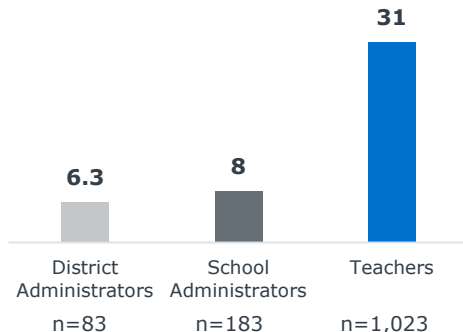


Disruptive Behavior High on the Priority List

Rising Number of Disruptions Reported by Administrators and Teachers

District Leaders May Underestimate Real Size of the Problem

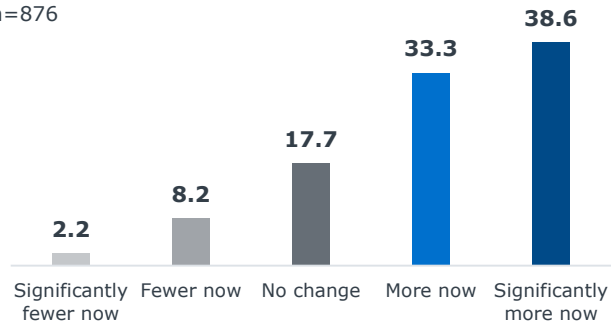
% of Student Population Exhibiting Severe Behavioral Disruptions, By Educator Type



Teacher Perceptions Reveal a Disturbing Trend in Disruptive Behavior

% of Teachers Responses Indicating Trends in Behavioral Disruptions over the Last Three Years

n=876



“I have an affluent part of my district and a part with lower socioeconomic status and there's not much difference between what schools report with regard to kids in crisis.”

Superintendent, MO

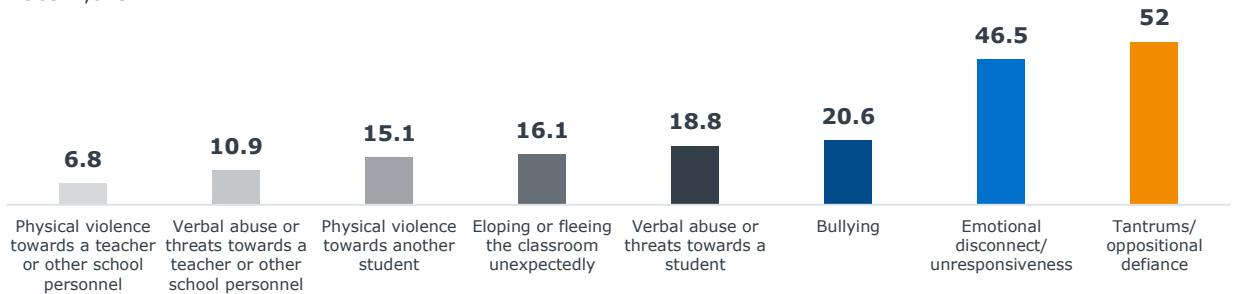


Various Negative Behaviors Eroding Instructional Time

Disruptive Behavior Occurs Often, Takes Many Forms

% of Teachers Reporting the Following Disruptions Occur Frequently (Several Times per Week) or Very Frequently (Several Times per Day)

n=989-1,023



Behavioral Disruptions Take a Significant Toll On Instructional Time

Average Time per Week Teachers Spend on Discipline

Gates Foundation, Teacher-Reported, 2012

n=10,212

  **1:30 hr.**

Average Instructional Time per Week Lost to Behavioral Disruptions

DLF Survey, Teacher-Reported, 2018

n=942

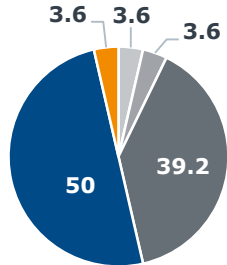
   **2:24 hr.**

Schools Expand Student Support Services

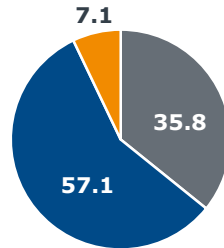
Variety of School Resources Available to Address Disruptive Students

% of District Responses Indicating How Support Staffing Has Changed in Response to Rising Behavioral Disruptions Over the Last Three Years, by Support Staff Role

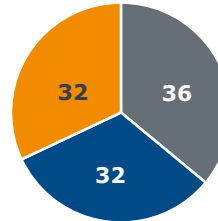
Counselors
(n=28)



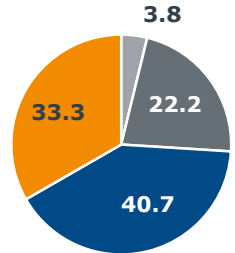
Psychologists
(n=28)



Mental Health Support Specialists
(n=25)



Behavioral Aides/Specialists
(n=27)



Decreased significantly
 Decreased slightly
 Remained the same
 Increased slightly
 Increased significantly

A Growing Educational Mandate

"...The introduction of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act placed much of the responsibility for student mental health on the education system, at least for students whose mental health could be linked to educational success."

