



RESTORATIVE DISCIPLINE AND CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

ABOUT LSSSI

The Louisiana Safe and Supportive Schools Initiative (LSSSI) is a four-year, federal grant-funded project intended to design and implement statewide measurements of, and targeted programmatic interventions to improve, school climate. Eight school districts were selected to participate in LSSSI: *Caddo, East Baton Rouge, Jefferson, Lafayette, Lafourche, Plaquemines, Tangipahoa, and Terrebonne* based on their school climate scores. The goals of the LSSSI Project are to create physically and emotionally safe and supportive school environments; improve learning conditions by reducing alcohol, tobacco, drugs, and violence on campus; provide students and staff with opportunities for meaningful participation; and foster a school environment where students may engage and excel both academically and socially. The LSSSI program is called *Positive Approaches for Safe and Supportive Schools (PASSS)*, and the strategies are designed to increase the capacity of school personnel to make data driven-decisions in selecting appropriate interventions to address school climate. To inform school decision-making, LSSSI created school-level school climate scores by measuring student perceptions of school climate dimensions (e.g., relationships, opportunities for meaningful participation at school, perceived violence, victimization, and substance use) and school-level discipline and attendance rates.



School Climate Innovations: Restorative Discipline & Classroom Management

The Louisiana Safe and Supportive Schools Initiative (LSSSI) has bolstered the use of innovative, restorative discipline and classroom management practices that encourage students' autonomy and self-direction and capitalize on youths' inherent interest in shaping and supporting a safe, socially connected school environment. Restorative discipline and classroom management strategies promote students' *self-discipline* by actively teaching and modeling expected behaviors; motivating students to commit to school rules encouraging them to feel connected to peers and school adults and by noticing and encouraging students who exhibit behaviors; and addressing behavior problems by providing opportunities for feedback, remediation, and reparation of harm. Highlighted herein are LSSSI schools that have engaged

in innovative, exemplary efforts to improve school climate using positive, proactive, and restorative discipline practices.

SCHOOL CLIMATE, DISCIPLINE, AND CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

Positive school wide discipline and classroom management practices improve the predictability of the school environment, thereby improving students' trust that they will be treated fairly by school adults. Engendering trusting relationships between students and school adults is fundamental to school climate improvement. Preliminary results from research in elementary, middle, and non-traditional high school settings indicates that the implementation of positive school wide behavior supports decreases

Using Student Voice to Improve School Climate

classroom discipline referrals and school suspensions¹, improves school attendance, increases completion of career and technical education certifications², and improves math and reading proficiency.³

CRITICAL STRATEGIES AND SUPPORTS

- District and school leaders who embrace positive, restorative approaches to school discipline.
- Clearly defined expectations stated in behavioral terms and visibly posted throughout school building.
- Discipline strategies, such as student referral outside of classroom, are fairly applied and consistently enforced across classrooms.
- Standardized process for entering school discipline data into student information system in order to ensure that aggregated data accurately represent discipline practices (i.e., student gender, race, disability status, language learner status; referring teacher; and location of infraction).
- Team of school community members (i.e., administrators, teachers, security staff) meets regularly to review school discipline data using standardized process and procedures. Team subsequently makes data-driven recommendations to administration about shifts in policies and procedures for preventing and intervening with challenging behavior and rewarding positive behavior.
- Exclusionary practices such as outside of school suspension and expulsion are used only in the most severe circumstances and all cases are thoroughly reviewed by school and district oversight teams.
- School adults acknowledge and reward student behaviors that are consistent with a civil and safe school environment.
- Focus on student self-management skill building, including explicit teaching to students of expected behaviors.
- Professional development to staff about effective, positive classroom management.
- Regular observation and coaching to teachers and school staff to ensure that classroom management practices are being used effectively.

- Students are provided meaningful opportunities to define and adjudicate school rules and consequences.
- Students are provided opportunities to reflect on their behavior in order to examine the behavior's antecedents and to articulate better ways they might handle a similar situation in the future.
- Opportunities are provided for students to repair harm they may have caused to the school community (e.g., apologizing, repairing or replacing property).

COMMON IMPLEMENTATION TENSIONS

- Beliefs among community members and school personnel that student discipline should be harsh, punitive and/or exclusionary in order to improve school safety and reduce the likelihood that students will again engage in the behavior for which they were disciplined.
- Lack of understanding of the complex origin of many challenging behaviors for children and youth, including trauma experiences and grief.
- Punishment being applied inconsistently, with the same behavior infraction resulting in different responses for different students.
- Variation among staff within school building in use of positive classroom management techniques.
- Challenges inputting discipline-related data within student information systems and in generating related reports.
- Failure to actively use existing school discipline data to inform new school policies and practices.
- Lack of ongoing training to staff on classroom management practices and components of evidence-based programs (e.g., Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports).
- Lack of modeling and coaching for staff to integrate new classroom management practices into daily work.
- Lack of intervention resources for students with more advanced behavioral needs (e.g., access to trained mental health personnel).

