Discipline Toolkit Manual

Technical Assistance for Reducing Suspension and Expulsions

Michigan Department of Education

Office of Special Education

2024

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Discipline Toolkit Manual

Introduction

The intent of this guide is to use the Data Action Team process to provide a framework to develop, implement, and evaluate a sustainable plan to reduce suspensions and expulsions, leading to improved equitable outcomes for students by focusing on changes in adult behavior and adult responses to student conduct. Achieving equitable outcomes takes time and requires a minimum of a one-year commitment to initiate sustainable change. Addressing racial or gender-based discrepancies in discipline is not a "one-and-done" activity and typically involves multiple courageous conversations leading to meaningful changes. The cultural changes and activities implemented as part of this toolkit need to be maintained and revised, given evaluation data, over time to achieve equitable district discipline results. Once the initial PeopleSMART results are met, the activities need to be sustained, and the periodic monitoring of evaluation data should be performed to avoid slippage.

This document assumes the intermediate school district (ISD) is supporting one or more member districts in working through the Discipline Toolkit. It is, however, possible for a district or school team to work through this process on its own. Regardless of who is leading this process, it may be necessary to provide support to individuals who find this work challenging or uncomfortable. Data analyses and reflections may uncover the policies, procedures, and/or actions of individuals contributing directly to the disproportionality issues knowingly or unknowingly. Those individuals facilitating meetings and reflection activities should be prepared to lead courageous conversations.

Who Can Benefit From the Discipline Toolkit?

The Discipline Toolkit was developed to assist ISDs, districts, and schools identified as having a significant discrepancy in the percent of students with an individualized education program (IEP) in one or more race or ethnic groups who were suspended or expelled for more than ten days over multiple years. However, any educational organization can benefit from analyzing their discipline data and use this process to prevent the occurrence of significant discrepancies. The decision to use this framework should be based on data such as suspension/expulsion (B-4) data, significant disproportionality (B-9 and B-10) data, data in local student information systems, and anecdotal data.

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Obtaining Commitment From District Leadership and Everyone Affected by Potential Changes

Change efforts require the support of leadership who hold the power to initiate and sustain change. Once the decision is made to implement the Discipline Toolkit, before beginning the first step, it is critical to obtain commitment from district and ISD leadership. Cultural change and activities to be implemented require participation and support from all levels across the organization. Although discipline may not be an issue across an entire district, support from district leadership, including the superintendent, is a crucial component to being successful.

Some suggestions for obtaining commitment include the following:

- Share relevant data in an easily understandable form.
- Share the Discipline Toolkit process to develop a shared understanding.
- Be transparent about the possibilities, the challenges, and discuss how to mitigate the challenges.
- Share the timeline and be realistic about the time commitment required from various roles across the district.
- Discuss and agree upon the expected results/outcomes.
- Establish agreed-upon evidence-based processes and protocols to:
  - Identify the duration and frequency of meetings and time needed outside of meetings, e.g., data review.
  - Communicate with team members.
  - Make decisions.
  - Communicate and disseminate information across the district and to external stakeholders.

These items can be recorded on the Tracking Template for Discipline Toolkit Teams available on the Catamaran Technical Assistance Website (https://training.catamaran.partners/discipline-how-tos/). A sample is also provided in Appendix A.

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People (students, families, the community, and educators) are at the center of any consideration regarding student discipline. No action, including all phases of the data action team process, should be taken without the consideration of the people involved. Unless the people affected by proposed changes are informed and facilitated in providing input to the team, any change will not be sustained. Any team undertaking change is responsible for implementing communication routines that meaningfully engage all who will be affected by the team's efforts.

Discipline Toolkit Process Overview

The Discipline Toolkit Process begins with a team. The team can be an existing team (e.g. MICIP team) or one assembled for purposes of addressing a concern regarding student discipline. Each team should have a leader, a member who can compile, visualize, and present data to the team, and a note taker. The [MICIP website](https://www.michigan.gov/mde/services/school-performance-supports/micip) (https://www.michigan.gov/mde/services/school-performance-supports/micip) includes helpful information on forming and operating a team.

The Discipline Toolkit using the OSE Data Action Team Process has four phases – Prepare, Inquire, Plan, and Act – with two steps each. The outcome of the process is to develop and implement a plan for evidence-based systems change using a data-driven methodology. The process is designed to provide a set of clearly defined steps and tools to develop a deep understanding of problems, issues, and concerns related to suspension and expulsion, and to develop a plan to address them. The phases and steps are shown in the table below. The remainder of the document will give an overview of each of these steps and reference the accompanying templates created to support this process.