Mental Health Interventions in Schools in High-Income Countries, Lancet Psychiatry, 2015



Increased Staffing Unlikely to Meet Rising Demand

Building Student Relationships with All Staff Necessary to Address Problem

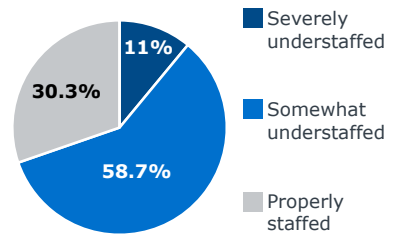
Despite Increases, Support Staff Ratios Still Far from Ideal



1:250
Recommended ASCA¹ ratio

1:482
Average national ratio

Districts' Perception of Current Support Staff Capacity to Meet Student Needs (DLF Survey Data)



Behavior, Discipline, and Mental Health Require Effort from All Educators

It Takes a Village

"Though increased funding for school counselors will help the issue, most mental health issues are not identified in random contact with school counselors. **This often requires relationship building, something that is more likely to be accomplished by teachers, mentors, or peer support efforts.**"

School Counseling Resources Stretched Thin at Most Schools, Education Dive, 2018



1) American School Counselor Association.
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Source: "School Counseling Resources Stretched Thin at Most Schools," Education Dive, March 7, 2018, <https://www.educationdive.com/news/school-counseling-resources-stretched-thin-at-most-schools/518568/>; DLF Managing Disruptive Behaviors Survey, 2018; EAB interviews and analysis.

Punishment is a Common Response to Misbehavior



Various Exclusionary Practices Still the Norm Across Schools

Punitive Discipline Takes Many Forms



Out-of-school suspensions



In-school suspensions



Taking away recess, rewards, etc.



Calling parents into school to pick up child

Low Average National Rate (2.6%) Masks Significant Disparities By Race, Gender, and State¹



Highest suspension rate in the US (5.1%)



Largest suspension rate gap between black (14.3%) and white (1.8%) students

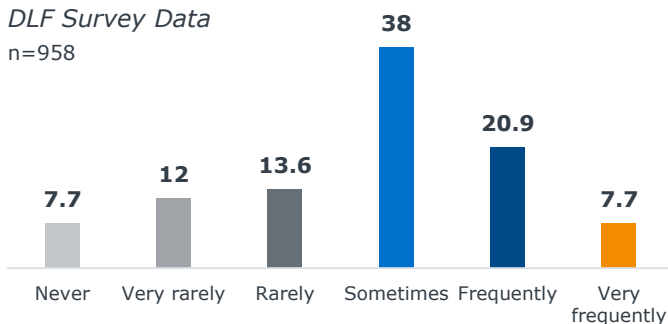


Rates for boys (3.8%) higher than for girls (1.1%)

% of Elementary Teachers Who Say They Withhold Recess and Rewards as a Form of Punishment

DLF Survey Data

n=958



1) All figures below are for elementary schools.

Source: "Discipline Disparities for Black Students, Boys, and Students with Disabilities," United States Government Accountability Office, Report to Congressional Requesters, March 2018, <https://www.gao.gov/assets/700/690828.pdf>; "Are We Closing the School Discipline Gap," The Center for Civil Rights Remedies, February 2015, https://www.civilrightsproject.ucla.edu/resources/projects/center-for-civil-rights-remedies/school-to-prison-folder/federal-reports/are-we-closing-the-school-discipline-gap/AreWeClosingTheSchoolDisciplineGap_FINAL221.pdf; DLF Managing Disruptive Behaviors Survey, 2018; EAB interviews and analysis.

Does Punishment Work?

Exclusionary Discipline Harmful to Both Disruptive and Well-Behaved Students

Variety of Punitive Practices are Ineffective at Improving Disruptive Student Behavior



"Exclusion from recess for bad behavior in a classroom deprives students of physical activity that can contribute toward improved behavior in the classroom."

Center for Disease Control, 2014



"In-school suspension was associated with lower grade point averages and increased likelihood of high school dropout. These findings raise caution about the use of in-school suspension [...] as an alternative to out-of-school suspension."

Blaire, C. et al., Predictors and academic outcomes associated with in-school suspension, 2018

Removing the "Bad Apples" Does Not Help Others Learn



Study In Brief:

Suspending Progress: Collateral Consequences of Exclusionary Punishment in Public Schools (2014)

- Follows ~17,000 students in 17 middle and high schools across 3 years
- Finds that *"high levels of out-of-school suspension [...] are associated with declining academic achievement among non-suspended students, even after adjusting for a school's overall level of violence and disorganization."*



The Continuing Need to Rethink Discipline (*The White House, 2016*)