Ellender Memorial High School's Story



TERREBONNE PARISH DEMOGRAPHICS

Terrebonne Parish, the second largest parish in Louisiana in terms of land area, is located in southern Louisiana on the Gulf of Mexico and has been a center of Cajun culture since the eighteenth century. The Terrebonne Parish School District serves nearly 19,000 students in 36 K-12 schools. The majority of students are White (56%), and African American (28%), followed by Native American (9%) and 67% are eligible for the free and reduced lunch program. Five schools served by the LSSSI grant are located in the parish capital, Houma.

DEVELOPING POSITIVE CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

When Ellender Memorial High School (EMHS) received the LSSSI grant award, the school's leadership team selected to narrow their school climate improvement focus to address teacher turnover, a critical climate issue for their site. In the 2010/2011 school year, a full one-quarter (24%) of EMHS staff left the school. Anchored by a leadership approach that recognized the critical nature of students' relationships with school adults as the foundation for academic achievement and an acknowledgment that negative, combative transactions between teachers and students in the classroom undermine those relation-

ships, the EMHS leadership team agreed to focus on building teachers' capacity to use positive, effective classroom management practices. The team reasoned that greater teacher knowledge and skills for preventing negative transactions through effective classroom management would increase instructional minutes, allowing new teachers to focus on the activities that drew them to teaching initially, thereby improving staff job satisfaction and intention to stay in the teaching field.

EMHS's principal, Mr. Corey Butler, convened his leadership team, which was comprised of a master teacher, an assistant principal, the school's lead counselor, and the district school climate coach. In addition to guiding school climate improvements, the team set the tone for the school by modeling collaboration, empowerment, and a focus on continuous improvement. Together, the team mapped out a plan for integrating their per-established school wide discipline approach, *Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS)*, with a newly adopted classroom management framework, *Discipline in the Secondary Classroom (DISC)*.

The 2013/2014 school year represented the third year of DISC implementation for EMHS. During year 1 (2011/2012) of implementation, the school leadership team and department lead teachers attended a multi-day, intensive training on DISC, which was facilitated by the program's developer, Safe and Civil Schools. Subsequently, all EMHS instructional staff received in-service training, including all program materials, during pre-arranged professional development hours. To ensure that all members of the school were consistent in their implementation of the program, all leadership team members that joined EMHS in subsequent grant years attended the multi-day DISC training. Annual trainings were also provided to new teachers by EMHS veteran teachers.

To ensure that new teachers had the skills to effectively implement DISC's classroom management practices, Terrebonne Parish School District's school climate coach, Ms. Amanda Robertson, observed instructional time using DISC's Conversation Help Activity Movement Participation Success (CHAMPS) observation tool, which provided standardized observation metrics. Following her observations, Ms. Robertson provided feedback and coaching to assist new teachers in modifying and improving their classroom management practices.





In addition to the coaching for new teachers, skill-building coaching was provided to veteran teachers as well. Veteran teachers could request observation and coaching or could be identified for coaching through their office discipline referral rates. Each month, the school's Positive Approaches to Safe and Supportive Schools (PASSS) team, which is constituted by approximately 15 staff members representing all areas of school life (e.g., instructional staff, security, counseling, administration) and chaired by the lead counselor, met to address school wide discipline concerns. In addition to examining school wide discipline data to determine when issues are occurring on campus and by which students, together they examined which classroom teachers were generating inordinate numbers of office discipline referrals. Together with the school's master teacher, the district's school climate coach provided observation, coaching, and feedback to help these teachers improve classroom discipline practices and, ultimately, decrease office discipline referrals. This approach is founded on the philosophy that teachers can use help to grow; that skills for managing classrooms can be developed and cultivated.

Mr. Butler and his leadership team also used the CHAMPS observation tool during informal administrator walk-throughs and formal observations for teacher effectiveness. Having a clearly defined rubric for classroom management practices that is consistently used and supported by coaching for skill development reduces the stress caused to teachers when expectations are unpredictable and when they lack the knowledge and/or skills to effectively meet the challenge.

