



**Minnesota Department of Human Resources Agreement
In-Progress Review of Actions in Support of the Agreement Between Minnesota
Department of Human Rights and Special School District No.1, Minneapolis Public
Schools**

5-February-2021

Introduction

Minneapolis Public Schools (MPS) agreed to provide regular status updates to the Minnesota Department of Human Rights (MDHR) on its activities designed to eliminate disparities in discipline outcomes. The purpose of this report is to respond to and provide status updates about these requests. MPS continues to support adaptive change in all spaces to eliminate discrimination and disparities in outcome for all students. Since the time of the last report, MPS continues in distance learning. The district is shifting to in person learning for elementary schools beginning in February.

Items Contained in this Report

In accordance with the Minnesota Department of Human Rights Agreement this report contains information in support of agreements 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7. The MDHR agreements, status of each agreement and action steps to be taken are presented in this report.

1. The District agrees to submit reports to include its efforts related to African American students, Native American students and students with disabilities. The District will provide information to the Department on its efforts to reduce suspension disparities for African- American students, Native American students and students with disabilities. The District agrees to provide this information to the Department separately and to provide it on the following dates:

November 30, 2020

February 1, 2021

June 15, 2021

November 30, 2021

The reports to be supplied by the District are encompassed throughout this Agreement.

MDHR Request: The District will provide information to the Department on its efforts to reduce suspension disparities for African- American students, Native American students and students with disabilities.

Status: The District has been conducting online learning since March 19, 2020. It has not had any in person learning; therefore, no suspensions have been reported to date.

	Suspension	Out-of-School Removal	In-School Removal	Rec for Expulsion	Consult with Law Enforcement	Req for Admin Transfer	No Action Taken	No Action Recorded	Other Response	Total Referrals
2020-21	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	30	30
2019-20	2,739	485	656	44	186	15	96	0	2,870	6,102
2018-19	3,088	520	635	65	228	18	293	0	3,116	6,852
2017-18	2,959	790	600	58	246	6	508	2	3,357	7,597
2016-17	2,542	597	681	80	266	10	390	8	5,235	8,778
2015-16	2,465	384	464	61	361	20	228	2,115	7,299	12,451
2014-15	2,727	298	1,584	0	0	0	0	829	11,624	16,954
2013-14	3,981	533	1,269	0	0	0	0	458	8,866	25,053

There have been 30 behavioral incidents logged since the beginning of the school year with outcomes that range from restorative conversation to a phone call to care provider, but zero incidents resulting in suspension. In addition, the District uses a software platform called Gaggle. During this time of Distance Learning specific challenges in supporting the mental and emotional health needs of students arise. To ensure student safety while online and to provide an added payer of support for school teams, the District has enlisted Gaggle to help monitor student interactions on the G-Suite. to ensure student safety while online and to provide an added layer of support for our staff, MPS has recently enlisted Gaggle to help monitor student interactions on the G-Suite. The District is actively monitoring chats and postings for inappropriate content and follows up as appropriate with warning messages. Language or images that are flagged for review are sent to school sites for follow up.

Action Steps: In February of 2021, the District’s elementary students will be returning to in person learning district wide. The district is currently working with all building site to ensure a smooth transition to the classroom and continues to reinforce that student and staff have not been in the classroom for over 10 months and that grace and patience are needed for all persons involved. Each school site has a district engagement team assigned to assist with student, staff, and disciplinary concerns.

2. The District will review its revised student discipline policies, practices and procedures and make further revisions, as necessary. In doing so, the District will take into account any recommendations or suggestions made by the student committees and working groups referenced. The District will ensure that its student discipline policies, practices and procedures, as currently in place and as revised during the implementation of the agreement.

MDHR Request: The District will review its revised student discipline policies, practices and procedures and make further revisions, as necessary.

Status: Beginning in August 2020, a district team has been working on re-writing the discipline handbook, which is used to determine if a student can be suspended. This team also focused on removing subjective language found within behavior definitions. In addition, the team has created a Universal Behavioral Data Form that will be used for documenting behavior incidence.