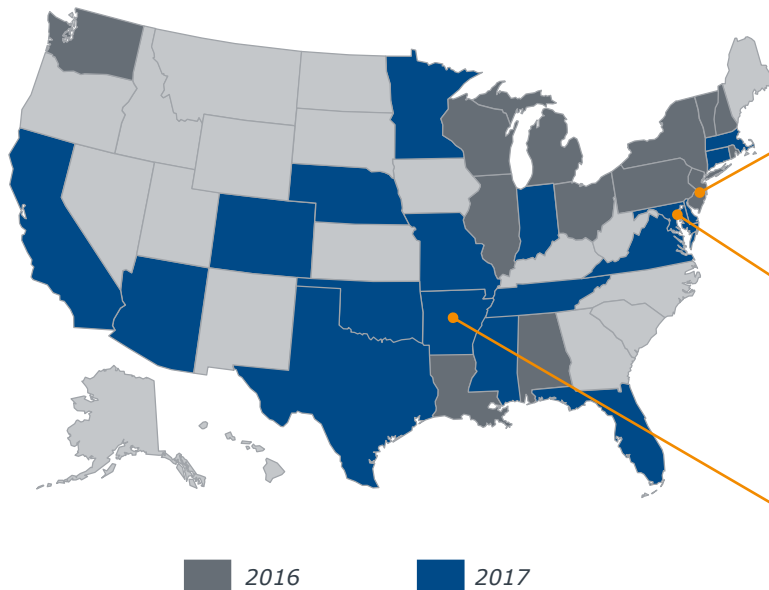
"Suspensions, expulsions and other exclusionary discipline policies and practices can be detrimental for not only school climate, but can also negatively impact student learning and success as well as social and emotional development."

Exclusionary Discipline Increasingly Out of Favor

Multiple States Consider Legislation to Limit Suspensions and Expulsions

States Considering Legislation Limiting Punitive Action in Schools

Examples of Enacted State Legislation



NJ: Requires districts to implement an early detection and prevention program to identify and support students with disciplinary problems (PK-2)

MD: Companion bills prohibit expulsions and suspensions in PK-2 (allow for federal law exceptions)

AR: Prohibits out-of-school suspension or expulsion K-5, with some exceptions

School Leaders Offered a Large Menu of Options...



... But Various Roadblocks Make It Hard to Achieve Tangible Results



Inconsistent Implementation

Districts let schools choose what and how to implement, leading to dramatic variation from school to school



Lack of Fidelity

Staff skepticism of the "latest initiative" leads to unwillingness to adopt practices and ultimately erodes implementation



No Accountability

Initiatives started without clear district mandate, ownership, or measure of success, making them hard to sustain

A Tale of Missed Opportunities

Schools' Reactive Approaches to Disruptions Fail to Address Student Needs on Time

Mapping the Journey of a Disruptive Student



Student Behavior



School Response

- 1** *Student internalizes personal or school issues, does not trust adults at school enough to share and get help*

➔ *School has no way of identifying the student as at-risk because they have not acted out yet*
- 2** *Student repeatedly acts out with increasing intensity, behavior is the only outlet of built up frustration*

➔ *Teacher cannot manage escalating behavior, refers student to principal's office for punishment*
- 3** *Student punished for misbehavior, misses school, lags behind peers, and grows increasingly defiant*

➔ *School engages support resources to address behavior and build coping skills*
- 4** *Group intervention not effective in the short run, student continues to act out*

➔ *Multiple tier 2/3 interventions attempted, student placed in alternative education setting as last resort*

Missed Opportunities at Every Step

Schools should invest in preventive measures to identify at-risk student early, rather than wait for the student to act out

Schools should better prepare teachers to manage disruptive behavior and work to change punitive discipline policies

Skill-building and behavior support resources should be employed early, not only as a response to student behavior

Alternative placement should be used as a temporary setting to allow student to build skills before being used as a last-resort measure

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Reversing the Rising Frequency and Intensity of Student Misbehavior

1

Prevent Misbehavior Through Early Intervention



1. Transition Program for Incoming High-Risk Kindergarteners
2. Universal Behavioral Screening to Identify Students in Need of Support
3. Teacher Home Visit Program
4. Trusted Adult-Student Relationship Mapping

2

Create Conditions for Positive Classroom Behavior



5. Self Regulation-Friendly Classroom Audit
6. Expanded Time for Free Play
7. Districtwide PBIS Implementation
8. Standardized Behavior Guidelines and Data Collection

3

Promote the Social Emotional Well-Being of Students and Teachers



9. Direct Instruction of Key Social-Emotional Skills
10. Embedded SEL Routines for Adults
11. Teacher Burnout Coping Supports

4

Enhance Support for Higher-Needs Students



12. Trauma-Informed Perspective of Student Behavior
13. Cross-Functional Behavior Health Intervention Team
14. Cognitive Behavioral Support for Students with a History of Trauma
15. Reintegration-Focused Alternative Classroom

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Missing an Opportunity for Early Identification

Despite Evidence of Effectiveness, Universal Screening Still Not the Norm Why Screen Students for Behavioral and Emotional Issues?

