

**PRESENTER:** Without further ado, it is my pleasure this morning to introduce Dr. Reece Peterson. Dr. Peterson is a professor at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, specializing in the education of students with emotional and behavioral disorders. He teaches undergraduate and graduate courses related to student behaviors as well as special education administration. Dr. Peterson's interests include identification of and interventions for students with emotional and behavioral disorders, student discipline in school, and school violence. He is also interested in legal and policy issues related to special education and children and families.

He has published in these areas, is the coauthor of a book on multicultural issues and behavioral disorders, and has served as an editor and reviewer for many journals. He has served as a governmental relations chair for the Counsel For Children With Behavioral Disorders and is an affiliated faculty member of the UNL Center on Children, Families, and the Law. He recently directed a federal violence prevention project entitled Safe and Responsive Schools. Please join me in welcoming Dr. Reece Peterson.

**REECE PETERSON:** Can everyone hear me? Okay, welcome, thank you. Thank you for being here on a Friday. Thank you for being here to talk about discipline on a Friday. Not always the first choice. I would like to know -- have some idea of who is here today. How many of you are classroom teachers? If you'd just raise your hand. Are there then special education teachers, school psychologists, administrators? Oh, a big group of administrators. And I should check -- that includes special ed administrators? And then general ed, building level administrators or superintendents, yeah? Okay. Mostly the special ed, but a big mix. And I've probably forgotten school social workers? Any other groups? That covers most of the group here. Oh, parents? Sure, how many parents are here? Oh, good. Good group of parents as well.

Well, thank you for being here. We'll try to make this work. I would be happy to try to take questions as we go if you have them. If I don't see you, you'll have to stand up or wave, but we'll try to make this work. Where I'm headed today is to talk about these topics. What is discipline? And a little bit about zero tolerance and related issues. Mostly, I'm going to assume that because you're here, you already have some motivation to think about changes, so I'm not going to spend a lot of time trying to explain why it's important to change. But instead, we'll go forward and try to talk -- spend more time on how we might go about trying to make some changes as it relates to discipline. So I am going to talk about some alternatives to suspension and expulsion for discipline, then also talk about what I would call prerequisites in order to

make alternatives for discipline possible. And then try to end up with conclusions or discussion. So that's kind of the direction.

So what is discipline? Most people think of discipline, I think, as punishment in schools, punishment for misdeeds. But while I -- from what I understand, the actual origin of the word discipline has more to do with teaching than it does with punishment. I understand that the root of the word means to teach or to comprehend. And we also talk about disciplines in higher education as being sociology or special education and the like. And so there are some different ways of thinking about discipline that I think are important. And in our case, I believe, of course, that the idea of discipline is really one of teaching. So having said that, let me get you to think for a moment. What would you say the purposes are of school discipline in your schools? What would be some of the reasons we have discipline? And if anybody wants to volunteer, you can. You don't have to. Oh yes, one volunteer here.

**AUDIENCE MEMBER:** It's apparent, I think, that the reason for discipline in schools is to get rid of a problem and not address it.

**REECE PETERSON:** Okay, yes. I'm going to set that one aside because in just a moment, we're going to come back to that one. But I would tend to agree with you. The response was that the idea is to get rid of a problem rather than having to deal with it. Now if I took the time, and I don't know that we will here, though, some of the -- and you can kind of raise your hand if you think that this would be a common understanding of the word discipline, but one of the things that usually comes first is we have discipline to change student behavior, to change misbehavior in schools. Would you agree? Okay. Another purpose that I think I could draw from you if you thought about it was to deter or prevent other kids from engaging in misbehavior. So in part, we respond to behavior because we don't want this to extend beyond the one incident to become more widespread. Does that get you going? Are you thinking of more reasons for discipline?

Well, there are some other ones. You didn't mention using discipline to create a safe school environment. That's certainly one these days that we're all concerned about, especially with recent incidents in the last few days. And another one that commonly gets raised is to maintain the decorum of the school, or the atmosphere in the school, which has to do with appropriate language, dress, conduct that is supportive of our role as educators in a school. Do you agree with that one too?

So I'm not sure if you all do, you're not nodding, you're not willing to go along with me yet, but most people that I've encountered would say that these are the typical purposes that people have in accomplishing discipline. And of course, in just a few minutes, I'm going to ask you whether or not your school discipline procedures and policies are actually accomplishing these purposes. And that's the question that we're really going to focus on.

But before we go there, I do want to share with you that there are some other, more hidden, purposes of discipline. I call them less forthright purposes that sometimes happen in schools. One of them, I believe, is something called retribution, which is simply creating suffering to somebody who we think did something wrong. That's a little bit different than changing behavior, right? Another one, the one that our parent mentioned, is getting rid of the problem, getting rid of the student so the adults will no longer have to cope with the student's behavior. Another one is to assert adult authority by making it clear to students the power adults have over students. And finally, although this has diminished greatly in the last 20 years, as almost like serving as a supplemental law enforcement agency providing consequences for behavior.

Now these are not the things that most people volunteer as discipline. I think it's obvious why. They're not the nice, idealistic purposes, but I also believe in my experience that sometimes these purposes underlie what happens in school discipline as much as the other purposes. So another thing that you might want to consider related to discipline is to what extent does our current system of school discipline accomplish and support these purposes? Does suspension and expulsion particularly assist here? If so, and if even though we may not think that they're ideal purposes, if so, we also have to have a school discipline system that somehow accommodates the needs that might have created these what I'd call unspoken, less forthright purposes for discipline. How am I doing? Does that make sense? Well, good.

There is a very important distinction I think that needs to be made, and I alluded to this earlier, that we have a choice. We want to either make discipline punishing inappropriate behavior, or we need to teach -- use it to teach appropriate behavior to change student behavior. And unfortunately, I think the bulk of our disciplinary practices in the past have been focused on the former one, the one on the left, and much less on the one on the right. But I believe strongly that we need to change what we do in order to change that balance dramatically in the other direction. And if you believe that, then we get to the question of how

do we do that? So I'm going to assume that these few words have convinced you totally that we need to change and really go on and talk more about how the discipline system works and what some of the implications and consequences of it are.

Typically, if you were to ask someone, what is school discipline, oh, that's when some kid gets detention or suspension in a school. In fact, the word suspension and expulsion actually become almost synonymous with discipline, I think. There are some other traditional consequences that are disciplinary consequences, the ones on the left, things like demotion from one grade level to another, backwards. Lowering grades, which has occurred in the past and continues. Of course detention. Detention usually is after school. A youngster is asked to stay after school. I'm sure the nature of detention varies. The ones I was familiar with is more like a study hall where -- at least at the secondary level, where kids are expected to do homework or work quietly.

I can say that when I was a student, a high school student, this one teacher who I really liked and worked well with discovered that I had not ever been in trouble at school. So he assigned me a detention. I was crushed. I thought, there goes my chance to ever go to college. It's all over. I then sat through detention and went on with my life. It turns out it had very little impact. He did not have -- there was no behavior that triggered it, he just thought it was a worthy experience for any high school student. So I guess we're all familiar. How many of you have, in your high school experience, had a detention? Oh, see? We're a large group, actually. And if I were to guess, some of you actually had a good reason for being detained in detention. Well, we'll see.

Okay, well anyway, these are the traditional consequences. Now I am going to be talking primarily from the point of view of schools rather than the classroom, but you probably could devise a similar way of thinking within each teacher's classroom where there are rules and consequences. And some of the old-fashioned consequences from classroom teachers were like writing, I will not do blank, whatever it is, and that type of thing, staying after school, more homework, and the like. So if these are the more traditional consequences, then what can be some of the better consequences that we might try to put in place of some of these consequences?

Before we do that, though, let's compare again the punishing orientation to the teaching orientation. You may have seen this before. This is adapted from someone else's work,

but it basically compares a punishment process to discipline to a more discipline or teaching process. And as you can see, that punishment is a reactive intervention that occurs after the problem occurs. It is adults imposing arbitrary consequences, usually. It requires obedience to adult authority and obedience is what is attempting to be taught. It involves control by external rule enforcement and it employs both psychological and physical punishment.

