
Solutions In Action

Stakeholder Input
Results

Listening Sessions
Focus Groups
Stakeholder Surveys

Prepared for
Solutions In Action Steering Committee

Prepared by
Saint Paul Public Schools
Department of Equity
Department of Research, Evaluation and Assessment

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Solutions In Action (SIA) Stakeholder Input Results

Introduction

As part of a district initiative to reduce the disproportionate patterns in suspensions among SPPS schools, staff in the Equity department designed and implemented a research process designed to collect feedback from a community and school partners regarding their experiences and opinions. This report presents the results of the internal inquiry.

Methodology

The Solutions In Action (SIA) Stakeholder Surveys

The SIA Stakeholder Survey was designed to collect opinions regarding Saint Paul Public School's desire to eliminate the racial predictability of suspensions of our African American/Black students, and to ensure that our African American/Black students receive a premier education. Questions were developed by the SIA steering committee members. All surveys had common questions and several surveys had individual questions nuanced toward collecting specific feedback.

Respondents. Respondents to the SIA Stakeholder Survey were identified according to their affiliation with members of the SIA steering committee. Because the members of the SIA steering committee were selected based on their representation within the Saint Paul community, a wide representation of survey feedback was embedded. Respondent populations included the following: SPPS administrators, teachers and instructional staff and school resource officers.

Procedures. Surveys were set up for each stakeholder group on the secured site, www.surveymonkey.com; there were six all together. Potential respondents were invited to participate in the survey via an e-mail link from their representative steering committee member. Directions for accessing and taking the survey were included in the e-mail and at the top of the survey. Potential respondents were reminded that responses were confidential and their individual data would not be reported in any way.

Solutions In Action (SIA) Listening Sessions

The SIA listening sessions were designed to gain understanding around the issue of suspensions from the community and to provide insight on SPPS organization. Questions were developed in the SIA steering committee and refined later by staff in the departments of Equity and Research, Evaluation and Assessment.

Participants. Potential participants in the SIA stakeholder listening sessions were identified according to their affiliation with members of the SIA steering community. Because the members of the SIA steering committee were selected based on their representation within the Saint Paul community, a wide representation of feedback

was embedded. Respondent populations included the following: SPPS administrators, teachers, faith-based community members and parents.

Procedures. Listening sessions were arranged for each stakeholder group. Sessions were scheduled via the steering committee representative in collaboration with SPPS staff. Prior to the sessions, facilitators were selected and trained, and note takers were identified.

Solutions In Action (SIA) student focus group

The purpose of the focus groups was to gain understanding around the issue of suspensions from the student perspective. Questions were developed in the SIA steering committee and refined later by staff in the departments of Equity and Research, Evaluation and Assessment.

Participants. Participating schools were chosen based on their suspension data, structures and supports in place to address racial predictability, and/or other unique factors that may impact their ability to address suspension. Potential focus group participants were chosen randomly from the population of Black male students in the school.

Procedures. Principals of identified schools were notified via e-mail from the department of Research, Evaluation and Assessment. In the communication were instructions regarding next steps, roles and responsibilities. After that parent communication was delivered to the identified buildings for the potential respondents. Before the groups were scheduled, facilitators were selected and trained, and notetakers were identified.

