

Minnesota Department of Human Rights and ISD 622 Collaboration Agreement

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

Independent School District 622 (District) provides public education to school aged children within its district and has Core Values as part of its December 2016 Strategic Plan which states that the District believes that:

- Strong communities are inclusive and value diversity.
- Trust and transparency are essential to healthy and enduring relationships.
- Continuous learning and service to others are imperative to individual and community progress.
- Individuals learn and thrive through connections in a safe, caring and supportive environment.
- Every individual has incredible potential and equal intrinsic value.
- High expectations with appropriate supports result in growth.
- School family and community partnerships enhance and support learning.

The Mission set forth in the Strategic Plan is that the District will commit each day to develop and empower lifelong learners who thrive in diverse communities. The District Mission Outcomes include that each learner will use creativity, critical thinking and intercultural competence to address real world challenges and to close the achievement gap for all student groups.

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 workforce. 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 commitment to:

- Work together on behalf of all Minnesota students to ensure their success; and
- Collaborate and use their best efforts to improve student academic achievement by reducing the disparate suspension and expulsion outcomes for students from racial minority communities 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 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. The District has developed and submitted to the Department a Strategic Plan, which is attached as Exhibit A to this Agreement. The District will obtain input from students, parents, and teachers to obtain qualitative data on a regular and on-going bases concerning the plan identified in Exhibit A and will provide the Department with information on the District's engagement efforts and if input from stakeholders was utilized.
2. The District will submit reports to the Department regarding implementation of its Plan in September and February of each year. The reports will address activity for the preceding school year.
3. At a minimum, the report will include the following information for each strategy the Plan identified:
 - a. The intended outcomes;
 - b. Specific steps the District took 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 annual report will also include suspension data broken down by category as provided to the Assistant Superintendent by each Principal as discussed within the monitoring progress section of the Plan. The suspension data will not identify specific students
5. The Department, in collaboration with 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.

6. 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.
7. The Diversion Committee may consider creating subcommittees as necessary to meet its purpose, which could include the following:
 - 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.
8. 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 disparities 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.
9. The Parties acknowledge that the release of information concerning this matter is governed by the Act, the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act, Minn. Stat. §§ 13.03 *et. seq.*, and the Official Records Act, Minn. Stat. §§ 15.17 *et. seq.*
10. The Parties agree that the Department may make public: (a) the terms of this Collaboration Agreement and (b) the information identified as public data in Minn. Stat. § 363A.35. The Parties agree to attempt to work collaboratively on any press releases and responses to media inquiries concerning this Collaboration Agreement.
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 Act.

13. This Collaboration Agreement begins on the date that the parties execute it and ends with the submission of the report on September 1, 2021 for the 2020-2021 academic year.
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. The party shall only initiate judicial proceedings to enforce this Collaboration Agreement if the parties reach an impasse after negotiating in good faith for 30 days.
18. To the extent consistent with State and Federal law, nothing in this Collaboration Agreement prevents the Department from requesting information from the District.

4/24/18

Date



Michelle Yener, School Board Chair

4/24/18

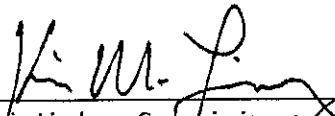
Date



Theresa Auge, School Board Clerk

4/18/18

Date



Kevin Lindsey, Commissioner
Minnesota Department of Human Rights

Exhibit A
Strategies for Reducing Student Suspensions

ISD 622 Core Values: We believe that:

- Strong communities are inclusive and value diversity.
- Trust and transparency are essential to healthy and enduring relationships.
- Continuous learning and service to others are imperative to individual and community progress.
- Individuals learn and thrive through connections in a safe, caring, and supportive environment.
- Every individual has incredible potential and equal intrinsic value.
- High expectations with appropriate supports result in growth.
- School, family, and community partnerships enhance and support learning.

ISD 622 Mission: We commit each day to develop and empower lifelong learners who thrive in diverse communities.

Strategies for Reducing Student Suspensions

Action Step	Person Responsible	By When
Positive School Climate		
Periodic review of student handbooks and applicable district policies	Board of Education	Ongoing
Program evaluation of positive school climate programs and practices.	Assistant Superintendent	2020-2021
Active supervision during all passing periods	Assistant Superintendent	Ongoing
District Wide Restorative Practice plan	Assistant Superintendent	2019-2020
Superintendent Student Advisory Committee	Superintendent	2019-2020
Developing positive student to student and staff to student relationships: Responsive Classroom, Developmental Design, Link Crew, Web Link, AVID	Assistant Superintendent	Ongoing
Student identity projects	Assistant Superintendent	Ongoing

Olweus Bullying Prevention Program	Assistant Superintendent	Began 2011-2012; Ongoing
Quarterly Meetings with School Resource Officers. The School Resource Officers are not involved in the decision-making regarding the discipline of students.	Assistant Superintendent	Beginning 2018-2019
Professional Development/Curriculum	Person Responsible	By When
Teachers, administrators, and support staff trained in Culturally Responsive Teaching practices, which includes cultural awareness and anti-bias training	Director of Teaching & Learning	Ongoing
Instructional Coaches at all sites have extended training in Culturally Responsive Teaching practices and support teacher implementation	Director of Teaching & Learning	Ongoing
All district subject area teams conduct an audit of current culturally responsive instructional practices	Director of Teaching & Learning	2017-2018
All district subject area teams set goals for improving culturally responsive instructional practices	Director of Teaching & Learning	Beginning 2018-2019
All district subject area teams conduct an audit of culturally responsive curriculum resources	Director of Teaching & Learning	2017-2018
All district subject area teams set goals for improving culturally responsive curriculum resources	Director of Teaching & Learning	Beginning 2018-2019
Trauma Informed Care training for all professional staff	Director of Student Services	Began 2016-2017; Ongoing
Crisis Prevention Intervention for Special Education staff and administrators	Director of Student Services	Ongoing
Behavior strategies and management training for classroom teachers	Director of Student Services	Began 2015-2016; Ongoing
Behavior Coaches for elementary and secondary who work with teachers	Director of Student Services	Beginning 2018-2019
Response to Behavior	Person Responsible	By When
Consistent office referral forms across the district.	Assistant Superintendent	2019-2020
Individual student interventions to be recorded in Campus for	Assistant	2019-2020

progress monitoring	Superintendent	
Restorative circles at every site	Assistant Superintendent	2019-2020
Alternative to suspension program to be established for secondary students otherwise facing out of school suspension	Director of Student Services	2018-2019
Principal consultation with Assistant Superintendent prior to any student suspension of greater than two days	Assistant Superintendent	2017-2018
Develop and implement consistent district-wide pre-suspension protocols for out of school suspension	Assistant Superintendent	2018-2019
Develop and implement consistent district-wide post-suspension review process for out of school suspension	Assistant Superintendent	2018-2019
Develop data visualization tools (Tableau) 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 Teaching & Learning	2017-2018
Monitoring Progress	Person Responsible	By When
Assistant Superintendent to meet monthly with each Principal to review all suspension data, broken down by race, gender, and disability status	Assistant Superintendent	2018-2019
Annual update on suspensions to the district Board of Education	Assistant Superintendent	2018-2019
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	2020-2021
Affinity groups for staff of color	Equity Office	ongoing