



School to Prison Pipeline Handbook: *Empowering Reformers and Demanding Change*

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Opening Letter

Dear Reader,

Thank you for taking time to learn more about Missouri's schools and how we can best help our children. We know Missouri's school discipline is inequitable. For years, the disproportionate discipline of students of color and students with disabilities has prevented these students from achieving their educational potential. We've crunched the numbers and we know that Missouri continues to head in the wrong direction- suspending students of color more frequently and for longer periods of time than their white counterparts. This handbook is designed to move beyond the numbers and be a hands-on resource to advocates and administrators alike who are committed to change.

This guide is designed to identify programs working throughout the country to break the school to prison pipeline, empower reformers to demand change, hold decision makers accountable, and bridge gaps when stretched resources exacerbate discipline disparities.

All children have an equal right to education. The quality of this education should in no way be determined by race, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, socioeconomic status, immigration status, or zip code. Missouri schools must offer the opportunity to succeed to all young people.

Last year, in the ACLU of Missouri's, [Pipeline of Injustice](#), we found disparities across the board for the unequal treatment of minority students and students with disabilities. Today, Missouri has one of the largest discipline disparity gaps in the country, ranking worse than 40 other states. This means we suspend students of color more often than Kansas, Kentucky, and Arkansas combined.

This guide is meant to engage those looking to answer the question "What can we do?"

Together, we must do better for our children. We hope you will join us in this fight.

Sincerely,

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Quick Discipline Facts

Missouri is falling far short of its obligation to provide its children with equal access to education by routinely disciplining Black students and students with disabilities harsher and more frequently than their White and non-disabled peers.

- Missouri's Marks 2015-2016:

	Increased or Decreased?	Relative Risk 15-16	Relative Risk 13-14
In-School Suspensions	⬆	2.57	2.47
Out of School Suspensions	⬆	4.40	4.26
Expulsion	⬇	1.03	1.19
Referral to Law Enforcement	⬆	2.56	1.29
Arrest	⬆	4.14	1.42

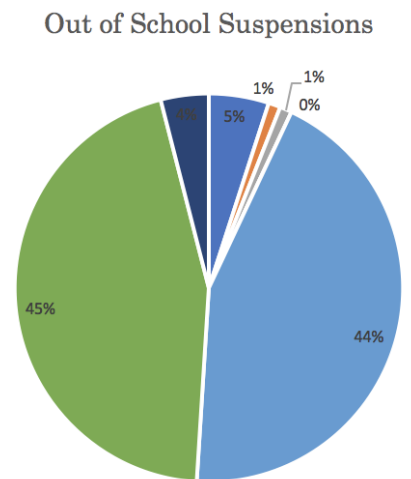
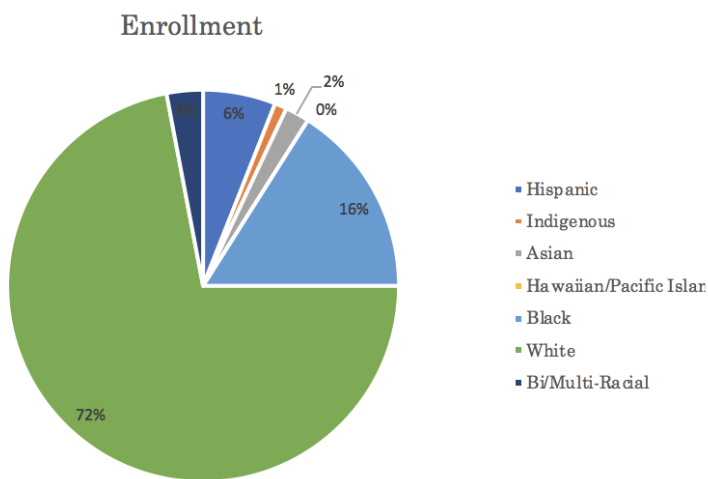
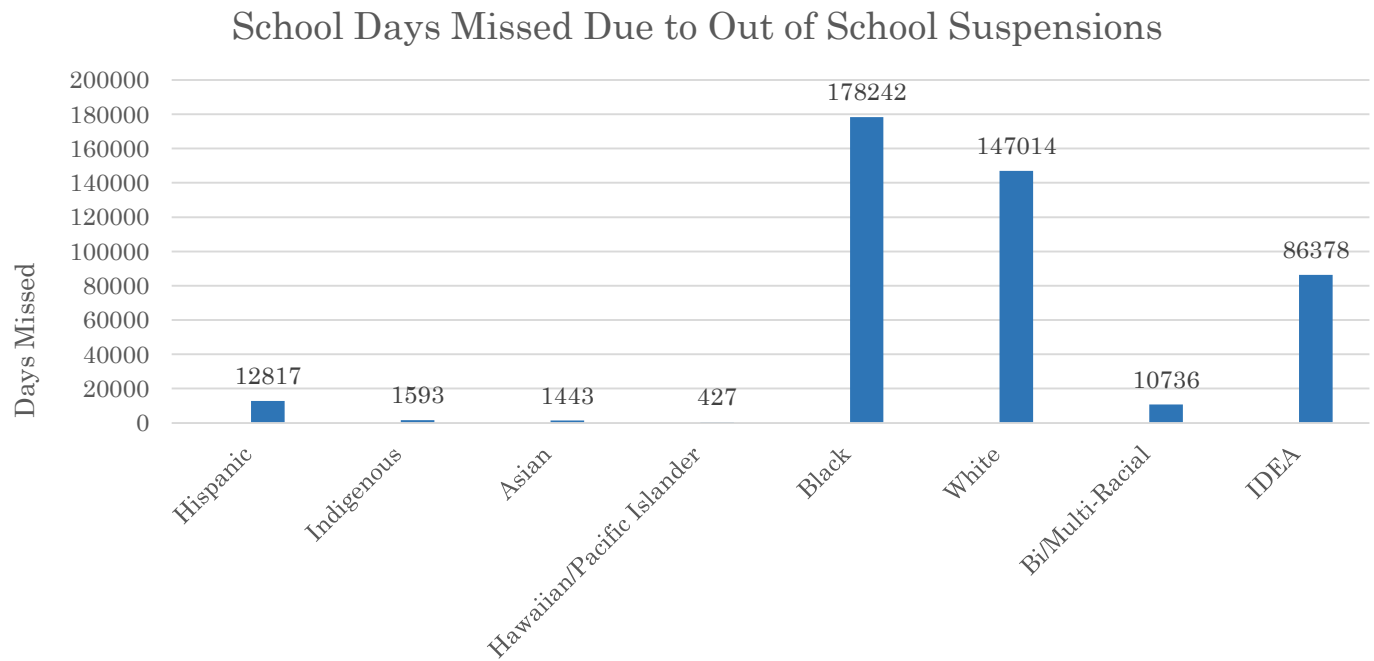
⬆ Increased

⬇ Decreased

- According to federal data from the 2015-2016 school year, Missouri now has the 10th highest gap between Black and White K-12 students in the nation when it comes to out-of-school suspensions.
- Relative risk ratio analyses, which compare the rate at which one student group receives a disciplinary action to that of another, indicated that Black students were more than four times as likely to receive an out-of-school suspension (OSS) or be arrested at school than their White peers .
- During the 2015-2016 school year Black students in Missouri missed nearly 180,000 days of school due to out of school suspensions, more than every other group combined.
- Black students were 16 percent of the population but received 44 percent of suspensions statewide, 32% of in school suspensions, 33% of in school referrals to law enforcement, and 44% of arrests at school.
- Missouri's students with disabilities were twice as likely to receive an OSS compared to non-disabled peers. Further, Black students with disabilities

were suspended three times more frequently than White students with disabilities.

