



Enhancing Educational Communities and School Climate August 2024

A primary goal of Milwaukee Public Schools is to reduce discipline disproportionality across the district. The following is an update on the activities that support creating a positive and inclusive educational community and equitable school climate.

Climate Pathways within School Improvement Plans

For the 2023–2024 school year, all schools had a variety of activities within their School Improvement Plans (SIP) aligned to improve school climate and lower disciplinary disproportionality. The four primary pathways laid out to address school climate are the Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) framework, mental wellness practices, restorative practices (RP), and anti-racism/anti-bias practices. Schools worked on developing all four pathways and selected a primary focus pathway.

Throughout the year, professional development was provided for all four pathways at the district level through the Learning Management System (LMS) as well as at the school level upon request. The PBIS team conducted a walk-through at all district schools with their regional PBIS coach, school leader, and members of the school-based PBIS team using a rubric they created together. Results from the walk-through rubric were used to guide school-based decisions as evidence for the SIP and artifacts for Educator Effectiveness as well as to guide the level of support provided from the school's regional PBIS coach. At the end of the school year, all school teams completed the Tiered Fidelity Inventory (TFI) to provide a valid and reliable instrument that can be used over time to guide both implementation and sustained usage of PBIS. PBIS coaches used this data to ensure that the schools with the greatest needs are provided with support. PBIS coaches worked with all schools to create an action plan to improve the implementation of PBIS at all tiers to meet the diverse needs of students.

The Violence Prevention (VP) team focused on the priorities of increasing fidelity of Second Step implementation, supporting implementation of comprehensive mental wellness activities, and promoting proactive classroom management strategies as a means for creating predictable, respectful learning environments. The VP team trained schools and departments in a variety of topics related to social and emotional learning (SEL), trauma-sensitive strategies, the Classroom Organization and Management Program (COMP), historical trauma, and Youth Mental Health First Aid (YMHFA) training. The implementation phase of the MPS RISE grant is well under way at each of the six grant schools.

The Department of Restorative Practices (RP) provided regular coaching support to 19 schools throughout the district within the restorative practices implementation plan, which is aligned to the district strategic plan. Schools interested in implementing a whole-school approach to restorative practices started in the exploration stage and build readiness skills. Schools in the exploration cohort attended required professional development; attended monthly after-school coaching sessions; and received weekly site visits. Schools that have completed the exploration stage have been assigned a full-time restorative practices coach. Schools in this cohort will continue to receive monthly leadership development and administrative support along with team facilitation, professional development, and classroom coaching throughout the multiyear process. The department completed two days of the restorative practices training series. School staff members, along with department staff from across the district, enrolled in one of six sessions being presented. The department collaborated with Community Schools, specifically supporting

efforts of developing shared leadership, student voice, and culturally responsive practices through a whole-school approach to restorative practices implementation. Restorative practices coaches supported Community Schools through involvement in the two-year community assessment process to help establish goals for the next two years.

Every school identified a climate equity liaison, who received best-practice training for interrupting bias and addressing discipline disproportionality as well as regular updates from the district discipline manager. Each month, a focus strategy was shared with climate equity liaisons regarding addressing discipline disproportionality. In addition, networking and other opportunities were provided for staff members to engage utilizing the Courageous Conversations About Race framework to increase racial consciousness in staff members and the educational system. Modules are available through LMS as well as at the school level upon request on various topics regarding anti-racism and anti-bias.

Stakeholder Engagement

Student discipline committees continue to meet monthly at the 30 middle and high schools across the district. These committees are organized as a professional learning community that has been researching an area of concern and gathering additional insight from other students at the school. This work culminated at the district's Student Leadership Summit at UW-Milwaukee on April 19, 2024, with 221 students attending. At the summit, each school presented their overall problem of practice that students discussed throughout the year, recommendations, and support needed for next steps. Presentations occurred in small groups with students from other district schools. Some of the problems of practice that were presented included student engagement and motivation; bullying awareness; staff and student community building; restorative practices; procedures in the hallways and passing time; and student leadership opportunities.

The Department of Gender and Identity Inclusion, specifically the Girls of Color program, held its third annual Denim Day on April 24, 2024. The department launched the event in response to feedback from listening sessions held at 30 schools. Over 200 students attended the third annual MPS Denim Day at UW-Milwaukee as part of Sexual Assault Awareness Month. Students participated in workshops and question-and-answer sessions intended to create awareness of sexual assault, consent, and trauma. The event also provided resources for reporting assault and recovering from assault.