Table 1. SIA Data Collection Overview

| Listening Sessions | Date | Time/location | #Survey | #Face to Face |
|--|-------------|---|----------------|----------------------|
| Family Engagement and Community Partnerships – Parents Of African American Students Advisory Council | 5/15/2014 | Time: 5:30-8:30 pm Where: 360 Colborne, Room A SPPS Administration Building | 0 | 25 |
| SPPS Administration Principals | 5/21/2014 | Time: 11:00-12:30 pm Where: 360 Colborne, A&B SPPS Administration Building | See AP | 15 |
| Saint Paul Black Interdenominational Ministerial Alliance | 5/22/2014 | Time: 5:30 pm Where: Morningstar Baptist Church 739 Selby Ave, Saint Paul | 0 | 10 |
| Saint Paul Black Interdenominational Ministerial Alliance | 5/22/2014 | Time: 6:30 pm Where: Progressive Baptist 1505 Burns, Saint Paul | 0 | 2 |
| SPPS Administration Assistant Principals | 5/22/2014 | Time: 9:30 AM Where: 360 Colborne, A&B SPPS Administration Building | 24 | 20 |
| Saint Paul Federation of Teachers/Educators | 5/28/2014 | Time: 5:00 p.m. Where: SPFT offices 400 Selby Avenue, Saint Paul | 184 | 12 |
| SPPS Security Management | -- | -- | 7 | N/A |
| Family Engagement and Community Partnerships – Somali Parent Advisory Council | 5/30/2014 | Time: 5:30-8:30 pm Where: 360 Colborne, Room A SPPS Administration Building | 0 | 15 |
| Student Focus Groups | | | | |
| [elementary school] grade 5 | 5/30/2014 | On-site | N/A | 5 |
| [elementary school] grade 5 | 5/30/2014 | On-site | N/A | 4 |
| [junior high school] grade 7 | 5/30/2014 | On-site | N/A | 5 |
| [senior high school] grade 10 | 5/30/2014 | On-site | N/A | 2 |

Table 2. SIA Stakeholder Survey Results

| All Respondents (n=215) | | |
|---|----------------|--------------|
| Answer Options | Percent | Count |
| To keep learning environment safe | 85% | 183 |
| To model that there are consequences to choices | 63% | 136 |
| Discipline for unacceptable behavior | 60% | 129 |
| To maintain order/control | 49% | 106 |
| To communicate unacceptable behaviors | 46% | 99 |
| It is punishment for unacceptable behavior | 27% | 58 |
| It provides restoration for victims of unacceptable behavior | 25% | 53 |
| It redirects the suspended student towards appropriate behavior | 19% | 41 |
| To identify unacceptable behaviors | 17% | 36 |
| There is no better option | 12% | 26 |
| It is an affordable option | 8% | 17 |

Table 2a Continued. SIA Stakeholder Survey Results

| SPPS Administrators (n=24; response rate=30%) | | |
|---|----------------|--------------|
| Answer Options | Percent | Count |
| To keep learning environment safe | 79% | 19 |
| Discipline for unacceptable behavior | 54% | 13 |
| To communicate unacceptable behaviors | 50% | 12 |
| To maintain order/control | 38% | 9 |
| To model that there are consequences to choices | 33% | 8 |
| It redirects the suspended student towards appropriate behavior | 25% | 6 |
| It is punishment for unacceptable behavior | 21% | 5 |
| There is no better option | 13% | 3 |
| It provides restoration for victims of unacceptable behavior | 13% | 3 |
| It is an affordable option | 4% | 1 |
| To identify unacceptable behaviors | 0% | 0 |

Table 2b Continued. SIA Stakeholder Survey Results

| Saint Paul Federation of Teachers (n=184; response rate=9%) | | |
|--|----------------|--------------|
| Answer Options | Percent | Count |
| To keep learning environment safe | 86% | 159 |
| To model that there are consequences to choices | 66% | 122 |
| Discipline for unacceptable behavior | 60% | 111 |
| To maintain order/control | 50% | 92 |
| To communicate unacceptable behaviors | 45% | 82 |
| It is punishment for unacceptable behavior | 26% | 48 |
| It provides restoration for victims of unacceptable behavior | 25% | 46 |
| To identify unacceptable behaviors | 17% | 31 |
| It redirects the suspended student towards appropriate behavior | 16% | 30 |
| There is no better option | 10% | 18 |
| It is an affordable option | 7% | 12 |

Table 2c Continued. SIA Stakeholder Survey Results

| School Resource Officers (n=7; response rate=70%) | |
|---|--------------|
| Answer Options | Count |
| To model that there are consequences to choices | 6 |
| Discipline for unacceptable behavior | 5 |
| It is punishment for unacceptable behavior | 5 |
| It redirects the suspended student towards appropriate behavior | 5 |
| There is no better option | 5 |
| To communicate unacceptable behaviors | 5 |
| To identify unacceptable behaviors | 5 |
| To keep learning environment safe | 5 |
| To maintain order/control | 5 |
| It is an affordable option | 4 |
| It provides restoration for victims of unacceptable behavior | 4 |

