# Introduction

The Mastery School Charter School has made significant steps to address the significantly high number of suspensions and expulsions that have happened at The Mastery School over the past five years. On November 2, 2017, the MN Department of Human Rights in collaboration with The Mastery School staff met to review suspension and expulsion data and create a plan for how the district would address this need. This report is to address the stated objectives and tasks that are outlined in the Suspension Reduction Plan, that was attached to the agreement between the MN Department of Human Rights and The Mastery School that was signed, on March 27 by The Mastery School and March 28 by Commissioner Lindsey of the MN Department of Human Rights. As outlined in the report, this semi-annual summary will include, but not be limited to:

a. The intended outcomes;
b. Specific steps the Charter School took to implement the strategy;
c. Metrics the Charter School developed to measure the effectiveness of the strategy; and
d. Any changes implemented by the Charter School in light of results in the reporting period.

# Philosophy Statement

The Mastery School has the following objectives as outlined in its Suspension Reduction Plan.

Objectives

- Maintain authorizer standards for overall school attendance.
- Decrease the number of suspensions by 30%.
- To increase positive student behavioral choices and reduce negative behavior.
- To provide a positive academic environment which is safe, orderly, and conducive to learning.

1. **Maintain authorizer standards for overall school attendance.**
   *The school maintains 95% attendance, which is in line with their authorizer goals.*
2. **Decrease the number of office referrals for negative behavior by 10%.**

3. **Decrease the number of suspensions by 30%**

As one can see, tracking data, the suspensions at Mastery actually rose from where is was in 17-18. Mastery suspended 158 students in all last year. This was almost a 47% increase from the previous year. There are a number of reasons that the district sees that these suspensions increased. They are outlined below.

a. When Mastery left the network, HNS, they were forced to provide a number of back office functions that in the past were handled by the CMO, in this case, HNS. This led the school leader to focus more on these back office functions and less on school culture.
b. Mastery saw a significant growth in students in October, 2018 which led to a new student body, who were now always familary with Mastery.
c. There was a lack of administrative support to support the School Counselor, School Social Worker and staff in areas such as SEL and PBIS.

4. Increase positive student behavior choices and reduce negative behavior.
   *See below.*
5. Provide a positive academic environment which is safe, orderly and conducive to learning.
   - *Paraprofessionals have a PD every Monday for 1 hour with Jaton White at NAZ: Foundations that focus on mindset and belief gap with children that have stress and trauma.*
   - *Middle School has yoga every wed as part of our Emotional Health plan.*
   - *Future plans include hiring a full time clinical therapist on site that would be provided by NAZ and Washburn.*

# Policy and Professional Development for Staff

The Mastery School has worked to ensure that staff had professional development in de-escalation skills, positive interventions, assertions, problem-solving, cultural competency, conflict resolution and responses to behavior that are age appropriate. The school has engaged with both the Washburn Center for Children and the Northside Achievement Zone to ensure that training and policies aligned with the needs of our families.

Policy and Language Alignment

Before the end of the 2017-2018 school year, the Principal and all relevant personnel shall ensure that there is consistency concerning:

- The language, terms, and definitions used by school personnel to determine when students engage in identified removal behavior;
- When school personnel may remove a student from class;
- When a student may be suspended or expelled for engaging in identified removal behavior; and
- The length of time a student may be suspended or expelled for engaging in identified removal behavior;
- School Bullying Policy and the Parent & Scholar Code of Conduct.

Professional Development

Staff will engage in mandatory professional development opportunities focused of student discipline. These will occur both before the school year and throughout the school year.

- Professional development activities will present information on de-escalation skills, positive intervention, assertion, problem solving, implicit bias, cultural competency, conflict resolution, and age-appropriate responses to behavior,
- Mastery School staff will continue to receive training from the Wilder Center on Trauma Informed Education as well as the Washburn Children's Center.
- Professional development activities will also include high quality classroom management, organization, and instructional strategies to be used

Mastery School will also track trainings completed by staff and measure the effectiveness of all training identified above consistent with identified metrics.

**August 2018** Northside Institute: Cultivating the Classroom through NAZ and Washburn
**November 2018** Emotional EQ through NAZ and Washburn
**January 2018** Building Relationships through Naz and Washburn

# School Wide Initiatives

School-wide Initiatives

- Distribution of Parent & Scholar Code of Conduct to families and staff.
- Orientation for families and student assemblies at the beginning of the year.
- Rules and procedures are posted throughout the school.
- Daily announcements and newsletters serve as reminders.
- All personnel model desired behavior.
- All adults in the building actively monitor students' behavior rewarding with verbal praise or redirecting student behavior as needed.
- Students exhibiting positive behavior will;
    - Attend Fun Friday events
    - Attend field trips
    - Receive citizenship awards
- Emphasis on Character Education and Character Building
    - Curriculum is taught at each grade level
    - The staff models appropriate character traits
    - Incentives are provided for students who exhibit positive character traits (see above list).