To complement the consistent discipline practices occurring in the classroom, EMHS's PASSS team regularly examined school wide discipline data to determine what conditions might exist in the school to cause discipline referrals to increase during certain periods of the day or in certain locations of the school. The team responded to patterns in the data in meaningful ways by making immediate changes to the school environment, such as implementing a warning bell to warn students 30 seconds before the tardy bell was to ring, revising staff duty areas to supervise hot spots, and installing cameras in poor visibility areas. These school wide discipline strategies improved teacher morale and collective effi-

cacy by reducing disruptions to instructional time that are outside of any one individual's control.

As a result of these systematic, comprehensive efforts, the EMHS staff turnover decreased by nearly 10% in the 2013-2014 school years (total 13/14 turnover was 15%). Reflecting the improved teacher morale and instructional environment, one student said, "I feel like I belong here; it feels like home. All the teachers here are really nice; it is easy to learn."

CRITICAL ELLENDER HIGH SCHOOL STRATEGIES

EFFECTIVE INFRASTRUCTURE AND PRACTICES

- Effort guided by a collaborative leadership team comprised of the school principal, assistant principal, master teacher, counselor, and district coach. All leadership team members are consistent in their messaging and expectations about positive classroom management practices.
- Timely and efficient access to student information systems that provide accurate aggregate data reports on discipline incidents by referring teacher, student demographics (age, race/ethnicity, gender), and time and location.
- Inclusion of all elements of effective professional development, including training, modeling, and regular coaching for developing new classroom management practices.
- Acknowledgment of the need to provide timely training on positive classroom discipline practices to *all* new staff members and to provide mentoring and coaching as new teachers work to build classroom management skills.
- All observations of instructional staff made using a written rubric to improve transparency of expectations and consistency of application across observers.

EVIDENCE-BASED PROGRAMS

UNIVERSAL

- PBIS (pbis.org)
- Discipline in the Secondary Classroom

Loranger High School's Story



*Regular Opportunities for Adults and
Students to Enjoy Non-Contingent
Positive Interactions*

TANGIPAHOA PARISH DEMOGRAPHICS

Tangipahoa Parish is located in the north-central part of Louisiana near the Mississippi border on the north and Lake Pontchartrain on the south. Tangipahoa Parish School District is currently the largest employer in Tangipahoa Parish with approximately 2,637 employees serving 19,803 students in 33 K-12 schools. The two high schools served by the LSSSI grant are Independence High in Independence, and Loranger High in Loranger, which are small rural schools in a heavily agricultural area. The majority of students are African American (47%) and White (47%) and 75% of students are eligible for the free and reduced lunch program.

In 2005, after Hurricane Katrina devastated its neighboring communities, Loranger High School (LHS) welcomed an influx of students whose families were new to the community. This reconstitution of the school's student population provided a ripe opportunity for LHS to reflect on its school climate practices and to create a strategic plan for building a safe, supportive, equitable, and inclusive school environment. With additional grant support from the Louisiana Safe and Supportive Schools initiative, LHS was able to codify their strategic plan and implement evidence-based programs and practices to advance their school climate efforts. Undergirding LHS's strategic school climate improvement plan is the credo, "We are Loranger", which represents the school's emphasis on community building through a purposeful effort to build rapport and trust with students and their families.

Fundamental to LHS's community building approach are four critical practices: (1) regular opportunities for adults and students to enjoy non-contingent positive interactions, (2) clear, consistent, and regular communication of expectations from school adults, (3) transparent and fair behavior management practices that emphasize keeping students in school and connected to school adults while providing instruction on emotion and behavior regulation skills, and (4) a continuous improvement mindset. Each of these critical practices is described in more detail below.

It is often the case that positive interactions between students and school adults are contingent on the student's academic achievement or compliant behavior. LHS has worked to break this habit by encouraging school staff to engage in non-contingent interactions; that is, connecting with students about topics that go beyond their performance in school. LHS staff are encouraged to be visible in the hallways between classes in order that they can ask passing students about their weekend plans, family experiences, and friends. LHS students are also encouraged to interface with community adults outside of the school walls. For instance, all LHS students are provided an opportunity to 'adopt' a student from the elementary school and LHS partners with a local veterans group to have student volunteers place flags on veterans' graves on Memorial Day.

When a student's behavior is disruptive enough to warrant his/her removal from a classroom, the LHS leadership team, including the principal, assistant principal, and counselor, will ask the student to "take a walk" with them. During this walk, the administrative team avoids pressing the student on his/her behavior and instead works to deescalate the student by walking quietly and, when the student is ready, asking open-ended questions about the student's life. This process typically provides insight that helps explain the student's disruptive behavior and contributes to rapport and trust building, which create a foundation to build off of in later interactions.