Prepare
1. Organize Data
2. Assess Data Quality

Inquire
3. Conduct Data Analyses
4. Determine Actionable Causes

Plan
5. Develop PeopleSMART Results
6. Identify Strategic Activities & Plan

Act
7. Implement Plan with Integrity
8. Evaluate Progress

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Phase	Step	Step Name	Timeframes for Plan	Sample Calendar
Prepare	Step 0	Assemble a Team	Month 1	March
Prepare	Step 1	Organize Data	Months 1 - 2	March - April
Inquire	Steps 2 & 3	Evaluate Data Quality and Conduct Data Analysis	Months 2 - 4	April - June
Inquire	Step 4	Determine Actionable Causes	Months 4 - 5	June - July
Plan	Step 5	Develop PeopleSMART Results	Months 5 - 6	July - August
Plan	Step 6	Identify Strategic Activities and Plan	Months 5 - 6	July - August
Act	Step 7	Implement Plan with Integrity	Months 6 - 12+	August - Ongoing
Act	Step 8	Evaluate Progress	Months 12+	Ongoing

The table above illustrates a possible timeline a team could follow as it implements the OSE Data Action Process.

Step 0: Assemble a Team

Administrators are responsible for identifying a team or creating a team. The Team may consist of core and extended team members. Core Team members are responsible for leading the toolkit work. Extended Team members are used on an as-needed basis.

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Select participants who can productively participate, are open to considering the dimensions of disproportionality, and who can deliver the message back to their colleagues. Below are the suggested people to consider including on the Core Team and Extended Team. The number of Team members will vary depending on the size of the member district. For manageability, it is recommended the Core Team for each member district not exceed seven members. Note: one person may fulfill multiple roles (e.g., the technical assistance provider may also be the data expert).

To maximize success, the Core Team at a school district should include:

- The intermediate school district technical assistance provider.
- The special education director.
- The superintendent (or a representative such as the assistant superintendent, student services director, etc.).
- Program leadership (English as a secondary language, title programs, guidance and counseling, etc.).
- Data expert(s) (individual(s) understanding data sources and how to analyze data).
- Building leadership of each K-12 school.

The Extended Team could include:

- General education teacher(s) (elementary, middle, and high school).
- Special education teacher(s) (elementary, middle, and high school).
- Representatives from complementary initiatives (restorative justice, trauma informed, etc.).
- School board representatives; union leadership.
- Parent(s) and/or local parent groups.
- Local agencies or community groups providing support.

In addition to including a variety of member district roles on a district team, it is important to maintain a team reflecting the racial/ethnic demographics of the school population. Ensuring a diverse representation of individuals on the team will allow for

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different perspectives to be considered in the analysis and interpretation of data. A school team should reflect the demographics of the school's student population.

If completing a corrective action, the team members should be recorded in the Tracking Template for Discipline Toolkit Teams available on the [Catamaran Technical Assistance Website](https://training.catamaran.partners/discipline-how-tos/) (https://training.catamaran.partners/discipline-how-tos/). A sample is also provided in [Appendix A](#).

Checklist

- Team members selected and recorded in the Tracking Template for Discipline Toolkit Teams.

Step 1: Organize Data

Understanding the results of current student discipline practices begins with data reflective of what is happening in schools. The Core Team meets to coordinate the gathering and compiling of the necessary data by compiling an inventory of available data. The MDE provides [data on demographics and student performance](https://www.mischooldata.org/) (https://www.mischooldata.org/) for all districts and schools. ISDs and school districts typically collect additional data on student performance including school climate. Survey or focus group data reflecting student and teacher voice are critical to gaining a comprehensive view the context for school discipline. Data reflecting student perspectives on climate and discipline become important variables for the team to consider. The Core Team Data Review Form available on the [Catamaran Technical Assistance Website](https://training.catamaran.partners/discipline-how-tos/) (https://training.catamaran.partners/discipline-how-tos/) can be useful in assembling all relevant data in one place. A sample is also provided in [Appendix B](#).

To help expedite the gathering of the correct data, the Core Team could also populate the source and the school year columns in the Core Team Data Review document to build trend data, including the most recent data available. Preferably, choose data for entire school years. If the most recent data are incomplete or not yet verified, use the data from previous years.

Whenever feasible, data should be presented to the team in a graphical format. Visualizing data can be useful in comprehending similarities and differences.

Step 2: Assess Data Quality

After the data are gathered, the Core Team reviews the data and reaches consensus on the quality or level of confidence in the data (none, little, some, or much), recording their level of confidence and why in the Core Team Data Review document. If the confidence level is "none" or "little" for any of the data, steps should be taken to obtain more accurate data before moving forward. Use the following questions to help determine the level of confidence:

- ■ Do these data accurately represent the population being examined or an adequate sample?
- ■ Is each data element valid? Reliable? Timely? Useful?