Classroom Initiatives

- Teachers directly instruct and model behavior expectations and rules.
- Rules and expectations are posted in the classroom.
- Teachers establish routines and procedures.
- Teachers use 'Morning Meetings' to establish a climate of trust, safety, and respect.
- Active monitoring of rule-following behavior.
- Classroom management will include plans for transitioning from one activity to another, as well as the organization and cleanliness of the learning environment.

# Community Engagement

- There will be consistent application, by personnel, as to when to involve family members in attempts to improve a student's behavior; training provided to personnel on when and how best to involve families; and consistency of feedback provided to personnel when deviations occur in the implementation of policy.
- During the school's annual meeting Mastery School will report on discipline initiatives, the MDHR Plan, as well as review the discipline policy. During this time families and community members will have the opportunity to raise concerns and share suggestions.
- Mastery School will ask discipline specific questions on its Parent Survey in order to assess the effectiveness of charter school strategies that seek to increase engagement and policy clarity.
- Before the start of the school year copies of the school's Parent & Scholar Code of Conduct will be distributed to staff and families whether electronically or in a hard copy. A copy of the Parent & Scholar Code of Conduct will remain in the school's front office at all times.

Community Engagement continues to be an area that The Mastery School is addressing. The scholar and Parent Code of Conduct were distributed to each parent. There is a copy available in the front office as well as one on the website.

https://static1.squarespace.com/static/56de48b31bbee0f33b3823af/t/5b353b14758d46d1dc885f56/1530215189457/Mastery+School+2018-2019+calendar.pdf

# Discipline Committee

The discipline committee will meet every two weeks and review all suspensions that have taken place. They will review the antecedents for the behavior, any other circumstances that may fall into the behavior and will create a plan to address the behavior with the scholar. The committee is made up of the:

1. school principal
2. special education coordinator
3. school board member and
4. behavior interventionist.

Other members may join the committee if they would like or if they are asked by a school administrator.
The purpose of the committee is to help with alternate behavioral resources.

Attendance and minutes are taken at these meetings. The information from these meetings is included in the board report of the school principal at the monthly board of directors meeting.

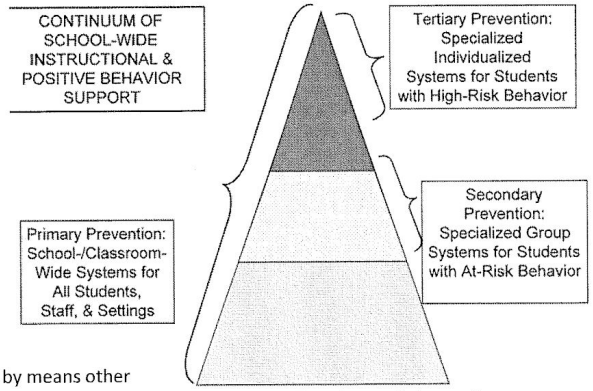
The school is also utilizing the Student Support Team (SST). This group meets weekly and reviews scholars who are referred to SST for continued struggles with academics or behavior. The purpose of the SST is to create high quality, research-based interventions that will allow students to access education and in an effort to decrease the number of special education evaluations that are taking place.

Discipline Committee

Mastery School will create a Discipline Committee to meet every two weeks and to focus on analyzing and creating solutions for behavior issues. The committee is also charged with creating intervention plans designed for students with at-risk behaviors, as well as monitoring and adjusting school action plans as needed. This committee will be comprised of a representative of the school faculty and includes an administrator.

Key staff on the discipline committee shall include, but are not limited to...

- School principal
- Behavior interventionist
- Director of SPED
- Board member




Additional duties the Discipline Committee is tasked with...

- Providing input to personnel on strategies to:
  - Improve student behavior;
  - Address student behavior by means other than disciplinary action through corrective action practices such as de-escalation and restorative justice;
  - Ensure that referrals for discipline are not impacted by explicit or implicit bias; and
  - Ensure that discipline actions are effective in addressing student behavior and are not punitive.
- Providing best practices to:
  - Prevent school bullying;
  - Address explicit and implicit bias in the classroom;
  - Develop cultural competency; and
  - Interact with students experiencing trauma,
- Providing input to the school community to:
  - Ensure school personnel are aware and have access to available resources to assist them in being successful in the classroom;
  - Identify new practices to more effectively implement identified strategies;
  - Raise awareness of challenges personnel face when implementing identified strategies; and
  - Identify policy and scheduling changes, including but not limited to, those that may minimize interactions that could result in a suspension, such as changing the time of passing period between classes, changing lunch periods, and alternating bus routes.