Disrupting the school-to-prison pipeline

Violence Prevention and Mental Health Services for Children with Disabilities

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ADVOCACY DENVER
providing active voice and supporting civil rights for people with disabilities
The Problem

Discipline Disproportionality

- Students with Disability 1.82 times as likely to receive ISS/OSS compared to typical peers.¹
- Students with OHI and SED disproportionately disciplined compared to other disabilities.²
- 155 students handcuffed in DPS from 2017-2019.³

Inequity in Threat Assessment Determinations

- TA Teams are more likely to find “serious threats” for children with disabilities.⁴
- Students receiving special education services more likely to be suspended than students in general education following threat assessments.⁵

Lack of Mental Health Services/Education

- Students with special needs more likely to be victimized by bullying compared to typical peers.⁶
- Students with a disability often have fewer school social supports and face social isolation, leading to risk of suicide.⁷
Required mandatory trainings for all SROs, including the following:

- Child and adolescent development;
- Trauma-informed approaches to working with youth;
- Recognizing and responding to youth mental health issues;
- Educational rights of students with disabilities, the relationship of disability to behavior, and best practices for interacting with students with disabilities;
- Local and national disparities in the use of force and arrests of children;
- De-escalation techniques when working with youth or groups of youth;
- Bias free policing and cultural competency, including best practices for interacting with students from particular backgrounds, including English learners, LGBTQ, and immigrants.
Solution 2
Unified TA process - The Virginia Model

TA Team Requirements

- TA teams must include persons with experience in counseling, instruction, and special education.¹⁰
- School psychologist must conduct mental health assessment for serious threats.⁹

Equity

- Require the process to include referral of a student for evaluation for special education services or amendment of a student’s individualized educational program.¹¹
- Require quantitative data reporting to audit disproportionality.

Differentiation of Types of Threats

- TA’s must differentiate between transient threats and serious threats.⁹
  - Transient – statements that don’t express a lasting intent to harm someone
  - Substantive – sustained intent to harm someone beyond the immediate situation.
Solution 3
Increased Mental Health Providers/Services

Provider Ratios

- Mandate a ratio of 1:250 for school social workers serving general education students and 1:50 for school social workers providing services to students with intensive needs.¹²

Funding

- In requiring provider ratios, any mandate must be funded to ensure compliance.
Solution 4 – Required Social-Emotional and Trauma-Informed Instruction In All Schools.

Mandated SEL Curriculum
• Social emotional learning is directly correlated with academic readiness and success, school adjustment, social relations, personal well-being, and mental health.¹³

Trauma Informed Practices
• Require training in “trauma-informed practices in classroom management” for all school-based personnel.¹⁴
References


10 WA ST 28A.320.0001; PA ST 24 P.S. § 13-1302-E; TN ST 49-6-2701; RI ST 16-21-23.2

11 TX EDUC 37.220; FL ST 1006.13; VA ST 9-1-184;


Thank You

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