The Department of Black and Latino Male Achievement (BLMA) held its third annual Mental Health Awareness Symposium on April 22, 2024. Over 100 students gathered at Marquette University for this event and participated in workshops focused on raising awareness of mental health, breaking down the stigma of mental wellness, and providing avenues to support.

Each year, MPS staff members complete a year-end discipline survey looking at recommendations regarding school discipline and support needed to continue to improve climate district-wide. For the 2023–2024 school year, over 1,700 staff members completed the survey. Some highlights from the survey include the following:

- 42.2% of staff indicated that they took time to build relationships daily, and an additional 40.5% took time multiple times a week to build relationships.
- 70.8% of staff indicated that they agreed or strongly agreed that their school uses data to make informed decisions.
- The most common support needed regarding discipline included administrator follow-up; collaboration time with colleagues; additional strategies; guidance from school and district leadership; and coaching support and professional development.
- The most utilized proactive practices included repeating requests, use of calm requests, community building, and pre-correction.

- The most utilized classroom strategies after a behavior occurred included one-on-one conversation, parent contact, mindfulness/brain breaks, restorative conversation, and a recovery area in the classroom/buddy classroom.
- The most requested professional development topics included re-entry, alternatives to suspension, classroom management, restorative practices, student voice, culturally responsive problem solving, and microaggressions.

On May 29, 2024, a variety of departments across MPS collaborated to plan and host a community event, Equity Conversations: Discipline in MPS, to engage community and MPS families in a conversation about what programs and practices MPS has implemented to reduce discipline disproportionality. During this event, community and family members heard from different departments, including PBIS, restorative practices, student services, and Violence Prevention, about how their programs are working to move the needle on disproportionality as well as reduce the number of behavior incidents overall in the district. Attendees also had a chance to experience the programs themselves through interactive activities and to engage in deeper dialogue with MPS employees about how the district can continue to make progress in this area.

Courageous Conversations About Race and District Equity Leadership Team

As part of phase two of Courageous Conversations About Race integration, Movie Mondays started in March 2024. Each Monday, a documentary discussing anti-racism or educational equity is played with participants having the opportunity to engage in conversation afterward utilizing the Courageous Conversations About Race framework.

In addition, the district equity leadership team (DELT) continues to meet monthly to utilize Courageous Conversations protocols to discuss district policy, practices, and systems through a lens of race and equity. In April 2024, this team utilized the systems thinking model of the ladder of inference and the iceberg model to reflect on district systems and mental models throughout the district.

Below are updates on the implementation of Courageous Conversations about Race since starting our collaboration on March 1, 2021.

Timeline	Number of Sessions Held
March 2021–July 2021	17
August 2021–July 2022	31
August 2022–June 2023	45
August 2023–April 2024	43
Total for three-year plan	136
Staff who have attended	9,300

Next Steps

Looking forward, we are planning the following activities:

- Beyond Diversity seminars in August
- Additional refreshers and advanced seminars on anti-racism and anti-bias
- Networking opportunities
- Updating Culture, Climate, and Alternatives to Suspension Toolkit
- Five Components of School Climate alignment
- Teaming in Equitable Education Coaching and Holistic Support (TEECHS) collaboration team

Disciplinary Data Review

The use of specific strategies for classroom-managed behaviors are documented within PLP Classroom Behavior notes. Total documented strategies through June 30, 2024, are found below.

Strategy	Total
BB: Brain breaks	1,411
BC: Behavior contract	1,330
BR: Rewind/broken record	2,357
BT: Buddy classroom	5,903
C: Community service	340
CP: Collect property	2,348
EO: Engagement opportunities	1,478
GO: GoGuardian	589
IW: Independent work	703
M: Mindfulness	874
MS: Move their seat	5,267
OO: One-on-one conversation	54,171
P: Proximity control	8,969
P5: Praise 5:1	459
PC: Parent contact	34,928
PI: Planned ignoring	10,661
R: Redirection	34,968
RA: Recovery area (within room)	3,221
RB: Referral to BIT	593
RC: Restorative conversation	2,641
RE: Restorative circle	171
S: Secret signal	121
SC: Support staff consultation	15,974
SM: Self-monitoring	866
T: Tangible acknowledgment system	1,466
TS: Reflection sheet	1,371
V: VABB	44

All schools have a building intervention team (BIT) whose team members ensure that students in need of additional support are offered Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions within the PBIS framework. Below are the number of students who received Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions throughout the 2023–2024 school year.

