

The Equity Project at Indiana University

Our Mission

The Equity Project is a consortium of projects dedicated to providing high quality data to educational decision-makers in order to better understand and address issues regarding educational equity and bridge the gap between research and practice.

Our mission is to provide evidence-based information specific to issues of school discipline, school violence, special education and equality of educational opportunity for all students. Specifically, we (a) provide data on these issues, (b) focus on understanding the causes and conditions that create inequities, and (c) provide support and technical assistance to educational agencies seeking to create equitable school systems.

The Equity Project supports educators and educational institutions in developing and maintaining safe, effective, and equitable learning opportunities for all students.

Our Current Projects

PBIS Indiana: Establishing a Statewide Network of Culturally Responsive Positive Behavior Supports

PBIS Indiana is working to create a statewide network of culturally responsive positive behavior interventions and supports (CR-PBIS). PBIS Indiana works with schools and districts throughout the state, to develop a model of culturally responsive PBIS, and provides technical assistance to schools addressing compliance issues related to disparities in discipline. PBIS Indiana is collaborating closely with national leaders in the field to establish a statewide CR-PBIS network. We work closely with the Center for Education and Lifelong Learning at IU (CELL) on this project.

Race and Gender Disparities in Discipline: A Research to Practice Collaborative

The Equity Project is the lead institution for the Collaborative, designed to identify promising directions in research on disparities in school discipline by race, gender, and gender identity. The national panel meets quarterly to (a) complete a strategic status report, (b) support intervention research in the area including bullying prevention, and (c) hold a national conference on the issue.

Evaluation of Indiana's LEA Data for Special Education Indicators

The Equity Project works with the Indiana Department of Education to analyze statewide discipline and special education eligibility data to identify school districts out of compliance with respect to the disproportionality requirements of the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). We also provide technical assistance to identified districts.

School Disciplinary Climate and Educational Outcomes for African American Students

This is the second phase of research that explores African American disproportionality in school suspension and expulsion. In this phase, the Equity Project is conducting four case studies in urban and suburban schools to identify factors that may contribute to racial disparities in discipline at the school level.

The Equity Project

Center for Evaluation and
Education Policy

1900 East Tenth Street
Bloomington, Indiana
47406

812-855-4438

equity@indiana.edu



INDIANA UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF EDUCATION



CENTER FOR EVALUATION
& EDUCATION POLICY

Discipline Disparities:

A Research-to-Practice Collaborative

Supported by:



Discipline Disparities: A Research to Practice Collaborative

Discipline Disparities in the use of school discipline by race, gender, and sexual orientation have been well-documented, and continue to place large numbers of students at risk for short- and long-term negative outcomes. In order to improve the state of our knowledge and encourage effective interventions, the Discipline Disparities Research to Practice Collaborative, a group of 26 nationally known researchers, educators, advocates, and policy analysts, came together to address the problem of disciplinary disparities. Funded by Atlantic Philanthropies and Open Society Foundations, the Collaborative has spent nearly three years conducting a series of meetings with groups of stakeholders – advocates, educators, juvenile justice representatives, intervention agents, researchers, and policymakers—in order to increase the availability of interventions that are both practical and evidence-based, and to develop and support a policy agenda for reform to improve equity in school discipline.

The project has funded eleven new research projects to expand the knowledge base, particularly in the area of intervention, and commissioned papers from noted researchers presented at the **Closing the School Discipline Gap Conference**. A culminating report of the Collaborative's work is the formal release of the **Discipline Disparities Briefing Paper Series** three papers on policy, practice, and new research summarizing the state of our knowledge and offering practical, evidence-based recommendations for reducing disparities in discipline in our nation's schools. Additionally, the Collaborative has developed three supplementary research papers designed to help address many commonly held beliefs about discipline disparities.

The Equity Project has served as the lead institution for this collaborative of national scholars who have joined forces to identify and present known issues and solutions for implementation related to disparity in school outcomes. Our center hosts and maintains the literature sources created by the collaborative on our website.

To View Collaborative Publications, Visit:

<http://www.indiana.edu/~atlantic/>

Discipline Disparities Series

- Overview
- Interventions
- Policy Recommendations
- New Research
- Acknowledging Race

Supplementary Papers

- Black Misbehavior
- Implicit Bias
- Myths vs. Facts

Discipline Disparities Newsletters

The Equity Project
and
The Center on
Education and
Lifelong Learning
at
Indiana University



Contact:

The Equity Project
Center for Evaluation
& Education Policy
Indiana University

1900 East Tenth Street
Bloomington, Indiana
47406

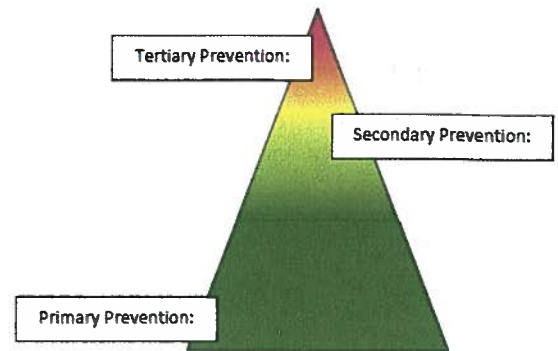
812-855-4438
equity@indiana.edu

Culturally Responsive Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports

What is PBIS Indiana?