- Despite representing a much smaller segment of the student body (2%), Black students with disabilities were more than 7 times as likely to receive an OSS compared to their white non-disabled peers (63%).



How the ACLU can help

The ACLU of Missouri aims to be an ally and resource as schools and communities begin to reevaluate school discipline and realign programs with restorative, rather than punitive, intentions. We are committed to ensuring that the constitutional right of all students to an education is met. We take this commitment further in our work to guarantee that the high-quality education, to which we believe all children are entitled, is in no way affected by students' race, gender, socioeconomic status, ability, immigration status, or sexuality.

Changing Disciplinary Culture: What Works and How to Engage

In this section, we will discuss programs used to reduce suspensions and expulsions that remove students from school. As discussed above, school discipline is often racially biased, depriving students of color of classroom time and leading to a myriad of consequences both as kids and later in life. These disciplinary programs have been proven to reduce reliance on disciplinary practices like out of school suspensions, and thus can act to disrupt the School to Prison Pipeline.

We looked across the country and identified the following programs as school to prison pipeline disruptors:

- Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports
- Restorative Justice
- Anti-bias/anti-racist training
- Trauma-informed practices
- Inclusive in-school suspensions

It is important to note that these solutions are not mutually exclusive; the most significant results will come from implementing of a combination of these solutions. Our descriptions are meant to provide a general idea of what each program aims to do and how, and we have also included links to more detailed resources for each method.

General Resources for reducing disciplinary Bias:

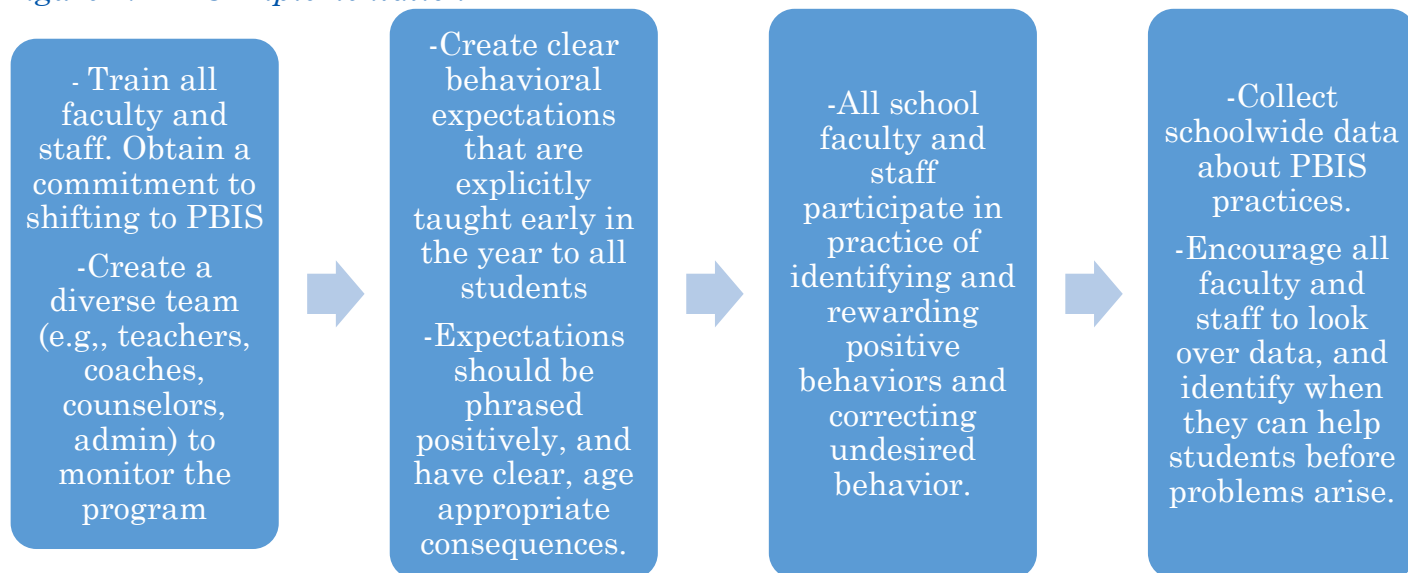
- [Analyzing student-level disciplinary data: a guide for districts](#)
 - This report offers a blueprint for examining discipline.
- [Instead of Suspension: Alternative Strategies for Effective School Discipline](#)
 - This report provides an overview of America's heavy suspension policies and outlines disciplinary alternatives that both heighten student achievement and maintain safe schools.
- [Fix School Discipline](#)
 - The resource discusses the best ways to keep students engaged and inside classrooms, reduce harsh and exclusionary practices, and improve the overall school climate.

Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS)

What is it? How does it work?

Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports is a research-based strategy centered on the idea that behavior can be taught in a classroom along with academics. The Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports was formed as part of the 1997 reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Act to provide support and resources to schools and students with behavioral disorders.¹ PBIS uses positive reinforcement to encourage constructive behavior and correct undesired behavior. Positive reinforcement is a strategy in which you reward and/or praise positive behaviors that you would like to see repeated. For example, if you see a student share a toy when asked by a classmate, you would highlight and praise this behavior. This is contrasted with negative reinforcement, meaning punishment as a result of undesirable behaviors (e.g., time out for not sharing toy with classmate). Thus, when using PBIS, educators should watch for positive behaviors and offer praise or a reward. The positive experience of being rewarded will lead to a desire in students to repeat this type of behavior. By focusing on students' good, rather than bad, behavior we can create a more supportive culture that improves disciplinary outcomes for everyone in the school.

Figure 1. PBIS Implementation



¹

According to the Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports, nearly 26,000 schools in the United States have implemented PBIS programs.² PBIS has a proven record of improving school outcomes. For example, after implementing a PBIS program in Jefferson County Kentucky in 2013, disciplinary referrals in participating high schools dropped nearly 30 percent.³ Several nationwide studies have also indicated that PBIS can help to reduce racial disparities in the use of school discipline.⁴ For example, since implementing a PBIS program during the 2009-2010 school year, Wisconsin schools have shown an overall reduction in the use of suspensions and in racial disparities for both disciplinary referrals and academic achievement.⁵ According to Wisconsin's report, "this drop in suspension rates represents 30,933 days of instructional time saved in schools implementing PBIS."⁶ PBIS has been shown to also decrease discipline referral for student with disabilities.⁷

It is important to keep in mind that PBIS is a full system change. As a result, it can take up to five years for a full cultural shift to take place in a school, but positive changes build up along the way. Each year schools should set PBIS benchmarks in order to track and share their progress towards a full cultural shift.