There may be one or more team members who do not "believe" the data. If there is no evidence to support the data being incorrect, then the data are valid. This is where some of the uncomfortable conversations may begin, so be ready.

Once the team agrees the level of confidence in the data are "some" or "much," populate the tables in the Data Analysis Tool following the instructions in the tool. There are multiple tabs, and the names of tabs requiring data begin with "Tables."

While the Core Team is together, it's also an excellent time to prepare for facilitating the next meeting when data analysis and reflections will begin with core and extended team members.

Checklist

- ■ Gather data identified in the Core Team Data Review document.
- ■ Review the data as a team and come to a consensus on the level of confidence in the data gathered.
- ■ Once the team agrees the level of confidence in the data are "some" or "much," populate the tables as instructed in the Data Analysis Tool.
- ■ Prepare for the facilitation of the next meeting with core and extended team members.

Step 3: Conduct Data Analyses

Step 3 is to perform a deep dive into the data related to student discipline. Typical analysis methods include disaggregation, gap analysis, examining trends, and identifying outliers. A useful first step is disaggregating the district's demographic, disciplinary referral, infraction, and suspension data by race/ethnicity and gender provides a framework for examining possible inequities (gaps) in discipline results number of days of discipline, etc.). Disaggregation separates data into meaningful smaller groups of data that enable comparisons.

Trend analysis, examining data across a number of years, may assist the team in determining when changes in practices or demographics may have occurred. Outliers, data points appearing remarkably different, might be specific schools, grade levels, referring teachers, etc. that 'stick out.' Generally, examining data using several methods will facilitate a multi-perspective approach. Frequently referred to as 'Triangulation,' using data from several sources reduces the possibility of errors in interpretation.

Once the Core Team has gathered, reviewed, and judged confidence in the data, the entire Team should set a series of meetings for the next 12 months. Over the series of meetings, the team will analyze the data in the Data Analysis Tool, especially the calculated percentages and graphs. Then they will discuss the reflection questions for each section of the Data Analysis Tool and record the responses in the Data Analysis Reflections Form available on the Catamaran Technical Assistance Website (https://training.catamaran.partners/discipline-how-tos/). A sample is also provided in Appendix C.

Checklist

- ■ Schedule meetings for the next 12 months and record them in the Tracking Template for Discipline Toolkit Teams.
- ■ Analyze the data in the Data Analysis Tool.
- ■ Discuss the reflection questions in the Data Analysis Reflections document and record the responses.
- ■ Create a Challenge Statement and record it in the Data Analysis Reflections document.

Step 4: Determine Actionable Cause(s)

After the data are analyzed, the reflection questions discussed, and a Challenge Statement is agreed upon, the next step is to determine one or more Actionable Causes. An Actionable Cause is an answer to the "why?" of the Challenge Statement. An Actionable Cause can be influenced and controlled and, if corrected, there is a realistic hope the issue will be prevented in the future.

Actionable Causes will be used to drive the strategic selection of evidence-based activities that will have an impact on the issue(s) defined in the Challenge Statement.

To determine Actionable Causes, follow the steps in the Actionable Cause(s) Form available on the [Catamaran Technical Assistance Website](https://training.catamaran.partners/discipline-how-tos/) (https://training.catamaran.partners/discipline-how-tos/). A sample is also provided in [Appendix D](#).

The steps include:

1. Review the Challenge Statement.
2. Complete the "5 Whys"and "5 Whos" activities.
3. Use the checklist provided to select up to two Actionable Causes to focus on for the foreseeable future.
4. Document the agreed-upon Actionable Cause(s).

Checklist

- ◼ Determine at least two Actionable Causes.
- ◼ Record the Actionable Cause(s) in the Actionable Cause template.

Step 5: Develop PeopleSMART Results

In Step 5, the Discipline Toolkit Team will identify measurable results to address the agreed-upon Actionable Cause(s). If the team does not select a result to work toward, the team will not know when they get there! It is recommended the team use the PeopleSMART result format, but it is not required. Any method allowing the team to arrive at a measurable result that aligns with the PeopleSMART criteria is acceptable.

Based on the Actionable Cause(s) and supporting data, what is the PeopleSMART result to be achieved? Given the team's determination of the relevant people (5 Whos activity) involved in the Challenge Statement, write at least one Specific (based on present data),

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Measurable (progress is determined based on data), Achievable (realistic and related to critical needs), Results- Focused (developed with outcomes in mind), and Time-Bound (defined beginning and ending creating a sense of urgency) goal. Remember, the team can modify and add additional desired results as needed when implementing the plan and completing initial evidence-based activities based on analyses conducted in step 8 of the process.

Checklist

- Draft one or more PeopleSMART results for each Actionable Cause, if appropriate.
- Record each PeopleSMART result in the PeopleSMART Results section of the Action Plan Template available on the [Catamaran Technical Assistance Website](https://training.catamaran.partners/discipline-how-tos/) (https://training.catamaran.partners/discipline-how-tos/). A sample is also provided in [Appendix E](#).