PBIS Indiana is working to create a statewide network of culturally responsive positive behavior interventions and supports (CR-PBIS). PBIS Indiana:

- Works with school districts throughout the state
- Provides regional training for schools and district leadership teams
- Works intensively with six demonstration sites
- Is developing a model of culturally responsive PBIS
- Is providing technical assistance to schools addressing compliance issues related to disparities in discipline



PBIS Indiana is collaborating closely with national leaders in the field to establish a statewide CR-PBIS network.

What is culturally responsive practice?

Culturally responsive practice is intended to ensure that all groups are benefitting equally from instruction and classroom management practices. It is often applied for race and ethnicity, but should be considered whenever there is a group with poorer educational outcomes.

It involves a set of congruent educator/stakeholder behaviors, attitudes, and policies that come together in a system which works for all children.

At the classroom level, a culturally responsive approach to educational intervention means:

- Being aware of cultural differences
- Examining teaching materials and practice and
- Adapting programs and interventions, as appropriate, to respond to different student needs.

On an institutional level, culturally responsive practice involves:

- Monitoring the effects of programs and interventions for all students, especially those from groups that have been historically marginalized.

At its heart, cultural responsiveness involves self-reflection, continuous examination of data, raising difficult and sometimes awkward questions about why some students succeed and others do not, and making adjustments that can improve the instructional/disciplinary match for all groups of students.

What is culturally responsive PBIS?

Culturally responsive PBIS (CR-PBIS) is a framework for integrating issues of race, ethnicity, and culture into SWPBS implementation in order to ensure that the activities and outcomes of PBIS equally benefit all groups of students. Since disproportionality in disciplinary outcomes means that standard discipline systems are not working equally well for everyone, the goal of culturally responsive PBIS is to make strategic additions to the standard PBIS framework in order to address the needs of all groups in implementing schools or districts.

Is CR-PBIS meant to replace standard PBIS implementation?

No. Culturally responsive PBIS is an approach that ensures that, at strategic points in the implementation of PBIS, issues of race, ethnicity and culture are considered. In this way, disproportionality in discipline may be addressed as a school issue in much the same way that PBIS addresses other issues, such as patterns of problem behavior, location of referrals, and the need for targeted group interventions.

Our school is highly homogeneous in terms of racial/ethnic diversity. Is CR-PBIS relevant for us?

Yes, CR-PBS is still relevant in schools without high levels of racial or ethnic diversity. Although many of the most significant differences in discipline in our schools have to do with race and ethnicity, there are other groups, such as students with disabilities or low-income students for whom there may be disparities in discipline. While there may be a pressing need for CR-PBS where there is already an identifiable difference in disciplinary outcomes for at least one group, CR PBIS, like standard PBIS implementation, greatly enhances schools' capacity to respond to change. Many Indiana schools can expect the current realities of changing demographics to continue.

What types of changes are made in culturally responsive PBIS?

For example, in addition to considering school-wide data, disciplinary data are also disaggregated by race and ethnicity so that the team can determine the extent of difference in ODRs or suspensions for different groups. A second important point of entry for CR-PBS is in the interpretation of data, encouraging school teams to ensure that all stakeholders are at the table and that a variety of reasons for disparities are considered. Third, the PBS team considers the extent to which interventions to be implemented are culturally responsive, that is, that they meet the needs and will likely benefit all groups.



