



**Minnesota Department of Human Rights and Independent School District 196
Semi-Annual Report
February 1, 2019**

This is Independent School District 196’s second semi-annual report to the Minnesota Department of Human Rights (MDHR) pursuant to the Collaboration Agreement entered into by the parties on June 27, 2018. This report provides information concerning District 196’s progress implementing the Collaboration Agreement and District 196’s local plan to address disparities in student discipline. The report will address each strategy in the local plan, including intended outcomes, implementation steps and responsive changes taken in the reporting period, as well as metrics to measure effectiveness. A spreadsheet with de-identified suspension data is also attached to this report as required by the Collaboration Agreement.¹

I. Periodic Review of District Discipline Policy

Intended Outcomes – District 196 will periodically review its student discipline policy to improve the fairness and objectivity of the policy, provide alternatives to suspension and allow for community engagement in the development of the policy.

Implementation Steps and Responsive Changes – District 196’s annual process for making changes to its discipline policy begins in the winter when the district seeks school and community input on needed changes. District 196 is currently in the process of collecting input for potential changes to District 196’s discipline policies for the 2019-20 school year. The District has been implementing responsive changes made to the District’s 2018-19 discipline policies, which included providing administrators with greater authority to adjust disciplinary consequences and allowing for restorative practices as a disciplinary alternative. Over the course of the current school year, the District has also conducted additional outreach to students on its anti-bullying regulation.

Metrics – The effectiveness of all strategies will be measured, in part, by District 196’s suspension data. This strategy will also be measured by the amount and quality of suggested policy changes.

¹ The Collaboration Agreement requires suspension data from the preceding six months to be submitted along with the September and February semi-annual reports. Because suspensions typically occur during the nine months of the school year, and because September and February are not spaced six months apart, the District has designed its suspension reports to split the school year in half. Accordingly, the February report will provided data for the first half of the school year beginning with summer school and ending on the January 15th before the February report. The September report provide data on the second half of the school year beginning on January 16th and ending with the end of the school year. The September report will also include additional data on those students who were suspended in both halves of the year, consistent with paragraph 2 (j) of the Collaboration Agreement.

II. Data Review

Intended Outcomes – District 196 will periodically review student disciplinary outcomes to increase awareness of the effect of current suspension practices on students.

Implementation Steps and Responsive Changes –The data review is scheduled to occur three times per year near the end of each trimester at three separate tiers (school, task force² and cabinet). Data has been reviewed at all tiers. Data was also reviewed with the school board. The district noted an increase in suspensions related to student vaping (both THC and Nicotine). This increase appears to have prevented the district from reducing overall suspensions. The district is reviewing options for reducing student vaping. Modest decreases were seen with respect to more subjective grounds for student discipline (e.g., insubordination, disruptive conduct).

Metrics – The effectiveness of all strategies will be measured, in part, by District 196’s suspension data. This strategy will also be measured by the fidelity of all schools to the data review process.

III. Alternatives to Suspension

Intended Outcomes – District 196 is actively seeking alternatives to suspension for student misconduct in order to reduce the use of suspension for student misconduct that is nonviolent and unrelated to drug possession, sale or use.

Implementation Steps and Responsive Changes –The district has established a Student Support and School Climate Team (“Climate Team”). The purpose of the team is to meet to review districtwide disciplinary practices and alternatives to suspension, as well as other matters related to student engagement, attendance and school climate. The Climate Team continues to meet and address these issues during the 2018-19 school year. Individual schools are also encouraged to implement alternatives to suspension where possible. Efforts to create alternatives to suspension have varied depending on the level (elementary/middle/high), but have included alternatives (where appropriate) such as:

- In-school disciplinary options;
- parent meetings;
- determining the underlying functions behind behaviors and addressing those needs with the child and families;
- Deepening relationships with students and families;
- Teaching lagging student skills instead of punishing through consequences;
- Restorative discipline;
- Restoration circles; and
- Learning in a buddy classroom.

Metrics – The effectiveness of all strategies will be measured, in part, by District 196’s suspension data. The effectiveness of this strategy will also be measured by the frequency of the Climate Team’s meetings and the initiatives recommended by the Climate Team.