Step 6: Identify Strategic Activities and Plan

The next step is to identify evidence-based activities and develop an Action Plan addressing the Actionable Cause(s) and PeopleSMART result(s) agreed upon in previous steps. Additional tasks identified as part of the Action Plan include developing a communication plan and planning for implementation, including how to mitigate any anticipated challenges. The team should also set a date when the entire plan will be reviewed, typically in about 3 months.

It is essential the Action Plan begins with a shared understanding throughout the district or school that disproportionality in the application of disciplinary removals is a critical equity issue to resolve. Things to consider when developing the Action Plan include but are not limited to the current status of related initiatives, the degree of prior knowledge and capacity existing in the district leadership related to engaging in racial equity work, the capacity to implement the Action Plan with fidelity, and other strategic results and priorities of the district. These factors play a significant role in the successful implementation of the Action Plan.

Checklist

- Agree on and record a set of activities meeting the criteria provided in the Action Plan form available on the [Catamaran Technical Assistance Website](#)

(https://training.catamaran. partners/discipline-how-tos/). A sample is also provided in [Appendix E](#).

- Develop a communication plan to keep everyone informed and record it in the Action Plan Template.
- Plan for implementation and record any applicable information to the Action Plan.
- Set a date to review the Action Plan.

Step 7: Implement Plan with Integrity

The Action Plan will be implemented for at least the remainder of the year at which time the team will evaluate progress and determine next steps. Implementation fidelity, using a quantitative measure, is the degree (typically expressed as a percent) to which the evidence-based activities are being implemented as designed by the developer. Implementation integrity is the degree to which an evidence-based activity, customized to context without changing non-negotiable aspects, is implemented. Throughout implementation, quick fidelity checks should be done to determine if activities are being implemented as planned. If the team does not check, the activities may not meet PeopleSMART results, and the team won't know if the lack of progress is due to the activities or not. Use the Measuring Implementation Fidelity Form available on the [Catamaran Technical Assistance Website](#) (https://training.catamaran.partners/discipline-how-tos/) to develop a Fidelity Checklist. A sample is also provided in [Appendix F](#).

Checklist

- Implement the Action Plan.
- Develop a Fidelity Checklist and do quick fidelity checks throughout implementation.

Step 8: Evaluate Progress

Step 8 of the Discipline Toolkit process is to evaluate progress throughout implementation. This evaluation of progress should take place at monthly meetings. Even though it's the "final" step in the eight-step process, the process is cyclical, and the data and information gathered at this step inform what happens next. The evaluation process is ongoing. Use available data to help determine when to evaluate progress toward PeopleSMART results. It may help to categorize data as short-term (daily/

classroom) data, medium-term (marking period) data, and long-term (annual) data to create a schedule for evaluating progress on different types of data. For example, review changes in suspension rates and referral rates by race/ethnicity and gender each marking period for a quick measure of progress. This data and the data analyzed in Step 3 should also be reviewed when data for the current school year become available to view long-term progress. In addition to looking at the numbers, building walk-throughs are another way of gathering data on an ongoing basis to be shared at monthly meetings and may reveal areas for improvement not apparent in the data analysis.

In Step 7, the importance of implementing with fidelity was covered. Fidelity of implementation should be at least 80 percent to be able to more definitively connect the selected activities to progress toward the PeopleSMART results. Implementation fidelity and performance over time toward meeting the PeopleSMART result(s) are the two measures used to evaluate ongoing progress. Use the Evaluating Progress form available on the Catamaran Technical Assistance Website (https://training.catamaran.partners/discipline-how-tos/), which includes reflection questions as a guide through this evaluation. Record the responses in the Evaluating Progress Form. A sample is also available in Appendix G.

In addition to the ongoing evaluation, approximately once per year, the team should evaluate the Action Plan. Addressing discrepancies in discipline is not a "one-and-done" activity. The cultural changes and activities implemented as part of this toolkit need to be maintained and revised over time to achieve district discipline results. Once the results are met, activities need to be sustained with periodic monitoring of the data performed to avoid slippage. Reviewing and revising the Action Plan as necessary will help the district to continue to improve and to avoid any slippage in progress made. Use the Evaluating the Action Plan form to evaluate the Action Plan. Record the team's responses to the reflection questions in the Evaluating the Action Plan Form. A sample is also available in Appendix H.

Checklist
- ■ Evaluate progress throughout implementation and make adjustments as needed.
- ■ Evaluate the Action Plan for effectiveness once per year.

