

**Minnesota Department of Human Rights and Independent School District No. 14,
Fridley, Minnesota
Collaboration Agreement**

The Minnesota Department of Human Rights (the Department) is the agency of the State of Minnesota responsible for enforcing the Minnesota Human Rights Act.

Independent School District No. 14, Fridley (the District) provides public education to school-aged children within its district.

It is the State of Minnesota's mission to provide a system for lifelong learning, to ensure individual academic achievement, an informed citizenry, and a highly productive work force. This system focuses on the learner, promotes and values diversity, provides participatory decision-making, ensures accountability, models democratic principles, creates and sustains a climate for change, provides personalized learning environments, encourages learners to reach their maximum potential, and integrates and coordinates human services for learners. The public schools of this state shall serve the needs of the students by cooperating with the students' parents and legal guardians to develop the students' intellectual capabilities and lifework skills in a safe and positive environment. Minn. Stat. §120A.03.

The Department and District share mutual goals to ensure:

- Learning occurs in safe and supportive environments;
- Every student has an equal opportunity to fully participate in and to succeed in a quality education; and
- The District applies its student discipline policies and procedures in a non-discriminatory manner.

The Department and District have a strong a commitment to:

- Work together on behalf of the District's students to ensure their success; and
- Collaborate and use their best efforts to improve student academic achievement by reducing suspension and expulsion for students and address any disparity for students of color and students with disabilities.

The Department and District acknowledge that the unnecessary use of exclusionary discipline can have serious, long term, and detrimental effects on student engagement and academic achievement.

The Department and District acknowledge that teachers and students deserve school environments that are safe, supportive and conducive to teaching and learning.

The Department and District recognize that there are many strategies that can be implemented within a school environment and that the District should have the ability to select the specific strategy it feels is best for its school community.

The Department and District recognize that there are several federal and state educational mandates for the District to achieve. The Department and District recognize that the District should have flexibility in crafting a Plan that is best suited for its school community.

The Department and District recognize that enhanced alignment of government programs and services seeking to assist low-income households and eliminate homelessness may have a positive impact on reducing behaviors that could result in suspension and expulsion.

The Department and District recognize that the Department will affirmatively seek to assist the District in securing resources among private foundations, private businesses, and governmental units to support efforts within the District to reduce the need to suspend or expel students.

Therefore, the Department and District, collectively referred to as Parties, agree as follows:

1. On or before September 15, 2018, the District will develop and submit a final Strategic Discipline Plan (Plan) to the Department. An initial draft of the Plan is attached as Exhibit A to this Agreement. The parties shall use their best efforts to resolve any outstanding issues with the final Plan within 15 days of its submission to the Department. When agreed to by both parties, the final Plan shall be incorporated into this Agreement as Exhibit B. At a minimum, the Plan will identify or address the following:
 - a. The role and responsibilities of the Board, Superintendent, Principals, and other relevant individuals to ensure discipline is properly implemented as identified within the Plan;
 - b. The tracking system the District uses to track office referrals, partial day dismissals, in-school and out-of-school suspensions, expulsions, and exclusions at each school site and how and when the District will analyze this data;
 - c. Applicable policies and procedures and the process for policy revisions, including how the District will engage its students, parents, and teachers in the policy revisions;
 - d. School Resource Officers are not involved in recommending or determining student discipline or in investigating incidents of student discipline that do not involve a crime;
 - e. A comprehensive training and professional development plan for teachers and administrators on the District's selected educational strategies and best practices that are designed to address student behavioral issues in the classroom; and
 - f. The District's engagement efforts to ensure input from students, parents, and teachers so the District can obtain qualitative data on a regular and on-going basis throughout the length of this Agreement.
2. The District will submit semi-annual reports to the Department demonstrating its efforts to comply with the provisions of this Agreement and to implement its Plan. The District will provide semi-annual reports by September 1 of each year, and the second semi-annual report by February 1. The September report will address activity for the preceding months of January through June. The February report will address activity for the preceding months of

July through December. The first semi-annual report is due to the Department on September 1, 2018.

3. At a minimum, the semi-annual report will include the following information for each strategy identified in the Plan:
 - a. The intended outcome;
 - b. Specific steps for the District to implement the strategy;
 - c. Metrics the District developed to measure the effectiveness of the strategy; and
 - d. Any changes implemented by the District in light of results in the reporting period.

 4. The semi-annual report will also include the following information:
 - a. The date the student was suspended or expelled;
 - b. The race, ethnicity, national origin and gender of the student suspended/expelled;
 - c. Whether the student is a student with a disability;
 - d. The reason(s) for the student's suspension or expulsion;
 - e. The length of the suspension or expulsion; and
 - f. Dates the student was previously suspended or expelled during the academic school year.

