



NATIONAL
CHARTER SCHOOL
RESOURCE CENTER
AT SAFAL PARTNERS

CHARTER SCHOOL DISCIPLINE:

Examples of Policies and School Climate Efforts from the Field





The National Charter School Resource Center (NCSRC) is dedicated to supporting the development of high-quality charter schools. The NCSRC provides technical assistance to sector stakeholders and has a comprehensive collection of online resources addressing the challenges charter schools face. The website hosts reports, webinars, and newsletters focusing on facilities, funding opportunities, authorizing, English learners, special education, military families, board governance, and other topics. The NCSRC is funded by the U.S. Department of Education and led by education consulting firm Safal Partners.

www.charterschoolcenter.org



Safal, meaning “good outcomes” in Sanskrit, is a mission-driven strategy consulting firm that supports education reform efforts at the federal, state, district, and school level. We bring deep domain knowledge in the charter sector, human capital management systems, and next generation learning. Safal Partners’ clients include the U.S. Department of Education, leading foundations and non-profits, and state and district agencies.

www.safalpartners.com

PROJECT CONTRIBUTORS

Project Director

Mukta Pandit

Authors

Nora Kern, Suzie Kim

Acknowledgments

The authors wish to thank the individuals involved in the production of this report: Renee Bradley, Kristen Harper, Stefan Huh, Sonia Park, Soumya Sathya, and Ursula Wright of the U.S. Department of Education for guidance and feedback; and Safal Partners staff for editing and design.

Safal Partners: Kern, N., Kim, S. (2016).

Charter School Discipline: Examples of Policies and School Climate Efforts from the Field.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	1
SECTION I: OVERVIEW	4
SECTION II: CHARTER SCHOOL PROFILES	7
Health Sciences High and Middle College	7
Organizational Profile.....	7
Approach to Building a Positive School Climate.....	7
Implementation	9
Impact	10
Key Takeaways.....	11
KIPP Bay Area Schools	12
Organizational Profile.....	12
Approach to Building a Positive School Climate.....	12
Implementation	12
Impact	14
Key Takeaways.....	14
New Orleans College Prep Network	15
Organizational Profile.....	15
Approach to Building a Positive School Climate.....	15
Implementation	16
Impact	17
Key Takeaways.....	18
Rowe Elementary School.....	19
Organizational Profile.....	19
Approach to Building a Positive School Climate.....	19
Implementation	19
Impact	21
Key Takeaways.....	21
SECTION III: FINDINGS	23
Approach: Set a Vision for School Discipline and Climate	23
Implementation: Focus on the Needs of the School Community.....	23
Impact: Perform Continuous Improvement to Sustain Results	25
APPENDIX: ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	27
ENDNOTES.....	28

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Students need a safe and supportive school environment to maximize their academic and social-emotional learning potential. A school's discipline policies and practices directly impact school climate and student achievement.¹ Together, discipline policies and positive school climate efforts can reinforce behavioral expectations and ensure student safety. However, exclusionary discipline practices, which include out-of-school suspensions and expulsions, can hinder student learning and growth. The schools profiled in this report demonstrate that charter schools can honor their mission and vision while also adopting inclusive discipline policies and practices. In addition to improving school climate, discipline reforms can also impact student achievement. For example, the profiled school networks in New Orleans, Louisiana, and the California Bay Area saw significant academic gains within three years of implementing schoolwide behavior efforts and alternative discipline policies.

Public charter schools have autonomy over their mission and educational model in exchange for increased accountability for student outcomes. They must follow the same rules and regulations that traditional public schools must follow affecting health, safety, and students' rights, including those that protect students with disabilities. The design and implementation of discipline policies can pose challenges in any public school setting, but in the charter school context, tensions between charter autonomy and public school obligations can raise additional issues.

Increasingly, leaders from the charter sector and the broader public education system are giving more attention to student discipline and school climate. As a way to understand the impact of disciplinary actions, all public schools should carefully examine their discipline policies, practices, and data.

The U.S. Departments of Education (ED) and Justice have worked closely with educators through the [#RethinkDiscipline](#) campaign to support initiatives that build positive school climates and develop alternative approaches to school discipline.² ED has worked with education leaders, including many within the charter sector, to support these changes. As charter school educators take up this effort, they will both rely on and build upon the following [guiding principles](#):

- Maximize the time students are in school and learning
- Cultivate systems that acknowledge and remedy the root causes of students' and educators' challenges in school
- Leverage data to inform equitable disciplinary systems
- Engage the entire school community in professional development and accountability systems that encourage alignment on the school's intended processes and cultural goals

The 2013-14 release of the U.S. Department of Education's biennial Civil Rights Data Collection (CRDC) shed light on discipline disparities and helped to inform a growing national discourse. According to the 2013-14 CRDC data for school discipline in K-12 public schools, including all charter and traditional public schools:³

- In all public schools nationwide, 2.8 million K-12 students received one or more out-of-school suspensions.
- Charter schools suspend a greater percentage of students than traditional public schools.⁴
- However, the suspension rate in charter schools is trending downward, declining to 6.5 percent in 2013-14 from 7.3 percent in 2011-12. This decrease in suspensions occurred even with a broader definition of suspensions in the most recent collection.⁵
- Students of color still experience higher suspension rates in charter schools: 9.0 percent of students of color (American Indian/Alaska Native, Black, and Hispanic students) are suspended in charter schools versus 8.5 percent in traditional public schools.
- By contrast, white students experience a lower suspension rate in charter schools. There is a 2.8 percent suspension rate for White students enrolled in charter schools, compared to a 3.7 percent White suspension rate in traditional public schools.
- In all public schools, Black students are 3.8 times as likely to receive one or more out-of-school suspensions as White students.
- Students with disabilities, protected under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), are more than twice as likely to receive one or more out-of-school suspensions in any public school as students without disabilities.
- Black students are nearly twice as likely to be expelled from any public school as are White students.

While concerns about fair and equitable treatment apply to all schools, charter schools have been notably spotlighted in the debate on discipline. Charter schools have been criticized for overrelying on rigid discipline policies (exclusionary and low- or no-tolerance models) and pushing out struggling students to boost achievement data.⁶ There have been high-profile examples of schools with high suspension and expulsion rates. This is an issue that the charter sector should take very seriously, even though most charter schools and networks have shown a strong commitment to serving all students fairly. There is evidence, with the profiled charter schools as prime examples, that charter schools and networks have acknowledged higher exclusionary discipline rates when they exist, and responded by reforming discipline policies. In the process of grappling with discipline policies and implementing reforms, some charter schools have made considerable progress in reducing suspension and expulsion rates in recent years.⁷ Further, a number of charter school leaders have successfully leveraged their autonomy to rethink approaches to discipline. The National Charter School Resource Center (NCSRC) has developed a [toolkit](#) to aide school leaders in translating the previously noted guiding principles into equitable discipline policies and practices at the school level.

This report from the NCSRC features case studies of four charter schools that have implemented innovative and intentional approaches to school discipline and have sustained or improved academic performance while decreasing or having historically low suspension and expulsion rates.⁸ The report is organized as follows:

- Section I of this report gives an overview of discipline data and alternative models to student discipline policies and practices.
- Section II features case studies of a diverse group of charter schools in varying stages of developing, implementing, or revising their discipline and school climate models.

- Section III presents common findings that emerged from the case studies.

Evolving a charter school's approach to discipline is a time-intensive process that requires work to set a vision for school climate, implement changes prioritizing the needs of students and families, and engage in continuous improvement efforts to sustain impact. Despite the time investment, the process is important to ensure a strong school climate that will enable all students to thrive.

The NCSRC developed this report in conjunction with a toolkit of resources and a set of case study videos that feature concrete examples of how other charter schools are rethinking discipline. Please see here for the [toolkit](#) and [videos](#). These NCSRC resources align with ED's efforts to expand the national dialogue on effective disciplinary practices. ED's [#RethinkDiscipline](#) campaign highlights discipline data and research, and the initiative also features best practices and resources to help states, districts, and schools to implement alternative practices.⁹

SECTION I: OVERVIEW



Charter schools generally have the freedom to establish their own policies and practices, including those for student discipline. Charter school leaders face the challenge of using their autonomy to create a structured, safe environment conducive to learning while ensuring that discipline policies and practices support a welcoming school climate. It is important for all charter schools to evaluate their discipline policies and practices—whether it is a charter school in its planning year establishing school discipline policies or a mature school rethinking the effectiveness of its current model.