INDIANA UNIVERSITY

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

Discipline Disparities:

A Research-to-Practice Collaborative

DISCIPLINE DISPARITIES: MYTHS AND FACTS

While the extent of and reasons for disciplinary disparities have been well documented for at least the last 40 years, a number of inaccurate assumptions and myths remain popular but lack research support. This fact sheet describes many of the most common claims about disciplinary disparities, and what research actually says about them.¹

MYTHS	FACTS ¹
Disparities aren't really due to race, class, or sexual orientation; they are really about the challenges of poverty, inadequate home lives, and violent communities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Poverty does not fully explain racial disparities (<i>New Research Brief</i>, p. 2). School factors are stronger predictors of disparities than individual student factors or the reasons students are suspended for (<i>New Research Brief</i>, p. 3).
Racial disparities are really due to worse behavior among students of color.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is no evidence that racial disparities in discipline are due to higher rates of misbehavior by Black students (<i>New Research Brief</i>, p. 2). If anything, those students are punished more severely for similar or less serious behaviors than their peers (<i>New Research Brief</i>, p. 2).
Suspension and expulsion are used infrequently and to prevent or punish series acts of misbehavior.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exclusionary discipline is actually used extensively, especially for Black males: 1/3 to 1/2 of all students will experience at least one suspension or expulsion during their K-12 careers; moreover, nearly 70% of Black males will experience at least one suspension or expulsion while in school (<i>Policy Brief</i>, p. 2). Suspension is used mostly for non-safety threatening incidents (<i>Policy Brief</i>, p. 1). The greatest disproportionality in discipline for Black students is based on subjective and relational-based issues such as "defiance" and "disruptive behavior" (<i>Policy Brief</i>, p. 5).
Disciplinary disparities are evident only for Black students.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disparities have been documented most often for Black students, and are the most extreme for Black males (<i>New Research Brief</i>, p. 2). There is consistent evidence of disparities for students with disabilities, Native American students, and Hispanic/Latino students (at the middle and high school level), and emerging evidence of disparities for LGBT students, girls of color, and English language learners (<i>New Research Brief</i>, p. 2). Most extreme differences are at the intersection of these groups, e.g., Black males with a disability (<i>Policy Brief</i>, pp. 3-4).

MYTHS	FACTS
<p>While a powerful symbol, there is really no evidence that the “school-to-prison pipeline” actually exists.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The consequences of school exclusion are devastating—lower academic achievement, higher truancy, higher dropout, higher contact with the juvenile justice system, and lower local and state economic growth. Disparities in discipline mean that certain students are more likely to experience these negative outcomes (<i>Policy Brief</i>, pp. 4-5).
<p>Disparities are solely due to individual teachers and principals</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disparities in discipline are systemic and determined by a number of policy and practice factors (<i>Overview Brief</i>, p. 2; <i>Interventions Brief</i>, p. 2). • The context of schooling and conditions for learning—including policy decisions at the national, state, and local levels; educator philosophies and practices; and unequal access to quality teaching, a rigorous and meaningful curriculum, and resources—determine disparities and should be prioritized in disparity reduction efforts (<i>Interventions Brief</i>, p. 2).
<p>There is very little schools can do to eliminate disparities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are a number of promising strategies schools can and are using for disparity reduction, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offering supportive relationships among and within school staff and students, including repairing relationships caused by misbehavior (<i>Interventions Brief</i>, pp. 3, 8-9), • Enhancing academic rigor for all students (<i>Interventions Brief</i>, p. 4), • Engaging in culturally relevant and responsive instructions and interactions (<i>Interventions Brief</i>, pp. 4-5), • Establishing bias-free classrooms and respectful school environments (<i>Interventions Brief</i>, pp. 5-6), • Using teacher professional development systems to focus on improving teacher-student relationships (<i>Interventions Brief</i>, p. 4), • Employing structured decision-making processes to student threats of violence (<i>Interventions Brief</i>, p. 7), and • Changing disciplinary codes of conduct to be aligned with positive school climates (<i>Policy Brief</i>, p. 7).
<p>There is really very little community organizations; advocates; and local, state, and federal policymakers can do to reduce disparities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community leaders and policymakers can demand or require annual collection of disaggregated disciplinary data be made publicly available (<i>Policy Brief</i>, p. 8). • Policymakers at the local, state, and federal levels can prioritize financial and human capital resources to approaches that reduce disparities (<i>Policy Brief</i>, pp. 8-9). • Local community organizations can organize and advocate for policy and practice changes in their communities, similar to those occurring in many states and districts across the country (<i>Overview Brief</i>, pp. 2-3; <i>Policy Brief</i>, pp. 3, 8).

¹ Each of the facts is supported by research cited in one of the four Discipline Disparities Collaborative briefing papers, which can be found online at: rtpcollaborative.indiana.edu. *Overview Brief* refers to *Discipline Disparities Series: Overview* (Carter, Fine, & Russell), *Interventions Brief* refers to *How Educators Can Eradicate Disparities in School Discipline* (Gregory, Bell, & Pollock), *Policy Brief* refers to *Eliminating Excessive and Unfair Exclusionary Discipline in Schools* (Losen, Hewitt, & Toldson), and *New Research Brief* refers to *New and Developing Research on Disparities in Discipline* (Skiba, Arredondo, & Rausch).