 5. The Parties acknowledge that the release of information concerning this matter is governed by the Federal Educational Rights and Privacy Act, 20 U.S.C. 1232g, the Minnesota Human Rights Act, Minn. Stat. §§ 363A et. seq., the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act, Minn. Stat. §§ 13.03 et. seq., and the Official Records Act, Minn. Stat. §§ 15.17 et. seq. The District acknowledges the Department's position that it may seek educational data under Minn. Stat. § 363A.06, Subd. 1(a)(9) pursuant to a lawfully issued subpoena and the Department acknowledges the School District's notification obligations to parents and/or students and that Students or Parents have a right to challenge the release of educational data pursuant to a subpoena or court order. The Department agrees that any personally identifiable educational data received from the District pursuant to a subpoena will not be re-released unless ordered by a Court of competent jurisdiction. The Department agrees to maintain any educational data received from the District pursuant to a subpoena in a secure manner with restricted internal Department access to such educational data.

 6. The Department, in collaboration with the Minnesota Department of Education ("MDE"), school districts, and charter schools, will create a Diversion Committee during the 2017-2018 school year. The District will designate a representative or representatives to serve on the Diversion Committee.

 7. The purpose of the Diversion Committee is to review and analyze aggregate suspension data of school districts and charter schools and to develop and create best practices for reducing suspension and expulsion rates for students of color and students with disabilities.

 8. The Diversion Committee may consider creating subcommittees as necessary to meet its purpose, which could include the following:
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- a. DIRS – Create greater clarity for schools on the conduct schools should report to MDE;
 - b. Strategies– Best practices for understanding, teaching, evaluating, and monitoring implementation of strategies;
 - c. Implicit Bias – Best practices for understanding, teaching, evaluating, and monitoring implementation of implicit bias education; and
 - d. Engagement – Best practices for ensuring student, teacher, and community involvement that leads to qualitative assessment.
9. The Diversion Committee will provide information and recommendations to the Department. Based on the information and recommendations made by the Diversion Committee, the Department will:
- a. Coordinate external stakeholders to drive toward community-based solutions;
 - b. In collaboration with MDE, publish technical guidance on best practices to reduce suspension and expulsion rates for students of color and students with disabilities;
 - c. Facilitate conversations with other government units to explore ways to eliminate duplication of services, barriers for families and students, and improve data sharing;
 - d. Facilitate a legislative policy report;
 - e. Provide technical assistance on civic engagement;
 - f. Provide feedback to District on policies, efforts to reduce suspensions, and data analysis; and
 - g. Use its best efforts to secure resources from private foundations, private businesses, and other governmental units, such as MDE, Minnesota Department of Human Services, Minnesota Department of Health, public housing agencies, and counties.
10. The Parties agree that the Parties may make public: (a) the terms of this Collaboration Agreement and (b) the information classified as public data under the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act. The Parties agree to provide each other drafts of any intended press releases or responses to media inquiries related to this Collaborative Agreement, and the Parties will attempt to work collaboratively on the content.
11. If a Court of competent jurisdiction, for any reason, holds any part of this Collaboration Agreement invalid, unlawful or otherwise unenforceable, such decision shall not affect the validity of any other part of the Collaboration Agreement.
12. The Parties have mutually agreed to enter into this Collaboration Agreement to work together on a nation-wide and state-wide issue. This Collaboration Agreement is not an indication or an admission of any liability or wrongdoing by or on behalf of either Party. The Department has not made a probable cause discrimination finding against the District and has not found a violation of the Minnesota Human Rights Act.
13. This Collaboration Agreement begins on the date that the Parties execute it and ends on ~~September 1, 2021.~~

14. The Parties to this Collaboration Agreement acknowledge that they have read and have gained an understanding of the terms of the Collaboration Agreement, that legal counsel has represented them or they had the opportunity to retain legal counsel, and they are voluntarily entering into this Collaboration Agreement.
15. This Collaboration Agreement may be executed in multiple counterparts, which shall be construed together as if one instrument. In addition, any Party shall be entitled to rely on an electronic copy of a signature as if it were the original. The Parties have caused this Collaboration Agreement to be signed on the dates opposite their signatures.
16. Minnesota law will govern the construction and interpretation of this Collaboration Agreement. No rule of strict construction shall apply against either Party as both Parties equally drafted the Collaboration Agreement. The Parties agree that any action regarding interpretation or adherence to the terms of the Collaboration Agreement shall be filed in Ramsey County District Court.
17. If either Party believes that the other is in material breach of this Collaboration Agreement, that Party will notify the other in writing and will identify the specific provisions of this Collaboration Agreement the Party believes has been breached. The Party will request a meeting with the other to resolve the outstanding issue. A Party may initiate judicial proceedings to enforce this Collaboration Agreement only if the Parties reach an impasse after negotiating in good faith for 30 days.

