THORNY ISSUES IN SCHOOL DISCIPLINE

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NAPCS Master Class on School Discipline
INCS, Chicago, IL
December 7, 2016
SCHOOL DISCIPLINARY SYSTEMS: VALUES & TENSION

• Universal Values & Purposes
  – Safety (schools, students, teachers)
  – Maximize Educational Opportunity & Student Learning

• Unique Tension Our Field Must Grapple With
  – Student Access/Public Interests <----> School Autonomy
LOTS OF NATIONAL ATTENTION

Just in the last two years:

- USDOE/USDOJ Discipline Initiative and “Dear Colleague” letter
- i3 (Investing in Innovation) Federal Funding Program Priority
- My Brothers Keeper Federal Task Force on Disciplinary Disparities
- Council of State Governments Discipline Consensus Report
- Discipline Disparities Collaborative Briefing Papers, Book, and Congressional Hearing
- National reports from UCLA, NCSECS, NACSA (and others)
- Commentary Series by Fordham Institute & Education Next (among others)
- US Sec of Ed John King Keynote at National Alliance Conference
- AASA (Supt Association) and Children’s Defense Fund Discipline Demonstration Sites
- LAUSD: banning suspensions for “willful defiance”
- Chicago Public Schools: Overhauled code of conduct to reflect restorative practices
- Maryland: Eliminate disparities in discipline over time
- Achievement First: Network wide exclusionary discipline reduction initiative
- And many, many others....
KEY REASONS FOR NATIONAL INTEREST

Suspensions Over Time

- 1973: 3.7%
- 2006: 6.9%
- 2012: 7.4%

Suspensions by Race Over Time

- White:
  - 1972: 3.1%
  - 2000: 6%
  - 2003: 13.2%
  - 2006: 13.9%
  - 2011: 14.98%
- Black:
  - 1972: 5.09%
  - 2000: 13.2%
  - 2003: 4.88%
  - 2006: 5.18%
  - 2011: 5%

From USDOE Office for Civil Rights
HEAVILY RESEARCHED IN DISTRICT RUN SECTOR; UNDER-RESEARCHED IN CHARTER SECTOR

• Changing Behavior?
  – Late elementary school suspensions are best predictor of middle school suspensions

• School Outcomes?
  – Lower academic achievement
  – Lower rates of on-time graduation
  – Higher rates of dropout

• Social Outcomes?
  – Higher risk of juvenile justice contact

See Skiba, Arredondo, & Rausch, 2014
RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SCHOOL ACHIEVEMENT & DISCIPLINE

Percent of Students Scoring 3+ on PARCC 15-16 Test by Cumulative Days of Out-of-School Suspension (grades 3 - 8)

R² = 0.7163
RELATIVE RISK OF OUT-OF-SCHOOL SUSPENSION FOR BLACK STUDENTS

Relative Risk
1.1-2.0
2.0-3.0
3.0-4.0
Above 4.0

US RR: 3.22

USDOE, OCR (2011)
IT’S ABOUT POVERTY, NOT RACE, RIGHT?

• Yes poverty and race overlap, but....
• Even controlling for that overlap, race (Black specifically) is independent and strong predictor of student removal

See Rausch & Skiba, in press
It’s Black kids misbehaving more, right?

Of 32 office referral infractions, only 8 significant differences:

- White students referred more for:
  - Smoking
  - Vandalism
  - Leaving w/o permission
  - Obscene Language

- Black students referred more for:
  - Disrespect
  - Excessive Noise
  - Threat
  - Loitering

Skiba et al., 2002
### TABLE 1: AUTHORIZER GROUPS ON PRACTICES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Practice</th>
<th>Percent Yes Responses</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Requiring applications to have comprehensive discipline plans that include suspension and expulsion practices</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collect or receive suspension and expulsion data</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitor school suspension or expulsion rates</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Publicly report suspension or expulsion rates</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Publicly report disaggregated suspension or expulsion rates (by race/ethnicity, socioeconomic status, special education status)</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Set performance expectations for suspension or expulsion rates, beyond what is required in federal or state law</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: All items are significant at the p<.001 level. Hands Off group comprised 39% of the sample, while the Monitor & Report group comprised 61% of the sample.

Rausch & Conlan (2016). *Authorizers are not monolithic on school discipline.*
AUTHORIZER PRACTICES WHEN CHALLENGES ARISE

- Access effective practices (e.g., forums, annual meetings)
- Connect with discipline/climate experts
- Changes to staffing plans
- Changes to discipline policies
- Changes to remediation/action plans
- Revoked/not renewed charter for persistent discipline policy violations
- Other penalties for discipline rates deemed too high

NACSA's 2016 Authorizing Survey
NEEDS IN THE FIELD

Data, data, data
• Availability, usability, public promotion

Call out law breakers loudly and publicly

Fostering awareness of alternatives w/o infringing—intentionally or not—on autonomy
• Peer pressure; collaborative learning

Interventions that address inequity
• Few in existence
• Emerging are improving relationships b/w students and teachers