Exclusionary discipline, defined as any disciplinary action that removes or excludes a student from his or her usual educational setting, is disruptive to student learning. Additionally, schools tend to disproportionately apply exclusionary discipline to children of color and those with disabilities in K-12 public schools:¹⁰

- In the 2013-14 school year, 2.8 million public school K-12 students received one or more out-of-school suspension,¹¹ even though suspensions were mostly used for non-safety threatening incidents.¹²
- Charter schools suspend a greater percentage of students than traditional public schools.¹³ However, the suspension rate in charter schools is trending downward, declining to 6.5 percent in 2013-14 from 7.3 percent in 2011-12. This decrease in suspensions occurred even with a broader definition of suspensions in the most recent collection.¹⁴
- Frequent use of exclusionary discipline has a negative impact on school climate, with lower levels of student engagement and trust correlating with higher suspension rates.¹⁵ Exclusionary discipline also increases the likelihood of future truancy, dropout, substance abuse, and juvenile delinquency.¹⁶
- Suspensions and expulsions cause students to lose instructional time and are associated with lower levels of academic achievement and lower grades.¹⁷
- Students of color face a greater risk of suspension. Evidence shows that Black students are 3.8 times more likely to receive an out-of-school suspension in a public school than White students.¹⁸ Native American, Latino, Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander, and multiracial male students also face disproportionately higher suspension rates.¹⁹ The differences in discipline rates are not explained by higher rates of misbehavior, and

evidence shows that students of color are punished more severely for the same behaviors.²⁰

- Schools suspend students with disabilities at more than twice the rate of students without disabilities.²¹ Charter schools expel and suspend students with disabilities at higher rates than at traditional public schools.²² However, English learners are not assigned out-of-school suspension at disproportionately high rates.²³
- Schools punish lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning (LGBTQ) students more severely than their peers for similar or less serious behaviors.²⁴

All school leaders can benefit from analyzing discipline policies and practices given their prevalence and impact. Examining discipline data can ensure that daily and long-term practices mirror a school's equity goals. Charter school leaders have a unique opportunity to leverage charter-specific features, such as autonomy, flexibility, and innovation, to create a safe and positive learning environment.

This report focuses on the models and methods used by four charter schools that experts specializing in student discipline nominated. These featured schools have implemented innovative and intentional approaches to school discipline and have sustained or improved academic performance while having declining or historically low suspension and expulsion rates. Although the methods differ, there are common themes and principles that the featured schools share that can help all charter schools establishing positive school climates and effective discipline policies—whether school leaders are creating new policies in a school's planning year or re-examining policies in operational schools. For example, all of the profiled charter schools chose to focus on research-based, alternative discipline models to improve students' academic and non-academic skills and outcomes. Within the education field, the most prevalent mechanisms of discipline reform include relationship-building, multi-tiered systems of behavioral support, emotional literacy, and culturally-responsive approaches.²⁵ For clarity, we define these approaches and common models below:

Relationship-Building: Relationship-building approaches use relationship and community-building to prevent and correct student misbehavior. Restorative practices are the most common relationship building approach.

- *Restorative Practices* constitute a set of strategies that provide a framework to build social capital and to respond to wrongdoing through participatory learning and decision-making.²⁶ A fundamental principle of restorative practices in schools is welcoming student agency and doing things 'with' rather than 'for' students. While restorative practices represent a comprehensive approach to building community, *restorative justice* is a subset of restorative practices that focuses on intervention after a student has committed an offense.

Structural Interventions: Structural interventions use structural changes, such as multi-tiered system of support for behavior (MTSS-B), to shift the school-wide approach to discipline.

- *Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports (PBIS) or School-wide Positive Behavioral Supports (SWPBS)* is a comprehensive systems-change process that helps schools

identify student behavioral needs, and select and implement tailored evidence-based interventions. This model focuses on teaching appropriate school behaviors and preventing the escalation of behavioral issues through a tiered-support system.²⁷ PBIS uses a multi-tiered approach for early identification and response to student needs.²⁸

Emotional Literacy: Emotional literacy equips schools with the tools to regulate student behavior by reinforcing an awareness of responsibility to self and to others.

- *Social-emotional learning (SEL)* equips schools with the tools to reinforce emotional literacy, which is defined simply as the ability to identify, understand, and respond to emotions in oneself and others in a healthy manner.²⁹ The goal of SEL programs is to instill an awareness of responsibility to self and to others. SEL programs emphasize self-motivation, managing emotions, respecting others and others’ opinions, goal-setting, and responsible decision-making. These approaches are frequently integrated with multi-tiered behavioral frameworks, such as PBIS.

Culturally-Responsive:

- *Culturally-responsive* approaches directly target discipline disparities through considerations for different student cultures that are reflected in communication, behavior, and engagement norms of student cultures. This model is frequently integrated with other models, such as PBIS, to ensure that the school is intentionally addressing the different cultures and backgrounds that are represented in the student body and staff.

The next section features the profiles of four charter schools, their student discipline, and school climate models. These approaches can all support schools as they work to achieve the guiding principles outlined on page 1. The section also features the school’s implementation of the models, the impact of using alternative discipline policies and practices, and some key takeaways for other charter schools to consider. The profiled schools and networks are Health Sciences High and Middle College (HSHMC), KIPP Bay Area Schools (KBA), New Orleans College Prep (NOCP), and Rowe Elementary School (Rowe). The NCSRC conducted research and interviews with charter school leaders and experts in the field to create these school profiles.

Table 1: Charter School Profiles at a Glance

	HSHMC	KBA	NOCP	ROWE
Location	San Diego, CA	San Lorenzo, CA	New Orleans, LA	Chicago, IL
Total schools	1	11	4	1
Total enrollment (2014 - 15)	569	416	1,377	812
Alternative Approaches Used				
Relationship-Building	✓	✓	✓	✓
Structural Interventions		✓	✓	✓
Emotional Literacy		✓	✓	✓
Culturally-Responsive		✓		✓

SECTION II: CHARTER SCHOOL PROFILES



Health Sciences High and Middle College

Organizational Profile: Health Sciences High and Middle College (HSHMC) is an independent charter high school in San Diego, California, focused on health and health sciences careers. HSHMC received a Charter Schools Program (CSP) grant for planning, program design, and initial implementation in 2004. The school is located in City Heights, which has a large immigrant and refugee community and welcomes students from an expansive geographical area that spans from Carlsbad in the north to the US/Mexico border in the south.

Approach to Building a Positive School Climate: HSHMC’s approach to school climate and discipline is a seamless integration of restorative practices and the school’s core values. Even before adopting restorative practices, HSHMC was deeply rooted in a thoughtful approach to student care. To guide cultural cohesiveness, the founders of the school established the five pillars below, which provide teachers and staff a framework to cultivate their own desired climate:

30

1. **Welcome:** A culture that is welcoming,
2. **Do no harm:** A culture in which we examine how our behaviors affect us, others, and our world,
3. **Never too late to learn:** A culture in which the conditions for learning are ever present,
4. **Choice words:** A culture in which the language creates and facilitates personal pride, purpose, and power, and
5. **Best school in the universe:** A culture in which there is a shared belief that we are a part of something special and great.

After HSHMC was in operation for several years, the leaders revisited these foundational principles to make sure teachers and staff’s actions were matching the vision and supporting every student. Through re-examining the school’s principles, the school leadership found that the foundational five pillars had created a community that became the ideal backdrop to incorporate an approach based on relationship-building. Restorative practices gave the school a model and set of proactive strategies to maintain the community.