IV. School Climate Initiatives

Intended Outcomes – District 196 will implement school climate initiatives in all schools to reduce disciplinary incidents and improve student engagement and inclusion.

Implementation Steps and Responsive Changes –The district has identified and is implementing various school climate initiatives including, but not limited to, REACH, Responsive Classroom (restorative practices) and Conscious Discipline. Individual schools also implement various forms of school specific climate initiatives. These initiatives vary by school

² The task force identified in the strategy has been renamed the “Student Support and School Climate Team.”

but may include the establishment of common expectations, norms and language, morning meetings to build community, “The Leader In Me” programming, PBIS, “staff buddies,” Yoga Calm programming, “buddy bench” for friendship building, schoolwide celebrations, kindness journaling, student recognition programs, etc. . . Schools have reported to their directors on their individual school climate initiatives.

Metrics – The effectiveness of all strategies will be measured, in part, by District 196’s suspension data. This strategy will also be measured by the twice annual reports by the schools regarding their school climate initiatives.

V. Professional Development for Staff

Intended Outcomes – District 196 offers professional development to staff in order to develop a workforce of culturally proficient staff attuned to the social/emotional learning of students.

Implementation Steps and Responsive Changes – The district is providing cultural proficiency training to all staff during the course of the 2018-19 school year. In addition, the district has identified and offered many learning opportunities to address topics related to cultural proficiency, school climate, student discipline and social/emotional learning, including some of the trainings identified above in strategy IV. These opportunities have included, but are not limited to, Restorative Practices 101, Responsive Classroom, Yoga Calm, Culturally Responsive Teaching, Conscious Discipline, Comfortable Cafeteria, Behavior Tools, REACH training, and trauma informed practices training. Since September 2018, professional development related to student mental health has included an overview of county services in October, a session on depression in children and teens in November and an ADHD update in January.

Metrics – The effectiveness of all strategies will be measured, in part, by District 196’s suspension data. This strategy will also be measured by the number of professional development offerings concerning cultural proficiency (including implicit bias) and student social/emotional learning.

VI. Consultation

Intended Outcomes – District 196 consults with the Midwest & Plains Equity Assistance Center and the Center of Excellence to improve the district’s understanding of needed equity work.

Implementation Steps and Responsive Changes – The district participates in web-based trainings with a cohort of school districts.

Metrics – The effectiveness of all strategies will be measured, in part, by District 196’s suspension data. This strategy will also be measured by the number of consultations conducted.

VII. Staff Review of Policy

Intended Outcomes – District 196 requires all employees to review its anti-discrimination and anti-bullying policies to improve staff understanding and awareness.

Implementation Steps and Responsive Changes – Policy review is conducted in the fall of the year. The 2018 policy review was completed at all sites with all staff. It included a review of the anti-discrimination and anti-bullying policies. The 2018 policy review included particular emphasis on making staff members aware of who the identified anti-bullying contact person is at each school site. This emphasis was in response to community feedback that the contact person is not widely known at each building.

Metrics – The effectiveness of all strategies will be measured, in part, by District 196’s suspension data. This strategy is also measured by the fidelity of all buildings to the policy review requirement.

VIII. Family and Community Engagement

Intended Outcomes- District 196 provides numerous community engagement opportunities to improve community engagement and voice.

- **Implementation Steps and Responsive Changes** – The district has scheduled and conducted various meetings and events for families and community. Examples of these meetings include the district’s Community Collaboration Council, Community Education Advisory Council, Curriculum and Instruction Advisory Council, Early Childhood Family Services Advisory Committee, Gifted and Talented Advisory Council, Legislative Advisory Council, Native American Parent Advisory Committee, River Valley Project Explore Advisory Council and the Special Education Advisory Council. The district also participated in Dakota County’s January 2019 Community Conversation on Disability and Mental Health Inclusion. School specific engagement opportunities have included various theme-based family nights, outreach videos, “One School One Book” initiatives, “Family Game Night,” family math and literacy activity nights, all school picnic and block party, magnet school family nights, “Tea and Talk” night, “Dinner and Dialogue” night, “Community Think Tank” events, “Author Night,” health and wellness events, “International Food Night,” and school carnivals. In addition, all schools are required to conduct regular meetings of a school engagement organization (e.g., site council, PTO, schoolwide booster club).

