How to Walk the Talk-
A journey to improving school climate and student engagement through social emotional learning

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Goals of presentation

- What is student engagement and why is it important?
- Develop understanding of past and present discipline strategies and the unintended consequences that exist
- Explore the connections between restorative practices and Social Emotional Learning competencies
- Identify possible strategies and solutions to increase student engagement
- Create an action plan to bring back your home district with practical implementation strategies to change school culture
Agenda

- What is student engagement and what barriers exist that keep kids from being engaged?
- Student discipline- past and present
- Restorative Practices
- SEL Competencies
- Focus on empathy
- Bringing it all together- Alternatives to Suspensions
  - Describe the SEL competencies applied in each option
fiscal policy

monetary

depression

work
Student Engagement refers to the degree of attention, curiosity, interest, optimism, and passion that students show when they are learning or being taught, which extends to the level of motivation they have to learn and progress in their education.
Barriers to Student Engagement

- Trauma
- Home issues
- Lack of basic needs being met
- Learning struggles
- Anxiety, depression, other mental health issues
- Poor classroom management
- School Violence
- Lack of connections to adults and peers
School Discipline - The Ugly Truth

Since the age of the dinosaurs...and the dawn of public education, there has been school discipline;

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Whipping</th>
<th>Holding heavy objects for an hour</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lashing</td>
<td>Sitting in corner with actual Dunce cap</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beatings</td>
<td>Boys having to wear a girl’s bonnet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rapping of knuckles with rulers</td>
<td>Cleaning the one room schoolhouse</td>
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And when all of the above failed- students were suspended and/or expelled
Of the 49 million students enrolled in public schools in the most recent OCR report:

- **3.5 million** students were suspended in-school
- **3.45 million** students were suspended out-of-school
- **130,000** students were expelled without educational services

Black males are **3.5 times** more likely to be suspended than their white counterparts

Students with disabilities are **2 times** more likely to be suspended

[ocrdata.ed.gov](http://ocrdata.ed.gov)
Effects on Student Achievement

Students who are repeatedly suspended:

- More likely to become disengaged, fail classes and drop out of school
- More likely to be arrested at school
  - 70% of all arrests in schools were made for Black or Latino students
- Difficulty maintaining positive peer relationships
- Difficulty maintaining appropriate adult relationships
- Decreased adult earning potential
Effects of School Community - Did you know...

The higher the number of suspensions during the course of a semester, the lower the non-suspended students’ scores on end-of-semester reading and math evaluations?

- Students feel they are in an environment that focuses on punishment and crimes (dress code, tardies)
- School is not focused on relationships
- Students are anxious that they are “next”

Why do we Suspend?—This is what we have always done...

- **Deterrent**
  - We believe that other students will see the consequences of violating school rules and will be less likely to break them in the future or;
  - We believe that once a student is suspended, the experience will be so terrible that they will never want to be suspended again. What teenager wouldn’t want a forced vacation day anyway?

- **Safety**
  - Weapons, threats, criminal acts (not the majority of suspensions, BTW)
  - We are currently being challenged on what constitutes school safety—fights, disingenuous threats?

- **Gimme a break!**
  - Removing a student from class can put time and space between a teacher and student
  - Allows time to create safety plans, behavior contracts, interventions, etc.

- **It’s Cheap**
  - All of those other fluffy programs are too expensive and staff intensive
  - But don’t forget about ADA
Cost of Suspensions

Report from the Center for Civil Rights Remedies at UCLA

- Social cost: losses incurred by individual high school dropouts
  - Lower income
  - Diminished productivity
  - Higher healthcare costs
  - $364,000-over lifetime

- Fiscal Losses
  - Increased incarceration
  - Decrease of taxable income
  - $163,000-over lifetime
Overall cost of in-school and out of school suspensions for 10th graders

35 Billion Dollars!!!!

Check out costmatters.org
Due to the public outcry from the disproportionality data, an increasing number of states have passed legislation limiting the use of suspensions and expulsions, and eliminating Zero Tolerance policies (except under school code).