Student Demographics (2014-15)	Health Sciences High and Middle College	
Disciplinary Model	Restorative Practices	
Location	San Diego, CA	
Total Enrollment	569	
Grades Served	9 - 12	
Free/Reduced Price Lunch	74%	
English Learners	20.4%	
Students with Disabilities (SWD)	10%	
American Indian	1%	
Asian	7%	
Black	21%	
Hispanic	55%	
Two or More	1%	
White	15%	
Academic and Disciplinary Statistics	HSHMC	San Diego Unified
Performance (CAHSEE) (2014-15)		
State 10th Grade Exit Exam Pass Rate, English	93%	86%
State Math Exam Proficiency	90%	88%
Performance (API) (2013-14)		
Graduation	100%	89.7%
Student Retention	100%	95.5%
State English Exit Exam Pass Rate	96%	85%
State Math Exit Exam Pass Rate	96%	87%
Discipline (2011-12)		
Total In-School Suspension Rate	0%	1.8%
Total Out-of-School Suspension Rate	1.9%	5.6%
Percentage of Out-of-School Suspensions, by Race/Ethnicity	100% Hispanic	50.4% Hispanic 22.2% Black 13.6% White 6.1% Asian
Percentage of Out-of-School Suspensions, by SWD	0%	28.1%
Percentage of Enrollment, by SWD	7.8%	10.4%
Total Expulsion Rate	0%	0.2%

Source: [Ed-Data](#), U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2011-12. [Civil Rights Data Collection 2011-12](#), [California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress](#).

When the founders of HSHMC started to think about how they would communicate relationship-based discipline policies, they were deterred by the vague and complicated policies in existing student handbooks. Instead, they looked to the single-line creeds of major universities. They summarized the code of conduct into the Hippocratic Oath, ‘do no harm,’ to reflect the school’s focus on health and wellbeing. By doing this, HSHMC sought to move away from a traditional, rule-based approach to one that supported individual student decision-making.

Reflections on Restorative Practices

“The fundamental premise of restorative practices is that people are happier, more cooperative and productive, and more likely to make positive changes when those in positions of authority do things with them, rather than to them or for them.”

– *International Institute for Restorative Practices (IIRP)*

“Simply stated, our actions affect those around us and affect the quality of our school. Our codes and standards should support, but not replace, your personal and ethical beliefs.”

– *HSHMC Student Handbook*

Implementation: After HSHMC articulated their vision for a school based on restorative practices, the next phase was to support the teachers in creating an environment that matched the vision. HSHMC’s Chief Executive Officer, Dr. Ian Pumpian explained, “The leadership team has a responsibility to expose the teachers to opportunities to reflect on their current practice, to generate interest in other alternatives, and to obtain buy-in.” To match the restorative practices philosophy of doing things with, not ‘for’ or ‘to’ others, HSHMC deeply engaged its teachers and staff to determine how the school can improve.

When HSHMC began implementing restorative practices, the school sent a team of teachers to the International Institute of Restorative Practices (IIRP). The IIRP is a center dedicated to restorative practices and provides trainings and certifications to create a consistent understanding of its principles. HSHMC’s school Director of Student Support and Vice Principal, Dominique Smith, earned his certification with the IIRP and became an in-house resource to train and support teachers. Smith led groups of teachers on visits to other schools to observe restorative practices in action. After the school visits, the teachers would gather to discuss how they could improve their own practices. The successful implementation of restorative practices throughout the school was largely dependent on open communication with all staff and the establishment of mutual trust. Now, HSHMC provides full IIRP training for all new teachers to ensure that they enter the school environment with a mindset consistent with the existing school climate. Smith, along with three coaches, consistently checks in with teachers and provides ‘five-minute’ breaks by supporting disruptive students. The school actively seeks to disseminate its practices by welcoming other schools and visitors to the campus to learn, just as they did before. HSHMC has hosted IIRP professional development events open to the public. HSHMC also allowed students to share their personal experiences with restorative practices in a student-led panel at the Best of Out-of-School Time Conference. While not all schools are able to provide extensive support, Dr. Pumpian emphasizes that the failure to invest in the behavioral success of students costs far more than the immediate cost of training and resources.

For students, the focus on restorative practices begins with the opening of the school year, when the whole school dedicates the first four days entirely to climate and team-building lessons and activities without any typical academic classes. During this four-day period, the lesson plans are centered around building trust, teaching restorative practices, and practicing them. During the rest of the school year, teachers and staff develop nurturing relationships with students through formal and informal check-ins. The entire staff participates in a daily 'Morning Meeting' to highlight any students who are struggling emotionally, socially, or academically so that they can jointly support those students. In the classroom, teachers integrate smaller practice circles at their discretion into the class content to give each student a chance to share what they have learned and build relationships with staff and other students. These touchpoints serve as opportunities for the teacher to preemptively initiate conversations if he or she observes any changes in the student's attitude or behavior.

Common Restorative Practice Processes

- **Restorative Conferences:** a structured meeting between offenders, victims, and relevant parties to resolve and repair the harm.
- **Circles:** a less structured group discussion that can be used to proactively build community or discuss problems and conflicts.
- **Family Group Decision Making:** bringing together family support networks to empower them to make decisions for their family members.
- **Informal Restorative Practices:** include affective statements or questions that allow students to reflect on their feelings.

HSHMC also creates opportunities for students to determine their own behavioral education through "essential questions." Every year, students vote on essential questions, which are used to guide discussions schoolwide that relate what happens in the school to the real world. There are four essential questions for the 2015-16 school year:

1. *Who (and what) do you want to be?;*
2. *What's your story?;*
3. *Which is stronger, heart or mind?;* and
4. *What defines beauty?*

These discussions provide adults and students with a platform to engage with one another on academic, social, and behavioral issues.

Impact: HSHMC was recently honored as a 2015 California Gold Ribbon School and awarded the National School Safety Advocacy Council Award for innovative practices in reducing disruptive behavior. HSHMC measures its own success through its graduation rate. Even though the school is located in one of the most dangerous areas in the region, HSHMC has reached a graduation rate of 99%, far surpassing neighboring schools. In its approach to discipline, Dr. Pumpian explains, "Discipline needs to be looked at as something you invest in and reaps dividends over time, rather than doing the 'easy' thing of removing a child." However, Dr. Pumpian acknowledges that the process of implementation is a difficult one, especially in transitioning to a restorative mindset. For example, teachers were initially frustrated when they sent a disruptive student out

of the classroom only to find the student quickly returned to the classroom after speaking with an administrator. The transition to restorative practices is a topic of ongoing training, reflection, and “soul searching” among the staff. With continual practice and a support system of coaches, teachers have changed their mindset from punishing behaviors to teaching behaviors.

Key Takeaways:

- Effective approaches marry the discipline model with the school’s **core values** and **integrate discipline and** climate with all aspects of the school’s greater mission and vision.
- **Buy-in from and training** for teachers and staff is critical to creating a positive school climate that is based on trusting relationships between teachers and students.
- A simple **vision** helps communicate and set clear expectations among teachers, students, and parents (e.g., “Do No Harm.”).

KIPP Bay Area Schools

Organizational Profile: The Knowledge Is Power Program (KIPP) is the largest charter network, with 183 schools nationwide. KIPP Bay Area (KBA) includes 11 schools, including one elementary school, seven middle schools, and three high schools. KBA schools are recipients of both Investing in Innovation Fund (i3) grants, and two middle schools and the high school received CSP grants in the past. The KIPP model is based on five pillars: high expectations, commitment to preparing students for college and life, more time in school, principals with the power to lead, and a focus on results. The KIPP network has also invested in teaching character skills, such as grit and zest, that impact students' long-term outcomes.³¹ KBA schools are focused on promoting a positive climate by showing that the KIPP character values go hand-in-hand with restorative practices.

Approach to Building a Positive School Climate: KIPP Summit Academy (KSA), one of the KBA schools, opened in 2003 in San Lorenzo, California, and when Ric Zappa became a teacher there in 2007, the school faced low academic results and high exclusionary discipline rates. Within his first two years at KSA, Zappa was promoted to principal of KSA and instituted three changes to turnaround the school's academic performance and climate:

1. Established literacy as a foundation for learning;
2. Emphasized differentiation in student and teacher learning; and
3. Implemented restorative practices.