I don't believe that Pennsylvania permits corporal punishment, is that correct? But as you may know, there are many states in the United States where still corporal punishment is an added disciplinary consequence to the ones we've been talking about. Compare that to a discipline process, which is more proactive and almost always focuses first on preventing inappropriate behavior. It also focuses on trying to develop natural consequences that make sense both to the adults and to youth. It also respects -- it provides respect for social responsibilities and tries to encourage that sense of responsibility in students and develop inner control rather than external control, which we really think about as the way to think about changing behavior. And in this frame of discipline, psychological and physical punishment are not usually employed, or at least employed much less so.

So I hope I've convinced you that we need to move in this direction and that many of the consequences that we have had in the past really reflect the punishment process rather than something that we might want to move towards. So let's take a moment and talk about zero tolerance. Zero tolerance is this idea of punishing severely even any amount of a particular behaviors. And it's, well here harsh punishment for any instance of the behavior.

The zero tolerance movement comes out of other sources, particularly the drug intervention programs of the 1980's, which use this term first, we think, as it relates to what we're talking about. And then it was picked up in the schools during the period of concern for school violence that occurred over the past 10 or 12, 13 years now, and also was embodied in the 1994 Gun Free Schools Act, which required harsh penalties for kids who brought weapons to school. There was various interpretations through time on that, but the Gun Free Schools Act is usually viewed as an example of a zero tolerance type orientation to school problems. And then it has led to significant increases in disciplinary removal.

Now I'm not going to take time, but there is, I believe, a lot of data to show that our use of suspension, and maybe to a lesser extent also expulsion, has increased pretty dramatically over the last 10 or so years as this zero tolerance philosophy has been implemented in schools.

And it may have to do with other things going on as well, but we have had large increases in the use of these consequences. And those have been particularly troublesome because they have been over-represented in minority groups and because now, during the same time period, we're much more concerned with academic outcomes for students. And if we're concerned with academic outcomes, having kids not be in school, be suspended or expelled, means that we are also interfering with our desired academic outcomes for students, for all students.

But let's give some examples of the zero tolerance philosophy. Brandon here, 15, was suspended from a high school in October after he possibly saved the life of his girlfriend, fellow classmate, by lending her his asthma inhaler after she had misplaced hers. This school suspended this student for delivery of a dangerous drug. Does that make sense? I can't make any sense of it from a logical point of view, yet zero tolerance policies that would seem to be in place have sometimes directed this kind of response for behaviors that, while they technically meet the requirements, don't necessarily meet the underlying meaning of what we're trying to accomplish in schools.

Another one. Railey Montgomery, 13, suspended from school in Texas in September when her shirttail became un-tucked, a violation of the dress code. And rising number of dress code suspensions in her 3500-student school population to more than 700. So 700 dress code violations, presumably resulting in suspensions, for things like having your shirttail un-tucked. Now granted, I'm providing you with pretty extreme examples here. But if I were to press you, I'm guessing that you could find some examples in your own schools where the -- maybe not this extreme level -- but this same kind of thing might be happening. There are some more examples. Nine-year-old boy found a manicure kit with a one-inch knife. This was before the, what, two-inch policy became into effect, but now is suspended for having that knife. Examples of a kid in New York City being suspended, or even then considered for expulsion, for graffiti for writing on the desk. 14-year-old boy shared two Midol tablets with a classmate, suspended with expulsion forgiven. So he wasn't expelled. One of the famous ones, six-year-old kindergartener kissed a classmate, said the girl asked him to, but was suspended for unwelcome touching. Kindergartener? I'm trying to figure that one out. 7<sup>th</sup>-grader shared zinc cough drops with classmate, suspended. You get the idea.

Now even though I'm sharing the most extreme examples, I think what this illustrates is that having, first of all, universal categories of behaviors that are sometimes maybe not defined

with an understanding of what the motivation might be that underlies it is a problem. And then, on the other hand, having universal consequences that are automatic or that are not tailored to the individual circumstances are also not particularly helpful. And of course, our legal system does not employ that zero tolerance approach. In fact, almost always we ask for motivation and we take into account, in the legal system, the entire picture of an inappropriate law, what apparently is a law-breaking behavior. And juries and judges have substantial discretion to adapt those things to the particular circumstances that they are facing.

Okay, enough on all that. Your classroom management techniques work in practice, but not in theory. That worries me. So in this case, I'd say zero tolerance doesn't work in practice and it doesn't have much in the way of theory behind it, either, as well. But we are going to go on to some more familiar territory for a moment. I have to set a little bit of context. Is there anyone in this room who has not seen the infamous triangle at this point in your life? Well, good. I know it's all familiar, so I won't take more time, but what I think we need to do is to begin to think in triangles, and actually in a minute I'm going to say circles instead of triangles. But because I visualize this much better and I know this is heresy to the people in PBIS, but I like the idea of talking first about all students. And this would be, for those of you who are thinking in triangles now, the base of the triangle, tier one types of things, which are prevention. So the question is, what can we do to improve or maintain the appropriate behavior of all students in a school setting? And we do need to have interventions focused on all students, I think.

But there are then students who are at-risk. Those are students who give some signal, some sign that they are beginning to have some difficulty. And of course I'm thinking about this from the behavioral point of view, but we're, as you know, very parallel thinking about academics these days. Who are the kids who are falling behind, having grades that are going down on the academic side? But on the behavioral side, who are the kids who have now had three office referrals? Who are the kids who have missed five days of school already? And so on. Who are the kids who are withdrawn and not interacting effectively in the classroom? And the like.

There are signals and signs and data points in our schools, yes, the D-word, data, that is possible to identify and use kids who are beginning to have trouble. And I believe every school needs to have systems in place to identify these at-risk students using a variety of different indicators, and then to intervene specifically for those students to try and steer them back to a

path of more success without letting the problems get worse and worse. And then, of course, we have students with intense or chronic behavioral problems. Again, you know, tier three, the tip of triangle kids. And these are kids who have had a fairly long pattern of behavior for whatever reason. But the key here is that the same intervention that is going to prevent behavior problems with a larger population isn't necessarily, at that point, going to solve the behavior issues of the kids who have the most intense needs at that time.

So what I'm trying to do is to not only get you to think about kids from this framework, because all kids, at-risk kids, kind of students with chronic behavior and needs, but I'm also trying to get you to think parallel to the types of interventions that schools might employ. Things that are preventative that apply for all kids, things that apply for a select group of kids based on those particular kids' needs, and then finally, intense interventions for kids that have these chronic behavior problems that may go beyond even school services, but may rally community and family and other supports in order to be able to bring about change with those students.

So this is my context for our discussion about alternatives to suspension and expulsion. Oh well, let's see, I'm adding here students who are extremely violent. I suppose there's one note worth making, especially in the context of intense school violence, and that is that seemingly the kinds of kids that have had the school, the intense school violence, have come from three of these groups. Some have had very chronic needs behaviorally, but many of them have not and have not given those indicators, so while that's a very important issue, it's not necessarily the one we're talking about here.

So I do want to talk with you about alternatives to suspension and expulsion. The question is, are there disciplinary options which might work better and which might avoid exclusion and the problems that exclusion brings, exclusion from school? And that is primarily the focus here. What follows are 10 examples of alternative consequences which could be included in disciplinary alternatives. Use your school staff, students, and parents to brainstorm options, creating awareness and support. And I'm going to suggest that these need to be formalized and added to school discipline policies. A code of conduct needs to be changed to be expanded with more options, a menu of options that can be applied for student inappropriate behavior.

And what are some of those options? Here again, if we had the time, I would hope that all of you could generate some of these options, but of course I'm going to go ahead and share

at least a few ideas with you. Some of these may be familiar and I'll try to remember to ask as we go along whether some of your schools might already have some of these, which would put you in a good position.