Table 3. Solutions in Action Listening Sessions and Student Focus Groups Results Summary

| Solutions In Action Listening Session Results Summary | | | | | | |
|--|--|---|---|---|--|---|
| The "ideal" classroom/learning environment | The purpose for suspending students | Why the disproportionately high African American/Black suspensions? | Solutions to suspensions do you have to offer | Your Role in solutions | District's role in solutions | |
| SPPS Administrators | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Every student that walks through the door feels welcome, accepted, and a sense of belonging and his/her potential is ready to be developed • Triadic relationship with student, peers, and teacher • Teacher is having engaging conversation or teachable moment where cultural relevancy is involved • Can see positive relationships • Standards to be actively engaged in classroom through vocabulary and language | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enforcement • Sends a message to students and parents • Send message of support to teachers • Classroom safety • Give students a break • Suspension is about power • Create order | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Too hard to create alternatives • Learning center kids in general education • Predominantly white teachers working with black students • PD gap • No respect/relationships • The perception that the school is out of control • What is being asked of black boys does not go with their learning style | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alternative setting • Relationships • Check-in/check-out /PBIS • More adults • Intervene with students coming off the bus • Breaks to their day, Sensory rooms, etc. • Yoga calm • Replacement behavior • Family members in classroom • Social conferencing • Male role models • Restitution/ community service • JROTC | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance management of students and staff • Administrator should be in position to know staff & establish expectations • Diverse staff • Community involvement • Affirm the child every day • Show up authentically • Staffing • Culturally relevant teaching • PD • School-wide racial conversations • Celebrate teachers who are having success • Accountability | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the courage of our leaders • Stay the course • Respect the building leaders who are on the ground • Address the political piece that often gets in the way of the moral, humane, and ethical • Empower staff • Engage staff |

Table 3a. Solutions in Action Listening Sessions and Student Focus Groups Results Summary

Solutions In Action Listening Session Results Summary

| | The "ideal" classroom/learning environment | The purpose for suspending students | Why the disproportionately high African American/Black suspensions? | Solutions to suspensions do you have to offer | Your Role in solutions | District's role in solutions |
|--|---|--|---|---|---|---|
| Saint Paul Federation of Teachers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where kids and adults know they are safe and respected • Relationship with that student • Clear expectations • Montessori • Child centered • Classroom belongs to the student • Actively learning • Year round classrooms • Small size classrooms | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To create a safe (physical) environment for everyone involved • For the benefit of the student being suspended and class • Consequences for behaviors/deterrant • Sends a message to the students and the parents • It's a punitive system probably meant for a different time than 2014 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Possible Sped students • Possible repeaters • Poverty • Student reputation • Children act out once they become disengaged • 6th grade changes • 47 min. periods – not enough time | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restoration (Native American value) and restitution • Students apologize • Peer mediation/panel • Teach values • Parents chose the suspend able offenses • Parent Academy • Examine the teacher's contributions – positive and negative | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocate for the needs of all children • Reduce testing • Self examination • Create a community in the classroom that looks and feels like students • Student voice • Humble myself • Affirm Students as individuals • Do not assume | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Affinity groups • Ensure structural resources to be able to set up community • Ensure developmental needs of students are being met • Smaller class sizes • More positive parent contact • Jr. High philosophy vs. Middle School |

Table 3b. Solutions in Action Listening Sessions and Student Focus Groups Results Summary