For example, it is now illegal to expel preschool students in Illinois.

Legislators, along with educators, have seen the data and realized that doing the same thing over and over again and expecting a different outcome is.....

Wait. What’s that word again?
Insanity: doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results.

- Albert Einstein
What does Discipline Look Like Across the Country?

http://ecs.force.com/mbdata/MBQuest2RTanw?rep=SD1804
Past Practice

- Progressive discipline
- Zero-tolerance policies
- One size fits all

Moving Forward

- More interventions
- Case-by-case determination
- Creative, tailored solutions to meet students’ needs
- Maximized classroom presence
Change our thinking—You gotta believe to succeed

- What is our goal of discipline
  - Change behavior
  - Keep kids in school

- Benefits of keeping kids in school
  - Increase student engagement
  - Increase student performance
  - Build positive adult/student relationships
  - Increase graduation rates
  - Bridge the achievement gap of minorities in education

Daniel Losen, Director of the Center for Civil Rights remedies at UCLA
The number one, most important factor in student engagement in schools... 

Having a positive relationship with at least one adult in the building

For real. That’s it. Nothing fancy. Just a trusting adult.
What are Restorative Practices and where did they come from?

An approach to justice (through the court system and community organizers) wherein the offender and the victim have a meeting to share the experience of the crime. The offender hears first hand (usually) from the victim about the harm caused and the effects of the crime on them. The goal of the meeting is to right the wrong.

Offenders: take responsibility for their actions, put a face to the crime, right the wrong and prevent further criminal action.

Victims: Share their voice, become empowered, less anxiety and helplessness.
What are restorative practices?
- Used when an individual is able to come back to a person he or she harmed, physically or emotionally, or has damaged that person’s property and is able to “make things right.”

What does it mean to “make things right?”
- Being able to take responsibility for what was done and then to find a way to “fix it.”
- For example, damaging of personal property. The person who has damaged another’s property will find a way to “fix it.”
What does it mean to “fix it”?

To repair the harm- to do whatever is necessary to make the harmed person feel better about what was. This could include apologizing face to face or in an apology note, take responsibility for the choices they made, and will try to ensure it does not happen again.
What does it look like in schools?

Ex: Bobby steals Aiden’s iphone from the locker room. Rather than just suspend him, the students and parents may choose to:

1. Meet with a social worker. Counselor... to discuss the incident
2. Aiden can explain how the theft affected him, both logistically and emotionally
3. Bobby will listen to Aiden and make amends (return the phone, apologize, pay for any damage of costs)
4. A plan is made with the school on future interactions with the boys - back pack checks, non-engagement procedures...

Meeting must be structured, pre-planned, and each party must agree. Good idea to talk with parents before hand.
What is CASEL-

The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) is a trusted source for knowledge about high-quality, evidence-based social and emotional learning (SEL). CASEL supports educators and policy leaders and enhances the experiences and outcomes for all PreK-12 students.
Social Emotional Learning Competencies

Self-Awareness
Self Management
Social Awareness
Relationship Skills
Responsible Decision making
Social Awareness

Understand the perspectives of others and empathize with them, including those from diverse backgrounds and cultures.

Appreciating diversity

Understanding norms of behavior

Recognizing family, school and community supports
Self-awareness

Know your strengths and limitations, with a well-grounded sense of confidence, optimism, and a “growth mindset.”

Learn to label one’s feelings and relate those feelings to behavior.
Self-management

Effectively manage stress, control impulses, and motivate yourself to set and achieve goals.

Regulate emotions and behavior.
Relationship skills

Communicate clearly, listen well, cooperate with others, resist inappropriate social pressure, negotiate conflict constructively, and seek and offer help when needed.

Build relationships with others, resolve conflicts
Responsible decision-making

Make constructive choices about personal behavior and social interactions based on ethical standards, safety, and social norms.

Consider the well being of others and evaluate consequences
Table Talk

Share an anecdote of a time when you or someone you witnessed demonstrated an SEL competency.