Okay, so these are my top 10, but these are not in order, so they aren't in an order of priority. I don't imply that even though it looks as if that might be the case. The first one I have are mini courses. These are short courses or modules which students could complete related to their behavior as a disciplinary consequence. They could include workbooks, tests, videos or CD's that kids could watch on a particular topic. They might include activities that students could create such as a report, oral report, or written report, something like that. I'm thinking of -- although this could of course vary, I'm thinking of a module that might last a couple, two to three hours, something like that, and might be focused on something like anger control, anger management. By the way, there's good research that anger management interventions can help kids, so if we could find a way to deliver some anger management approach, that might be a really good example of one of these types of modules that could be created.

So could we create -- we're educators. We are good at creating this kind of curriculum and the like. Could we create some modules that could be added as disciplinary consequences? In other words, when a youngster got angry and slammed the materials down on the floor and stomped out of the room, instead of that youngster receiving a day's suspension, maybe that youngster would be assigned to complete a module on anger management. Just as an example. I'm being a bit simplistic here, but think to get the idea. Okay, how many of you have something like this going in one or more of your schools? Yeah, there are several, five or six across our group here. So this is not new, it's not brand-new thinking.

I always like to remind people, and I did discuss this beforehand, to find out that yes, Pennsylvania has the equivalent to Nebraska's stop class, which is a way that, for example, you may -- if you have a moving violation in your car, you can get the points removed by attending a class. Are you familiar with this? You don't have to admit it, but if you want, how many of you have -- okay, nobody's done that, so okay. Well, now let's think about that. That's true here in Pennsylvania. I know it's true in Nebraska. I think many states have that kind of a program.

One of the concerns of these module ideas is that, well, that isn't going to solve the problem of my kid, who is that tier three kid, the smallest circle, the tip of the triangle, and so why should we do it? Now let's think that through. Why do your motor vehicle department

include those things? Because certainly we could say the same way. Well, the worst possible driver who doesn't care, drives without a license and everything, that course, the driver's course is not going to stop that behavior, right? I agree. Why do we do it?

I think we're aimed at a different group, aren't we? We're aimed at that group, like maybe many of us, who might be influenced by that course, seeing the videos of the car crashes and the effects of alcohol and all of those kinds of things. And I think the orientation in those courses, I haven't asked judges about this, but the idea is that if you could prevent, by having people go through those courses after a moving violation, if you could prevent one or two or three percent of people from having a reoccurring violation, that that would be well worth the cost of these courses.

So while the courses aren't intended to solve all problems, they do shave off, potentially, some of the repeat offenders. And I'm going to apply that same analogy here. These modules aren't going to solve the worst offenders, but if you're looking at that at-risk group, kids that are beginning to have trouble, there is a chance that we can influence them with these types of approaches. And we could have a dozen different modules based on different types of things that might happen in school that might be a problem. And we have great educators who could create really outstanding ones, probably ones that are better than the ones that the Motor Vehicle Department comes up with. Have I convinced you on that one? Okay, so now when you go home next week, you're going to all begin to develop some modules that might fit into your school disciplinary options.

Another one is parent supervision. Parents should be invited to brainstorm with the school how to address the student behavior. And while I know that good administrators report to parents regularly when there is misbehavior, sometimes I think we forget the step of brainstorming with parents on how are things going at home? Is the same problem there? What can we do collaboratively to try address behavioral needs? And of course, in order for that to happen, we have to have developed a relationship with those parents, which usually doesn't come on that first call when you're telling the parent that their child has done something wrong and is in serious trouble. So what it means is we need to develop communication earlier on, which we'll get to in a while.

So, parent supervision. The famous one that I discovered in a Reader's Digest article probably 20 years ago or longer was, instead of suspending the student, especially middle

school students outside of school, how about suspending the parent in? And inviting that parent to come to school, sit with that youngster, go to all of their classes all day long, and find out how that student is behaving, how the class situation is working. Great idea. And of course you say, well, I can't require parents to do that. They're working and so on. What I'm going to say, though, is have you asked? Many parents, if they felt this was important, if they felt that it really could bring about change in behavior of their child, are with school, they would be happy to do that. Many of them would take a day's worth of vacation from work to come do this, I think. And in fact, I have heard subsequently some schools have tried this and, again, doesn't always work, doesn't always fit, but if it does work and does fit, it works great. As you can imagine, there would be nothing more horrifying or punishing to a middle school student than having mom or dad sit with them and go with them all day long in school. Can't conceive of anything worse. And maybe I'm flipping back to the punishment part, but. Yes, question?

**AUDIENCE MEMBER:** I have some experience with that, and what we learned is just having the meeting with parents and student and hearing the parent commit to [inaudible] should that behavior ever happen again is certainly more than enough.

**REECE PETERSON:** Okay, the comment was that just having a meeting where the parent agrees to doing this in the future was usually more than enough. Absolutely. Yes, thanks. Yes?

**AUDIENCE MEMBER:** At the elementary level, I had some schools that did this that found parents understood more of what was going on in class. The conversations that followed that student behavior were much more productive. It was much more collaborative.

**REECE PETERSON:** Yes, exactly. And the comment here was that when this happens, parents become more informed about what's going on in school and often become more collaborative in their approaches. It has all kinds of other side benefits aside from the direct issue of the behavior because it helps parents understand the general issues at school. And when the bond issues and tax issues come up, people understand where the dollars are going and the hard needs of teachers out there in the community as well. It has all kinds of possible side effects.

But the point is, we need to do it. It needs to be, in my opinion, written into that code of conduct as an option for disciplinary consequence, not for all discipline, but for the ones where this might be appropriate. How many of you have experimented with something like this? Again,

a few of you have? Right. I would like, next time I come back, to see almost every hand up in this audience with something like that. Yes?

**AUDIENCE MEMBER:** How do you keep the parents from coming in the [inaudible]. I mean, how do you plan for that? [inaudible].

**REECE PETERSON:** Well, I'm not sure that I can provide the way to the guidelines for that, but certainly there can be some side issues here. If either the personality of the parent or the personality of the teacher in the classroom would clash, that may not be a very effective way to go. But that to me is the judgment call that you need to make as to whether or not this consequence would fit the circumstances for that particular child, student, and situation, and behavior. So you're right, it is not a panacea, there could be some side issues that could emerge. Yes?

**AUDIENCE MEMBER:** What we did prior to that [inaudible], there would be a plan immediately with the teacher, parent, principal. And they would sit and map out what the parent would do while -- because there's a risk here that we have to acknowledge that, you know [inaudible]. It has to be said out loud, otherwise the student just takes it as being a matter, really, of preference.

**REECE PETERSON:** Right. If you didn't hear that, we need to be sure that we're not simply embarrassing or humiliating students by bringing parents in, that it is viewed as something very supportive from the parent towards trying to help that student do better in school. And I agree 100%. As with all of these suggestions, they require good, thoughtful implementation to be effective. Other comments? Well, I'll move on. Oh yes, go ahead.

**AUDIENCE MEMBER:** Also keep in mind that this is not going to work for all of your students. You need to pick and choose which students you're implementing this with. It's not going to work with everybody.

**REECE PETERSON:** Yes. This does not work -- in fact, I can say that none of these things are going to work with everybody. But what I'm trying to do is to create the mentality that we don't often have in schools because we often are looking for the silver bullet. If everybody would only do X, then we would always get the perfect outcome. Never going to happen. But what I'm doing is trying to suggest we shave off percentages. If there's five out of the 50 kids who would have gotten suspended that could be changed and prevented from being suspended another time, it

would be well worth it, whether it's this particular option or any of the ones that I'm going to be discussing.