Resources:

[The Center on Positive Behavioral Support](#)

- The Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports builds systems for implementing a multi-tiered approach to social, emotional, and behavioral support and improving outcomes for all students.
- [The Missouri School-Wide Positive Behavior Support](#)
 - A Missouri-specific resource for implementing PBIS in schools.
- ["SWPBIS for Beginners"](#)
 - This website provides information for those interested in learning the basics about Schoolwide Positive Behavior Supports.
- ["Best Practices in Developing a Positive Behavior Support System at the School Level"](#)
 - This chapter reviews the core features of PBIS and basic implementation requirements.

² <https://www.pbis.org/>

³ https://www.pbis.org/Common/Cms/files/pbisresources/RP%20PBIS%20Brief_JCPS%209.25.18.pdf

⁴ <https://www.pbis.org/evaluation/evaluation-briefs/racial-disproportionality>

⁵ <https://www.pbis.org/Common/Cms/files/pbisresources/Annual%20Report%2016-17%20final.pdf>

⁶ <https://www.pbis.org/Common/Cms/files/pbisresources/Annual%20Report%2016-17%20final.pdf>

⁷ <https://www.pbis.org/blueprint/evaluation-briefs/discipline-referral-rates>

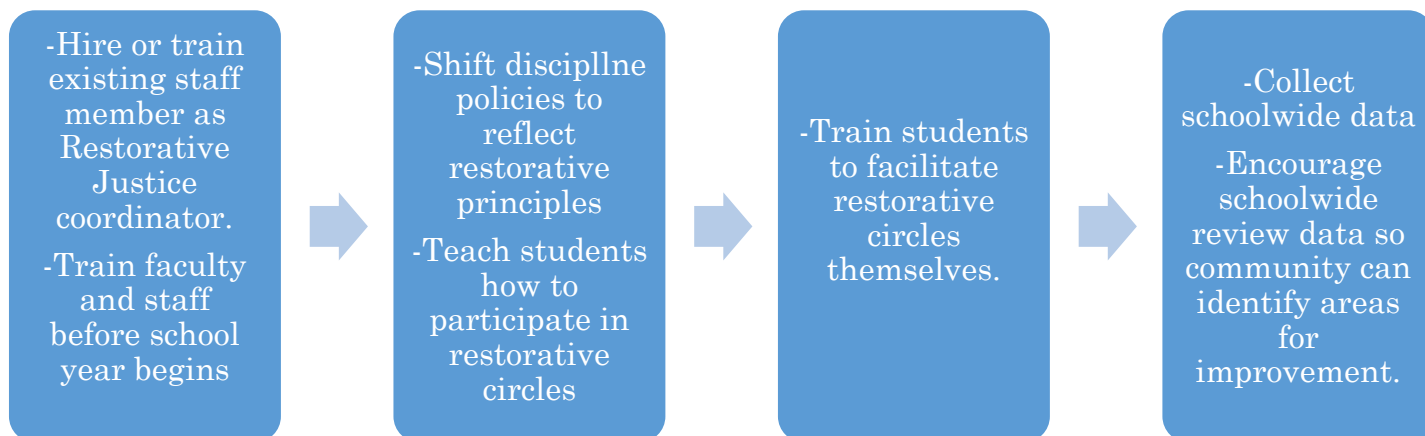
Restorative Justice

What is it? How does it work?

Traditionally, school discipline policies do not allow students to participate in punishment decisions. Restorative justice practices focus on maintaining relationships and bringing resolution to incidents of misbehavior through collective problem solving. Restorative justice practices, in contrast to punitive policies, acknowledge that misbehavior is normal, and use misbehavior as a teaching opportunity.

In schools that employ restorative practices, everyone affected by a student's behavior, including the student and the restorative justice facilitator, participate in the resolution. Participants sit in a circle and take turns speaking, giving voice to those harmed, and collectively decide how the student should repair their relationships. Restorative sanctions may include community service, apologies, and often a clear behavior change agreement.

Figure 2. Restorative Justice Implementation



Restorative justice programs have been shown to reduce disciplinary referrals and suspensions while improving relationships between students, their peers, and their teachers. Schools in Minnesota, California, Colorado, Philadelphia have reported that after integrating restorative practices suspensions dropped anywhere from 40 to nearly 90% and there were accompanying increases in academic achievement.⁸

⁸ <https://www.civilrightsproject.ucla.edu/resources/projects/center-for-civil-rights-remedies/school-to-prison-folder/state-reports/dignity-disparity-and-desistance-effective-restorative-justice-strategies-to-plug-the-201cschool-to-prison-pipeline/schiff-dignity-disparity-ccrr-conf-2013.pdf>

Such benefits can be striking and arise over time with each successive year bringing more expertise and attitude change.

University City School District in Missouri has recently implemented a restorative justice program and adopted a formal resolution that stated their commitment to humanizing school climates.⁹ According to their Executive Director of Student Services and Innovation, Gary Spiller, *"Our focus on restorative justice has also helped us to begin to create safer, more equitable and respectful learning environments for our kids. By shifting our focus, we have begun to offer healthier alternatives to the traditional disciplinary approach to rules and consequences. Instead of simply "putting students out", we have begun to make the shift to help them to better understand the impact of their behavior, take personal responsibility, repair the harm they have done, and restore relationships. We have found that our commitment to restorative practices has allowed kids and adults to feel valued, respected, safe and successful together."*

As with the other programs discussed here, full implementation of a restorative justice program is cultural shift that requires time and consistency. Research suggests that implementing restorative justice school-wide can take 1-3 years; however, outcomes can improve steadily as schools and districts move along the path to full implementation.

Resources:

- [The International Institute for Restorative Practices](#)
 - The institute's website provides comprehensive information on restorative practices as well as trainings.
- [Implementing restorative justice: a guide for schools](#)
 - This resource provides a comprehensive guide to using restorative practices.
- [Restorative Practices: Fostering Healthy Relationships and Promoting Positive Discipline in Schools: A Guide for Educators](#)
 - This resource outlines different types of restorative practices as well as real-world examples.
 - [8 Tips for Schools Interested in Restorative Justice](#)
 - This resource outlines eight tips for executing restorative justice techniques, from assessment through evaluation.
 - [Restorative Justice in U.S. Schools: A Research Review](#)
 - This report highlights research on restorative justice practices.

⁹[https://www.boarddocs.com/mo/ucity/Board.nsf/files/B9JVFY64D80F/\\$file/Resolution%20for%20Restorative%20Practices.pdf](https://www.boarddocs.com/mo/ucity/Board.nsf/files/B9JVFY64D80F/$file/Resolution%20for%20Restorative%20Practices.pdf)

Anti-Bias/Anti-Racist Training (AB/AR)

What is it? How does it work?