Within restorative practices, KSA removed rewards and punishment from discipline. Instead, the school provided students with tools to be proactive in changing their behavior. KSA frequently uses these three restorative processes:

- **Restorative Conversations:** Reflective discussions between students and staff members that help both parties reflect on why a conflict occurred and how to move forward in a way that builds trust and healthy relationships (*See Restorative Conferences, described in the box above*).
- **Honor Council:** A student-led practice to guide and support a student who has behaved with a lack of integrity. A group of students trained in restorative practice circles helps the student reflect on his or her actions. Together, they come up with a plan to behave with integrity in the future and include disciplinary consequences in the plan when necessary.
- **Restorative Circles:** KSA holds weekly discussions in every homeroom to proactively build community before any negative issues arise. If required, KSA also holds Restorative Circles in response to issues with any combination of students, families, and staff involved to develop a plan for moving forward together.

Implementation: The KSA staff are trained to maintain high-support and high-control classrooms by providing clear expectations. In addition, teachers build relationships with students that value, acknowledge, and respect what everyone contributes to the school and classroom community. Teachers spend two weeks in staff orientation prior to the start of the school year learning common language around instruction, school climate, and restorative discipline. Instructors also meet in grade-level and content-area teams to align standards and curriculum. Additionally, the

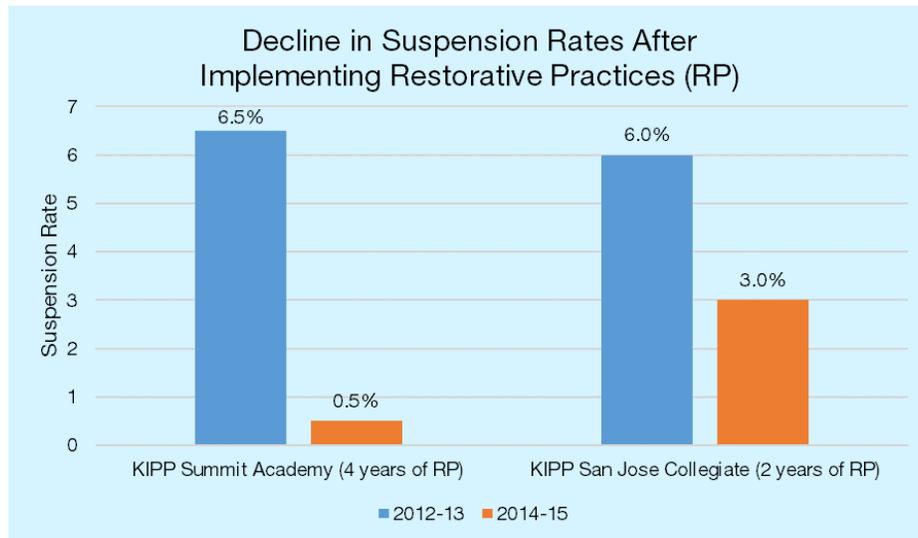
staff come together to set clear expectations for student behavior and develop a strong sense of the school climate.

Based on his successful implementation of restorative practices, Zappa is now the Director of School Culture for KIPP Bay Area. He is showing how effective disciplinary practices at one school can be disseminated throughout the network. Zappa shares his experience throughout the KIPP network by training school leaders and coaching principals in implementing social-emotional learning and restorative practices. As of fall 2015, all KIPP Bay Area teachers received training in restorative practices. As Zappa describes, “Restorative justice is a way of thinking and being, which fits with KIPP’s emphasis on developing students’ character strengths. Once all of us are invested in our school communities in this way, we cannot help but build a stronger, more positive culture.”³² A recent grant from Tipping Point has enabled Zappa to partner with University of California San Francisco to hire a mental health specialist to work in the school culture department. This specialist supports restorative practice teams in the San Francisco KIPP schools, and there are plans to roll out these teams in all KIPP Bay Area schools.

Student Demographics (2014-15)	KIPP Bay Area Schools	
Disciplinary Model	Culturally-responsive, MTSS-B, SEL, Restorative Practices	
Location	Oakland, Redwood City, San Jose, San Francisco, and San Lorenzo, CA	
Total Enrollment	3,800	
Grades Served	K - 12	
Free/Reduced Price Lunch	77%	
English Learners	16%	
Students with Disabilities (SWD)	8%	
Asian	17%	
Black	23%	
Hispanic	55%	
Academic and Disciplinary Statistics	KSA	San Lorenzo Unified
Performance (CAASPP) (2014-15)		
State English Exam Proficiency	81%	27%
State Math Exam Proficiency	75%	21%
Performance (API) (2012-13)		
State English Exam Proficiency	81%	45.1%
State Math Exam Proficiency	75%	45.2%
Discipline (2011-12)		
Total In-School Suspension Rate	1.5%	0.3%
Total Out-of-School Suspension Rate	6.8%	9.7%
Percentage of Out-of-School Suspensions, by Race/Ethnicity	63% Hispanic 14.8% Black 14.8% Asian 7.4% White	42.7% Hispanic 28.1% Black 12.5% White 6.7% Asian
Percentage of Out-of-School Suspensions, by SWD	14.8%	20.9%
Percentage of Enrollment, by SWD	4.3%	8.8%
Total Expulsion Rate	1%	0.1%

Source: [Ed-Data](#), U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2011-12. [Civil Rights Data Collection 2011-12](#). [San Lorenzo Unified School District](#).

Impact: KSA witnessed immediate academic gains in the first year of implementing restorative practices. Within five years (2009-2014), KSA’s results on statewide standardized test scores moved from barely proficient to the top 4% of all schools in the state of California. KSA was awarded the Distinguished School Award in 2011, the Academic Achievement Award in 2013, and the National Blue Ribbon Award in 2015. Within the nationwide KIPP network, all KSA grades (5-8) were on the top performers list in reading, and grades 5 and 7 were top performers within the KIPP network in math. KSA saw a decrease in its suspension rate from 6.5% in 2012-2013 to .05% in 2014-15. KIPP San Jose Collegiate, another KIPP Bay Area school that implemented restorative practices, was able cut its suspension rate in half in just two years.



Key Takeaways:

- > A focus on **restorative practices** can provide a foundation to foster academic rigor.
- > Successful social-emotional programming can be **replicated** with similarly positive results.
- > Existing **missions** don’t have to be modified when intentionally rethinking school climate and discipline policies.

New Orleans College Prep Network

Organizational Profile: New Orleans College Prep (NOCP) is a network of three charter schools and a Head Start program serving grades pre-K through 12. Founded in 2006, the network focuses on turnaround schools located throughout the New Orleans Recovery School District (RSD). The NOCP network received a CSP grant for planning, program design, and initial implementation in 2006. NOCP also received a Replication and Expansion Grant Award in 2008. Most recently, NOCP was awarded the charter to restart the Crocker Arts & Technology School. The school reopened for the 2013-14 school year as Lawrence D. Crocker College Prep (Crocker) and served grades Pre-K through 8. Crocker's letter grade on the state report card rose from an 'F' to a 'C' in the first two years of NOCP management.

Approach to Building a Positive School Climate: NOCP's approach to discipline has been, and continues to be, a progressive evolution. Currently, the network successfully integrates several different models to meet its students' needs:

- MTSS-B system for student behavior with a personalized approach to student behavior planning;
- Social-emotional learning to lay a foundation for all students; and
- Restorative justice and trauma-informed care to serve higher-need students.

In its early stages, NOCP followed a very different approach to discipline by applying a 'sweat the small stuff' philosophy that emphasized strict and inflexible consequences to regulate student behavior. However, when state discipline data showed that NOCP schools exceeded the district's rate of suspensions and expulsions, network leadership set out to create a more inclusive strategy. NOCP founder and president, Ben Kleban, reflects, "While a 'zero tolerance' type of school climate may be well-intentioned and fairly effective at creating an orderly atmosphere, it can happen at the expense of the children who are most at risk and need something different." The network was able to cut its exclusionary discipline rates by 75% across the network within three years through flexible, positive approaches. At the same time, academic achievement has grown steadily, proving that exclusionary discipline is not necessary to achieve academic excellence. The leadership team overhauled the code of conduct by raising the threshold on what it would take to receive an out-of-school suspension and providing several extra layers of consequences and interventions as alternatives to out-of-school suspensions. NOCP also integrated an MTSS-B system to structure its interventions and create an individualized approach appropriate to students' needs.