So let's go on to another one. Many of you have counselors in your schools, and I realize that the counselors are in short supply and sometimes the subject of budget cuts and the like. But one thing we could do is, as a disciplinary consequence, is assign counseling to students. Most counselors don't particularly relish this idea because usually you want people attending counseling sessions who are there voluntarily. On the other hand, I think that in this circumstance, it might be suitable to have some minimal involvement of counselors to try to get at what is underlying the behavior that is resulting in the problems in school.

And in my experience, this orientation doesn't happen very often in schools as well. In other words, we don't take the time to have someone really sit down and scrape beneath the surface to understand what the motivations were and what the needs are of that youngster, and why the situation has developed the way it has. Again, another one that is not a silver bullet, but I think could be implemented and should be in that code of conduct as an option. Comments here? How many of you do use counseling as a consequence, at least occasionally? Okay, again, another small, significant number.

Okay? Another one, community service. How many of you use community service as a disciplinary consequence? Here again, about eight or ten out of all of you. Community service are programs which permit the student to perform a required amount of time doing some kind of service in the community or for the school as a consequence. And of course, our legal system uses this consequence sometimes, so why not also employ a parallel one within our schools? Volunteer hours at a soup kitchen, park, other organization in the community would be great.

Now this will take some organization. Those of you who are administrators would need to set up and understand what your options are for community service, have that pre-planned. It will take some time commitment, I think very little money, but some energy to set this up. But if it were set up, then there would be somebody in the community who would monitor and turn in and make sure that the student contributed the proper amount of community service. This, too, should be an option if it's not in your school's code of conduct.

Keep going, behavior monitoring. I think that many times we, special educators, are familiar with behavior monitoring for students because we have had more of a history of doing

that. But the point is that we could use a variety of strategies to monitor the behavior and academic progress of certain students in a better way than we do. Even if a student is not in special ed, we could have that card that is taken around to teachers that would report on that student's behavior in that classroom each time, both either academics and/or behavior as may be appropriate.

So instead of considering a suspension right away, what about assigning a monitoring? Now is there a parallel to that in our justice system? Of course. I'm not saying we should go so far as the ankle bracelet type monitoring, but there are a variety of monitoring programs to have kids that get in trouble with the law check in with people and get regular progress reports. Here again, something we could do in schools, very low impact I think, but yet could be done very, very well. I didn't ask. How many of you -- did I ask how many of you do behavior monitoring with students as a disciplinary consequence? Okay, I know we do it in special ed, but trying to change that.

Okay, restorative practices and restitution. This one is a very interesting one to me. In fact, I did add slides. There will be one slide coming up here that's a new one. I'll give you a head's up. But this restitution could be financial or in-kind, and obviously I think we're more concerned with in-kind types of restitution for certain offenses that happen in school where the student could be asked to restore the environment. Things like graffiti, and then the action would be to clean that off. Again, a logical consequence, but one that works.

But that's just restitution and there's beginning to be a wider literature on something called restorative practices, which has a broader context and is really focused in on not just restoring the physical environment, but also restoring the social environment or the cultural environment. So it has to do with repairing relationships that might have been damaged by a behavior, for example, between a student and a teacher. You know, they got mad at each other, the kid was kicked out, how do we repair that relationship? And there are a variety of strategies under this larger umbrella that purport to do this.

And let's see, this is the slide that I've added. Restorative practices, not interested in blame, shame, fault, apologies, excuses, only fixing. And the issue is how can we fix this thing that happened? Let's let the bygones be bygones. What happened before isn't going to necessarily affect it. What we want to do is, what can we do to fix this problem so that it isn't going to happen again, and so that we can go on in that environment?

And so this is very difficult to characterize in terms of something that would be installed in a code of conduct. Obviously restitution would fit and could be there and maybe should be there, but this concept of restorative practices -- one of the practices is called family conferencing, but in our case it might be teacher-student conferencing where we have a brief meeting with the kid, the teacher, maybe the parent, and try to figure out, brainstorm what happened, what went wrong, why this thing happened, and so on. And then with the idea that what are the changes that each of us could make to make this situation be different? And if teachers, educators could suggest that they could change, not just the kids change, I think that would be a very appropriate and possible type of consequence as well.

Okay? How many of you use restitution or something similar to that in your discipline? I just see one hand, or a couple of them, on this one. So those type of practices are very important, and there is beginning to be a good literature on those in the juvenile justice arena, but I think that would quickly apply to schools.

Okay? Next one I have is problem-solving contracting. And by the way, these begin to kind of overlap and interact with each other. They aren't always cleanly different, but the idea is we would do some specific problem solving about what's going on with this youngster, do some negotiation, try to assist the student to identify alternatives for their behavior. This is social skills instruction. What could I have done differently than called the teacher a name and stomped out of the classroom, and why did that happen, the like? Then develop a contract with the student that includes reinforcers for success, some positive outcomes, as well as then some consequences that the student would engage if they did not change. So and then -- so in other words, after the incident happens, we make a plan for the future and what happens in the future depends on our plan that we have created.

Again, this is something familiar within special ed, but I think could easily be extended to be used with most any student in a school environment. How many of you use something like this? Have a problem-solving worksheet or something like that? And there are some of the school discipline programs that might be adopted on a school-wide basis, have some of these problem-solving and contracting arrangements built into them as well. A few of you did that.

Okay, and then finally -- no, I'm sorry, not finally. Another one is alternative programming. This one is changes in the student's schedule, classes, or course content, assignment to an alternative school or program, independent study or work experience

programs. These should be tailored to student needs. So there's a wide variety of changes we could make in this student's program to try to address the situation.

And I understand all the reasons why we tend not to do that in schools. There's some very good reasons why this can be problematic. On the other hand, I think in the case where it might really benefit kids, we need to be willing to make an exception. So the question should be, would there be a change in this student's schedule or program or interaction pattern that might make it more likely that this student is going to be successful? And if that's the case, let's work around the other ramifications, the other issues that might emerge as a result of that.

So developing some alternative programs. And I don't always mean alternative schools. This could be alternative types of classes or things within the main school environment, although of course those alternatives could also be helpful. How many of you have alternative schools that your schools use regularly? I see most of you do, yes. And then are there alternative programs within the school? I suppose that depends on size. So if you have multiple math courses, then there are some options there, but on the other hand, if you are a small school and have very few options, some of those options are less. But at any rate, this, I believe, is an exploration that could be built into a disciplinary consequence program as well.

Okay, I'm going to keep going. Don't hear any questions. Okay. Next we get to appropriate in-school suspension. I think almost every school has in-school suspension. Do most of your schools have that? Some do, not everyone? How many do not have in-school suspension? Hardly any. So I figure it is usually an option these days. Didn't used to be, always was detention or something else, but in-school suspension is a viable alternative when it is done well or positively. To the extent that in-school suspension just simply is a place kids are sent where they sit during the day, that probably is not going to be particularly helpful. But to the extent where an in-school suspension environment can be a place where kids can do some of the things we've already talked about, problem-solving, developing plans, where they can get caught up academically, where they're given adequate support and attention that seems appropriate to their needs, then in-school suspension could be a very useful consequence.

And just like these earlier ones that we've talked about, it demands that you be pretty sophisticated in how it might get set up. So for example, we don't want an in-school suspension room that takes all the pressure of students, they get to sit and listen to music and enjoy a break from their regular classes. That's not what we're aiming for. It might be nice, but that's not what

we're headed for. We want an environment that is a deterrent on the one hand, but a deterrent that results in some positive progress and change in the student's behavior. Otherwise we're not much better off than out-of-school suspension.

I'm waiting for somebody to ask -- well let's see, maybe it doesn't come through on your screen. Can you see the Frank Sinatra? Okay, good. Nobody's going to ask, why Frank Sinatra? Because I visualize the in-school suspension room as playing continuously Frank Sinatra's song My Way. And I would hate to be the adult supervising that, but the idea is that's probably -- if that were happening, that's probably wouldn't be motivation for kids to sit there and enjoy that that much. At a certain point, they'd want to be motivated to leave. And as a result, they may be motivated to make the changes to get back. And I'm using that as kind of a hokey, funny example, but it illustrates the need to be, on the one hand, supportive of students, respect their emotions, what's happening in their lives, and understand and take that into account in the in-school suspension, on the one hand. But on the other hand, to make the environment something that isn't simply a way to escape the rest of their school environment as well. And so I think we could maybe, if not Frank Sinatra, develop something that would make and be an assist in accomplishing that. So any comments or thoughts on in-school suspension? I assume you may be familiar with this since almost all of you have this.