Appendix A: Sample Tracking Template for Discipline Toolkit Teams

This form is intended for use throughout the toolkit process. The special education director and the toolkit team are responsible for the completion and active maintenance of this document. The sharing and storage of all toolkit forms and documents is the decision/responsibility of the special education director.

Collaboration Meeting

Document the collaboration meeting held with district leadership.

Date:

Time:

Core Team Member Contact Information

Core Team member suggested roles include: ISD technical assistance provider, special education director, superintendent, program leadership, data expert, building #1 leadership, and building #2 leadership.

Core Team Member Name	Role	ISD or District Name	Phone Number	Email

Extended Team Member Contact Information

Extended Team Member Name	Role	ISD or District Name	Phone Number	Email

Schedule of Monthly Toolkit Team Meetings

Month	Date and Time	Location	Purpose
Month 1			
Month 2			
Month 3			
Month 4			
Month 5			
Month 6			
Month 7			
Month 8			
Month 9			
Month 10			
Month 11			
Month 12			

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Communication Plan Informing Stakeholders

Describe the communication plan for disseminating information to staff, students, and parents, following monthly meetings. Use the following questions to help guide the plan. Keep in mind communications may need to be separated for different audiences.

1. Who is the specific audience?
2. What is the main message being communicated to this audience?
3. What is the most effective delivery format for this message?
4. Who is responsible for delivering this message?
5. What data are needed to support this message?
6. What is the value of this message to this audience? (If there is no value, consider revising the message or not having a message.)

Notes/Additional Information

Include any relevant notes or additional information.

Appendix B: Sample Core Team Data Review Form

Data Inventory

The data below are needed for the Data Analysis step in the Discipline Toolkit. Use the most recent data available for an entire school year. For example, if using the Discipline Toolkit in 2019-2020, use 2018-2019 data if it is complete and verified for the categories below. If the most recent data is incomplete or not yet verified, use the previous year.

Complete the source and school year columns as the data are compiled for the Core Team.

Complete the "level of confidence" and "why was this level of confidence selected" columns with the Core Team.

Data Needed	Source	School Year	Level of Confidence (None, Little, Some, Much)	Why was this level of confidence selected?
District enrollment by race/ethnicity and gender.				
Number of students with an IEP enrolled by race/ethnicity and gender.				
Number of students with an IEP suspended/expelled for more than 10 days by race/ ethnicity and gender.				
Number of students referred for disciplinary action by race/ethnicity and gender.				
Number of disciplinary referrals by race/ethnicity and gender.				
Number of suspensions by race/ethnicity and gender.				
Top five most common infractions causing disciplinary referrals by race/ ethnicity and gender.				

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Data Needed	Source	School Year	Level of Confidence (None, Little, Some, Much)	Why was this level of confidence selected?
Top three most common infractions resulting in suspension by race/ethnicity and gender				
Number of students who were suspended 1 time, 2-3 times, 4-5 time, more than 5 times by race/ethnicity.				
Additional district data				

Notes/Additional Information

Include any relevant notes or additional information.

Appendix C: Sample Data Analysis Reflections Form

Use this document with the Data Analysis Tool to answer the data reflection questions related to district data. The Data Analysis Tool referenced above can be found at the [Catamaran Technical Assistance Website](https://training.catamaran.partners/discipline-how-tos/) (https://training.catamaran.partners/discipline-how-tos/). The tables referenced in the questions below are the tables in the Data Analysis Tool.

ISD Name:

District Name:

Start Date of Reflections:

End Date of Reflections:

Looking at Demographic Data

1. Is the proportion of each race/ethnicity of students with IEPs (Table 4) in the district comparable to the proportion of the race/ethnicity of all students in the district (Table 2)? (Answer yes or no for each race/ethnicity in total and by gender. If no, you may provide further explanation.
   a. American Indian:
      i. Female:
      ii. Male:
   b. Asian:
      i. Female:
      ii. Male:
   c. Black or African American:
      i. Female:
      ii. Male:
   d. Hispanic:
      i. Female:
      ii. Male:
   e. Hawaiian or Pacific Islander:
      i. Female:
      ii. Male:
   f. Two or More Races:

         i. Female:

         ii. Male:

    g. White:

         i. Female:

         ii. Male:

2. Is the proportion of each race/ethnicity of students with an IEP suspended for more than ten days (Table 6) comparable to the proportion of the race/ethnicity of students with an IEP (Table 4)? (Answer for each race/ethnicity in total and by gender.)

    a. American Indian:

         i. Female:

         ii. Male:

    b. Asian:

         i. Female:

         ii. Male:

    c. Black or African American:

         i. Female:

         ii. Male:

    d. Hispanic:

         i. Female:

         ii. Male:

    e. Hawaiian or Pacific Islander:

         i. Female:

         ii. Male:

    f. Two or More Races:

         i. Female:

         ii. Male:

    g. White:

         i. Female:

         ii. Male:

Looking at Referral Data

1. How does the composition of the number of students referred for disciplinary action for each race/ethnicity (Table 8) compare to the overall student composition (Table 2)?
2. How does this compare to the district's overall gender composition (see Table 2)?