Tested and Validated



High average (0.5-0.8) positive predictive values¹ of most universal screeners

Very high average (0.92-0.98) negative predictive values² of most universal screeners

Endorsed by Multiple Entities



- PBIS
- Surgeon General
- SAMHSA³
- NASP
- The White House
- American Psychological Association



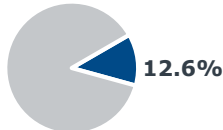
“The key step in reform is to move school-based psychological services from the back of the service delivery system, in which only students at the highest level of risk receive services, to the front of service delivery through **the use of universal, proactive screening.**”

NASP Position Statement: Mental and Behavioral Health Services, 2015

Adoption of Recommended Practice Slow Across the Country

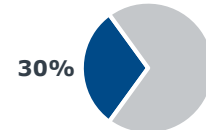
Nationwide Sample, 2014

n=454



DLF Member Survey, 2018

n=30



Percentage of districts using universal screening

Source: National Association of School Psychologists. (2015). The importance of mental and behavioral health services for children and adolescents (Position statement). Bethesda, MD. <https://www.nasponline.org/x26827.xml>; Bruhn, Allison L. et. Al., "A Preliminary Investigation of Emotional and Behavioral Screening Practices in K-12 Schools," Education and Treatment of Children, 37 (4), pp. 611-634, 2014, <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1070185>; Jenkins, L. et. al., "A Critical Review of Five Commonly Used Social-Emotional and Behavioral Screeners for Elementary or Secondary Schools," Contemporary School Psychology 18(4), 2014, <http://psycnet.apa.org/record/2016-24252-005>; DLF Managing Disruptive Behaviors Survey, 2018; EAB interviews and analysis.

1) Of those identified at-risk, proportion of correctly identified.
 2) Of those identified not at-risk, proportion of correctly identified.
 3) Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.
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Misconceptions Hinder Widespread Adoption

Concerns Reveal Limited Understanding of What Screening Should Be Used For

Common Concerns about Universal Screening...

...Are Driven by Faulty Assumptions



"We Will End Up Labeling Students if We Screen Them"



- Practice already common in other areas (reading, math)
- Screening identifies need for support, not potential threats
- Aversion reinforces stigma associated with behavioral and mental health



"Screening Will Identify Too Many Students and Stretch Our Support Resources"



- Number of students identified through screening similar to numbers from teacher referrals
- Proactive approach more cost-effective in the long run



"We Don't Need Universal Screening, Teachers Already Refer Students"



- Standardized screening procedure reduces teacher bias
- Teacher referrals usually come after a disruption has occurred

Establishing a Reliable Procedure Critical to Success

Proliferation of Tools Makes Universal Screening Accessible to Any District

Basic Considerations for Adopting Universal Screening



Choose an evidence-based tool in consultation with mental health staff



Characteristics to Consider:

- Cost
- Time to administer
- Complexity
- What it measures



Secure parental consent via opt-in/out




Train teachers on properly using selected tool



Screen several times a year for continuous identification

Multiple Reliable Instruments Available

| Tool | Advantages | Disadvantages |
|--------------------|---|---|
| BIMAS | Progress monitoring; identifies positive skills; electronic scoring | Only available in English; no student self-report option until age 12 |
| BASC-3 BESS | Very high validity and reliability; excellent online tools; multiple raters | Fairly complex to administer; expensive |
| SAEBRS | | |
| SDQ | | |
| SSBD | | |
| SRSS | | |
| SSIS-PSG | | |
| EBS | | |



Detailed list of evidence-based universal screeners and their advantages and disadvantages available in Appendix

Source: Pierce, Corey D., et. al., "Applied Examples of Screening Students At Risk of Emotional and Behavioral Disabilities," *Intervention in School and Clinic* 2016, 52(1), pp.6-11., <http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/1053451216630276>; Jenkins, L. et. al., "A Critical Review of Five Commonly Used Social-Emotional and Behavioral Screeners for Elementary or Secondary Schools," *Contemporary School Psychology* 18(4), 2014, <http://psycnet.apa.org/record/2016-24252-005>; EAB interviews and analysis.

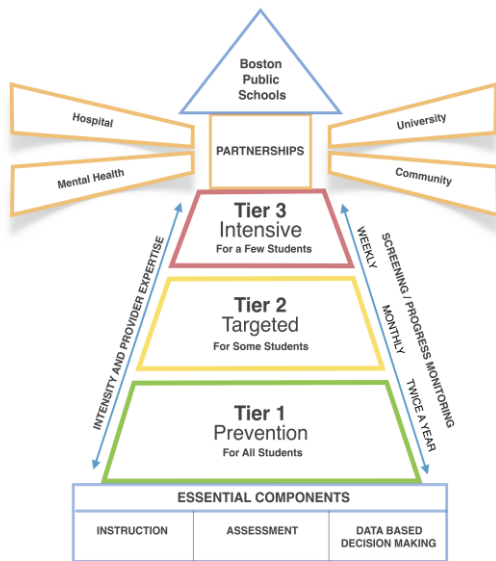
Comprehensive Supports Address Student Behavior

Boston's CBHM¹ Aims to Provide Relevant Support to Every Student

Comprehensive Behavioral Health Model Overview

Profiled Institution:

Boston Public Schools, Boston, MA



Key Model "Non-Negotiables" for Participating Schools



Strong leadership and accountability at district level, including data monitoring and resource support



Universal screening to provide schools with actionable data and a way to track progress



PBIS¹ implementation in all CBHM schools



Implementation of social-emotional learning curriculum as a universal support instructs all students on critical social skills