Solutions In Action Listening Session Results Summary

| | The "ideal" classroom/learning environment | The purpose for suspending students | Why the disproportionately high African American/Black suspensions? | Solutions to suspensions do you have to offer | Your Role in solutions | District's role in solutions |
|--|---|---|--|--|--|---|
| Saint Paul Black Interdenominational Ministerial Alliance | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Loving knowledgeable/flexible teachers ● Highly interactive materials ● Small class sizes ● Understanding of each student ● Each student has opportunity to express oneself ● Good order | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Punish students ● Adult doesn't know how to interact ● Keep the school safe ● To comfort or control the fear ● Get rid of the student ● Interrupts student behavior ● A release for the adults ● Positional power ● To send a message ● To allow teachers time for instruction | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● New teachers ● Lack of teachers of color ● Borderline evil to systematically deprive humanness ● White female teacher fear ● The standardization of behavior code ● No relationship or understanding ● Weak relationship between schools and parents ● Institutional racism | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Support the teachers ● Diverse building staff ● Adult presence and parents have to feel welcome ● Student voice ● Re-entry strategies ● Welcoming environment for parents and community ● Alternative learning setting - church and Sunday school ● Two adults in a classroom | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Advocate for African American/Black students and children ● Parental involvement ● Community support diversity in the schools/mentorship | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Make SSSC mean something ● Dismantle racism ● Parents, teachers, and students ● African American/Black students' trauma ● St. Paul Youth Services ● Transparent sharing of information to community ● Offer children more ways to be creative; sports, music, and recess ● Train teachers and administrators |

Table 3c. Solutions in Action Listening Sessions and Student Focus Groups Results Summary

| Solutions In Action Listening Session Results Summary | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|--|---|--|--|
| | The "ideal" classroom/learning environment | The purpose for suspending students | Why the disproportionately high African American/Black suspensions? | Solutions to suspensions do you have to offer | Your Role in solutions | District's role in solutions |
| Parents Of African American Students Advisory Council | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Black staff • Curriculum that includes African American/Black students and voice • No required navigation as condition for success | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To suspend learning, achievement and self-actualization • To oppress community and student | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Negative reaction to students • Fear • Poor systems in place to allow parents access • Lack of respect from African American/Black students | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Boycott schools • Parent and community partnerships • Stipends for parental involvement • Parental assistance in the classroom | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To be involved in meetings both at a district level and at our students schools and classrooms | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remove poor teachers • Mandatory evaluation process of teachers and administrators • Hire diverse teaching staff • Mandatory diversity training |
| Somali Parent Advisory Council | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Somali community, the principal, the teachers and all the community working together • A principal that listens • Strong teacher • Bully free/Safe | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kids don't have enough conscience/sense to stop, and the teachers need to show them | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Miscommunication • Language Discrimination • Students language skills • Parents may not be taking their responsibility seriously | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Try to do everything we can at home and take responsibility seriously | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hear our community and provide answers • Make schools safe • Provide an environment where children can learn • Stop ignoring parents • Provide somebody who speaks Somali instead of a machine |

Table 3d. Solutions in Action Listening Sessions and Student Focus Groups Results Summary

Solutions In Action Listening Session Results Summary

| | The "ideal" classroom/learning environment | The purpose for suspending students | Why the disproportionately high African American/Black suspensions? | Why do teachers suspend students? | What are the root causes of suspensions? | District's role in solutions |
|-----------------------------|---|---|---|--|--|--|
| Student Focus Groups | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bad • Trouble • Violence • Home punishment • Going home • Arguing • Loss of education • Consequence for parents • Play fighting | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Punishment • To stop students from doing stuff they're not supposed to do • Other people's safety • Teach lesson • Discipline • To prevent further bad behavior • Keep bad kids out of the classroom • Protect or support Teachers • Improve behavior • Separate the good kids from the bad kids | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers don't like black people • Schools painted white • White kids get privilege • White teachers are racist • Stereotyping of Black students as bad, trouble, gangster, and/or from the streets • White parents say stay away from blacks • Black students listen to bad music • Black students try to be cool, ie: swear to teachers • Lack of active teachers • Boring classrooms and material • Racial tension between Black and Asian students • Black students are targeted | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers racist • Teachers Stereotypes of black students • Student Behavior - cussing, bad words, fights with whites • Being racists to whites • Rude • Weapons (BB guns, swords) • Making fun of others • Threats from gangs • Social media- facebook at home, inappropriate pictures • Cell phones • Not wearing uniform – continually, ie. skinny jeans • Electronics; they take them away | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bad words • Fight black kids but not white • Weapons, ie. BB guns, swords • Threats from gangs • What goes on Facebook at home • Bullying • Rumors that start fights | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take a break/walk • Redirect of teacher • Psychologist/social worker • Program to teach how to not get suspended • Meet counselor to help calm down • Quiet room to calm down • Call home/nom • Play games on computer • Squeeze ball/toy • Take away sports and playing in the gym • Teacher(s) who are strict and make them do their work • Better instruction that connects students and teachers • Provide physical activities/break to let students blow off steam, ie. shoot hoops or something • A meeting – teacher, student, parents • Afterschool suspension |