Tier 2/Tier 3 Intervention	Number of Students
Check-In/Check-Out (CICO)	2,279
Individualized CICO	778
Social Academic Instructional Group (SAIG)	1,984
Behavior Assessment/Intervention Plan (BAIP)	227
FBA/BIP	358
Educational Wraparound	58
RENEW	74

The following table shows total suspension events by race for year-to-date through June 30, 2024.

Behavior	Hispanic	American Indian	Asian	Black	Pacific Islander	White	Multiple	Grand Total
Total Suspensions	3,459	135	309	18,801	9	564	470	23,747

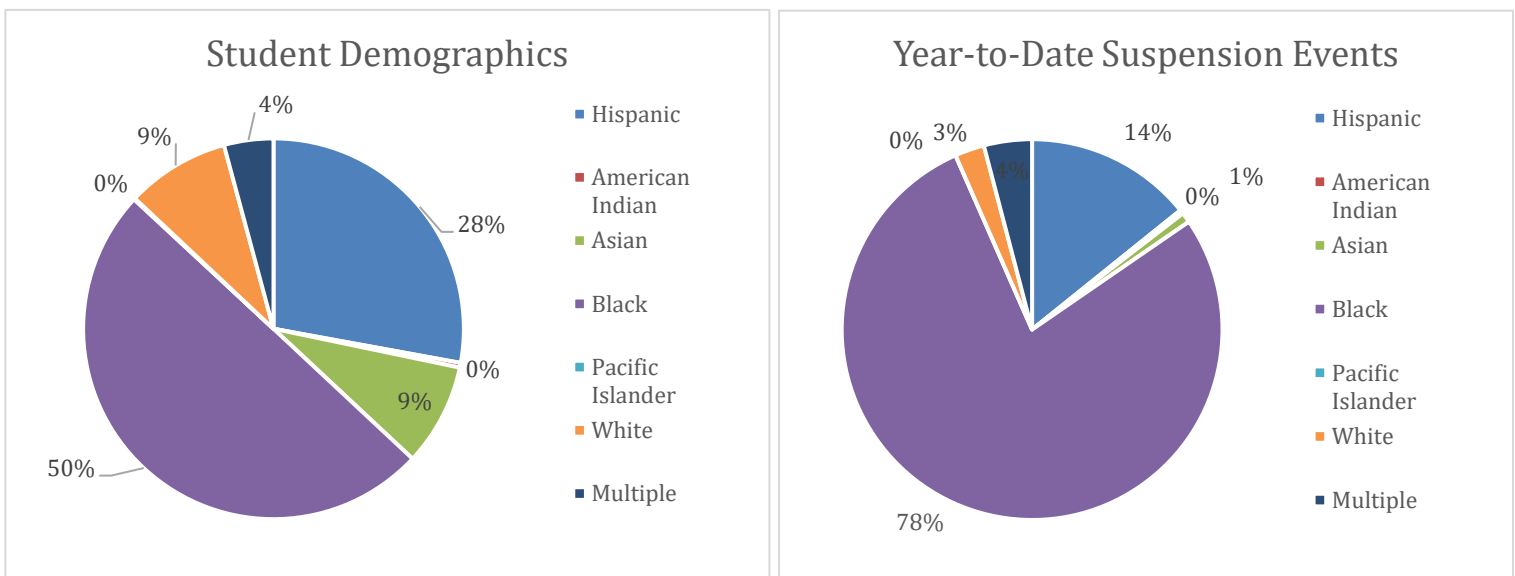
The following table shows total suspension events by grade level through June 30, 2024.

K4	K5	1st Grade	2nd Grade	3rd Grade	4th Grade	5th Grade
47	198	331	464	736	1,001	1,343
6th Grade	7th Grade	8th Grade	9th Grade	10th Grade	11th Grade	12th Grade
2,478	3,104	3,067	5,884	2,938	1,492	664

The following alternatives to suspension were utilized by administrators through June 30, 2024.

Alternatives to Suspension Utilized	Total
Conference	2,100
Counsel	15,736
Detention	1,602
Mediation	961
Referral to building intervention team	248
Referral to support staff	393
Repairing harm circle	252
Restorative conference	593

The following charts show district demographics and disproportionality for the 2023–2024 school year.



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