School psychologists at each building designated as point people to support CBHM implementation

1) Comprehensive Behavioral Health Model.
2) Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports.
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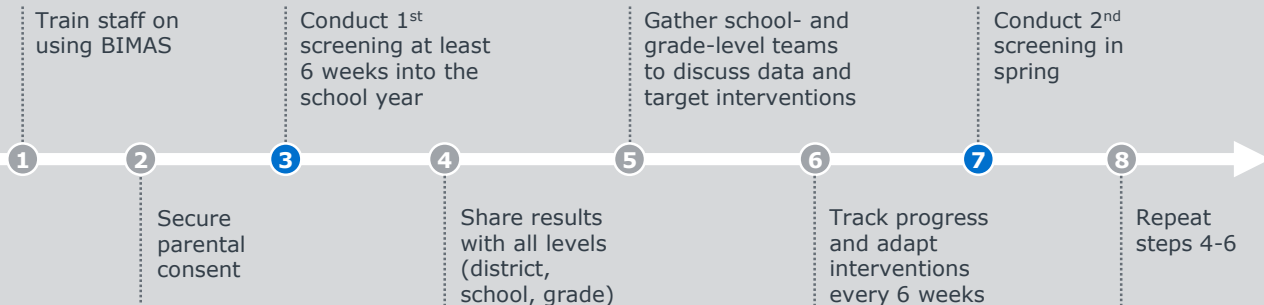
Screening Process More than Just an Assessment

Profiled Institution:

Boston Public Schools, Boston, MA



Timeline of Universal Screening at Boston Public Schools



Lessons from Successful Implementation



Track Multiple Levels of Data

Evaluate individual, class, grade, school, and district data to better target interventions



Keep Teachers Informed and Supported During Process

Dedicate time to conduct screening and have administrators help teachers during process



Set Screening as Basis for Targeted Support

Use assessment to raise awareness, inform practices, and provide early interventions

Assessment Enables Targeted Action Planning

“Grow the Green” Initiative Aims to Address Broad “Tier 1” Student Supports



BIMAS Assessment Results

Provides 3-tiered risk or strength assessment for the student body on 5 different scales:

3 Behavioral Concern scales (risk):

- Conduct
(externalizing concerns)
- Negative Affect
(internalizing concerns)
- Cognitive/Attention
(focus, memory, etc.)

2 Adaptive scales (strength):

- Social
(communication, friendships)
- Academic Functioning
(study skills, attendance, etc.)



Screening Data Helps Whole-School Team Develop Universal Interventions

Principal, assistants, teachers, MH¹ professionals, counselors meet to discuss schoolwide data

Team selects appropriate tier 1 interventions to address specific population needs

Example

Screening identifies high number of students at risk for internalizing issues. Tier 1 team conducts classroom observations to help teachers implement SEL¹ lessons focused on coping skills, conflict resolution, and communication.

Team also works with lunch/recess monitors to reinforce positive social skills during unstructured activities.

Team develops **6-week plan** to implement, adapt, and measure effects of chosen intervention



Whole-School planning tool available in the Appendix

1) Mental Health.

2) Social-Emotional Learning.

Assessment Enables Targeted Action Planning (cont.)

Further Interventions Designed to Address Individual Classroom Concerns



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(*study skills, attendance, etc.*)



Grade-Level Team Addresses Classroom and Individual Needs

Teachers, counselors, and paraprofessionals discuss grade-level, classroom, and individual data

Team chooses necessary interventions across all 3 tiers to address the needs of students and equip teachers with the right tools to support them

Example

If screening identifies **over 20%** of students in a classroom as at-risk on any of the 5 BIMAS categories, student support teams automatically choose appropriate group interventions for the students, taking into account their academic needs as well.

Team develops **6-week plan** to implement, adapt, and measure effects of chosen intervention



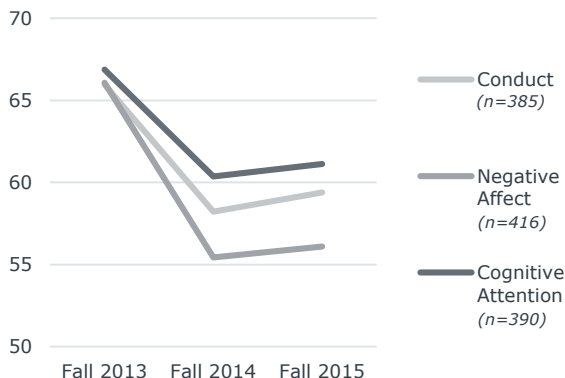
Grade-Level planning tool available in the Appendix



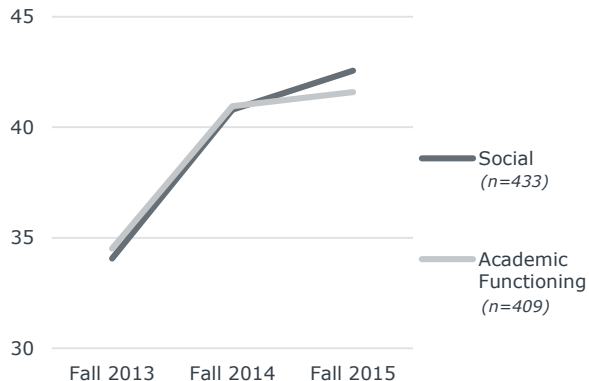
Data-Driven Approach Improves Variety of Outcomes