After listening to the examples, identify a few characteristics of a healthy adult SEL culture.
Kahoot

https://create.kahoot.it/l/#/preview/2be55da7-bde7-4f22-a7ed-dc282e59ae06
What is Empathy?

“The psychological identification with or the vicarious experiencing of the feelings, thoughts, or attitudes of others” (dictionary.com)

In other words…
Walking in someone else’s shoes
Seeing things from another’s point of view
Our ability to connect to our own core feelings that are similar to another’s core feelings.
Why Empathy Matters

Empathy is important because:
● it facilitates our interactions with others
● it is the foundation of effective communication
● it builds community
● it supports healthy relationships at all levels

(At the extreme, some people who do not feel empathy have a greater risk for developing personality disorders)
Empathy vs. Sympathy

Empathy is the capacity to understand and feel the emotion that someone else is experiencing.

Sympathy is feeling pity or badly about someone else’s situation.
What does Empathy look like?

Empathetic responses validate, not judge. The response is more about what the other person is feeling, not so much about the circumstances that have occurred.

Everyone’s threshold for needing empathy is relative; what may not be a big deal for you could be very upsetting to someone else. Empathy is demonstrated when the listener can emote "I am hearing you AND I recognize the feeling/value you are placing on your experience."
Building Capacity for Empathy

Several conditions need to exist or be taught:

● A sense of Self Awareness
● Being aware of others and what they are experiencing
● Be able to access one’s feelings and ideas
● Be aware of the consequences in self and others
Factors That May Impact the Development of Empathy

● Childhood trauma or adverse childhood experiences
  ○ Neural Pathways in the brain are altered to protect emotions of the child
● Adult Trauma
● Drug addiction
● Certain mental health conditions
Think of an example where having increased empathy would have benefited a situation for your building or a time when empathy did make a difference in the outcome of a situation.
Take a Break
Get out of your chair, it's killing you
Alternatives to suspension

Instead of excluding students from school, there are many ways to help students learn to become better decision makers and therefore change behavior.

Most of the suggestions provided can be implemented using existing staff and resources.

Remember the definition of insanity....
Positive Behavior Supports for Students

- Check – Ins (Deans or Counselors)
- Adult/Peer Mentoring
- Social Skills Instructional Groups (Individual and Group)
  - Bullying
  - Appropriate use of technology/social media
  - Tobacco/vaping
- Substance Abuse counseling
- Student Support Center
- Supported Lunch Program
- Supported Attendance Programs
- Night School
Check-Ins

- Low level intervention
- Be first contact with a student for school refusal issues
- Check backpack/person for inappropriate objects
- Emotional check-in
- Pre-teach expectations
- Materials/homework check-in

Can be used at end of day for Check-outs

- Make sure materials/homework is ready to go
- Assignment notebook check
- Recap day and prepare for home
- Reteach social skills
- Positive praise and encouragement for tomorrow
Adult Mentoring

Form of mentoring where an adult is paired with a student to provide a caring, nurturing relationship that is aimed at increasing student engagement in school.

- Can be any adult - custodial, teacher, secretary, librarian
- Must be trained on protocols and boundaries
- Has a set schedule
- Can be used as a check-in/check-out monitor
- Needs a facilitator to organize (SW, Counselor, Psych)
- Mentors meet with facilitators to review progress
Peer Mentoring

Form of mentorship where a student is paired with a trained peer to help provide support, guidance and positive social modeling. Must be monitored and facilitated by adult trained in the peer mentor process

- Cross-age
- Low cost
- For lower level social/emotional needs

Benefits:

- Builds positive peer relationships
- Models appropriate friendships
- Improve student engagement at school/connectedness
Social/emotional learning groups

Group therapy consists of a small number of individuals that meet together with a therapist to discuss similar issues and concerns. The purpose of the group is to help group members develop insight into their thoughts and behavior while providing support and feedback to one another.