Finally, the last one that I have, then, is coordinated behavior plans. And coordinated behavior plans are the creation of a structured plan that is specific to the student and based on the assessment of the quantity and the purpose of the target behavior to be reduced. It should be focused on increasing desirable behavior and replacing inappropriate behaviors. Now for those of you who are in special education, you'll recognize this under a different term, but I've tried to avoid it because I think it tends to be jargon-ish and we tend to then get locked into something that I'm not intending here.

But this is functional assessment. The idea is trying to develop, understand why the behavior is occurring, develop an intervention plan that is specific to the youngster and to the circumstances and to the apparent motivation for that behavior, and try to accommodate that in a plan. So I am saying, yes, I am saying that we could develop coordinated behavior plans for kids who are not in special ed, but who are beginning to show us through their being sent to the office, office referrals, and the like, a variety of behaviors that show problem. And let's do these plans before they need to be referred to special education, while we are still somewhat positive

about these students' behavior, while we can get cooperation from parents and families and all the educators that might be involved.

And of course these plans, while they're often focused around a particular student, are really what we should call adult plans because what they really tell us is how we as the adults in that environment can modify our own behavior around the needs of this particular student once we understand that student. So the idea is to try to develop a plan, but yes, it could be in writing. The only reason it's in writing from my point of view is not a bureaucratic one, but because then it makes explicit what the plan is. It also makes it a lot easier to communicate to all of the people that might see this student, especially in the secondary environment where there's lots of people around with regard to a student. How many of you do some kind of coordinated behavior plan that is not for special ed students? Again, a few of you. So very good, it's on the way.

Okay, and you probably are familiar with this, but in functional assessment we always think about these as being some examples of the kinds of functions that kids' behavior have. In other words, kids may be acting inappropriately to seek power and control, or to receive attention, or to escape the environment. And if we have an idea about that function of what this behavior is, we then can use that information to make a much better plan than we might otherwise be able to do. So simply consequences that are standardized probably aren't going to work because they don't address the real reason, the underlying function of that particular behavior.

So where are we? These are top 10. Now I would guess, I do this with my students in class often, if we'd had the time, which we probably don't today, but if we had the time, I'm guessing you could add another 10 to my list fairly easily that I either haven't thought of or that would be better variations of some of these alternative consequences. And what I hope is that we could begin to generate some of these. And more importantly, not just generate them, but have them become institutionalized as we go along.

It's kind of like discipline alternatives made simple, right? Well not really, but what we're doing is expanding the array of disciplinary alternatives, we're generating a list of non-exclusionary -- and by the way, none of these except maybe in-school suspension were exclusionary consequences. We're getting as many as possible employed in the environment. We're permitting administrators who are making decisions about discipline, we're permitting

them to individually tailor consequences that make sense for that particular student for that particular circumstance. And then we're using data, which we haven't talked a great deal about yet today, to determine the effectiveness of the consequence.

So for example, just like with that Motor Vehicle class, we're not expecting that the class is going to solve the problem for all students, even though we might assign it routinely. Then what we need to do is to have data to find out, who are the students that have been through that class that are still having difficulty? Then what are the next array of consequences that we want to choose? And then if those don't work, we continue on. So that is an idea that we are trying to kind of whittle down the disciplinary issues through time by ending or preventing future occurrences of behavior problems, at least across some students.

But I'd also like to advocate for a tiered code of conduct. What this means is that we might have, you know, of course codes of conduct are these huge laundry lists of things kids can do that are bad stuff. And what we could do would be to organize those into minor, moderate, or serious types of offenses, types of disciplinary infractions, and then match with them an array of consequences for each level of offense. I think this makes sense so that we are not suspending a student from school for chewing gum the same way we are suspending a student who got in a fight at school where someone was injured. And yet today that happens.

By the way, in Nebraska, yes, students are being suspended for chewing gum as of, last I heard, was two years ago. I think that is bad policy, doesn't make sense. But at any rate, until we can get to the point where we have a code of conduct that makes some sense to us that is effective, we are still going to be faced with that type of thing. Then what we can say to parents and the community is, yes, we have consequences for any type of violation that occurs in school. And we can not only do that, but we can say we also try to understand the level of problem that this behavior has, and we try to develop an individually tailored set of consequences for that behavior from among our menu that is created when we have our menu of options.

So what are the supportive measures for this student? And are they in place? And again, I'm hammering at this, but I really think that this needs to be built into the code of conduct. Let me ask this. How many of you are assistant principals in a -- usually in a secondary environment, but I guess some could be in elementary as well. Some of you here, okay. Well, I'm not going to offend too many people here then. But most people who are assistant principals don't grow up as kids saying, boy, I think I want to be an assistant principal for discipline when I grow up. That's

my career choice. Instead, I'm guessing people say that that's one of the steps I have to go through in order to become a principal. And once I become a principal in a secondary school, then I don't have to deal with discipline anymore.

So that's why I assistant principals as the purgatory that people have to go through in order to move on. Now that would probably not be a bad problem if it weren't for this. It means that all of the expertise that we have around school-wide behavior is invested in a person who, number one, doesn't aspire to be there; number two, doesn't have usually particular training related to behavior or to what their main job is going to be; and number three, is going to be gone in a year or two when they move on. Those are some of the serious problems we have in discipline right now in our schools.

In my opinion, we need to have the equivalent of a curriculum director, which we have in the academic areas usually, at least in the larger schools. We need to have the behavior coordinator and that needs to be someone who can organize and address these kinds of issues on a more systematic and long-term basis. It also is something that can then result in more of this being institutionalized, where we can add a person's expertise just to tell our attorneys, usually, that no, we don't simply want to add another -- you know, cell phones to the bottom of the list of the offenses. We need to do something more sophisticated and more likely to bring about success in our goals.

So I admire our assistant principals, but I also feel that it reflects a problem that we have in developing and implementing the good things we do know about behavior. We know a lot now on how to change and improve student behavior in schools that we did not know 20 years ago, and we need to make sure that we're implementing that and doing it well.

So the purpose is to develop a more sophisticated system of responding to different types of inappropriate behavior with an expanded array of alternatives. And are the cost of those significant? Ah, so think back past my list of 10, how much are they going to cost? Well, they are going to cost some time, energy. Most of them are not going to cost a lot in terms of dollars, which we know are scarce these days in schools. But they are going to take some organization, planning, implementation time to build those in.

So time, materials, costs. What would be the potential benefits? Are these going to solve the world's discipline problems? Probably not. Some kids are still going to be suspended or

expelled. But if we could diminish the number of kids who are suspended or expelled by half, or if we would decrease the number of repeat offenders by half, I argue that that would be a substantial benefit to our schools. And moreover, our assistant principal here would have a much better day every day than dealing with the same old problems as they occur.

Would we achieve our purposes for discipline, changing student behavior, preventing other students' behavior, making a safe environment, maintaining the decorum of the schools, with these kinds of consequences more than we would with detention? That's an open question. Till we try it, we don't know. I believe, of course strongly, that we would have a much better chance of accomplishing those goals with these kinds of consequences than with the more traditional ones that we've employed through the years. But you would be the people who would test this out and prove or disprove this. To be honest, I don't think that we could make it much worse than what it has become, and I realize there's a wide variation in schools in terms of the way that works. Questions at this point? Comments?