Universal Screening Facilitates Integration of Support Services

Trends in Student Outcomes Among Students At-Risk¹ for Behavioral Concerns



Trends in Student Outcomes Among Students At-Risk² for Adaptive Concerns



“Whether you use a screener or not, students who need support but may not be getting it still exist in our schools. **So using a screener is one way to make sure more of those students get the supports they need.**”

Jill Snyder Battal, School Psychologist, Boston Public Schools

1) Average score of all students identified in “some risk” or “high risk” categories. BIMAS defines scores of ≥ 70 as “High risk,” 60-69 as “Some risk,” and < 60 as “Low risk.” Mean score = 50.
 2) Average score of all students identified in “some risk” or “high risk” categories. BIMAS defines scores of ≤ 40 as “Concern,” 41-59 as “Typical,” and ≥ 60 as “Strength.”

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Improving School Environment Begins in the Classroom

Disruptive Behavior Harms Both Students and Teachers, Impedes Learning

Disruptive Classrooms Take a Heavy Toll on Teachers

44%



Of US teachers who left the profession cited disruptive student behavior as a reason for leaving (2005)

53%



Of US teachers who moved schools cited disruptive student behavior as a reason for moving (2005)

Positive Environment Can Be Created In Multiple Different Ways



“A positive school environment is defined as a school having appropriate facilities, well-managed classrooms, available school-based health supports, and a clear, fair disciplinary policy.”

National Center on Safe Supportive Learning
Environments

Practice 5:

Self Regulation-Friendly
Classroom Audit

Practice 6:

Expanded Time for Free Play



Practice 7:

Districtwide PBIS Implementation

Practice 8:

Standardized Behavior Guidelines
and Data Collection

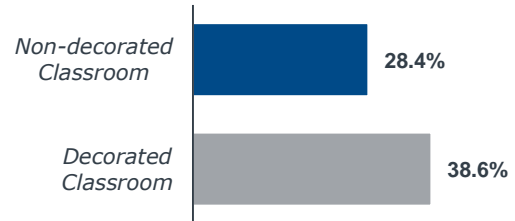
Study in Brief: Visual Environment, Attention Allocation, and Learning in Young Children



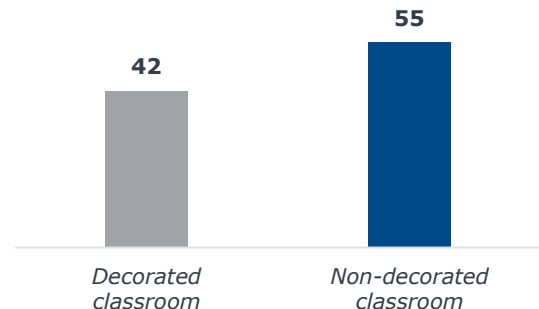
- Randomized controlled trial of 24 kindergarteners placed in six different classrooms
- Children were taught six introductory science lessons on material they previously had not been taught
- Found that children in highly decorated classrooms were **more distracted, spent more time off-task, and learned less** than if they were in classrooms with no decorations



% of Time Spent Off-Task



% of Accurate Responses on Test Questions





Understanding the Theory to Change the Practice

Rondout SD 72 Transforms Physical Space from Triggering to Comforting



Educate Adults about Environmental Triggers

- Licensed OT¹ teaches educators, parents on environmental effects on children's brains
- Presentation focuses on how light, sound, temperature affect behavior
- Teacher study groups and ongoing PD² sessions discussing neuroscience research help teachers understand how principles can be applied in practice



Modify the Physical Space to Support Student Growth

- Teachers reorganize their classrooms in order to:
 - Decrease clutter and reduce colors
 - Vary types of space (e.g., individual, collaborative)
 - Provide more natural or incandescent light
 - Create alerting and calming areas
 - Allow standing desks and moving chairs



Teach Students to Use Spaces Effectively

- Teachers educate students on using the newly-designed space
- Examples include:**
- Using calming corners
 - Calming themselves down via blankets or beanbag chairs
 - Alerting themselves via obstacle courses and other physical activities in the classroom

Profiled Institution:

Rondout School District 72, Illinois



RONDOUT SCHOOL
and District 72

1) Occupational Therapist.

2) Professional development.