Date

July 17, 2018

Mary Kay DeLore
 Mary Kay DeLore, School Board Chair
 Fridley School District

Date

July 18, 2018

Kim Hiel
 Kim Hiel, Superintendent
 Fridley School District

Date

7/19/18

Kevin M. Lindsey
 Kevin M. Lindsey, Commissioner
 Minnesota Department of Human
 Rights

Strategies for Reducing Student Suspensions

Fridley's vision is to develop an educational foundation for students

- To be life-long learners
- To develop high skill levels
- To care for others
- To be adaptable
- To be prepared to thrive in a diverse, changing society

Fridley Public Schools, ISD 14, School Board Priorities:

1. Improving academic achievement and ensuring high levels of school performance.
2. Using instructional strategies recognized as most-effective within the field, instructional strategies that are linked to high levels of student achievement.
3. Creating a positive, safe and respectful environment for student learning.
4. Continuing to build financial stability in Fridley schools by planning and executing financial plans.
5. Improving parent, school and community partnerships.

ISD 14 Mission: As a world class community of learners, Fridley Public Schools aims to develop internationally minded students. We challenge ourselves, our students, and our community to become caring and knowledgeable life-long learners who inquire and take action to create a better world.

Strategies for Reducing Student Suspensions

Action Step		
Positive School Climate	Person Responsible	By When
Annual review and updated of district student-parent handbook and annual review of applicable district policies	Superintendent and Building Principals	Annually
Annual review of district policies	Superintendent	Annually
Program evaluation of positive school climate programs and practices	Director of Educational Services, Director of Special Services, and Building Principals	2018-19
Districtwide Restorative Practice Plan	Director of Special Services	2019-20
Superintendent Student Advisory Committee	Superintendent	2018-19
Developing positive student to student and staff to student	Director of Special Services	Ongoing

relationships: PBIS, CLR, EMR, Link Crew, AVID, TCIT, ADSIS for Behavior	Director of Educational Services and Building Principals	
Quarterly Meetings with School Resource Offices and Police Chief. The School Resource Officers are not involved in the decision-making regarding the discipline of students.	Superintendent	Annually
Professional Development/Curriculum	Person Responsible	By When
Teachers, administrators, and support staff trained in Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Classroom practices, which includes cultural awareness and awareness of explicit and implicit bias.	Director of Educational Services and Building Principals	Ongoing
Instructional Coaches at all sites have extended training in Culturally Responsive Teaching practices and support teacher implementation	Director of Educational Services	Ongoing
All district subject area teams conduct an audit of current culturally responsive instructional practices	Director of Educational Services	2018-19
All district subject area teams set goals for improving culturally responsive instructional practices	Director of Educational Services	2019-20
Trauma Informed Care training for all professional staff	Director of Special Services	Beginning 2018-19
Crisis Prevention Intervention for Special Education staff and administrators	Director of Special Services	Ongoing
Behavior strategies and management training for classroom teachers (PBIS, CLR, CPI, EMR, Link Crew, AVID, TCIT)	Director of Educational Services	Ongoing
Behavior Coaches (TCIT) for elementary who work with teachers	Building Principals and Director of Special Services	Beginning 2018-19
Response to behavior	Person Responsible	By When
Consistent office referral forms across the district	Director of Educational Services	2019-2020
Social Workers to engage with students and families at all sites and link families to resources beyond the school	Director of Special Services and Building Principals	Ongoing
Individual student interventions to be recorded centrally for progress monitoring	Director of Special Services	2019-2020
Restorative circles at every site	Director of Special Services	2019-2020
Alternative to suspension program to be established for students otherwise facing out of school suspension	Director of Educational Services, Director of Special Services and Secondary Principals	2018-2019
Principal consultation with Superintendent prior to any student suspension of greater than two days	Building Principals	2019-2020
Develop and implement consistent district-wide pre-suspension protocols for out of school suspension	Director of Educational Services Director of Special Services	2018-2019
Develop and implement consistent district-wide post-suspension review process for out of school suspension	Director of Educational Services Director of Special Services	2018-2019

Develop data visualization tools of behavior data which allows administrators to disaggregate by behavior type, resolution type, demographic categories, location and person who made referral. These visualizations should also show any disproportionality that may exist.	Director of Educational Services and Director of Special Services	2018-19
Monitoring Progress	Person Responsible	By When
Monthly meetings with Principal to review all referral and suspension data, broken down by race, gender, and disability status	Superintendent	Ongoing
Annual update on suspensions to the School Board	Superintendent	Ongoing
Hiring Practices	Person Responsible	By When
Plan for recruitment and retention of staff which reflect our student population, consistent with applicable law	Director of Human Resources	Ongoing
Affinity groups for staff of color	Director of Human Resources	2018-2019