Okay, I'm going to switch gears and talk for a moment about what makes it possible for these types of consequences to work in a school. Because I don't think you can talk about counseling or modules of courses unless there is some base here. And back to my circles, what are the things that are happening for all students in this building that would be supportive of appropriate, positive student behavior? And the world's best discipline consequences won't work without this foundation. So I'm going to give you my top 10 bases for good behavior.

First of all, we have to gather data about what's going on. And I know that we're all sick and tired of the D-word, but we do need to do this and it needs to be related to behavior. Actually, much of this is already available. We have usually data about tardiness, about skipping school, often office referrals. I don't know if your schools use one of the commercial systems or Swiss program in the PBIS mode, but there are systems that can give you very good pictures of where the problems are occurring in school, what the nature of those disciplinary problems are, and permit you therefore to make decisions about them if you have the data. So without having some data systems in place, and by that I mean not only gathering the data and it goes to some black hole of somebody's computer, but we need to be able to put that back out and have a group of people who are using the data to make some decisions regarding what's happening. And there could be data about these disciplinary consequences as well as a wide variety of other things. And I think you're familiar with that, so we're not going to spend a lot of time.

Objective data about behavior, make adjustments in the programs and using it to make adjustments, use that to correct misperceptions. I'll give you one example. In a school that I work with, when I talk -- we actually did a survey, but when we talked to the teachers, the teachers felt that bullying was not a big problem in their school. They didn't think that it happened. We did a survey of the students and of course found something very different. And then parents were right in between. This discrepancy resulted in a lot of questions being asked that found out that, yes, there was more bullying, but most teachers weren't aware of it because it was well hidden from the educators in that building. And of course that's the classic story behind bullying, that often people don't know it's going on. But unless we had asked these questions, unless we had gathered the data, that would not have been confirmed. And then of course we can continue to gather data on a yearly basis or whatever makes sense in order to make sure that there are changes that are occurring as well.

Okay, here's a list of all the different kinds of data that we might want to gather. Some of them I didn't mention. Environmental expectations in that school, the perceived needs that people have, you know, what's wrong with the school environment, and so on and so forth. Something about the school climate would be very good to know how people are being received, and we'll come to that in a minute.

Number two, then, after the data would be creating a caring and welcoming school environment. And this is the tone that we feel in school. And I'm not sure I can tell you exactly how to change that, but it makes a big difference. It makes a difference for us as educators wanting to go to school if we have a positive tone. It certainly does for students, and it also makes a huge difference for parents interacting with the school. And we need to be able to make sure that that's positive. Some of the school climate surveys would be good ways to measure this and make sure this is there. And then there are a variety of strategies to try to make the school feel like a very welcoming place, and a lot of good things can be done there.

Some of the school climate things are patterns of communication and problem-solving, who has the authority and how status is determined, rules, and so on. I don't think I even need to go over them. The physical environment is really important, too, to make sure that's sharp, clean, and that everybody's comfortable in it.

We want to foster and promote the sense of community in schools, the feeling that all kids belong. Even if you get in trouble, you still belong here, you're our student, we're going to

help you no matter what. That unconditional caring is really important. That there is academic success for kids who are behind. It's not a lost cause for that student. And then that we teach pro-social skills, we teach kids strategies to get along, connection to the family and community.

Number three here is consistent school values or character education programs. And there are a variety of ways that this occurs. I realize that some of your schools are in the positive behavior interventions and support, PBIS, approach. And usually there is a discussion about the school-wide values that are created in a PBIS school. That's one way of doing it, but there are other alternatives. Some of you may know of Character Counts, which has these six pillars of character. That would work too. But the whole point is that every school should identify, in my opinion, some values or character points that they feel are worth investing in and which are important to good outcomes in our society as well as in our school.

And then all teachers should collectively take on the responsibility to support those values, which means that when we see someone demonstrating good citizenship, we need to call attention and say, good job. Make sure that that student knows that there -- that that good thing is being acknowledged. And there are a variety of ways that we can do this. Different schools have different ones of these, but if your school does not have some value statement or some goals like this related to citizenship values, it should develop them. Having the conversation itself across a school faculty can be a valuable discussion to help people understand and correlate what their perceptions about behavior are. How many of your schools have some kind of a value statement like this? Many of you, more of you do on this one.

Okay, conflict de-escalation, training, and practices. One of the issues that we find is that conflict happens in schools. For example, one of the big conflict areas is around homework. And teachers expect homework, kids don't bring it for whatever the reason, conflict develops, an argument occurs, and then often that kid's moved on to becoming a disciplinary issue at some point.

And yet we, as educators, aren't trained as well as I think we could be about how to avoid or disengage from these kinds of conflict situations. We should be able to recognize when this conflict cycle is developing and be able to find a way, as the adult in this circumstance, to back away, to disengage from that conflict thing so that it doesn't spiral up and out of control the way sometimes it does. And I hope -- is everybody familiar with conflict de-escalation strategies?

I learned this of course by watching television programs like Cops. Cops is not anymore, but there's all kinds of other ones that are on. The Alaskan State Patrol, has anybody seen that? But if you notice when they arrive at a domestic dispute, the way things work, they separate the parties. Don't directly confront. There's a lot of active listening going on, I-statements, trying to get the person to talk, to communicate, to let out their frustration and anger. When that person is angry and calling the cops names, they don't get their weapon out and say, shut up or I'll plug you. They recognize that that's the circumstance and that's part of what they're doing, and try disengagement. And a lot of times, unfortunately, educators aren't aware, don't seem to be willing or able to do that. It tends to escalate.

And particularly this is true at middle school where most of the office referrals get made for all -- most schools systems. And of course, what do we know about middle-schoolers? Well, they're challenging all adult authority due to developmental issues. That means they're challenging their parents as much as they're challenging the teachers and administrators in their building, exploring the boundaries of what they can get away with and do and so on. And if we recognize that, we ought to at the middle school level especially be willing and able to back off. You know, my famous song from another context is The Gambler, which has the words in it, know when to hold them, know when to fold them, know when to back away. And it goes on from there. Well, we have to learn when we can back away and that that isn't necessarily losing our adult authority.

Well, enough on that. There are a variety of programs out there in the schools. The peaceable school approach is just one example of them, but there are a whole variety of instructional programs to teach de-escalation, conflict resolution skills and the like -- and the like out there.

Another one somewhat related is mediation programs. These are programs which teach students about non-violent conflict resolution and which use -- and which permit students the chance to use and experience these in school. A few years ago in my area, conflict resolution programs were quite common. But I think with the passage of No Child Left Behind and the whole switchover to academics, a lot of programs like these got washed away in the schools. How many of you still have conflict resolution programs going in your schools? Well, one or two or three, a few of you.

But okay, now one of the problems with those conflict resolution programs as they existed I'll say in Lincoln, in my area, eastern Nebraska, were that when they were set up, they were intended for problems that arose between students. And while there was good training for the student mediators and while these mediators then did mediation between students and so on, and I think most people thought it was fairly successful, it avoided the real issue. The thing that would have made it work better for more students and which kind of defeated the whole purpose because it avoided having the same type of mediation occur between teachers and kids. And what the message was, the inadvertent message was, if you have a little-bitty kid problem that nobody cares about anyway, you use mediation, peer mediation to solve that problem. But any time an adult has an issue with you, we decide that through adult authority, period. And that conflict has, I think, defeated some of these programs. But I do see that there's a lot of potential for using mediation and the skills around mediation as a valuable tool for schools to de-escalate conflict and solve problems by addressing what the issues are. And sometimes it's a vehicle for just creating a conversation and a better level of understanding between the two parties. Again, a lot of it around homework issues.

Okay, I'm getting there. Positive office referrals. Instead of only having a system of sending misbehavior to the office, this idea is to send examples of good behavior to the office as well. How many of you have a positive office referral program? Oh, just a few. A school in my area did this and there's all different variations, but if a school -- if a teacher's going to send any student to the office for inappropriate behavior, they need within a certain time period, not necessarily right at that time, to send kids for good behavior. It focuses teachers on finding examples of good behavior and recognizing it and acknowledging it, which is very important.