Enabling Teachers to Quickly Modify Classroom

Checklist Allows Educators to Address Student Needs





2-page checklist allows teachers to systematically scan the classroom for important potential stressors

Grouping helps teacher think in categories: visual clutter, lighting, noise, hydration and nutrition, seating options, smells

Classroom Environment Checklist

When designing a classroom environment, you must take into account stressors that may be present that can impact a child's learning and behaviour. Using the checklist below, identify what you have in place and what you can strive towards to make your classroom as Self-Reg friendly as possible.



| Stressor | Classroom as the "Third Teacher" Examples |
|--|--|
| Visual Clutter  | <input type="checkbox"/> All surfaces (e.g. desks, shelves) in the classroom are free of excess clutter <input type="checkbox"/> Walls and bulletin boards are organized with information grouped simply <input type="checkbox"/> Desk sized copies of tools usually displayed on walls (e.g. number or letter lines) are available to students, and neatly put away when not being used <input type="checkbox"/> Desk top study carrels to reduce visual input when working at a desk <input type="checkbox"/> The floor is clear and clean |
| Lighting  | <input type="checkbox"/> Lighting is adjusted throughout the day according to the arousal needs of the classroom <input type="checkbox"/> Natural lighting is maximized where available <input type="checkbox"/> Fluorescent lighting is minimized where possible <input type="checkbox"/> Differently lit areas are available for students to access, based on their preferences (a bright area, and a dimmer lit area) <input type="checkbox"/> Curtains to create a darker area and use of lamps for ambiance |
| Noise  | <input type="checkbox"/> Excess noise is reduced where possible (e.g. weather stripping on doors) <input type="checkbox"/> Reverberation is reduced (e.g. carpets, egg cartons on walls) <input type="checkbox"/> Noise cancelling headphones or earbuds are available or allowed <input type="checkbox"/> Electrical humming from lights, heating/cooling vents, electronics, etc. is minimized <input type="checkbox"/> A non-startling noise used to indicate class change overs or breaks (e.g. a rain stick) |
| Hydration & Nutrition  | <input type="checkbox"/> Access to water at desk <input type="checkbox"/> Regular hydration breaks available throughout the day <input type="checkbox"/> Healthy meals served from the cafeteria <input type="checkbox"/> Encourage healthy snacks <input type="checkbox"/> Spare water and healthy snacks in classroom |

Provides specific guidance on how to adjust the classroom



Full Classroom Environment Checklist available in the Appendix

Profiled Institution:

The MEHRIT Centre, Canada



Easy to Spot the Change in Environment

Educating Teachers Leads to Improved Classroom Experience for Students



Typical Elementary School Classroom

▼ Classroom Conducive to Better Self Regulation



Managing Behavioral Disruptions in Early Grades

Reversing the Rising Frequency and Intensity of Student Misbehavior

1

Prevent Misbehavior Through Early Intervention



1. Transition Program for Incoming High-Risk Kindergarteners
2. Universal Behavioral Screening to Identify Students in Need of Support
3. Teacher Home Visit Program
4. Trusted Adult-Student Relationship Mapping

2

Create Conditions for Positive Classroom Behavior



5. Self Regulation-Friendly Classroom Audit
6. Expanded Time for Free Play
7. Districtwide PBIS Implementation
8. Standardized Behavior Guidelines and Data Collection

3

Promote the Social Emotional Well-Being of Students and Teachers



9. Direct Instruction of Key Social-Emotional Skills
10. Embedded SEL Routines for Adults
11. Teacher Burnout Coping Supports

4

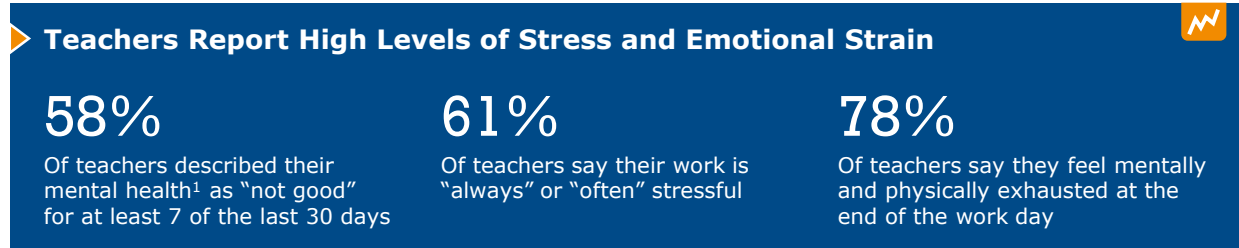
Enhance Support for Higher-Needs Students



12. Trauma-Informed Perspective of Student Behavior
13. Cross-Functional Behavior Health Intervention Team
14. Cognitive Behavioral Support for Students with a History of Trauma
15. Reintegration-Focused Alternative Classroom

Concerns Over Teacher Well-Being

But Support Systems Not Keeping Pace with Mental, Emotional Strain



Strategies to Support Teacher Wellness Often Insufficient or Overlooked



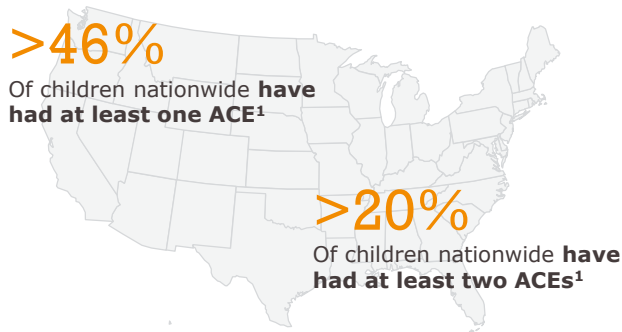
1) Including stress, depression, or emotional challenges.