Action Steps: The discipline handbook and universal behavioral data form has been written and edited and is currently being reviewed by stakeholder and once completed with be released to school site and the district.

3. The District agrees to provide information to the Department regarding its use of Student- Focused Remedies. The District will ensure that it has in place at each District school a system of support to assist students who display behavior concerns. These supports may include, but need not be limited to, the following:

- a. Adult in-school mentoring
- b. Access to school counselors, social workers or other mental health advocates, as appropriate
- c. Involvement of parents/guardians/caregiver in the discipline process
- d. Assistance with developing decision-making skills;
- e. Referral for psychological testing or other educational services, where indicated.

The District will provide annual training to District teachers, administrators, school aides, and any other District personnel charged with discipline data entry for students, making disciplinary referrals or imposing disciplinary sanctions. The District will continue to participate in the External Diversion Committee (a collaboration between MDHR, School Districts and Charter Schools).

MDHR Request: The District agrees to provide information to the Department regarding its use of Student- Focused Remedies. In addition, the District will provide annual training to District teachers, administrators, school aides, and any other District personnel charged with discipline data entry for students, making disciplinary referrals or imposing disciplinary sanctions.

Status: The District continues to attend state quarterly meetings. The district continues to provide trainings to school staff. When the updated discipline handbook is finalized, all school sites will be provided the updated version and offered training around the changes.

Action Steps: Finalize updated discipline handbook.

4. The External Diversion Committee will:

- a. Review and analyze aggregate suspension data of School Districts and Charter Schools;
- b. Review and analyze suspension practices of School Districts and Charter Schools;
- c. Develop legislative proposals that will have a positive impact on reducing suspensions and expulsions from racial and ethnic minority communities and students with disabilities; and
- d. Develop and create best practices for school boards, superintendents, discipline supervisors, principals, teachers, staff and discipline assessment teams on the issues identified within this Agreement.

MDHR Request: Review and analyze multiple district and charter school suspension data and suspension practices.

Status: The District continues to use information provided and presented at external diversion committee meetings to inform practices and processes.

5. The District will create an MPS specific Diversion Committee in addition to its participation in the city/state Diversion External Committee. The District seeks to engage stakeholders that will include a representative from all defined MPS stakeholder groups which may include but are not limited to representatives from: Positive School Wide Engagement team. Social Emotional Learning team, Equity, Research Evaluation Assessment team, Emergency Management Safety Security team, Associate Superintendents, Social Work team, Mental Health team, Family Engagement team, Indian Education team, Special Education team, Office of Black Student Achievement team, Teaching and Learning team, and Multi Tiered System of Supports team.

MDHR Request: The District will create an MPS specific Diversion Committee.

Status: An email has been sent to various stakeholder groups for this committee. Due to the constraints of COVID, final section has not occurred.

Action Steps: Finalize internal diversion committee members and schedule three monthly meetings (one whole group, two subcommittee).

6. The District Internal Diversion Committee will:

- a. Review and analyze aggregate suspension data of MPS;
- b. Review and analyze suspension practices of MPS; and
- c. Develop and create best practices for the District on the issues identified within this Agreement.

MDHR Request: Review and analyze district suspension data, review and analyze suspension practices, and develop best practices. Previous suspension data and practices have been viewed to help inform the updates to the district discipline handbook amendments.

Status: Due to COVID, the District has been in distance learning and has no suspension data to review and analyze. Methods for review and analysis of suspension data and suspension data have been identified. The district is currently identifying methods of developing best practices.

Action Steps: Finalize review and analysis tool.

7. The District Internal Diversion Committee will be comprised of the following subcommittees:

- a. DIRS - Create greater clarity for schools on the conduct schools should report to MDE;
- b. Corrective Action Strategies- Best practices for understanding, teaching, evaluating, and monitoring implementation of corrective action 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.

MDHR Request: Create Internal Diversion Committee subcommittees.

Status: The District has created subcommittees leads or the purpose of leading work in corrective action strategies implementation, implicit bias education and engagement best practices.

Action Steps: Continue the syntheses of resources and select best practices to be in subcommittee.