3. Based on the data reviewed, are there practices in the district causing students to be referred at different rates by race/ethnicity and/or gender? If so, which ones?
4. How does the composition of the number of disciplinary referrals by race/ethnicity (Table 10) compare to the overall student composition (Table 2)?
5. How does this compare to the district's overall gender composition (see Table 2)?
6. Based on the data reviewed, are there practices in the district causing multiple referrals for a single student by race/ethnicity and/or gender?

Referrals Resulting in Suspension

1. How does the racial/ethnic composition of disciplinary referrals resulting in suspension (Table 12) compare to the overall student composition (Table 2)?
2. How does this compare to the district's overall gender composition (see Table 2)?
3. Based on the data reviewed, are there practices in the district causing referrals to be treated differently by race/ethnicity and/or gender? If so, which ones?

Top Five Most Cited Infractions for Disciplinary Referrals

1. Are different racial/ethnic groups of students referred for different infractions? If so, why?
2. Are there differences in the infractions related to gender?
3. What is the relationship between the most commonly cited infractions (Table 13) and those most likely to result in suspensions (Table 14)?
4. What relationships are there among the most commonly cited infractions and those most likely to result in suspension and race/ethnicity and gender?
5. What do the data indicate about the district's discipline practices?

Effectiveness of Suspensions

1. What observations are there about the effectiveness of suspensions?
2. What do the data indicate about the district's discipline practices?

Summary of Reflections

1. Review all of the reflections in this worksheet. List three new things learned from examining the data. (These can be positive or negative.)
2. List two interesting or surprising things (challenge assumptions).
3. What is one question remaining about discipline in the district warranting further exploration?

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Challenge Statement

After analyzing and reflecting on the data, the next step is to develop a Challenge Statement. A Challenge Statement should be a clear, concise statement of the issues needing to be addressed. Be as specific as possible by addressing the who, what, when, and where of the issues. The goal is to focus on one or two specific issues.

Example: In Shenanigans Middle School (where), 6th-grade male Hispanic students with IEPs (who) are suspended three times as often as students with IEPs that are female or of other races/ethnicities (what) for failure to follow classroom rules during instruction (when).

1. Whom does the issue affect?
2. What is the problem?
3. When does the problem occur?
4. Where does the problem occur?

Notes/Additional Information

Include any relevant notes or additional information.

Appendix D: Sample Actionable Cause(s) Form

Once a Challenge Statement is developed, the next step is to draft Actionable Causes. An Actionable Cause is an answer to the "why?" of the Challenge Statement. It is a cause that can be acted on to provide long-term relief from the symptoms without causing more problems. See the MICIP Root Cause Analysis document (https://www.michigan.gov/-/media/Project/Websites/mde/2020/04/02/Root _Cause_Analysis_101_PPTwNotes.pdf?rev=28229ee485984fdeb36dd8a5f9e0c828) for more information on root cause analysis. An Actionable Cause can be influenced and controlled and, if corrected, there is a realistic hope the issue will be prevented in the future.

If the issue would have occurred even if the identified cause wasn't present, or if correcting the cause will not prevent the problem or causes similar problems, then it is NOT an Actionable Cause.

The Actionable Cause will be used to drive the strategic selection of activities that will have an impact on the issue(s) defined in the Challenge Statement.

Follow the steps below to arrive at an actionable cause.

Step 1: Review the Challenge Statement

Copy the Challenge Statement here.

Step 2: "5 Whys" Activity

Ask "why does the challenge statement occur?" and then ask why did "it" occur? Continue to ask "why?" three to five times until something fundamental which can be controlled is identified. If it cannot be controlled, back up a step and try again. Note: The team may have several answers to "why does the challenge statement occur?" Repeat the following process for each of these.

1. Given the Challenge Statement, what are some possible Actionable Causes?
2. Why does Why #1 occur?
3. Why does Why #2 occur?
4. Why does Why #3 occur?
5. Why does Why #4 occur?

Step 3: "5 Whos" Activity

Ask who is affected by the challenge statement. Identify at five people or groups of people who are affected and therefore important to include in any consideration of changes.

Step 4: Use the Checklist to Select an Actionable Cause

Select one or two Actionable Causes by using the following checklist. If the answer is "yes" to each of the checklist questions about the possible Actionable Causes brainstormed in Step 2, they are eligible for selection. Multiple Actionable Causes may emerge meeting the criteria, but select one or two to focus on.