2) Voluntary, work-based programs that offer free and confidential assessments, short-term counseling, referrals, and follow-up services to employees who have personal and/or work-related problems.





Trauma a Significant Driver of Student Misbehavior

With a Troubling Impact on Students' Behavioral and Social Functioning

Early Traumatic Experiences Prevalent Across the Country



District Leaders See Many Sources of Trauma in Their Own Communities

-  **Family instability**
(e.g., abuse, neglect, parental drug use)
-  **Sudden incidents**
(e.g., accident, death)
-  **Natural disasters**
-  **Refugee populations**

Children Who Face Adverse Events More Likely to Struggle in School

2x

Children ages 6+ with two or more ACEs are **twice as likely to be disengaged from school**

4x

Children ages 3 to 5 with two or more ACEs are four times more likely to:

- Have trouble **calming themselves down**
- Be **easily distracted**
- Struggle to **make and keep friends**

1) Adverse Childhood Experience.

Understanding the Impact of Adversity

Research Shows Toxic Stress Can Hinder Children's Cognitive and Social-Emotional Development



Children exposed to chronic poverty-related stressors experience **reduced gray matter volumes** in the frontal and temporal cortex and the hippocampus¹

3-4%

Below developmental norms for families **at 150% of poverty line**

8-9%

Below developmental norms for families **at 100% of poverty line**

“Adjusting for potential confounders [...] experiencing ACEs is associated with below-average language and literacy skills, math skills, **attention problems, social problems, and aggression.** [...] With few exceptions, increased ACEs were associated with increased odds of below-average academic skills and behavior problems.”

Jimenez et. al., "Adverse Experiences in Early Childhood," 2016

1) Parts of the brain responsible for planning complex cognitive behavior, personality expression, decision making, moderating social behavior, emotional association, among other functions.

Sources: Blair, C. Raver, C., "Poverty, Stress, and Brain Development: New Directions for Prevention and Intervention," *Academic Pediatrics*, April 2016; Jimenez, M. Wade, R. Lin, Y. Morrow, L. Reichman, N., "Adverse Experiences in Early Childhood and Kindergarten Outcomes," *American Academy of Pediatrics*, February 2016; EAB interviews and analysis.

Lack of Understanding Exacerbates Student Issues



Knowledge Important First Step in Changing Teacher Mindset and Approach

Study in Brief: *"Impact of Trauma-Informed Care Professional Development on [...] Knowledge, Dispositions, and Behaviors Toward Traumatized Students"*



Large, urban school district



552 participants, classified and certified staff



3.5 hour trauma-informed care (TIC) professional development



Pre-post test, 52 item *Trauma-Informed Care Dispositions Survey*

Found that TIC¹ professional development resulted in a **statistically significant change in:**

- Overall knowledge of TIC
- Self-ratings on 21 of 26 disposition subscales
- Self-ratings on 9 of 10 behavior subscales

2x

Teachers **lacking an empathetic mindset** are twice as likely to suspend students over the course of the school year²

Sample Disposition Measures

"I feel empathy for students when they are having problems"

"I try to look at student's side of a disagreement before making a decision"

"I give students opportunities to make choices and decisions"

"I believe it is important to learn about students and their community"

Sample Behavior Measures

"I utilize strategies with the intent to create a safe environment for students"

"I use active listening strategies when interacting with students"

"I give students positive reinforcement for good behavior"

1) Trauma-Informed Care

2) 9.6% suspension rate versus 4.8 %

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Sources: Goodwin-Glick, K., "Impact of Trauma Informed Care Professional Development on School Personnel Perceptions and Knowledge Dispositions, and Behaviors Toward Traumatized Students," Bowling Green State University Graduate School of Education, May 2017; Parker, C., "Teacher Empathy Reduces Student Suspensions," Stanford University, April 2016; EAB interviews and analysis.

Providing a Trauma-Informed Point of View

Growing Number of Frameworks Exist to Create Trauma-Informed Schools

Popular Trauma-Informed Care Frameworks Share Four Main Components

| |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Flexible Framework, Helping Traumatized Children Learn <i>(Massachusetts Advocates for Children)</i> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compassionate Schools Initiative <i>(Washington State OSPI¹)</i> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Sanctuary Model <i>(By Dr. Sandra L. Bloom)</i> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child Trauma Toolkit for Educators <i>(National Child Traumatic Stress Network)</i> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trauma-Informed Schools Initiative <i>(Missouri DESE²)</i> |



Schoolwide focus to address broad impact of toxic stress rather than providing treatment only to those experiencing acute trauma symptoms



Dedication to a safe school environment
(e.g., physical safety, psychological safety, orderly and welcoming learning environment)



Building student skills
(e.g., resilience, coping, relationship building)



Building staff capacity to support students experiencing toxic stress, trauma
(e.g., instructional strategies, effective discipline, strategies to prevent burnout)

Despite Interest, Districts Take Fragmented Approach to Trauma-Informed Care



Efforts exclusively at school, individual level
(e.g., book reads, conferences)



District-developed training available, but optional for interested staff

1) Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction
2) Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

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