One important component of the prevention strategy is a strong commitment to social-emotional learning. At Crocker, students receive social-emotional instruction five days a week. While this may seem like a large time commitment, Crocker's principal, Amanda Aiken, explains that this 30 minutes a day saves them much more time in the long run. Each day starts with either a Morning Meeting (twice per week), Second Step instruction (twice per week), or a community circle (once per week). The Morning Meeting, derived from the Responsive Classroom approach, is a way to establish community in the classroom by giving a space for students to share about different topics, such as loss or worry. Second Step is an SEL curriculum that teaches skills such as empathy, self-control, and problem-solving. Crocker's existing deans and social workers were recently trained in restorative practices and started to lead Community Circles. These circles help

to address any conflict within the community and reestablish relationships through discussions on topics presented by the staff.

From the onset, NOCP has been a data-driven school and closely monitoring behavior data has helped the network to quickly reduce suspension and expulsion rates and target the students who need individualized support. Currently, the central office provides the schools a weekly snapshot of behavior data, including office referrals, suspensions, and expulsions. With fewer and fewer suspensions, the referrals have become a useful measure to monitor. There is also a network-wide goal of fewer than two suspensions per student per year. After one suspension, students are referred to an MTSS-B system that provides individualized support that may include counseling, restorative conferences, or behavior plans. This ensures that students are receiving the support they need.

Student Demographics (2015-16)	New Orleans College Prep	
Disciplinary Model	MTSS-B, PBIS, SEL, Trauma-informed, Restorative Justice	
Location	New Orleans, LA	
Total Enrollment	1,436	
Grades Served	PK - 12	
Free/Reduced Price Lunch	> 90% *	
Special Education	15%	
English Learners	4.3%	
American Indian	< 1%	
Asian	< 1%	
Black	95%	
Hispanic	3%	
Two or More	< 1%	
White	1%	
Academic and Disciplinary Statistics	Crocker	New Orleans
Performance (PARCC 2014-15)		
State English Exam Proficiency	56%	57%
State Math Exam Proficiency	53%	50%
Performance (iLEAP 2013-14)		
State English Exam Proficiency	56%	56%
State Math Exam Proficiency	61%	62%
Discipline		
Total In-School Suspension Rate	0% (2014-15)	4.1% (2011-12, citywide)
Total Out-of-School Suspension Rate	4.6% (2015-16)	8.3% (2014-15, statewide)
Percentage of Out-of-School Suspensions, by Race/Ethnicity	100% Black (2015-16)	88.2% Black 7.1% White 2.7% Asian 1.3% Hispanic (2011-12, citywide)
Percentage of Out-of-School Suspensions, by SWD	12.2% (2015-16)	9.0% (2011-12, citywide)
Percentage of Enrollment, by SWD	17.9% (2015-16)	12.8% (2014-15, citywide)
Total Expulsion Rate	0.4% (2015-16)	0.5% (2014-15, citywide)

Source: [Civil Rights Data Collection 2011-12.; NOLACollegePrep.org](http://CivilRightsDataCollection2011-12.NOLACollegePrep.org)

Implementation: Because Crocker is a turnaround school, the school leaders wanted to make sure that they first established a foundation of trust and relationship building before creating a

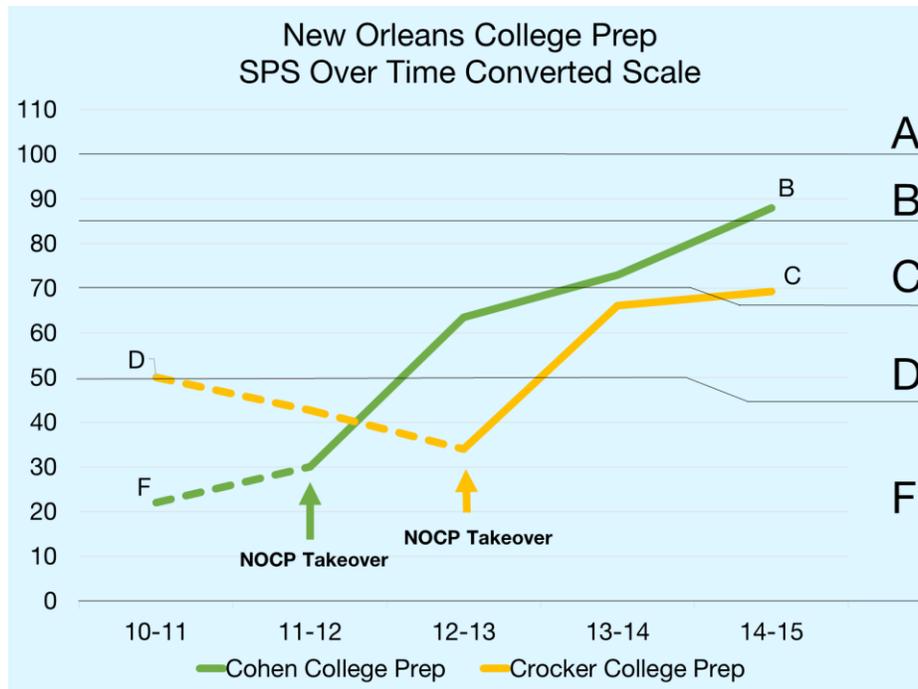
* All NOCP Schools currently provide 100% of their students with free lunch due to the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) and thus do not collect Free/Reduced Lunch Forms. In the past, over 95% of NOCP network students qualified for free or reduced lunch.

disciplinary structure. The implementation happened across multiple phases. In the first year, there was a heavy emphasis on community building, with the Morning Meeting set every day to reinforce common language and expectations. The initial focus was on MTSS-B-identified preventative and positive interventions for the entire student body. In the following years, Crocker introduced new programs to incorporate along with Morning Meeting (Second Step and community circles). These programs created more structure around check-ins, which are short conversations to gauge a student's feelings and comprehension and provided additional support for higher-needs students through trauma-informed approaches.

During this third year, Crocker has been focusing on trauma-informed care and restorative justice. Ms. Aiken reflects, "We had become very good at developing joy [one of their core values] across the school and serving 95% of the student body. But we felt that we could do more for the 5% of students who need more intensive interventions." This has been especially relevant for many of the students at NOCP who grew up in the wake of the devastating effects of Hurricane Katrina, coupled with endemic poverty and violence. NOCP recently joined the Trauma-Informed Approaches Learning Collaborative for Schools, a state initiative to bring schools together to learn from each other to meet the needs of traumatized students. Because NOCP's approach was already oriented to support the whole child, NOCP easily integrated trauma-informed care and restorative practices into the existing practices.

For teachers, NOCP provides a combination of training and full in-school expertise, such as a robust counseling and MTSS staff. The MTSS team works with the teachers to develop student behavioral assessments and provides guidance around the MTSS framework. NOCP also makes sure that teachers understand why trauma-informed practices are necessary and how to respond. Every year, the teachers go on a field trip to all of the neighborhoods their students come from, riding on the same bus routes that their students may take daily. The schools engage different members of the community, such as church leaders, to speak to the school staff about local issues. This way, the staff can understand students' backgrounds and the struggles students may face. Through a grant from the Trauma-Informed Approaches Learning Collaborative for Schools, Crocker is able to offer trauma-specific professional development every month with two full professional development days in the summer. During the training, the teachers discuss the indicators of trauma and how to respond appropriately.

Impact: Prior to NOCP management, Crocker received an 'F' letter grade from the state for the 2011-12 school year. Only 44% of the students were testing at grade level in English and 37% in math. In 2015, the school made significant gains and was recognized for the highest growth among all schools in New Orleans. Crocker rose from the lowest performing elementary school to 5% above RSD state average in 2015. The chart below shows the impact of NOCP on two of its turnaround schools, Crocker and Cohen College Prep, in terms of improvements to their statewide School Performance Score (SPS). Ms. Aiken attributes much of the performance gains to school climate and academic rigor. Crocker continued to reduce its out-of-school suspension rate from 6.9% in 2013-14 to 4.6% in 2015-16. Across the whole network, the school has reduced its out-of-school suspension rate by 64% between the 2012-13 and the 2015-16 school years. Data fail to fully capture the change on an individual level. Ms. Aiken says that the transformation of student behavior has been encouraging, with more students taking ownership of their actions and showing empathy for others.



