



September 2018

St. Francis Area Schools, Independent School District 15 Suspension and Expulsion Reduction Plan Exhibit B

The goal of St. Francis Area Schools is to decrease disproportionality in discipline for students of color and students with disabilities, and to have suspensions and expulsions be considered as a last resort for all students in the district.

Strategy 1: Revise and update School Board Policy 406 — Student Discipline

The current version of Policy 406, which addresses all aspects of student discipline, is scheduled to be reviewed by the school board within the upcoming calendar year. The plan is to review the entire Policy 406 with additional attention and awareness to addressing student discipline issues for students of color and students with disabilities.

Key Action Steps

By December 1, 2018 the superintendent will identify a workgroup to manage and facilitate a complete review and update of the Student Discipline Policy 406.

The work group will make recommendations to the school board's policy review committee regarding policy 406 by April 1, 2019.

The school board will have the opportunity to seek additional community input into the proposed student discipline policy prior to any action being taken to approve the revised policy.

The target date for the school board to approve an updated Student Discipline Policy will be June 30 2019. The intent of the final product is to have a student discipline policy which will provide more specific and uniform discipline procedures which also reflect the district's efforts to promote positive behavioral intervention strategies whenever possible as an alternative to suspension. Note: The Policy 406 revision will reaffirm the district's position that School Resource Officers are not involved in recommending or determining student discipline or in the investigation of incidents of student discipline that do not involve a crime.

Strategy 2: Provide and/or expand professional development opportunities for school personnel in the area of cultural awareness and cultural competency.

The first step in changing a culture of student suspensions starts with professional development and training for the teaching staff. There are some opportunities to enhance professional development in the areas of cultural awareness and cultural competency, as outlined in the following action steps.

Key Action Steps

By January 15, 2019 the district's Professional Development Oversight Team will review each of the following areas, as it relates to training and professional development opportunities for the licensed teaching staff of the district. The desired outcome is to enrich staff understanding for applying culturally relevant and developmentally appropriate strategies into all aspects of instruction and learning.

Explore and/or extend collaborative partnerships with outside agencies to provide professional development

Provide professional development on Restorative Practices that may include, but are not limited to, age appropriate responses to behavior, de-escalation techniques, trauma-informed practices, equitable learning environment and implicit bias

Provide professional development on the Social Emotional Competencies as identified by the MN Department of Education

Provide targeted professional development for remedial situations

The outcome of this review and the recommendations for how the district is meeting or will meet this standard will be shared with the Superintendent by February 1, 2019. The superintendent will provide further direction on how to proceed with incorporating these concepts into the staff professional development for the 2019-20 school year.

The district is working in coordination with the American Indian Parent Advisory Committee (AIPAC) to increase our efforts to provide early intervention and targeted intervention to this student group. By identifying and training staff on the unique cultural dynamics of the American Indian students, we intend to decrease suspensions and other significant disciplinary actions for these students. This will be accomplished through two specific strategies:

The district has been accepted into Project Dream Catcher. This will allow the district to send a team of teachers for training in order to better understand the cultural needs of the American Indian student.

The district is planning to increase the American Indian Education Program staff from approximately a .5 FTE position to a full 2.0 FTE team. This will allow for an increased ability to directly intervene with identified students (both academically and behaviorally) in order to minimize education disruptions and gaps in achievement.

The issue of suspensions for disciplinary reasons concerning special education students will also be a discussion topic for the Special Education Parent Advisory Committee (SEAC) during the 2018-19 school year. All of the information in this action plan, along with suspension data for students with disabilities will be shared with the advisory group. The group will then make recommendations to the director of special education for consideration in planning services for students with disabilities.

Strategy 3: Develop and implement a district-wide system for reporting all student discipline issues.

In order for the district to understand and recognize patterns and tendencies with regard to all student discipline, the district must develop a stronger and more organized system of reporting data. Current practices have demonstrated inconsistent definitions and understanding (and therefore inconsistent application) of standards, policies and procedures. Once the district adopts consistent, effective and reliable student discipline practices and reporting procedures, we will then be able to effectively measure and analyze our trends and patterns of student discipline. At that point, the district will then have the capacity to build awareness within and across all of the schools and programs concerning discipline practices with all student groups.

Key Action Steps

By November 1, 2018, the superintendent will assign an administrative team to develop and implement a districtwide system of both consistent application and accurate reporting of disciplinary actions. Components of this district system will include:

Uniform language and definitions to categorize student discipline issues

Partial day dismissals (definitions, reasons/issues, outcomes, etc.)