Anti-Bias/Anti-Racist trainings teach educators, administrators, and school staff to recognize the ways that either conscious or unconscious biases, or prejudices, may affect judgment in the classroom. AB/AR trainings teach participants about systems of power and privilege (i.e., “the rights, benefits and advantages enjoyed by a person or body of persons beyond the advantages of other individuals.”¹⁰), like white supremacy, and how the oppression we see and hear about in broader society can also be at play in schools. AB/AR trainings promote greater understanding and inclusivity across many identities including race, gender, sexual orientation, ability, and socioeconomic status.

The four goals of anti-bias education are:¹¹

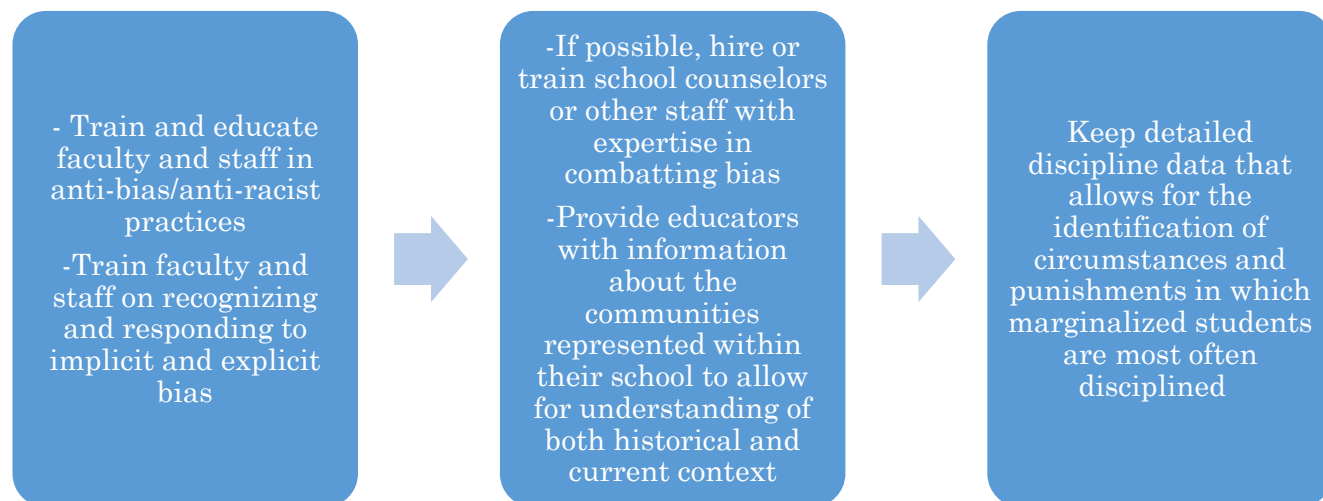
Goal 1: Each child will demonstrate self-awareness, confidence, family pride, and positive social identities.

Goal 2: Each child will express comfort and joy with human diversity; accurate language for human differences; and deep, caring human connections.

Goal 3: Each child will increasingly recognize unfairness, have language to describe unfairness, and understand that unfairness hurts.

Goal 4: Each child will demonstrate empowerment and the skills to act, with others or alone, against prejudice and/or discriminatory actions.”

Figure 3. AB/AR Implementation



¹⁰ <https://www.usc.edu.au/connect/work-at-usc/staff/cultural-diversity/cultural-diversity-and-inclusive-practice-toolkit/race-power-and-privilege>

¹¹ <https://www.naeyc.org/resources/topics/anti-bias-education/overview>

AB/AR trainings are relatively new, and formal adoptions by school districts are rare. In nearly every state, however, there are educator-run social justice groups advocating for greater equity trainings in school. In some cases, schools have made formal commitments; for example, City Garden Montessori School in St. Louis has integrated AB/AR into their school trainings and culture. Although there is extensive research and writing about the underlying philosophy and implementation of AB/AR programs, publicly available data tracking outcomes is relatively rare. Studies have shown that student-focused interventions regarding biases and stereotypes lead to increased education achievement; however, there is little to no research on educator-focused interventions.¹² However, our own and other's research makes clear that without an explicit focus on equity, many discipline reform programs fall short of meeting the needs of all students. Without careful study and inclusion of existing discipline inequities in discipline reform plans, schools may see their overall use of exclusionary discipline decrease but the disparities for certain students (e.g., Black students or students with disabilities) remain mostly unchanged. Thus, as stated on City Garden's website, "Our commitments to the ongoing work of anti-racism will allow us to fulfill our purpose and will ultimately enable the empowering transformation of our children and our world."

Resources

- [Moving Beyond Anti-Bias Activities: Supporting the Development of Anti-Bias Practices](#)
 - This resource discusses what it means to take an anti-bias stance, and how teachers can implement an AB/AR framework in their classrooms.
- [Crossroads Anti-Racism Organizing and Training](#)
 - Crossroads provides trainings and tools for individuals and organizations interested in implementing anti-bias/anti-racist practices.
 - [Crossroads Suggested Readings](#)
- [Unconscious Bias in the Classroom](#)
 - This document provides background on research about unconscious bias (UB), as well as summary of existing research about UB interventions for both teachers and students.
- [Witnessing Whiteness, Book By: Shelly Tochluk](#)
 - This book outlines the meaning and history of the "whiteness", discusses the importance of developing an awareness of systematic racism, and narrative about cross-race and multicultural work.

¹² <http://services.google.com/fh/files/misc/unconscious-bias-in-the-classroom-report.pdf>

- [Other People's Children: Cultural Conflict in the Classroom, Book by Lisa Delpit](#)
 - This book examines how educators can often unknowingly reproduce societal power structures in the classroom.
- [Pushout: The Criminalization of Black Girls in Schools, Book by: Monique Morris](#)
 - This book discusses the unique effects of School to Prison Pipeline for Black girls. Black girls and women are increasingly the target of school discipline and mass incarceration, this book is a vital resource in understanding and combating this injustice.
- [Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom, Book by bell Hooks](#)
 - Hooks makes the argument for education as the practice of freedom. The book argues for a type of engaged pedagogy in which anyone can learn, and as a result of this education transgress societal boundaries toward liberation.

Trauma Informed – Missouri Model

What is it? How does it work?

Childhood exposure to trauma and toxic stress can lead to over-reactive stress systems, influence cognitive development, and has even been found to lead to changes in regions of the brain associated with behavior and learning.¹³ Childhood exposure to trauma is relatively common; a recent study found that, “more than two thirds of children reported at least 1 traumatic event by 16 years of age, with 13.4% of those children developing some post-traumatic stress symptoms.”¹⁴ The effects of trauma do not stop when a child enters school; however, the educational environment is not set up to handle the effects of trauma. In fact, many of the characteristics of classroom environments, like punitive discipline, can more negatively affect students who have experienced trauma and lead to increased rates of exclusionary discipline practices in this student population.

Children who have been exposed to trauma or toxic stress can quickly move to “fight or flight” states, in which stressors flood the body with hormones and neurotransmitters that make self-control, attention, and learning unimaginably difficult. Beginning in the late 1990s and early 2000s, researchers began to examine how these effects of trauma affect education and developed interventions such as the Sanctuary Model.^{15,16} The trauma informed discipline programs that have grown out of this research aim to recognize and respond appropriately to the consequences of trauma in the classroom and to meet students where they are so that all students can thrive in school.