Key Takeaways:

- **Discipline data collection and analysis** not only highlights existing problems across a school but can also be part of the solution. Setting suspension or expulsion thresholds that trigger individualized interventions can provide students with the proper support they need before behaviors become more severe. These thresholds also limit the amount of instructional time lost to out-of-school suspensions.
- For many schools, **trauma-informed** approaches can supplement other discipline models to provide a greater level of support for high-risk students. A holistic approach to evaluating and addressing student behavior changes how interventions are informed.
- Changing the climate and discipline of a **turnaround** school requires multiple phases of implementation. It is important to first focus on building trust and relationships with the entire school community.
- Every child has unique needs and may respond differently to various forms of behavioral intervention. It is critical to be **adaptive to students' needs** and allow for deviations from the school-wide code of conduct when the 'one-size-fits-all' approach is clearly not working for a student or a select group of students. One solution is to empower teachers and staff with the freedom to support socio-emotional outcomes for students.

Rowe Elementary School

Organizational Profile: Rowe Elementary School (Rowe) is an independent, single-site charter school in Chicago, Illinois, that focuses on a college preparatory curriculum for students in grades K-8. It opened its doors to students in 2009 and received a CSP grant in 2011. The school was founded in partnership with the Northwestern University Settlement Association, a nonprofit organization which has operated community programs in arts, education, and social services for Chicago's West Town residents for more than 125 years.

Approach to Building a Positive School Climate: Rowe used a variety of evidence-based programs focused on social-emotional learning from the outset, and it has expanded its programming over time to now include culturally-responsive, PBIS, Logical Consequences, Responsive Classroom, Second Step, and restorative justice. Principal Tony Sutton describes Rowe's overarching philosophy: "We try to instill clear and high expectations while recognizing that children will make mistakes. There needs to be learning throughout the discipline process, rather than relying on consequences to correct behavior."

There is direct instruction on SEL every day through 30-minute Morning Meetings in grades K-4. Rowe has added a grade level in each year of its operation, so its approach has had to grow to accommodate the needs of middle school students. An Advisory group, which is the adaptation of Morning Meetings for older students, starts the day in grades 5-8. Rowe places students in groups of 13-14 peers of the same gender according to their SEL needs for the Advisory group, and each group stays with its same faculty leader throughout middle school. This forms deep relationships and creates a trusting and caring environment for students and staff to discuss broader developmental issues.

Implementation: Rowe ensures that the emphasis on relationships is continued throughout all academic programming and has continuously prioritized resources to support SEL. For example, significant full-time staff are dedicated to SEL monitoring, coaching, and intervention. The school employs three Deans of SEL & Culture who serve three grade levels each. All of the Deans of SEL have classroom experience, as well as certifications in the SEL programs. The Deans are responsible for creating content for the Morning Meeting and Advisory group lessons, coaching SEL development for their grades, analyzing discipline data at the student- and grade-level, and conducting interventions for higher-need discipline issues. Rowe also has two social workers on its full-time staff to address any trauma students may have faced and serve as a resource for families. The social workers are also involved in developing SEL lessons. Rowe allocates its operating budget to support a large leadership team. The team members serve as in-house experts and coaches who develop and support the instructional staff in addressing the vast majority of student needs and SEL lessons within the classroom. Rowe feels it is worth leaner budgets in other areas in order to support a leadership team to train, grow, and empower its teaching staff.

An important part of Rowe's hiring process is alignment with its academic and discipline approach. Significant professional development is given to reinforce and improve SEL instruction and integration. New instructional staff have two and a half weeks of professional development during the summer before school starts, and one of those weeks is dedicated to training on researched-

based discipline decision-making. All teachers are held accountable for SEL instruction through frequent observations by administration and peers and feedback from the students.

Student Demographics (2014-15)	Rowe Elementary	
Disciplinary Model	Culturally-responsive, Logical Consequences, MTSS-B, PBIS, Responsive Classroom, Restorative justice, Second Step, and SEL	
Location	Chicago, IL	
Total Enrollment	812	
Grades Served	K - 8	
Free/Reduced Price Lunch	80.9%	
English Learners	26%	
Students with Disabilities (SWD)	10.5%	
Black	14%	
Hispanic	79%	
Two or more	5%	
White	2%	
Academic and Disciplinary Statistics		
Student-Level Data	Rowe	Chicago Public Schools
Student Retention	97.1%	95.5%
Performance (2015-16)		
State Reading Exam Attainment	76%	54%
State Math Exam Attainment	87%	52%
Performance (2014-15)		
State Reading Exam Attainment	66%	52%
State Math Exam Attainment	59%	48%
Discipline (2011-12)		
Total In-School Suspension Rate	0%	4.7%
Total Out-of-School Suspension Rate	7.8%	7.3%
Percentage of Out-of-School Suspensions, by Race/Ethnicity	59.3% Hispanic 40.7% Black	69.3% Black 24.9% Hispanic 3.2% White
Percentage of Out-of-School Suspensions, by SWD	22.2%	18.1%
Percentage of Enrollment, by SWD	7.8%	12.7%
Total Expulsion Rate	0%	0.4%

Source: [Chicago Public Schools: Civil Rights Data Collection 2011-12](#)

Student feedback is collected through a formal school climate survey that is administered three times each year. The surveys cover essential topics such as school climate, peer relationships, fair treatment by teachers, school safety, and high expectations. These climate data are used to ensure that Rowe has a positive school atmosphere and that scholars feel engaged and supported. For example, when students recently rated fair treatment lower than other survey areas in the first student survey of the year, the Deans of SEL and Culture interviewed groups of students to learn more about how they were defining and experiencing the problem. The student interviews revealed that the school’s discipline system was not being enforced uniformly in every classroom. The leadership team took this message to heart and developed a series of mid-year

trainings for teachers on fair treatment and discipline enforcement, along with professional development on differentiated supports for English Learners and students with disabilities, so that every student would receive fair treatment.

Parents are asked to give feedback during any interaction with the school, and they are also invited to a number of events at the school aimed at fostering communication between families and teachers. Before students begin middle school, Rowe leaders invite parents to a session that explains the Advisory group and holds a session so that parents can understand what their child is experiencing in the classroom. Rowe also sends a weekly note to parents explaining what the Advisory topic will be for the upcoming week so that families can discuss and reinforce the lessons at home.

Impact: Rowe has engaged a number of community partnerships and resources to help bolster its SEL programming. First, the Northwestern Settlement, a founding partner of Rowe Elementary, is a cornerstone of the community and has applied a holistic approach to providing neighborhood families with access to resources and programming, from outdoor education to theater events, as well as emergency services. The ongoing relationship with the Northwestern Settlement shaped Rowe's whole-child educational approach from its foundation and continues to be an important resource for the students' SEL growth.

Rowe works with the Juvenile Protection Agency (JPA) for professional development on SEL. JPA professionals train the school's Deans of SEL and Culture and the broader leadership team on SEL content and practices. A partnership with Community In Schools of Chicago enables the school and its families to access free social, emotional, health, and enrichment programs to prioritize SEL supports.

Perhaps the greatest outcome of Rowe's holistic and relationship-based approach to discipline and school climate is how rare higher-tier discipline infractions are. Michael Rodrigo, Dean of SEL & Culture for middle school notes, "As the dean of an inner-city school, I think there is a perception from the outside that there is a lot of physical aggression in schools. In reality at Rowe, almost all of the discipline is handled by the teachers themselves. Since we put the emphasis on relationships, we rarely see a repeat offender for the same offense." Behaviors that cannot be addressed immediately within the classroom are rare because students are taught to recognize the impact their actions have on their peers and school community.