Responses List 1. SIA Results by Stakeholder Group

SPPS School Administrator – Principals

1. **What does the ideal classroom/learning environment look like?**
 - Careful planning. Lesson plans. Learning targets. Organized classroom where teacher is part of the lesson. Teacher has taken the time and is enthusiastic
 - Having another adult at every setting in the classroom because of large class sizes. Co-teaching in every perspective. Helping other students if teacher is teaching. Flexible group models in the classroom. Best way to close achievement gap
 - All about instruction. Passionate teacher that knows their content
 - Classroom proper air conditioning/temperature
 - Mounted projector, smart board, and document cameras in classrooms
 - Classroom for every teacher
 - Every student that walks through the door feels welcome, and accepted, a sense of belonging and his/her potential is ready to be developed
 - Triadic relationship with student, peers and teacher. Teacher is having engaging conversation or teachable moment where cultural relevancy is involved. And can see positive relationships
 - Standards to be actively engaged in classroom through vocabulary and language
 - Students understand rationale. Rigor. Students understand rationale for what they're learning
 - Differentiation for students
 - Kids actively engaging in authentic learning
 - Conversations between the kids
 - Multiple perspectives through inquiry are evident in conversations between students
 - Student leadership in co-facilitation of learning vs. teacher as main guide
 - Reciprocal learning so students are delving deeper into conversation and engaging
 - Environment itself should be print rich with artifacts; pictures of different cultures represented in the class
 - Diversity of the classroom; should be reflective of the district
 - Student's values and interest must be present
 - Relationship-based environment
 - Flexibility of working at the time with the lessons, seating arrangements, students' learning style and lesson content

- Look at practices and traditions endemic in the classroom culture
 - Responsive to the needs of all of the students
 - High level of respect between scholars and teacher/leader/facilitator
- 2. What is the purpose for suspending students? What is your philosophy and beliefs around that?**
- Enforcement of rights and responsibilities handbooks
 - Other kids need to see consequences
 - Sends a message to parents that something is going on at school that they need to pay attention to
 - Send a message to teachers that administrators are supporting you and we are not going to have these behaviors in the classroom
 - Classroom safety
 - Give students a break
 - Productive classroom
 - Fresh start for students; more effective when parents have to come in to readmit
 - Give the child and parents time to reflect outside of the environment
 - Suspension is about power
 - Drawing a line in the sand for students
 - Correcting the behavior
 - Suspension when student behavior would be harmful to the whole or to the building
 - Sometimes a dismissal is to give us time as a staff to consider—whatever we were doing isn't working so that when this student comes back, things are different
 - Provide time to investigate. If it's a community issue I may need a week to investigate
 - Suspension creates order in a school. Like the judicial system creates order in society
 - Gives some parents a sigh of relief knowing things are getting done, when students are victims
- 3. A recent SPPS report found, at the end of quarter 2, “African American students experienced a 22% increase, while all other racial groups experienced a decline in suspensions. Why in SPPS are there a disproportionately higher number of African American/Black students suspended?”**
- We often don't want to come out of our comfort zone to consider alternatives to suspensions
 - One of the reasons is we have former learning center kids who are in general ed. classrooms
 - Classroom culture does not welcome learning center kids
 - There continue to be teachers who don't want these students there and will make sure they are not

- Predominantly white teachers working with black students—this is a relationship gap
- Professional development gap, in how we are not reaching these black kids. Not because I don't want to
- Without respect and relationships, we get rebellion. If there is an impression of a lack of respect, we get rebellion
- The perception that the school is out of control—from the largely white staff with the largely black population
- What is being asked of black boys does not go with their learning style—kinesthetic in nature
- We don't have the mental health support