- Is this Actionable Cause informed by the Challenge Statement?
- Is this something the team can influence or control?
- Is this something the entire team agrees on?
- Does it provide a rationale for selecting strategic activities?
- Will correcting it prevent the challenge from occurring?
- Do the data support the selected Actionable Cause?

Step 5: Document the Agreed-Upon Actionable Cause(s)

Input the selected Actionable Cause(s) here.

Notes/Additional Information

Include any relevant notes or additional information.

Appendix E: Sample Action Plan Template

The planning stage begins with identifying results and strategic activities to address the agreed-upon Actionable Cause(s). This is a template for creating the district-level Action Plan. This Action Plan will be implemented for at least the remainder of the year at which time progress will be evaluated and next steps determined.

If the plan identifies multiple Challenge Statements, Actionable Causes, PeopleSMART Results, or activities, add pages and/or rows to the template as necessary.

Challenge Statement

Copy Challenge Statement from Actionable Cause document here.

Actionable Cause(s)

Copy Actionable Cause(s) from Actionable Cause document here.

Supporting Data for Actionable Cause

This will help determine which data to collect to measure progress.

PeopleSMART Result(s)

Based on the Actionable Cause(s) and supporting data, what is the PeopleSMART result to be achieved? Write at least one Specific (based on present data), Measurable (progress is determined based on data), Achievable (realistic and related to critical needs), Results- Focused (developed with outcomes in mind), and Time-Bound (defined beginning and ending creating a sense of urgency) goal. Remember, results can be modified and added as the plan is implemented.

PeopleSMART Result #1

PeopleSMART Result #2

Activities

The next step is to identify evidence-based activities addressing the Actionable Cause(s) and PeopleSMART Result(s). If the district is already working on activities related to this issue, include them in the list. The list should be manageable! This is a marathon, not a sprint!

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Suggested steps to identify strategic activities:

1. Brainstorm and research evidence-based solutions to the Actionable Cause(s).
2. Complete the table below for the activities "rising to the top" in brainstorming.
3. Consider the time needed for each activity. Ensure the time needed for the activity and the timeframe set in the PeopleSMART result(s) are aligned.
4. Select acceptable activities to implement using the criteria in the checklist following the table.

Activity Time	Description	Responsible Party	Planned Start Date	Planned Finish Date	Resources Needed	Evidence of Progress/ Data to Be Collected and When

Date for Overall Plan Evaluation:

Activity Checklist

Before moving forward with the activities, check each of the brainstormed activities against the criteria in the checklist below. If the answer is "No" to any of the criteria, revise the activity to address the missing components, or select a different activity.

- Are there activities to address each PeopleSMART result?
- Does the activity address at least one aspect of the Actionable Cause?
- Do all team members agree the activity will help increase the probability of meeting the PeopleSMART result(s)?

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- Is each activity measurable?

- Does the activity have an evidence base to support its effectiveness in the context in which it will be applied?

- Does the activity align with the mission and culture of the district?

- Does each activity specify:

  - Who will complete it?

  - What exactly will be done?

  - How it will be documented?

  - When it will be done?

  - How the data will be used to measure short-term (daily/classroom data) and medium-term (marking period data) progress?

  - A timeline or dates for when relevant data will be collected?

  - Resources needed to implement the activity?

- Does the team have the knowledge, skills, and abilities needed to complete the activities? If not, are resources (e.g., other staff, training) available to help?

- Are there any constraints (e.g., personnel, school calendar, money) preventing the completion of the activity?

Communication Plan

Describe the plan for disseminating information regarding the Action Plan to the appropriate people. Use the following questions to help guide the plan. Keep in mind separate communications may be needed for different audiences.

1. Who is the specific audience?
2. What is the main message being communicated to this audience?
3. What is the most effective delivery format for this message?
4. Who is responsible for delivering this message?
5. What data are needed to support this message?
6. What is the value of this message to this audience? (If there is no value, consider revising the message or not having a message.)

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Planning for Implementation

1. What are next steps based on planned activities above?
2. Are there any anticipated challenges that can be mitigated by planning ahead? If so, describe the challenges and what can be done to mitigate them.
3. How will implementation fidelity be assessed? (Consider creating a checklist as described in the Measuring Implementation Fidelity document.)

Notes/Additional Information

Include any relevant notes or additional information.

Appendix F: Sample Measuring Implementation Integrity Form

Implementation fidelity is the degree to which the activities are being implemented as planned. Throughout implementation, quick integrity checks should be done to determine if activities are being implemented as planned. If checks are not done, and PeopleSMART results are not met, then the reason for lack of progress cannot be identified.

Components to Consider for Integrity

There are several components to consider when evaluating implementation fidelity:

- Adherence – Is the activity being implemented as designed?
- Duration – Did participants adhere to the number, length, or frequency of activities as designed?
- Quality of delivery – Were activities delivered using techniques, processes, or methods as prescribed?
- Participant responsiveness – To what extent were participants engaged by and involved in the activities and content of the plan?