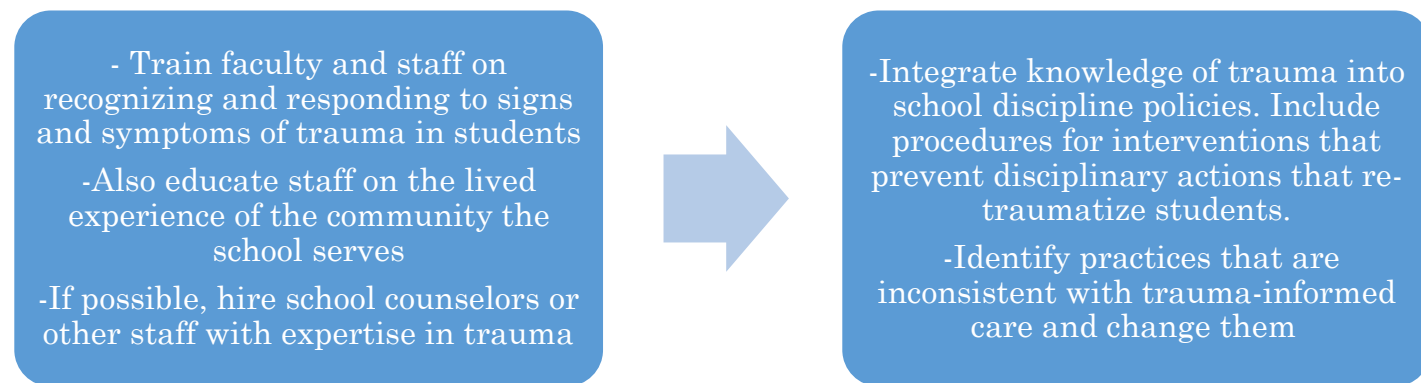
¹³ <https://www.elc-pa.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/Trauma-Informed-in-Schools-Classrooms-FINAL-December2014-2.pdf>

¹⁴ <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/17485609>

¹⁵ <https://www.elc-pa.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/Trauma-Informed-in-Schools-Classrooms-FINAL-December2014-2.pdf>

¹⁶ <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/childabuseandneglect/acestudy/about.html>

Figure 4. Trauma-Informed Implementation



The cultural shift requisite in adopting a trauma-informed practice takes time. However, as with the other programs described in this handbook, outcomes for students should improve steadily as schools move down the path toward full integration of trauma-informed practice.

In 2014, Missouri developed a trauma-informed schools initiative aimed at educating school administrators and educators to both understand and recognize the effects of trauma and to avoid re-traumatizing vulnerable students¹⁷. While at present there is no publicly available data about the program's success, trauma-informed practices have been successful at reducing disciplinary referrals in other states. For example, the Healthy Environments and Response to Trauma in Schools (HEARTS) was recently adopted by San Francisco Unified School District's Student, Family, and Community Support Department and trained all school social workers, high school wellness center coordinators, and school nurses in trauma-informed care. As a result of the HEARTS training, survey data showed a 57% increase in awareness of the effects of trauma on children, a 68% increase in understanding of trauma-sensitive practices, and a 49% increase in implementation of trauma-sensitive classroom practices. One such school, El Dorado Elementary, reported a 32% decrease in disciplinary referrals one year after HEARTS implementation, and an 87% decrease in referrals after 5 years.¹⁸ Studies have also shown that trauma-informed interventions can increase resilience, attention, and attendance.¹⁹

¹⁷ <https://dese.mo.gov/traumainformed>

¹⁸ <http://www.fixschooldiscipline.org/educator-toolkit/>

¹⁹ <http://whatworksforhealth.wisc.edu/program.php?t1=20&t2=2&t3=105&id=638>

Resources:**[The Missouri Model: A Developmental Framework for Trauma-Informed](#)**

- This resource details the Missouri Model for trauma-informed education.

[The HEARTS \(Health Environments and Response to Trauma in Schools\) Program](#)

- The UCSF HEARTS webpage provides information about their program and its philosophy as well as a list of additional resources.

[The National Child Traumatic Stress Network](#)

- This organization of providers, family members, researchers, and national partners works to grow and spread knowledge about childhood trauma as well as to increase access to care for affected children and families.

[Helping traumatized children learn](#)

- This resource gives information about effect of trauma on student learning and supportive school policies.

[Unlocking the Door to Learning: Trauma-Informed Classrooms & Transformational Schools](#)

- The resource gives a definition of trauma, as well as background on trauma-informed research and case studies. This resource also provides solutions educators can implement in their classrooms.

[Creating Trauma-Informed Systems: Child Welfare, Education, First Responders, Health Care, Juvenile Justice](#)

- An influential research article about the effects of childhood trauma/stress and recommendations for solutions across many child-serving industries (e.g., the health, mental health, education, child welfare, first responder, and criminal justices systems).

Social Emotional Learning

What is it? How does it work?

Social Emotional Learning (SEL) is also useful in combating disciplinary inequity, especially in combination if other programs discussed in this report. SEL helps “children and adults understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions.”²⁰ SEL approaches encourage districts to “dig in on the underlying reasons why kids violate norms, rather than reflexively and automatically punishing and sending kids away.”²¹ SEL trainings also helps educators learn to cope with the stresses inherent in their jobs.²² The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) was formed in 1994 and has since established SEL standards in all 50 states.²³ SEL implementation has led to positive effects such as increased graduation rates and improved mental health.²⁴

Resources:

[The Collaborative for Academic, Social, Emotional Learning \(CASEL\)](#)

- This organization provides resource about SEL implementation, research on effectiveness, and policy work. This website also features a map of partner districts as well as key findings from the partner districts.

[How We Stopped Sending Students to Jail](#)

- This op-ed describes the two superintendents’ experiences with using restorative justice and SEL. In both districts, they saw significant drops in disciplinary referrals and arrests as well as improved school culture.

²⁰ <https://casel.org/what-is-sel/>

²¹ <https://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2017/05/10/how-we-stopped-sending-students-to-jail.html>

²² <https://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2017/05/10/how-we-stopped-sending-students-to-jail.html>

²³ <https://casel.org/collaborative-state-initiative/>

²⁴ <https://casel.org/2017-meta-analysis/>

General Advice for Changing School Discipline Systems and Culture

Representation

For schools to successfully shift, it is critical to examine who is on the educational team at your school and what power those individuals may have to break the pipeline. This should also be considered in both the hiring practices for staff and in the management of school resource officers.

Representation matters. Qualified, compassionate, diverse educators are critical. Students will see themselves in the adults they are surrounded by and need role models to emulate who have similar life experiences.

Schools should consider initiatives such as Missouri's [Grow Your Own](#) recruitment program. The Grow Your Own program provides support and encouragement for students to become teachers in their home district, which combats teacher shortages and increases the likelihood that teachers reflect their students' diversity.