One of the biggest lessons that we've learned, and which is heavy in the positive behavior interventions and support program, is to increase the overall reinforcement of kids for good behavior in schools. And different formulas have even been applied where you must compliment five kids for good behavior before you can correct or criticize a student for inappropriate behavior. Trying to make that ratio of positives much larger than the negatives. And there are a variety of ways to do it, of which positive office referrals are one. But in my opinion, every referral would -- positive referral would be a good thing to have in all schools. Not only that, but our assistant principal who gives kids those positive referrals would be refreshed and be able to do some things. The principal in my area that did this gave away those

free pizza coupons that had been donated from the community and it's a good way to give something very tangible back to kids that do something, recognize them.

And of course we can go on from here. You probably know about having assemblies where you can recognize not only the top grade, the kids who get the highest grades, but maybe also recognize the kids whose grades have improved the most. You can recognize appropriate behavior based on those values or character issues and give a lot of recognition for things that are important, but which may not be the academic things that are often focused on. So that's another one.

Keep going. Increased parent communication. Touched on earlier, but the more communication we can have with parents, the better. And it's much better for that communication to occur well before any problems emerge with a student than after. This was my one experience with this, direct experience, was when I taught in middle school. Long time ago, way before cell phones and email. The principal at the middle school had a requirement that each teacher had a contact, phone contact, with each parent, a parent of each student in their class, at least once a month. So there was a bank. When you went into the front office, there was a bank of seven telephones at that time, seven or eight. And in the morning before school, those phones were busy with teachers, and after school, for 10, 15, 20 minutes. And every teacher made these phone calls every day, simply reporting in to a certain number of parents on what's going on with their particular youngster.

And obviously, in most of the cases that was good behavior, good academic progress, touching base to find out what's going on at home, anything the teacher should know about. Didn't take long, a minute or two at most. Parents got used to it. It developed that relationship that, later on when something bad happened, the relationship was already established and good outcomes could be much more likely as a result. Now that was before email and cell phones. It's much, I'd say, easier to reach parents these days, even though I know some are still difficult to reach. But we can do it. And even if it's a matter of mailing things home, that would be valuable. So increasing that parent involvement, communication, is a really important one. A lot of ways to do that. Many of the things we've already talked about are also other avenues for doing the same kinds of things.

And number eight, efforts to build adult-student relationships. This has occurred in schools. We have -- I know secondary schools have focused on developing homerooms or small

groups where the teacher presumably got to know better a small group of kids and represented a kind of mentor for kids. Those kinds of programs would be valuable, but opportunities to build relationships is really crucial. While this occurs at all levels, especially at secondary levels where the grind of the 50-minute period or whatever, and then the teacher is usually getting ready for the next class and doesn't have time for the small talk, the finding out how the day has gone, all those little things that mean a great deal to us even as adults, let alone to kids. And it moves away from that kind of factory orientation if we can develop those relationships with kids.

We need to find ways to do that. And I know time is so valuable in schools with our academic standards that sometimes we sacrifice there, but we need to build those things and take opportunities to do them. And to take opportunities to seek them out with the kids who normally don't engage as well. So we can ask teachers, for example, who are the kids who you talk to the least or have not talked to at all in the last few days? And then will you make a contact with that student to find out what's going on?

Okay, how am I doing? Doing okay? Early identification and intervention is my number nine. Again, these aren't in any order, but we know how to identify kids fairly early on in elementary school as to whether or not they are going to have, or are likely to have, significant mental health issues, significant behavior problems in school down the road. We screen for vision problems in school, we screen for hearing problems. We have the capacity to do the same for emotional and behavioral problems in school, yet many schools are not doing this. And I think it is going to be a very important thing to do.

It is so much easier and better to find out about smaller problems at a young age rather than waiting until those problems are ingrained, waiting until parents are as frustrated as teachers are with these problems, waiting until the kids are so big that they're, in a sense, unmanageable in that way. We need to move this down the ladder into the elementary schools to find and deal with kids and provide support, both to the kids and their families in a positive and constructive way. So for those of you at the secondary level, one of the pressures, back pressures, needs to be to find ways to identify kids early. And of course, we can do that even when kids are in the secondary school environment.

Most of you should be able even -- well, I won't say it that way. Might be able to punch a button on your computer and find how many kids have missed three days of school at this point in the school year, or seven days, whatever your criteria is. How many kids have been

tardy more than five times? How many kids have been sent to the office X number of times? And if we have that data and if we can employ or get it back out so that we can use it, we could use that for early identification, because these are kids that are giving us signals already that they're in trouble. We need to find those signals, use them, and then do something about those signals as quickly as we possibly can. So it's not only identifying, it is also doing something about it. It's intervening to change the circumstances that are causing that problem, whatever they might be.

And my last one is a school-wide discipline program. And there are a variety of these types of programs that have been commercially marketed. And many times they have some similarities, although they of course all have some differences. But what is valuable about them is that they develop a common terminology to discuss behavior and discipline issues. And what they tend to do is to also calibrate across educators the circumstances, the way that they view these behavior issues, so that one teacher is not sending a kid to the office when the youngster's late where another teacher is doing something altogether different. And it's not that we all need to be alike, but we need to be coordinated and consistent, and we also need to know what variations there are so that when kids are confused about what's going to happen, we understand some of the reason for it.

So anyway, these kinds of programs are not, again, a panacea, but I think can add a lot of value. And there are a variety of them. You would need to assess the need, try to pick some. I think each of them have strengths and weaknesses. Some of the ones over the years include these. Assertive Discipline, which is out of favor and for perhaps good reason. The Boys Town model is big in my area, of course, with Boys Town in Nebraska, but there's a whole bunch of other ones. Here's a few, but there really are a lot more of those types of programs that could be implemented.

And I should say that while PBIS, positive behavior interventions and support, is sometimes viewed as just another one of these, I think it is different. I'm going to say this, I hope I'm not speaking out of school here, but small, lower-case pbis, the idea of positive behavior interventions and supports, is an umbrella, over-arching thing that I think every school needs to adopt. Doesn't mean you have to go and adopt in exactly the way that it is being adopted in the so-called PBIS official site schools, although that would be great, but these principles about increasing positive reinforcement for kids, about teaching kids the behavior we want them to

have, about coordinating data and using data to make decisions, and making sure that everybody in the building is informed and on board and participating, those kind of principles are the underlying foundation of what we're talking about today. Those are foundational elements in PBIS. Those things we need no matter what discipline system we choose. And if we go to one of these others, that's okay, but we need to have those pieces as well. Some of them are included in some of these, but some of these types of programs don't include those elements. If not, they need to be added for it to be able to work.

So what do we know? I think we know that properly implemented strategies can decrease the level of suspensions and expulsions, and decrease student-teacher stress, probably also student stress, lower burnout, increase on-task behavior, academic achievement. Obviously when kids are not out of school and when all kids are behaving better in school, it is also more likely that they are learning more in school. And to meet our academic achievement standards, one of the next big pushes will be to improve behavior so that we can do better with kids. And many times, of course, the kids we're talking about, the ones that get in trouble at school, are the areas where they don't have or don't meet the academic standards that we would like them to have.

We need consistency between classrooms and across the school. The other thing that's very hard in all of this is we, as classroom managers, teachers, have our own classroom management style. We're not used to thinking about a school-wide issue. But we need to collectively come together and make these school-wide priorities in order for this to work, in order for any discipline system to work. And then we need to make sure that we have consequences that are identified both positive and negative for inappropriate behaviors, so that we really end up getting to the point where we can prevent most inappropriate behaviors. And then when they do, inappropriate behaviors do occur, we have a better sense of consequences for them.