In-school and out of school suspensions

Expulsions and exclusions at each site

A process for the district to review and analyze the data

The assigned administrative team will complete this task by incorporating input from a variety of district workgroups and committees. This work is to be completed and a final product presented to the superintendent for approval by May 1, 2019.

Upon completion and approval of the final product, the assigned administrative team will then provide professional development for all building administrators on the updated tracking system and appropriate/consistent application of discipline procedures. Target date for completion of this step is July 30, 2019.

Each Principal/Program Supervisor will be responsible for the training of their staff members on the implementation and reporting of discipline procedures with fidelity. Target date for the completion of this step is September 30 2019.

Strategy 4: Establish a Student Discipline Data Review Committee to review the outcomes of all disciplinary incidents which result in a suspension of a student. The intent of the committee is to provide information to the superintendent concerning all student suspensions. This committee will also be primarily responsible for the successful implementation of all aspects of the St. Francis Area Schools/MDHR Strategic Discipline Plan.

Similar to the Restraint/Seclusion Review Committee, this committee will be charged with analyzing suspension/expulsion data on a districtwide basis. Their mission is to review all discipline data from a systemic perspective. The committee will look for trends in the data and report its findings and recommendations for corrective action to the superintendent on a quarterly basis. The work of this committee is only to report findings to the superintendent (or designee) and not to engage in performance discussions with any specific staff member or site team.

Key Action Steps:

The districtwide Administration Discipline Assessment Team will:

- review and analyze quarterly suspension data
- review reports from School Leadership Teams (when applicable)
- engage in PLC discussions around suspension data disaggregated by race, ethnicity and disability

Make specific system recommendations to the superintendent which the committee feels will improve outcomes for students by decreasing suspensions for all students.

Review DIRS reporting process and discuss subjectivity/objectivity of DIRS categories that lead to suspension, including bullying, cyber bullying, harassment, disruptive/disrespectful behavior, insubordination, threats, intimidation and “other acts.” Submit system modification/improvement recommendations to the superintendent at the end of each review cycle.

Be responsible for the semi-annual reports to MDHR.

On a semi-annual basis during the 2018-19 and 2019-20 school years, report to the school board their progress

on implementing this Discipline Strategic Plan and the outcomes resulting from its implementation.

Strategy 5: Revise the educational service delivery system for the students who reside at the BarNone Residential Treatment Center to better address the unique social/emotional as well as the educational needs of the students served.

The revised educational system and school services will be better aligned to meet the social/emotional needs of the students. This revision and improvement in educational programming will result in a more therapeutic and developmentally appropriate response to student behavior and it is anticipated it will reduce suspensions and exclusions of both students of color and students with disabilities.

Key Action Steps

Note: All of the following strategies are planned to be implemented during the 2018-19 school year.

The school district will partner with the staff of the BarNone Treatment Center to develop a coordinated therapeutic approach to work with the students throughout their school day. This will include the facilitation of therapy groups by the treatment center therapists at scheduled intervals during the school day.

In conjunction with the Minnesota Department of Education, the district will apply for a change in location of the current school to the BarNone campus.

The BarNone and school district staff will meet on a regular basis throughout the school year to discuss and coordinate strategies to assist all students to be more successful in their treatment program and their education.

The school district staff of Crossroads School will be given the opportunity to use their paid professional development time to study and develop new student behavior/discipline strategies which will reduce the number of suspensions from school.

Strategy 6: Revise the district's student handbooks regarding discipline, student rights and responsibilities. The update of the student handbooks will be consistent with a revised and adopted School Board Policy 406.

Once the school district's policies and procedures concerning student discipline have been reviewed, updated and have consistent application across all student groups, the next step will be the improved communication of policies and procedures. The objective is to establish a system of communicating critical information to all parents and students from a district-level document, rather than individual building communications. This will build consistent messaging and implementation for all student groups.

Key Action Steps:

By February 1 2019, the superintendent will form a revision committee which will include representatives from district elementary and secondary schools and programs, special education staff, the Indian Education Coordinator, district alternative learning programs, and district administrators.

Throughout its work this committee will seek input from a variety of stakeholders which includes students and families, AIPAC, SEAC, Middle School and High School student groups, Parent-Teacher Associations, and other groups as determined by the committee.

The revision committee will make appropriate revisions to the handbook, both in format and content.

Upon completion, the revised handbook will be submitted to the superintendent for review and approval by the school board.