Resources:

["Diversifying the Teaching Profession: How to Recruit and Retain Teachers of Color"](#)

- This article outlines the benefits of recruiting more teachers of color, the barriers of doing so, and practices that will aid in the recruitment effort.

School Resource Officers (SRO)

School Resource Officers (SRO) are law enforcement and security personnel who work in schools. The presence of law enforcement in schools is controversial. The role of SROs for public safety, rather than student discipline, must be clear. SROs must understand the legal rights of children. The presence of an SRO can have a disproportionate impact on children of color. For example, during the 2015-16 school year in Missouri, Black students were more than four times as likely to be arrested at school compared to their White peers. Thus, it is important to develop and enact a [Memoranda of Understanding \(MOU\)](#) between districts and law enforcement with an emphasis on training in areas such as de-escalation, anti-racist practices, and restorative practices. MOUs should be developed with community input, and revisited every school year.

For more information about police in schools, please see [Cops and No Counselors](#).

Changing Policies

Look out for red flags in your discipline policies. The discipline policy provided by the district is the guidepost for students and parents to understand how the district will handle school discipline. It is imperative that the district make this information clear and accessible to avoid confusion, mixed interpretation, and disparate outcomes. If terms are vague or appear to target certain kinds of people, it can result in the unequal application of school discipline and worsen discipline disparities. **Below are common pitfalls and how to avoid them.**

- Look out for vague and subjective descriptions that depend on the judgement of the administration. Examples of this type of language include terms like “dangerous behavior” and “disruptive behavior” that lack clear definitions. The perception of danger will differ from individual to individual. Districts should specify what constitutes danger and what penalties accompany specific levels of perceived danger. Another example is how the discipline policy describes “appropriate attire.” These rules are not only very subjective, they also may have racial and gender implications based on the kind of “inappropriate” items they list, such as hair picks, sagging pants and revealing clothing.
- Make sure that due process (i.e., requirement to follow judicial/legal procedures set by law and court norms in a fair, or non-prejudicial, manner) is clearly outlined and that students are taught what rights they have and what they look like in a school setting. Pay close attention to what a district means by “expulsion,” “in-school suspension,” and “out-of-school suspension.” If it is district policy to suspend students while they wait for their disciplinary hearing, this may result in a lack of due process. Under this policy, the student may end up serving most of their suspension time prior to the actual hearing.
- Ensure that school policies do not trample on Constitutional liberties. Student speech should not be stamped out and student privacy should not be violated just because they are in school. This can be prevented by making sure your school’s policy acknowledges and explains the rights of students while in school.
- Look for policies that address punishment for off campus behavior. While it is important to recognize that student actions off campus can have an impact on school environment, it is also critical to remember that students have rights both in school and out of school. Under the Constitution, students do not shed their rights at the schoolhouse door; however, their rights are arguably more protected outside of school.

Assessing Change

Changing a district or a school takes time, commitment, and buy-in from numerous stakeholders. Below, we've outlined a few basic commitments districts or schools can make to improve discipline practices. We hope this chart will also be helpful in measuring districts that are seeking to improve and identify aspects for further improvement.



What your district should provide: “Wants” from the District	What a districts discipline policy should have: “Wants” from the Written Discipline Policy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a district-wide discipline philosophy modeled on proven best practices. • Commit to fund annual training and education with district employees about inclusive, equitable, and trauma-informed school policies. • Have publicly available metrics to assess the effectiveness of trainings • Organize an annual district review to assess inclusivity, paying specific attention to ensuring that all your students have role models available. Open this meeting to the public for comment. • Commit to annual, public review of district-wide discipline data. • Set a clear, comprehensive district-wide policy regarding the role and acceptable behavior of SROs. Train SROs to interact with children in keeping with district discipline philosophy and MOU. Ensure time for public input regarding the role of the SRO. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • List infractions and defined consequences that are age appropriate. • Include a clear process for appealing a discipline decision. • State specific commitments to annual school discipline training. All staff should be required to attend and parents should be invited. • Make discipline policy available online. Have an email or another clear way for parents to contact the district with concerns about the discipline policy. Accommodate meeting with parents on a flexible schedule and provide translation services as needed. • State commitment to restorative, inclusive discipline, and trauma-informed practices. • Commit to measuring and publishing the success rates of these trainings. • Define the role of SROs and the scope of their authority. Provide a link to information on any agreement between the district and law enforcement. List the rights afforded to students at school. • Provide a clear guide to students' rights when speaking to an SRO. Require SROs to reiterate student rights before any formal interactions.

How to Get Your School Discipline Data

DISCIPLINE RATES IN SCHOOL Accessing the Data



Data is collected from across the country and publicly available through the Civil Rights Data Collection. The following will show how can you find specific information relevant to your district on CRDC's site.

- 1  Enter the website of the Civil Rights Data Collection into the address bar of your web browser: ocrdata.ed.gov
- 2 Select "Data Analysis Tools" from the menu on the left side of the CRDC homepage.
- 3 On the Data Analysis Tools page, select "Detail Graphs and Data" from the middle of the page. It's the one with this icon: 



You will be taken to the School/District/State Detail Report page. This page will walk you through the steps to select the type of discipline, school year, and location of the school. This online tool can be used to look for information on any district, school, or state as well as researching rates for different types of disciplinary actions like Out-of-School Suspensions (OSS) or expulsions.

For this example, we will be looking at In-School Suspensions (ISS) during the 2011-2012 school year in the Hazelwood School District.

- 4 Be sure you've checked the box next to the school district after your search, followed by clicking the "Add to Data Set" button next to it.

For data results on Hazelwood, your query should look like this:

- 5 Once you've chosen the items for your search, click on "View Report" beneath your data selection.

This will take you to a new page with graphical representations of your information.

SCHOOL/DISTRICT/STATE DETAIL REPORT

Welcome to the 'SCHOOL/DISTRICT/STATE DETAIL REPORT'. Follow the instructions below to select the criteria to build the report and then click "View Report".

1. Select the data element
 - ☒ At least one in-school suspension
 - ☐ One out-of-school suspension
 - ☐ Multiple out-of-school suspensions
 - ☐ At least one out-of-school suspension (one and multiple suspensions combined)
 - ☐ Expulsions (with and without educational services combined)
 - ☐ Referrals to law enforcement
 - ☐ School-related arrests
 - ☐ Corporal punishment
2. Select collection year: ☒ 2013-14 ☒ 2011-12
3. Select the level of data: ☒ School ☐ District ☐ State
4. Further refine your report by selecting up to 2 schools, districts or states by name or by other criteria.
 - ☒ Find Districts by Name or State
 - If you know the district name, then type it in the district name field and click "Find". Additionally, you can search by State or ID only, or a combination of the three fields.
 - District Name: ID: State:
 - ☒ (Select all)
 -
 -
 -
5. View your custom report:

Selected Data Set

State	District Name	District ID	School Name	School ID	View Detail	Delete
Missouri	HAZELWOOD	2913830				

- 6 Next, we will show you how to read the charts from this query and to interpret the data to understand how your student may be impacted by your school district's disciplinary practices.