This is a school discipline quiz that I can't remember right off hand where it came from. It is not mine. I think it might have been from someone out east. I'm sorry, out in the western -- in Oregon, but the idea is create in your own mind a picture of your school discipline system and how clear that is to everybody. So if you interviewed 10 students, would they all be able to describe the system very much the way you describe it in your school? And here it's a scale of one to five from yes to no. If you interviewed 10 students, would they be able to describe the

sequence of things in terms of the harsh or disruptive responses that uses -- let's see, rather than an immediately harsh or disruptive response, you use a series of responses that are gradual to increase in severity.

So do kids understand the way that works if it's in place? Are responses -- the responses enhance or maintain students' sense of dignity and self-esteem. Is that in place? Is it educational? The responses in your system provides cues that helps students focus on positive behaviors or learn alternative behaviors. Is that in place in you school? When a problem occurs, you ask the question, what factors might be eliciting this behavior and what might I change to decrease the likelihood that that behavior occurs? Is that happening in your school? So this quick little survey could give you a flavor. And if you were to begin to implement some of what we've been talking about, I think you would tend to get higher responses on these questions and that might help you out.

There can be other things that we have not yet talked about. I didn't mention bullying prevention programs, so I could go on with my list of 10 building foundation blocks here. And there might be other things that could be built into this foundation. But my contention is that unless you have this solid foundation of positive things going on, these prerequisites, then implementing the array of disciplinary options we talked about at the beginning are not going to be as effective. So if you want this whole thing to work, you need to build the foundation, not necessarily first, but at the same time that you are building the disciplinary options that we talked about before. Because having counseling in a school where people don't feel welcome, don't feel attended to, don't feel reinforced, is not going to be very effective. And you see, on the other hand, that these things support each other.

Okay, I've got some principles. These were from Curwin and Mendler, some general principles also. Seek long-term behavior changes instead of short-term fixes. Stop doing ineffective things. We didn't talk about this, but there's a lot of data that says suspending kids is ineffective and even destructive because, of course, kids who are suspended tend to drop out, tend to get in other kinds of trouble, and so on.

Be fair, don't always treat everyone alike. I think that is an important principle. Being fair is not treating people alike. Being fair is providing people what they need to learn. That's fair. Adopt only those rules that make sense. Model the behavior you expect. Teach

responsibility instead of enforcing obedience. And treat students with respect and dignity. These are the kind of overarching themes of all of what we have been talking about.

So let's see where we are. Do you have some questions? I've got some quotes here, but are there some questions or further discussion about this? How are you doing? How many of you would say that -- I'll ask two questions. One of you -- how many of you would say you have a great foundation in place in your school, these foundational elements? Second question I'll ask, how many of you think that there's room for improvement on the foundational things we talked about? So first, how many think you have pretty good foundation in place already? A few of you, okay. How many of you think that there's considerable room for improvement on those foundational things? Okay.

So there is a need to build some of this foundation and then also to make sure that we institutionalize these into our codes of conduct and disciplinary rules. The reason institutionalizing and the code of conduct is so important is because our great assistant principal over here in a few years, who is doing all of this stuff and has a wonderful system that's very supportive in our building, when that person moves on, takes that principalship elsewhere, the new person comes in, total change in the way we treat behavior in a school building. Altogether different, total different atmosphere change, and so on. That is a problem. That's not right. We need to find a way to maintain that. And one I think that could be used is to institutionalize this in a code of conduct in the principles, the written rules at school, that will force anybody who's in those administrative positions to be able to use them and move on with them rather than resorting to the old traditional approaches.

I think that's about it. I'm going to share with you a couple of -- I have some incidents if you want to look at these slides later, you're welcome to do that. But I do want to share with you a resource before I end. I came across a good book that I would recommend, this one by David Dupper called *A New Model of School Discipline*, and it actually incorporates in this little booklet many of the things we've been talking about here and is a good resource. There is also a good resource in the Counsel For Children With Behavior Disorders' position paper on school discipline that talks about some of these issues.

I also listed another little book by the Association for Curriculum and Development by Boynton and Boynton called *Assessing And Improving School Discipline Programs*. And this has in it a variety of little assessment devices, little questionnaires, types of things that a committee

could do or that could be brought into a larger school to address a lot of these topics. At this point, though, I think I'm going to end and ask if there's any questions. Yes?

**AUDIENCE MEMBER:** [inaudible] and you know, for so many other things. But I didn't hear you mention anything about identifying students with specific learning disabilities. And given the fact that the supports and services that they need in order to succeed [inaudible].

**REECE PETERSON:** Yeah, great point. Well let's see. Of course, if we identify problems and those are serious enough, we should consider referral to special ed. And when kids get into special ed, we would hope that they are getting the appropriate services that they need so that those issues are being addressed. Now the reality, of course, doesn't always work that way. We in special ed would like to try to solve some problems so that we don't need to get into special education, and I assume most of you have student assistance teams that are building-level teams to try to do some of this problem-solving. They have a role in what we've been talking about. And it would be great to identify some issues and then have them be solved ahead of time, but definitely, yes, we should move kids on and get them into special ed. Unfortunately, in special education, there is an overrepresentation of kids who are among those kids who are disciplined and get suspension/expulsion, special ed kids are high in that area, partly because they've been identified in some cases for behavior issues. But it is a troubling and problematic area. I don't know if that answered your question. Oh, I'm sorry. Sure.

**AUDIENCE MEMBER:** My son had horrible behavior in school, but it didn't start until the demand for written expression was put in place. In second, third, and fourth grade, no one ever said to me, there may be an issue with written expression. And you know what his disability is? Written expression. And the minute that we got something in place for him, there were no more referrals, there was no more desk tipping over in the classroom. So my question, again, is I understand about children that are at-risk being given behavior assessment, but do schools -- and I understand about over-identification, but I think a lot of the behaviors that happen are due to students that are having issues [inaudible].

**REECE PETERSON:** Right, so I hope everybody heard the comment, that it had to do with an example of where written expression was causing a problem with this student and that student, once they got identified and some services or accommodations for that area, did much better. And yes, I think there is evidence that kids who get in disciplinary trouble have some problems, usually academic, that type of thing. And if we can solve those academic problems, sometimes

we can totally get rid of the behavior issues that are the result of that. Kind of gets back to that functional assessment. If we find out that someone is avoiding this activity because they don't have, let's say, writing skills, or feel that they are uncomfortable with where they are, then we can solve that problem. So you're absolutely right. All I can say is we need to do a better job of trying to identify what those issues are for kids, hopefully earlier on or as soon as they become evident, and then to try to make sure that we provide the accommodations. Unfortunately, we also, though, are dealing in the schools with many more kids with mental health needs that are not a result of -- we don't think are the result of their academic issues, but it obviously plays itself out in the school environment as well. So good comment, thank you. Yes?

**AUDIENCE MEMBER:** [inaudible].

**REECE PETERSON:** Okay, so what are the behavior rating scales that could be used before a child is ready for an IEP? Well, the kind of classic early identification one is -- I'm going to see if I can block -- SSPD, what is -- anyway, it involved trying to screen all kids for behavior issues. And the way that originally done was systematic screening for behavior disorders, Hill Walker's program. And what it requires each teacher to nominate three kids who are acting out, aggressive, had those of kind of tendencies, not necessarily big problems, and then also to identify two or three kids that were withdrawn, with internalizing problems. And those referrals were then taken on to another step, which was to do a behavior rating scale or checklist to try and find out specifically which behaviors those were.

Those were all before anything happened in special ed. And then only the kids that went through those gates, this multiple gating model, were then referred on to special ed, but hopefully some of the other problems could be solved earlier. It's kind of like getting those eyeglasses to prevent the reading problems early on. If we can find a simple accommodation that fits, then a lot of times some of the other issues disappear. I hope that answered your question. And that's just one example. Right now, I think there are several other similar approaches or ideas for early identification that are being promulgated. Any other questions or comments?

Well, thank you for your patience. I hope you don't mind if we adjourn just a few minutes early. I appreciate being here and hopefully you'll have some things to take home and do next week. Thanks.