Key Takeaways:

- A variety of **evidence-based programs** can be used and adapted to a school's specific needs and context.
- SEL education requires training and staffing, with **leadership staff** playing key monitoring, coaching, and programming roles.
- Administering **student surveys** can yield important data that can be used to monitor and improve school climate.
- **Partnerships** with community organizations provide SEL programming and resource support.

Video Case Study: Student Discipline and School Climate in Charter Schools

To learn more about the profiled schools' alternative discipline practices and positive school climate efforts, click [here](#) to access the following videos:

- **Introduction:** The Urgency of Improving Discipline Policies and School Climate in Charter Schools
- **The Approach to Building a Positive School Climate:** The 'How' and 'Why' of Shaping Fair and Effective Policies and Practices
- **Laying the Right Foundation:** Getting Buy-in Around Discipline and School Climate Approaches
- **Conclusion:** The Future of Student Discipline and School Climate

SECTION III: FINDINGS



The four profiles in the previous section provide examples of charter schools at various stages of implementing and refining alternative discipline policies and practices that support their school's mission. Although each charter school takes a unique approach to student discipline and school climate, the schools do share some features. This section summarizes these commonalities so that other charter schools can identify areas relevant to their school's needs and context.

Approach: Set a Vision for School Discipline and Climate

Whether the charter school is in its planning year or revisiting established policies and practices, there are basic steps that charter schools can take to establish or revise discipline policies and practices. Many of the profiled school leaders noted their exhaustive and continuing research on developments in alternative discipline, including touring other charter schools to learn best practices, reading scholarly publications, and pursuing certifications. These actions can inform and inspire the vision for the school, which should be tied to core values and desired student outcomes. Each of these schools was able to honor its mission and vision while also using its autonomy to make significant mid-course adjustments. The changes to the profiled charter schools' programs were based on the lessons school leaders learned through implementation and reflection.

Examples:

- HSHMC leadership researched the single-line mission statements of major universities to create a simple way to communicate the school's discipline policy. Its motto to 'do no harm' incorporates the Hippocratic Oath to reflect the school's focus on health and well-being (page 8).
- KIPP Bay Area schools believe that character values go hand-in-hand with restorative practices. To align practice with this belief, KIPP Summit Academy piloted restorative practice programs that are now being used in all 11 KIPP Bay Area schools (page 12).

Implementation: Focus on the Needs of the School Community

Once a school develops its vision for student discipline and school climate, it is important to foster buy-in from all stakeholders, including the staff, students, parents, governing board, authorizer, and community. This work is time-intensive because it relies on trust and relationship-building for

success. However, it is an essential foundation for supportive discipline policies and a strong school climate. Reforming school policies means providing guidelines, establishing non-negotiables, and creating a framework of responses to students' behaviors and needs. It does not mean an overly prescriptive or punitive approach. The practices that support discipline policies are what feed the school climate through an everyday commitment to addressing student needs. A school can utilize and adapt a variety of discipline models to fulfill its needs.

Examples:

- NOCP uses elements of PBIS, SEL, restorative justice, and trauma-informed care (page 15).
- Rowe's Deans of SEL have certifications in the alternative discipline programs Rowe uses and provide extensive training, coaching, and support to all staff to support a cohesive school climate (page 19).

Empower Teachers and Provide Ongoing Professional Development: Implementing alternative discipline policies and practices is an inherently people-focused process that incorporates the needs of the students and their families, the school staff, and the broader community. Therefore, it is important to provide supports and professional development, as well as opportunities for engagement and feedback, throughout the process. For example, several profiled schools noted the critical role that teachers play in establishing, enacting, and evolving alternative discipline practices. This is because they have the closest and most frequent interactions with students. Many schools' hiring processes include questions to assess whether the candidate's mindset aligns with the school's discipline philosophy. All of the profiled schools devote extensive resources to training and professional development for teachers to become informed and empowered to enact the individualized responses that are a part of alternative discipline.

Examples:

- HSHMC Director of Student Support leads teachers on professional development tours of other schools to see restorative justice practices in action (page 9).
- KIPP Bay Area teachers spend two weeks in staff orientation prior to the start of the school year where they learn a common language around instruction, school climate, and restorative discipline (page 12).
- NOCP uses the MTSS team to train teachers in student behavioral assessments. NOCP gives teachers a school bus tour of the neighborhoods their students come from to better understand their students' backgrounds and circumstances (page 17).

Involve Students and Families to Build a Positive School Climate: Another critical piece for the success of alternative discipline policies and practices is engagement from students and families. In all of the profiled schools, students receive daily, direct instruction on school climate topics, and these lessons are also integrated throughout the academic curricula. Parental support can reinforce school climate lessons and create a strong support network for students.

Examples:

- HSHMC dedicates four full days at the start of the school year to climate and team-building to establish nurturing and genuine relationships between students and teachers (page 10).
- Rowe holds a mock Advisory group for middle school parents so that they can experience and understand the SEL instruction their child receives (page 21).

Impact: Perform Continuous Improvement to Sustain Results

All of the profiled schools noted that their discipline policies and practices are evolving. There is always room for improving results, integrating academic and alternative discipline programs, and setting a higher bar. Charter schools are accountable for their students' long-term outcomes, so it is important for school leaders to take steps to ensure students are being educated for success in higher education and careers.

Analyze Data at All Stages of School Discipline Reform: Data collection and analysis are important at all stages of reforming discipline policies and practices. It can confirm that no student subgroup is disproportionately disciplined, show areas for improvement, and prove the effectiveness of practices that have been implemented. Every profiled school has a culture that values data to drive the development, implementation, and revision of its policies and practices.

Examples:

- KIPP Summit Academy saw immediate academic gains within the first year of implementing restorative practices. Given this success, restorative practices were slowly implemented in other KIPP Bay Area schools. KIPP San Jose Collegiate reduced its suspension rate in half in two years (page 14).
- NOCP's data-driven culture helped to reduce suspension and expulsion rates and target the students who need individualized support (page 16).

Seek Other Data for a Richer Picture: In addition to formal data collections and analysis, there are other meaningful ways to assess and support progress toward supportive school discipline and climate. For example, some schools use qualitative data gathered through student and parent surveys to monitor progress. Others use explicit staffing to support alternative discipline goals, which may include developing individualized student behavioral plans. All of the profiled schools had full-time staff in leadership positions to monitor, coach, and support students and staff members on alternative discipline policies and practices.

Examples:

- KIPP Bay Area has a culture team that supports restorative practices at three schools and spreads practices that work throughout the KIPP network (page 13).
- Rowe collects student feedback three times per year through a school climate survey (page 20).

Enhance Programming Through Community Partnerships: Finally, community partnerships are key to engaging more stakeholders, garnering resources, and expanding the impact of alternative discipline practices. All of the profiled schools have partnerships with community-based

organizations to provide certified mental health and social work professionals to support the school's students, families, and staff. These mental health professionals and social workers engage in therapy for students, trainings for parents, and professional development for teachers. Additionally, community organizations provide other wrap-around resources for healthcare and enrichment activities to families. Alternative discipline is time- and resource-intensive, and extra support from outside organizations can provide the school with the financial support and capacity it needs to fully implement holistic services for students and their families.

Examples:

- KIPP Bay Area schools received a grant from Tipping Point to hire a mental health specialist to work in the school culture department (page 13).
- NOCP has healthcare professionals lead trauma-specific professional development every month along with two full professional development days in the summer (page 17).
- The Northwestern University Settlement Association, which operates community programs in arts, education, and social services, founded Rowe (page 19).

2016 marks the 25th anniversary of the charter school movement, and this milestone presents an opportunity for every charter school and the broader education community to engage in self-reflection to ensure every student is receiving the educational knowledge, treatment, and experience he or she deserves. Using alternative discipline methods, which rely on teaching instead of punishment to instill positive behavior, is yet another way that charter schools can innovate to support improved student outcomes. The four charter schools featured in this report provide examples of schools successfully reforming their discipline policy and practice. These schools are in various stages of evolving different models, but their examples demonstrate that charter schools can use their autonomy to adapt alternative discipline approaches to meet the unique needs of students, create a safe and supportive school climate, improve student achievement, and uphold the school's mission.