Clear, Consistent, and Regular Communication of Expectations

"No secrets, no ambush" is how Mr. Torrence Joseph, Assistant Principal, describes behavior expectations and consequences at LHS. Indeed, LHS developed a multi-step, comprehensive intervention framework for responding to student behavior. The framework, referred to as the Code of the Pack, was developed in partnership with staff and includes prescribed, increasingly intensive school responses for misconduct. Although codes of conduct are not unusual for comprehensive high schools, LHS's Code of the Pack employs consequences to student behavior that encourage reflection and skill development and learning, all of which are described



in more detail below. At the beginning of school year, the school leadership team reviews the Code of the Pack with all staff members, articulating required intervention steps and related consequences. All instructional staff are expected to discuss the Code of the Pack with students on the first day of class, and an abbreviated Code of the Pack poster is displayed throughout the building, including in classrooms, hallways, and other shared spaces.

Transparent and Fair Behavior Management Practices that Emphasize Keeping Students in School and Connected to School Adults while Providing Instruction on Emotion and Behavior Regulation Skills.

As articulated in the Code of the Pack, the school employs several positive, prevention-oriented behavior management practices. To assist teachers in classroom management, LHS developed a Minor Incident Referral (MIR) process. The MIR process allows teachers to document state-defined minor incidences (e.g., willful disobedience, tardy/late for class, disrespect for authority, classroom disturbance, defiance, misuse of technology, dress code violation) without sending students out of their classrooms. The MIR defines for teachers exactly what to do in response to the first, second, third, and fourth infractions, with each step requiring more specific, intensive interventions. The process ensures that all teachers are responding to behaviors similarly, that students are treated fairly within the classroom setting, and that inclusive classroom management practices are being used throughout the school.

According to the MIR process, in response to the first minor behavior incident, teachers are expected to restate the behavior expectation. At the second incident, the teacher must meet with the student to discuss possible motivations for the behavior (e.g., avoid a task, obtain attention from peers) and to define an intervention, including rewards should the student follow the behavior expectation. At the third incident, the teacher must convene a meeting with the student and his/her parents to discuss the previous interventions attempted, explore the reasons for the behavior, and to make adjustments to the intervention plan. Finally, at the fourth incident the teacher may send the student out of class.

Any student who is sent out of class

must be sent with the completed MIR form, showing that all intervention steps had been used.

When a student's behavior reaches the threshold for an office referral, several alternatives to suspension are employed. Of these alternative approaches, Mr. Joseph says, "Our goal is to keep our students here. School is often the safest setting for our students and they can't afford to miss class. We want them learn from their behavior to become good Loranger citizens." Students may be required to complete a Behavior Reflection Essay, which asks them to reflect on the incident that led to their referral to the office, the actions they chose to take, what was occurring before the incident that may have contributed to the incident, what they could have done to prevent it, and what choice they could make in the future to avoid the same result. In addition, a student may be required to complete computer-based modules in Ripple Effects, an evidence-based program that addresses deficits in emotion and behavior regulation in adolescents. Finally, a student may be given the choice to participate in community service as an alternative to out of school suspension.

For the few students who receive several office referrals over the year, a behavior contract is established. The behavior contract is written in partnership with the student and his/her family and allows the team to set standards and limits for the student behavior prior to considering expulsion. It outlines goals for the student (e.g., student will receive zero office discipline referrals for one month), rewards if the goals are met, and consequences if goals are not met. This process encourages the fair and transparent treatment of students, and bolsters school-family partnerships.

The Continuous Improvement Mindset

To maintain a focus on prevention and to hold themselves accountable for critical student outcomes, LHS implements an ongoing internal continuous improvement process characterized by data collection and examination, piloting of new processes and programs, self-evaluation and scaling-up. For instance, by examining their school climate data from the Louisiana Safe and Supportive Schools Survey, the school's Positive Approaches to Safe and Supportive Schools (PASSS) team determined that their ninth grade students were



reporting higher levels of risk behaviors, such as alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs, as well as higher reported rates of bullying experiences than students in other grades. The PASSS team also recognized that majority of discipline referrals were coming from the ninth grade class. In response, LHS adopted an evidence-based program, *Too Good for Drugs and Violence*, for use in 9th grade classrooms, with the goal of easing the ninth grade transition by providing lessons on resolving conflicts, building healthy relationships, and resisting underage drinking and substance use. The program is delivered once per week the Journey to Careers class attended by all ninth grade students. Core subject teachers are asked to supplement lessons by making their classroom lessons relevant to the topics covered in *Too Good for Drugs and Violence*, and school leadership members monitor implementation regularly.