Developing an Integrity Checklist

What to Consider

Before writing the checklist, consider:

- What does the activity look like when it's being completed?
- What will participants be doing when the activity is being completed?
- What steps are critical to the activity?
- If customized to fit context, are on-negotiables of the evidence-based activity preserved?

Writing the Checklist

1. Identify the steps in the evidence-based activity.
2. Create an item for each step in the activity.
3. Add a yes/no response for each item.

Scoring the Checklist

1. Observe the activity in action.
2. For each item in the checklist, was the step completed? Answer "yes" or "no."
3. Total the number of "yes" responses.
4. Divide the number of "yes" responses by the total number of items on the checklist.
5. This is the fidelity percentage! The standard for fidelity is at least 80 percent.

Notes/Additional Information

Include any relevant notes or additional information.

Appendix G: Sample Evaluating Progress Form

This step in the process should be performed periodically based on the availability of data. Even though it's the "final" step in the eight-step process, the process is cyclical, and the data and information gathered at this step inform what happens next. Use the availability of data to help determine when progress toward the PeopleSMART results will be evaluated. It may help to categorize data as short-term (daily/classroom) data, medium- term (marking period) data, and long-term (annual) data to create a schedule. The two measures used to evaluate progress are performance over time toward meeting the PeopleSMART result(s) and the fidelity of implementation. Fidelity of implementation should be at least 80 percent for maximum impact and to be able to more definitively connect the selected activities to progress toward the PeopleMART results.

Copy the PeopleSMART results, Actionable Causes, and activities from documents completed earlier in the process. Then complete the table and discuss the reflection questions relative to the areas of progress and data being evaluated at this time.

PeopleSMART Result(s)

Copy PeopleSMART result(s) from Actionable Cause document here.

Actionable Cause(s)

Copy Actionable Cause(s) from Actionable Cause document here.

Activities

Copy the first four columns from the Action Plan.

Activity Title	Responsible Party	Planned Start Date	Planned Finish Date	Actual Start Date	Actual Finish Date	80%+ Fidelity? (Y/N)	Evidence of Progress

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Activity Title	Responsible Party	Planned Start Date	Planned Finish Date	Actual Start Date	Actual Finish Date	80%+ Fidelity? (Y/N)	Evidence of Progress

Reflection Questions

1. Was/were the PeopleSMART result(s) accomplished (yes/no)?
2. For any PeopleSMART results accomplished, what new result will be identified?
3. Do any of the PeopleSMART result(s) need to be revised? If so, how?
4. Overall, how would implementation fidelity be described based on the methods used to assess fidelity?
5. Are there any challenges in meeting the 80 percent+ fidelity goal? If so, how will these challenges be addressed?
6. What do participants report about the experience in implementation?
7. What adjustments to the activities or plan were implemented?
8. What additions, deletions, or revisions need to be made to the Action Plan?

Notes/Additional Information

Include any relevant notes or additional information.

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Appendix H: Evaluating the Action Plan Form

Approximately once per year, the team should evaluate the Action Plan. Addressing discrepancies in discipline is not a "one-and-done" activity. The culture changes and activities implemented as part of this toolkit need to be maintained and revised over time to achieve district discipline results. Once the results are met, the activities need to be sustained with periodic monitoring of the data performed to avoid slippage.

Copy the PeopleSMART results, Actionable Causes, and Activities from documents completed earlier in the process. Then complete the table and discuss the reflection questions. Some overlap in the reflection questions may exist between the Progress Evaluation and Action Plan Evaluation.

PeopleSMART result(s)

Copy PeopleSMART result(s) from Actionable Cause document here.

Actionable Cause(s)

Copy Actionable Cause(s) from Actionable Cause document here.

Activities

Copy the first four columns from the Action Plan.

Activity Title	Responsible Party	Planned Start Date	Planned Finish Date	Actual Start Date	Actual Finish Date	80%+ Fidelity? (Y/N)	Evidence of Progress

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Reflection Questions

Answer these questions for the period of time since the Action Plan was last evaluated (or created if this is the first evaluation of the Action Plan).

1. How many PeopleSMART results were accomplished?
2. How many evidence-based activities were completed?
3. Were the activities completed according to the timeline? If not, why not?
4. How any activities were implemented with at least 80 percent+ fidelity/integrity?
5. Which activities, if any, were not implemented with 80 percent+ fidelity/integrity?
6. What additions, deletions, or revisions need to be made to the Action Plan?
7. What are the implications for future improvement and sustainability efforts related to suspensions/expulsions?

Notes/Additional Information

Include any relevant notes or additional information.