APPENDIX: ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- Amanda Aiken and Ben Kleban, *New Orleans College Prep*
- Jim Griffin and Alex Medler, *National Charter School Resource Center*
- Carissa Harrison, Michael Rodrigo, and Tony Sutton, *Rowe Elementary School*
- Dan Losen, *Center for Civil Rights Remedies at UCLA*
- Rob Mayo and David Osher, *American Institutes for Research*
- Paul O'Neill, *National Center for Special Education in Charter Schools*
- Dr. Ian Pumpian and Dominique Smith, *Health Sciences High and Middle College*
- Karega Rausch, *National Association of Charter School Authorizers*
- John Widmer, *Mastery Charter Schools*
- Sarah Yatsko, *Center on Reinventing Public Education*
- Ric Zappa, *KIPP Bay Area Schools*

ENDNOTES

- ¹ Steinberg, M. P., Allensworth, E., & Johnson, D. W. (in press). *What conditions jeopardize and support safety in urban schools? The influence of community characteristics, school composition and school organizational practices on student and teacher reports of safety in Chicago*. In D. J. Losen (Ed.), *Closing the school discipline gap: Research for policymakers*. New York: Teachers College Press. 8.
- ² U.S. Department of Education, School Climate and Discipline. Available at <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/school-discipline/index.html>
- ³ U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights (2016). *2013-14 Civil Rights Data Collection: A First Look*. Available at <http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/2013-14-first-look.pdf>.
- ⁴ U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights. (2016b). *2013-2014 Civil Rights Data Collection*. Washington, DC: Author.
- ⁵ U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights. (2016b).
- ⁶ Denice, P., Gross, B., and Rausch K., (2015). *Understanding Student Discipline Practices in Charter Schools: A Research Agenda*. Center on Reinventing Public Education. Available at <http://www.crpe.org/publications/understanding-student-discipline-practices-charter-schools-research-agenda>.
- ⁷ The expulsion rate for D.C. public charter schools has been cut by two-thirds since 2011, and the rate of out-of-school suspensions has decreased by about 20 percent. D.C. Public Charter School Board, <http://www.dcpccb.org/facts-and-figures-discipline-and-attendance>.
- ⁸ Interviews with the following charter school leaders and experts on charter schools and student interviews helped inform this report:
 Aiken, Amanda. [New Orleans College Prep] Telephone interview. 12 May 2016.
 Griffin, Jim. [National Charter School Resource Center] Telephone interview. 8 January 2016.
 Harrison, Carissa. [Rowe Elementary School] Telephone interview. 12 May 2016.
 Kleban, Ben. [New Orleans College Prep] Telephone interview. 12 February 2016.
 Losen, Dan. [Center for Civil Rights Remedies at UCLA] Telephone interview. 8 February 2016.
 Mayo, Rob. [American Institutes for Research] Telephone interview. 9 February 2016.
 Medler, Alex. [National Charter School Resource Center] Telephone interview. 23 December 2015.
 O'Neill, Paul. [National Center for Special Education in Charter Schools] Telephone interview. 22 April 2016.
 Osher, David. [American Institutes for Research] Telephone interview. 9 February 2016.
 Pumpian, Ian. [Health Sciences High and Middle College] Telephone interview. 9 February 2016.
 Rausch, Karega. [National Association of Charter School Authorizers] Telephone interview. 21 January 2016.
 Rodrigo, Michael. [Rowe Elementary School] Telephone interview. 13 May 2016.
 Smith, Dominique. [Health Sciences High and Middle College] Telephone interview. 19 May 2016.
 Sutton, Tony. [Rowe Elementary School] Telephone interview. 4 May 2016.
 Widmer, John. [Mastery Charter Schools] Telephone interview. 17 May 2016.
 Yatsko, Sarah. [Center on Reinventing Public Education] Telephone interview. 15 January 2016.
 Zappa, Ric. [KIPP Bay Area Schools] Telephone interview. 24 February 2016.
- ⁹ U.S. Department of Education, School Climate and Discipline. Available at <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/school-discipline/index.html>
- ¹⁰ National Clearinghouse on Supportive School Discipline, <http://supportiveschooldiscipline.org/learn/reference-guides/exclusionary-discipline>.
- ¹¹ U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights (2016). *2013-14 Civil Rights Data Collection: A First Look*. Available at <http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/2013-14-first-look.pdf>.
- ¹² Losen, D., Hewitt, D., & Toldson, I., (2014). *Eliminating excessive and unfair exclusionary discipline in schools: Policy recommendations for reducing disparities*. Bloomington, IN: The Equity Project at Indiana University. Available at <http://rtpcollaborative.indiana.edu/briefing-papers/>.
- ¹³ U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights. (2016b). *2013-2014 Civil Rights Data Collection*. Washington, DC: Author.
- ¹⁴ U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights. (2016b).
- ¹⁵ Steinberg, M. P., Allensworth, E., & Johnson, D. W. (in press). *What conditions jeopardize and support safety in urban schools? The influence of community characteristics, school composition and school*

organizational practices on student and teacher reports of safety in Chicago. In D. J. Losen (Ed.), *Closing the school discipline gap: Research for policymakers*. New York: Teachers College Press. 8.

¹⁶ Balfanz, R., Byrnes, V., & Fox, J. (2015). Sent Home and Put Off Track: The Antecedents, Disproportionalities, and Consequences of Being Suspended in the 9th Grade. In D. J. Losen (Ed.), *Closing the School Discipline Gap: Equitable Remedies for Excessive Exclusion*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press;

Marchbanks III, M. P., Carmichael, D., Seibert, A.L., & Fabelo, T. (2015) The Economic Effects of Exclusionary Discipline on Grade Retention and High School Dropout. In D.J.Losen (Ed.) *Closing the School Discipline Gap: Equitable Remedies for Excessive Exclusion*. New York, NUY: Teachers College Press.

¹⁷ Gottfried, Michael A. 2010. Evaluating the relationship between student attendance and achievement in urban elementary and middle schools: An instrumental variables approach. *American Educational Research Journal* 47(2): 434-465; Noltemeyer, Amity L., Rose Marie Ward, and Caven Mcloughlin. 2015. Relationship between school suspension and student outcomes: A meta-analysis. *School Psychology Review* 44(2): 224-240.

¹⁸ U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights. (2016, June 7). 2013-2014 Civil Rights Data Collection: A First Look. Retrieved from <http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/2013-14-first-look.pdf>

¹⁹ U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights. (2016, June 7). p.3

²⁰ Skiba, R. J., Arredondo, M. I., and Rausch, M.K., (2014). *New and developing research on disparities in discipline*. Bloomington, IN: The Equity Project at Indiana University. Available at <http://rtpcollaborative.indiana.edu/briefing-papers/>

²¹ U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights (2016). *2013-14 Civil Rights Data Collection: A First Look*. Available at <http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/2013-14-first-look.pdf>.

²² Rhim, L. M., Gumz, J., & Henderson, K. (2015).

²³ U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights. (2014, March 21)

²⁴ Skiba, R. J., Arredondo, M. I., and Rausch, M.K., (2014). *New and developing research on disparities in discipline*. Bloomington, IN: The Equity Project at Indiana University. Available at <http://rtpcollaborative.indiana.edu/briefing-papers/>.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Wachtel, Ted. (2013). *Defining Restorative*. International Institute for Restorative Practices.

²⁷ Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) Technical Assistance Center. *Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports*. Retrieved from <https://www.pbis.org/>.

²⁸ RTI Action Network, "What is RTI?," Available at <http://www.rtinetwork.org/learn/what/whatisrti>.

²⁹ OSEP Technical Assistance Center, Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports Available at <http://www.pbis.org/>.

³⁰ Fisher, D., Frey, N., & Pumpian, I. (2012). *How to create a culture of achievement in your school and classroom*. Alexandria, VA: ASCD.

³¹ KIPP. "Character Counts." Available at <http://www.kipp.org/our-approach/character>.

³² Zappa, R. (2015). How We're Shifting School Culture Through Restorative Justice. The KIPP Blog. Available at <http://blog.kipp.org/developingcharacter/how-were-shifting-school-culture-through-restorative-justice/>.