Metrics – The effectiveness of all strategies will be measured, in part, by District 196’s suspension data. This strategy will also be measured by the frequency of key community engagement meetings held districtwide.

IX. Reimagine Minnesota

Intended Outcomes – District 196 has and will continue participate in available Reimagine Minnesota activities to enhance inter-district collaboration on the issue of equity.

Implementation Steps and Responsive Changes – Key district level administrators have reviewed the organization’s action plan. District administrators participated in the November 2018 and January 2019 meetings of Reimagine Minnesota on the topics of student voice and recruiting/retaining staff of color.

Metrics – The effectiveness of all strategies will be measured, in part, by District 196’s suspension data.

X. Use of School Resource Officers

Intended Outcomes – District 196 limits the role of school resource officers (SROs) in school discipline in order to minimize the criminalization of school misconduct.

Implementation Steps and Responsive Changes – District 196 has ensured that limiting language concerning the role of school resource officers is contained in school district policy and in the SRO contracts. The SRO contracts with the cities were finalized for 2018-19 school year. SROs have participated in the cultural proficiency training offered to district staff.

Metrics – The effectiveness of all strategies will be measured, in part, by District 196’s suspension data. This strategy will also be measured by the policy and contract language.

XI. Culturally Inclusive Curriculum

Intended Outcomes – District 196 reviews and improves curriculum to ensure the inclusivity of curriculum and academic offerings in District 196.

Implementation Steps and Responsive Changes – District 196 has a curriculum review process in place. As curriculum comes up for review, administrators use an equity lens when

examining the suitability of curriculum for District 196 students. The district also uses an equity lens when reviewing pedagogy and academic offerings. Particular actions have included the following:

- Middle school units of study are beginning to be developed in 6th grade science and 6th grade social studies. Instructional coaches are working with teacher representatives from each school to develop unit maps, using an Understanding by Design framework. Content standards, literacy standards, and equity standards are being woven together in the unit maps.
- Existing middle school units of study are being refined for 6th grade English, 8th grade science, 7th grade American studies and 7th grade language arts; building on the framework and standards cited above.
- The district has contracted with “Grassroots Indigenous Multimedia” to create original, authentic Ojibway story books that fit with its units of study at the elementary level.
- Classroom teachers can choose to utilize an equity domain in addition to the four domains in Charlotte Danielson’s Framework for Teaching. Peer leaders (cognitive coaches) help teachers reflect on their teaching practices through this lens and language.

Actions described in the district’s last semi-annual report are ongoing.

Metrics – The effectiveness of all strategies will be measured, in part, by District 196’s suspension data. This strategy is also measured by the participation of students of color in AP classes and by overall participation in the AVID program.

XII. Mental Health Support

Intended Outcomes – District 196 provides various mental health supports to meet the needs of students with mental health needs.

Implementation Steps and Responsive Changes – The district has finalized contracts with outside mental health providers to provide co-located mental health support to students in all of the district’s schools. In December the district entered into an additional contract with an outside provider to offer telemedicine mental health assessments at school to referred district students. The district has also maintained its staffing levels for school-level support personnel such as social workers, counselors, psychologists and nurses.

Metrics – The effectiveness of all strategies will be measured, in part, by District 196’s suspension data. This strategy is also measured by the number of buildings served by collocated mental health providers.

XIII. State Diversion Committee

Intended Outcomes – District 196 participates in the Diversion Committee to generate best practices to address disparities in student disciplinary outcomes.

Implementation Steps and Responsive Changes - The district has identified District 196 representatives to serve on the Diversion Committee and has participated in all meetings to date. Further responsive changes are expected once the Committee has an opportunity to develop best practice recommendations.

Metrics – The effectiveness of all strategies will be measured, in part, by District 196’s suspension data. This strategy will also be measured by the number of diversion committee meetings attended by District 196 representatives.