Important feature: They should be instructional!! Students should learn actual skill they can generalize into different situations in the future to avoid making similar mistakes.
Substance abuse programs

Substance abuse support (illicit, prescription drugs, tobacco, alcohol) is a great need, especially in high schools where more and more, drugs are becoming easier to get. From the urban school districts of inner cities to wealthier suburbia and all of the small rural schools in between, drug use remains a major concern among school administrators and society as a whole. Many schools employ social workers that have an expertise in drug and alcohol counseling.
Student support centers

A location in the school used to provide a safe place for students to cool down or get immediate support due to a behavior issue.

- Repurpose of In School Suspension Rooms
- Opportunity to work through Suspension Question curriculum
- Provide social work services
- Immediate removal with a therapeutic approach
- Provide safe space to cool off while support staff works through solutions and restorative practices with student
Supported Lunch Programs

One way to provide a safe place for students to unwind is to set up smaller lunch space where adults can help to facilitate positive peer interactions or provide respite during the day.

Some students are too tempted by long periods of unstructured time and require extra support during this portion of their day in order to wind down and gear up for the afternoon.
Supported attendance

An effort to intervene for those students who demonstrate school refusal behaviors or for whom attendance at school is a major obstacle to increasing student success.

- Wake-up calls
- Attendance Contracts
- Supported Transportation
- Work with Truancy officials
Night school

A traditional school environment does not always meet the needs of some students. Going to school after hours may be a better alternative for these students. For some students the overall environment and course load be be too stressful or anxiety provoking for them to be successful. For others, their home lives may require a different approach to education.

- Computer based instruction
- Mastery learning
- Smaller learning environment
- Reduced course load focus
- Reduced peer conflicts
Capacity building - considerations for implementation

- Communication
  - Get the word out - Union, parents, students, community...

- Staffing
  - Use of SW, Psychs, Guidance Counselors, In-School supervisors, non-certified staff

- Professional Development
  - Must be fluid and consistent
  - Include timeline, who is involved, trainers, trainees

- Data analysis
  - What data will you collect, who will collect it, who will analyze?
  - Examples of data: Discipline data, violation data by demographics, recidivism, number and types of interventions used, time study of interventions, grades, attendance, work completion
  - Get a Data Team!!
Capacity building - considerations for implementation

- Accountability
  - Fidelity and integrity of interventions
  - Student Support teams
  - Data
- Facility usage
  - Existing space - In school Suspension room?
  - Mentors? PD
- Policy and Procedure changes
  - Review current policy - PRESS
  - Create a team, start slow
Building an Action Plan...

**Goal:** Aligned to vision, mission, values of district

**Action:** What are you trying to accomplish?

**Rationale for Action:** Why is this important for students? How will the outcome improve student learning?
Building an Action Plan, continued

**Stakeholders:** Who will help develop, communicate and execute the plan?

**Process:** (including timeline): What steps will you take to accomplish the goal?

**Criteria for Success:** How will you know what your doing is working? How will you know when you have met your goal?
Curriculum (BRIDGES)

Building Bridges is an evidence based alternative to suspension program.

- Based on restorative justice and cognitive behavioral principles
- Components include:
  - Processing
  - Mediation
  - Scenarios & worksheets
  - Restitution
  - Restorative practices

Available on Amazon.com
The Suspension Question? (Coleman and Rappaport, 2016)

- Used for prevention & intervention
- Being used in therapeutic day school & regular education programs
- Can be used with individual students, small groups or entire classrooms
- Designed to reduce the number of overall behavior infractions
- Reduces the rate of repeat offenders
Remember, You have the power to change lives...don’t waste it

Be the kind of leader that you would follow.
Other Publications by Dr. Susan lava coleman

Just One Click: The Eternity of Cyberbullying
What Every School Needs to Know About the Educational, Social and Legal Implications of Cyberbullying
Dr. Susan Lava Coleman

THE SUSPENSION QUESTION:
Bridging the Gap Between Prevention, Intervention and Suspension
Michelle Rappaport, LSCW
Susan Lava Coleman, Ed.D.

The Journal of School Business Management
Student Cyber Speech and the Law: What Administrators Need to Know
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Books available at amazon.com