



**Minnesota Department of Human Rights and Independent School District 196  
Semi-Annual Report  
February 1, 2020**

This is Independent School District 196’s fourth 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. The intended outcomes and metrics remain the same as in past reports. The implementation steps include updates since the last report, although many steps described in past reports are ongoing and not repeated herein. Please refer to past reports for details. A spreadsheet with de-identified suspension data is also attached to this report as required by the Collaboration Agreement.<sup>1</sup>

**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 is currently implementing all of the discipline policy changes detailed in its September 2019 semi-annual report. District 196 is in the process of assembling new recommended changes for the 2020-2021 student discipline policy. These potential changes are generated by the various school communities, as well as the administration. The discipline policy subgroup of the Climate Team described in Section III of this report has also met periodically to review the district’s discipline policy and recommend changes. Changes for 2020-2021 may include revised consequences and more inclusive language. The District is also participating in the work group assembled by the Minnesota Department of Education to develop a model code of conduct for Minnesota 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 amount and quality of suggested policy changes.

---

<sup>1</sup> 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 provide data for the first half of the school year beginning with summer school and ending on the January 15<sup>th</sup> before the February report. The September report provide data on the second half of the school year beginning on January 16<sup>th</sup> 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, Climate Team and cabinet). Data has been reviewed at all tiers. It was also discussed at a recent meeting of the District 196 Learning Leaders (the district’s administrative group) as part of a review of district goals. District 196 continues to examine the disparities in student discipline and seek ways to reduce or eliminate these disparities.

**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** –As reported in the past, the district has established a Student Support and School Climate Team (“Climate Team”) with a primary purpose of reviewing districtwide disciplinary practices and alternatives to suspension, as well as other matters related to student engagement, attendance and school climate. The work of this team continues. Individual schools also continue to implement various interventions and alternatives to suspension as reported in previous semi-annual reports.

**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** –As described in previous reports, the district has identified and is implementing various school climate initiatives. Please refer to past reports for details.

**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** – As reported in the past, the district has identified and offered many learning opportunities for staff to address topics related to cultural proficiency, school climate, student discipline and social/emotional learning. In addition to the opportunities described in previous reports, this year the district is also consulting with Dr. Clay Cook at the University of MN to develop a district-wide mental health framework to guide district practices.

**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 was conducted in the fall of the year at all sites with all staff. It included a review of the anti-discrimination and anti-bullying policies. These policies and others are also reviewed with new hires and student teachers.

**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** – As reported in the past, the district has scheduled and conducted various meetings and events for families and community. In addition, individual schools conduct specific engagement opportunities throughout the year. Examples of these meetings and events are contained in previous semi-annual reports and they continue to be held. Of particular significance this year is that the Community Collaboration Council is developing a new 3-year Achievement and Integration Plan for District 196. The current plan runs through June 30, 2020. In addition to the various engagement events, District 196 employs cultural family advocates to work with building sites to support family engagement and connection.

**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 and continue to attend available Reimagine Minnesota meetings. In October of 2019, many District 196 students and administrators attended the Reimagine Minnesota Student Conference at the Convention Center. The Superintendent and key administrators subsequently met with student participants after the event to discuss and learn from the event.

**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 SROs is contained in school district policy and in the SRO contracts between the district and the cities providing the SRO services. The SRO contracts were finalized for the 2019-20 school year.

**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 those reported in previous semi-annual reports, as well as the following:

- As described in the last semi-annual report, an Equity in Curriculum Guidance Team was formed in alignment with the Reimagine Minnesota strategies. The team is expected to complete its work by June 2020.
- District 196 partnered with Darlene St. Clair who facilitated professional learning for all 6th grade Minnesota Studies Teachers around the experience of Dakota people in Minnesota and the Mni Sóta Maḵoḵe curriculum. A goal of this project is that the Mni Sóta Maḵoḵe

curriculum will be taught to sixth grade students to meet the required sixth grade social studies standards.

**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 described in past reports.

## **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 many initiatives in place to address student mental health needs. Please see past reports and other sections of this report for previously reported, ongoing initiatives. Recent initiatives of note include the following:

- The district has a Mental Health and Intervention Team (MHIT) which has in turn created a mental health work subgroup which includes principals, assistant principals, counselors, school psychologists, social workers, district level administration and nurses to develop a district-wide mental health service framework. The development of the framework is to be guided by Dr. Clay Cook a consultant from the University of Minnesota.
- The MHIT formed a risk assessment safety planning subgroup (counselors, social workers, nurse and district administrators) to develop a unified assessment tool for screening at-risk youth and developing safety plans.
- District 196 is surveying all schools to get a sense of different areas of work related to social, emotional, and behavioral programming. This will help to establish a baseline of implementation as the district develops a coherent, strategic, and sensible approach to supporting the implementation of a continuum of supports that promote student social, emotional, and behavioral development and well-being.
- MHIT leaders have coordinated several staff development opportunities that have been offered within District 196 for school support staff (e.g., school social workers, school psychologists, school counselors, cultural family advocates and school nurses). These have included:
  - October 2019 - Christina Corwin (Now What: Putting Trauma Informed Care Into Practice)
  - November 2019 - Michelle Enderson (Change to Chill Trainer)
- The district has maintained its staffing levels for school-level support personnel such as social workers, counselors, psychologists and nurses and passed its November 2019 levy referendum which will generate additional funds to increase mental health support for students. Staffing for mental health support will increase by .5 FTE at the elementary level, 1.0 FTE at the middle level and 1.5 FTE at the high school level.

**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 as the Committee develops 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.