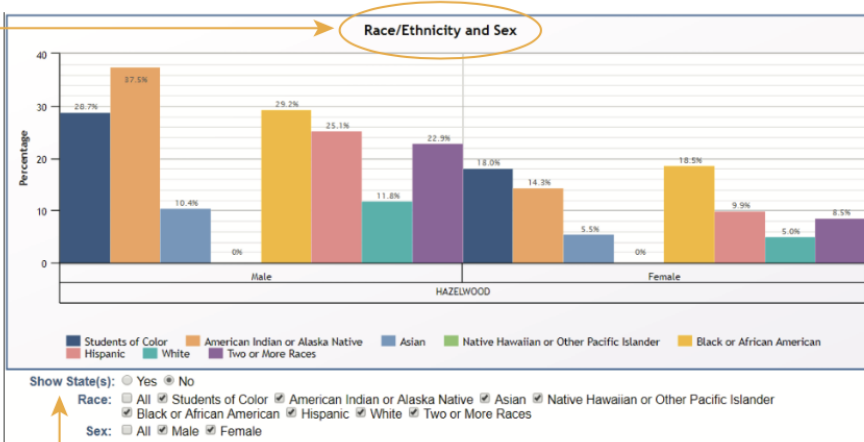
How to Interpret Data

DISCIPLINE RATES IN SCHOOL Reading the Data

Now that you have the data from the CRDC site on your school district, let's walk through how to read it and understand what each piece means for your child.

As an example, the first graph shows the percent of group's population who received a suspension.

The selection options at the bottom allow you to further refine your visual results to show only certain interest groups.

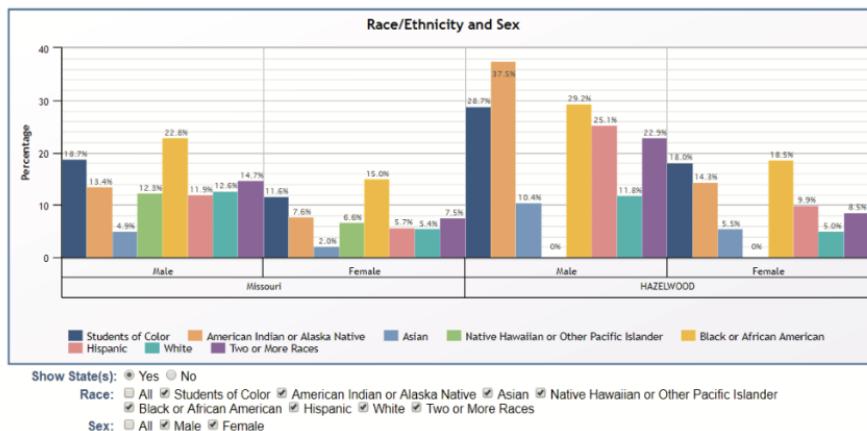


Selecting "Yes" next to "Show State[s]" will put your data in comparison to the rest of the state.

Let's try it with Hazelwood.

On the left side of this chart, you will see the rates of suspension across all Missouri schools. On the right, is Hazelwood.

Tip: If you're looking for another way to view this data, check the top right corner of the website. Select the button that reads "Chart > Data" for a numerical analysis.



MAKING A FACT SHEET Comparing the Data

The data output can help gather a fact sheet for your school district, like these comparison stats for the Hazelwood School District.

The charts to the left are examples of what can be learned from gathering data from different years and comparing them side by side.

Here, you can see the disparities in rates of ISS and OSS by race as well as disability or IDEA-status.

ACLUMO

One or More In-School Suspensions	Non-IDEA Students			IDEA Students		
	Total #	% black	% white	Total #	% black	% white
2011/2012	2,878	87%	11%	738	84%	13%
2013/2014	2,464	89%	8%	594	87%	11%

One Out-of-School Suspension	Non-IDEA Students			IDEA Students		
	Total #	% black	% white	Total #	% black	% white
2011/2012	1,231	86%	11%	302	85%	12%
2013/2014	1,208	85%	11%	347	79%	17%

More than One Out-of-School Suspensions	Non-IDEA Students			IDEA Students		
	Total #	% black	% white	Total #	% black	% white
2011/2012	1,026	90%	8%	445	82%	14%
2013/2014	994	89%	7%	343	85%	13%

Sunshine Requests

HOW TO GUIDE FOR PARENTS:

Writing & Sending a Sunshine Law Request



Sunshine Laws, like the one in Missouri, allow the public to request information (meeting notes, documents, or other records) from public officials in an effort toward accountability and transparency.

The following example is for Missouri's Department of Elementary and Secondary Education but can also be used as a guide for requests to other federal agencies or to your local school district.

Custodian of Records

Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
205 Jefferson St.
Jefferson City, MO 65101

A Sunshine Law request is only valid if it is sent to and received by the custodian of records

Re: Data Request

Sent on [fill in date] via electronic mail to civilrights@dese.mo.gov, recordscustodian@dese.mo.gov, dsm@dese.mo.gov, and U.S. Mail.

To be compliant with the law, it is important that you mail your request IN ADDITION TO email

To Whom It May Concern:

This letter is a request under the Missouri Sunshine Law. Pursuant to the provisions of Chapter 610 of the Missouri Revised Statutes, I request that you provide any and all records that reflect:

In this section of the request, create a bulleted list of the records you would like. Examples include records containing student enrollment data, number of students disciplined, how many students were suspended and what type of suspension they received, as well as, records related to DESE policies or official partnerships.

- + Always include the year or years of the data you would like to receive
- + Ask that the data be disaggregated by race, gender, and disability status for easy sorting
- + Keep in mind that you cannot ask for information that would identify individual students

For suggested data categories visit bit.ly/OCR1516.

Note: DESE may not have all data points. A FOIA request may also be sent to your district or the federal government. For more info visit: bit.ly/FOIARRequests.

If any part of this request is denied, please send a letter listing the specific exemptions upon which you rely for each denial and provide the contact information for the official to whom we may appeal. Mo. Rev. Stat. § 610.023.4. This request must "be acted upon as soon as possible, but in no event later than the end of the third business day following the date the request is received." (Mo. Rev. Stat. § 610.023.3).

Because this records request is being submitted in the public interest and, "is likely to contribute significantly to public understanding of the operation or activities" of the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, I ask that you waive any fees or charge a substantially reduced fee pursuant to Mo. Rev. Stat. § 610.026.1(1). However, should you decline to waive or reduce fees, proceed without further approval if the cost does not exceed \$[fill in an amount that you are comfortable paying], and send a detailed invoice with the data and records. If the cost will exceed \$[fill in amount], please inform me of the cost in advance.

I request that these records be sent electronically (preferably in a Microsoft Excel format) if possible. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions. I appreciate your prompt attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

[Your Name]

[Mailing Address]

Note that you are likely to have to pay a fee. However, there are guidelines governing how fees can be assessed for open records requests. You can find those here: bit.ly/SunshineFees

If you feel that the fee you were charged was excessive, please contact the American Civil Liberties Union of Missouri to file a complaint online: bit.ly/ACLUMOIIntake

Key Terms

Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS): A framework for school discipline that encourages early, positive interventions, as opposed to punishment, and focuses on cultivating and rewarding self-discipline.

