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]
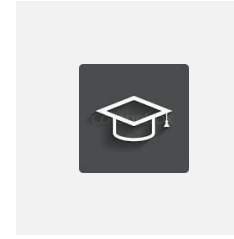

Lack of Mental Health Services/Education

- 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]

Solution 1
SRO TRAINING

Education

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[8]

Solution 2
# Unified TA process - The Virginia Model[9]
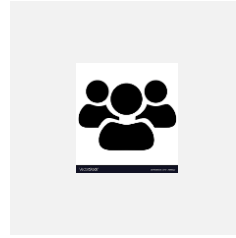
TA Team Requirements

- 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 disproportinality.
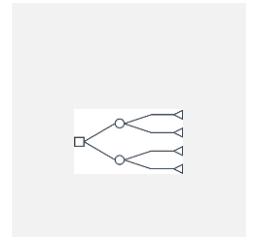
Differentiation of Types of Threats

- 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.
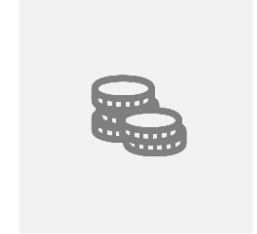
Solution 3 Increased Mental Health Providers/Services
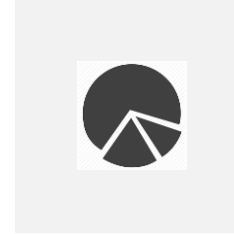
Provider Ratios

- 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]

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[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;

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Thank You

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