CRITICAL LORANGER HIGH SCHOOL STRATEGIES

- School leaders establish a deliberate focus on building relationships between staff and students. To that end, school leaders encourage staff to engage in interactions with students that are not contingent on their performance in school. School-sanctioned opportunities (e.g., community volunteer days) are used to provide a context for these types of positive interactions.
- Consequences to student behavior are applied thoughtfully, with a premium placed on consequences that encourage students' reflection, skill development, and learning.

- A clearly articulated progressive school discipline structure ensures that staff are responding to student behaviors uniformly, that students are treated fairly within the classroom setting, and that inclusive classroom management practices are being used throughout the school.
- Data from Louisiana's school climate survey, the Louisiana Safe and Supportive Schools Survey, are thoughtfully examined. At-risk subgroups (e.g., 9th grade students) are identified and evidence-based social, emotional, and behavioral interventions are selected to address identified needs.
- To avoid students missing critical class time and to ensure that no child becomes disconnected from school adults, alternatives to out-of-school suspension are used regularly. Alternatives include Behavior Reflection Essays and completion of skill-building Ripple Effects modules.
- Students' families are enlisted to assist in the writing of behavior contracts for students with the most intensive behavior-related needs, encouraging transparency of expectations and consistency of communication across home and school.

EVIDENCE-BASED PROGRAMS

UNIVERSAL

- PBIS (pbis.org)

SELECTIVE & INDICATED

- Ripple Effects (rippleeffects.com)
- Too Good for Drugs and Violence (toogoodprograms.org)



Dylan Peters knows the power of community at LHS. By his own account, there were times when the 20 year-old thought he might not graduate. After Hurricane Katrina, his Slidell home, where he lived with his mother, flooded. He was displaced, attending three different schools before ultimately missing school for two full years. After moving in with his father, Dylan enrolled at LHS. He described Loranger as a place where "teachers care." Dylan explained, "I have had my ups and downs as a student. People here want to know what is going on with us. The teachers listen and hear what the kids say. I feel safe here." Dylan is now a graduating senior, and is proud to share his 'senior paw print', which is displayed in the LHS commons area throughout the school year.

Using Student Voice to Improve School Climate

KEY RESOURCES

National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments, US Department of Education
(safesupportivelearning.ed.gov)

Positive Behavior Interventions & Supports (pbis.org)

Safe and Civil Schools (safeandcivilschools.com)

Restorative Justice (restorativejustice.org)

School Discipline (<http://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/supportive-school-discipline-webinar-series>)
and (http://csgjusticecenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/The_School_Discipline_Consensus_Report.pdf)

REFERENCES

- 1 Bradshaw, C., Mitchell, M., & Leaf, P. (2010). Examining the effects of schoolwide positive behavioral interventions and supports on student outcomes: Results from a Randomized Controlled Effectiveness Trial in Elementary Schools. *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions*, 12, 133-148.
- 2 Johnson, L., Wang, E., Gilinsky, N., He, Z., Carpenter, C., Nelson, C., et al. (2013). Youth outcomes following implementation of universal SW-PBIS strategies in a Texas secure juvenile facility. *Education and Treatment of Children*, 36, 135-145.
- 3 Jorgenson, D., & Boezio, C. (2012). Fidelity of implementation and academic achievement: A preliminary study of Colorado PBIS schools. Colorado Department of Education. Retrieved September 28, 2014: <http://sites.cde.state.co.us/sites/default/files/documents/research/download/pdf/fidelityofimplementationpbis.pdf>

STATE CONTACTS

Louisiana Department of Education
1201 North Third Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70804
225-342-7493

Michael C. Comeaux,
Healthy Communities, Section Leader
Email: Michael.Comeaux@LA.GOV

Terri Byrd
Email: Terri.byrd@la.gov

Lillie Burns
Email: Lillie.burns@la.gov

Ebenezer Ogunyinka
Email: Ebenezer.Ogunyinka@la.gov

DISTRICT CONTACTS

Dina Hutchinson
Email: dinahutchinson@tpsd.org

Nancy Flaspohler
Terrebonne School Climate Coach
Email: nancyflaspohler@tpsd.org

Torrence Joseph
Assistant Principal, Loranger High School
Email: Torrence.Joseph@tangischools.org

Susan Foster
Tangipahoa School Climate Coach
Email: Susan.Foster@tangischools.org



Louisiana's
Safe and Supportive
Schools Initiative
Engagement | Safety | Environment