Trauma informed: According the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), a trauma-informed approach, “involves understanding and responding to the symptoms of chronic interpersonal trauma and traumatic stress across the lifespan.”

Trauma-informed school: According the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) a trauma-informed school “a) realizes the widespread impact of trauma and understands potential paths for recovery, b) recognizes the signs and symptoms of trauma in students, teachers and staff, c) responds by fully integrating knowledge about trauma into its policies, procedures and practices; and d) seeks to actively resist re-traumatization.”

Restorative Practices: Restorative practices aim to prevent and resolve conflict in a manner that allows for communication between harmed parties and improved relationships going forward.

The School to Prison Pipeline:

The system by which students’ in-school behaviors result in punitive contact with law enforcement and the criminal justice system, resulting in greater likelihood of continued interaction with the criminal justice system through adulthood.

Zero Tolerance Policies:

Policies, such as the Safe Schools Act, which mandate that students been suspended for a year, or expelled as result of violent actions or bringing a weapon to school. (See Missouri Statute R.S. 160.261.1 for more information on the Safe Schools Act and Zero Tolerance Policies in Missouri.)

Out-Of-School Suspension (OSS):

When a student without disabilities and student with disabilities under Section 504 is temporarily removed from school for a period between half a day and 180 days. Out-of-school suspension can be given with or without alterative educational services. For students with disabilities under IDEA, an out-of-school suspension for less than 10 days can include suspensions with no IEP services provided, or suspensions in which services are provided.

In all cases, a suspension of less than 10 days does not require educational services. However, any services that are provided must be given equally to students with and

without disabilities. Any student receiving a suspension over 10 days long is still entitled to educational services. Students with disabilities must receive all services required to achieve an equal education under their IEP or 504 plan.

Short-Term Suspension:

A suspension lasting less than 10 consecutive and/or cumulative days.

Long-Term Suspension:

A suspension lasting more than 10 consecutive days and/or 10 days cumulatively that are judged to be part of pattern of suspension.

Principal's Suspension:

A school principal may suspend a student for up to 10 days. A parent/guardian must be notified and a meeting must be held to provide for students' due process rights.

Superintendent's Suspension:

A superintendent may suspend a student for up to 180 days. A parent/guardian must be notified, and a hearing held to allow for due process rights. Superintendent's suspensions may be appealed to the district's board of education.

In-School Suspension (ISS):

When a student is temporarily removed from classroom for a least half a day, but remains on school property.

Disciplinary Alternative Schools:

A public school which provides alternative education for students that cannot attend a typical school. This does not include special or vocational education.

School Resource Officer (SRO):

A law enforcement officer who works full time in schools.

Memorandum of Understanding (MOU):

An agreement between a school and law enforcement and/or security companies to establish the nature and scope of their relationship with respect to SROs and other law enforcement officials.

Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA):

Children who receive specialized educational services due to a disability under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). A student's specific needs will be laid out in their Individualized Education Program (IEP) or an Individual Family Service (IFS) plan. Some of the disabilities which fall in this classification include: intellectual disabilities, visual, hearing, speech or language impairment, serious emotional disturbance, orthopedic impairment, autism, and traumatic brain injury.

504:

Refers to Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Section 504 mandates that people with disabilities cannot be excluded, or denied equal benefits from any program that receives federal funding. In schools, this would require that the needs of students with disabilities that may or may not fall under IDEA classification must be addressed equally with those of students without disabilities.

Individualized Education Plan (IEP):

A plan created to ensure every student with IDEA disabilities is provided with the specialized services they require to have equal access to education.

Implicit Bias:

Stereotypes that can unconsciously affect behavior.

Funding Opportunities

Every community in Missouri has a cluster of foundations and grantmakers who make gifts to improve the lives of youth. Remember that grants require work and often reporting. Before you submit, make sure you have the infrastructure to live up to the grantmaker's expectations. If not, consider grassroots fundraising or crowdsourcing.

Tips for Getting Started

1. Relationships help. If you know others in your area who have received the grant funding you need, meet with them for advice.
2. Go to the library. Your local library system likely pays for access to databases that will help you search for grants. There will be books on grant writing, and possibly a special librarian who can help.
3. In order to receive 501c3 grant funding, you will need special information: an EIN number, budget figures, and possibly (already public) financial documents like an audit. If you are a teacher and your district is difficult to navigate, you may want to go the crowdfunding route via [donorschoose](https://www.donorschoose.org). Additionally, if you do not have nonprofit status, you can find a friendly nonprofit to be your fiscal sponsor.

Grantmakers to Consider:

Our state has hundreds of foundations. Below is a short list of funders who are interested in improving the lives of youth.

Kansas City: Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation, Women's Foundation of Kansas City, see this list of funders published by the Greater Kansas City Community Foundation <https://www.growyourgiving.org/grant>

Mid-Missouri/Columbia/Jefferson City: Community Foundation of Central Missouri, mid-Missouri has a strong culture of local businesses who provide sponsorships

St. Louis: Black Funders of STL, Deaconess Foundation, Spirit of St. Louis Women's Fund

General Grant Listings:

- www.Donorschoose.org
- <https://www.neafoundation.org/for-educators/other-grant-fellowship-opportunities/>
- <https://missouri.grantwatch.com/>

In Appreciation

For Those Who Made This Handbook Possible

Laura Cornell

Dr. Sharonica L. Hardin-Bartley

Kay Drey

Keep Kids in Class Coalition

Gwen Klein

Mildred, Herbert and Julian Simon Foundation

The Missouri Foundation for Health

Nicole Rainey

Gary Spiller

About ACLU of Missouri and the American Civil Liberties Union

An affiliate of the national American Civil Liberties Union, ACLU of Missouri preserves and expands the constitutional rights and civil liberties of all Missourians as guaranteed in the Missouri and U.S. Constitutions, with a focus on the Bill of Rights, the first ten Amendments.

For nearly 100 years, the ACLU has been our nation's guardian of liberty, working in courts, legislatures, and communities to defend and preserve the individual rights and liberties that the Constitution and the laws of the United States guarantee everyone in this country.

Whether it's achieving full equality for LGBT people, establishing new privacy protections for our digital age of widespread government surveillance, ending mass incarceration, or preserving the right to vote or the right to have an abortion, the ACLU takes up the toughest civil liberties cases and issues to defend all people from government abuse and overreach.

With more than 2 million members, activists, and supporters, the ACLU is a nationwide organization that fights tirelessly in all 50 states, Puerto Rico, and Washington, D.C., to safeguard everyone's rights.

The ACLU is nonprofit and nonpartisan. We do not receive any government funding. Member dues as well as contributions and grants from private foundations and individuals pay for the work we do.

LEARN MORE ABOUT ACLU MISSOURI

Visit us and join the conversation:

www.aclu-mo.org

To help us protect the rights of all Missourians as a member of the ACLU of Missouri:

bit.ly/JoinACLUMO



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