4. What solutions to suspensions do you have to offer and what are some alternatives that you have tried?

- In school suspension —kids in my office and I am teaching them
- Pair student with a teacher they have a good relationship with other than their homeroom teacher
- Teachers volunteer to take a student
- Check-in/check-out/PBIS
- Everyone is in the hallway at the start of school
- Intervene with students coming off the bus—get their day off to a good start
- Send scholars on errands or to other classrooms first
- Kids have individual plans and go through other options first
- Student areas, built breaks to their day. Sensory rooms, etc.
- Yoga calm
- Focus on a replacement behavior and how we are going to teach
- Family members in classroom
- Social conferencing. Calling the office or our focus room to address the child—teacher to conference with the child. We send our focus room staff to hot spots in the school when we know it may be a challenging environment for kids
- Male role models
- Restitution or community service
- JROTC
- Administrator mediation with student and staff

5. What do you believe is your role as a member of the SPPS community in ending the over-representation of African American/Black students being suspended in SPPS?

- Performance management of students and staff

- Administrator should hire staff
- Administrator should be in position to know staff and establish expectations
- Diverse staff
- Ensure community involvement
- Affirm the child every day - you are good, you are not bad
- Show up authentically. Model by example
- Get the right people in the classrooms to make a difference with every child
- Culturally relevant teaching
- Provide PD and follow up and continuing to work with staff to see the results
- School-wide racial conversations
- Celebrate teachers who are having success
- Interrupting the systems for our most marginalized kids
- Hold folks and myself accountable
- Focus on learning.
- To help us all recognize that we are all part of the district

6. **What do you believe is the district's role in ending the over-representation of African American/Black students being suspended in SPPS?**

- Increase the courage of our leaders. Majority of our principals and leaders do not have the courage to do the equity work
- Stay the course; don't back down now
- Respect the building leaders who are on the ground
- The other piece is that the political frame supersedes the human frame. There is what we morally, ethically and should be doing but we often recede because of the political frame. How courageous can we be? For me, it's the whole—how much is the district willing to dilute the political piece that often gets in the way of the moral, humane, and ethical?
- Empower teachers to do this learning with administration and create solutions
- More this type of activity with all of the different stakeholders. To bring in all of the voices. All have to have all stakeholders at the school sites
- Mindsets work would have been great before equity work. People are stuck. Part of the equity work is self-reflective

Responses List 1a Continued. SIA Results by Stakeholder Group

SPPS School Administrator – Assistant Principal and Administrative Interns

1. What does the ideal classroom/learning environment look like?

- Careful planning. Lesson plans. Learning targets. Organized classroom where teacher is part of the lesson. Teacher has taken the time and is enthusiastic
- Having another adult at every setting in the classroom because of large class sizes. Co-teaching in every perspective. Helping other students if teacher is teaching. Flexible group models in the classroom. Best way to close achievement gap
- All about instruction. Passionate teacher that knows their content. Teachers are muffling or not prepared. Creates an environment that is not conducive to learning
- Look at our buildings. Our classrooms are not conducive to learning. No air conditioning. Temps are off in the classroom. Look at the whole perspective. Some districts have mounted projector, smart board, document cameras. Some schools in St. Paul don't have this. We have blackboards and a lot of teachers on carts
- Every student that walks through the door feels welcome, and accepted, a sense of belonging and his/her potential is ready to be developed
- Triadic relationship with student, peers, and teacher. Teacher is having engaging conversation or teachable moment where cultural relevancy is involved. And can see positive relationships
- Likes standards but wants standards to be actively engaged in classroom through vocabulary and language
- Students understand rationale. Rigor. Students understand rationale for what they're learning
- Differentiation for students
- Kids actively engaging in authentic learning
- Conversations between the kids
- Multiple perspectives through inquiry is evident in conversations between students
- Student leadership in co-facilitation of learning vs. teacher as main guide
- Reciprocal learning so students are delving deeper into conversation and engaging
- Environment itself should be print rich with artifacts, pictures of different cultures represented in the class
- Diversity of the classroom; should be reflective of the district
- Student's values and interest must be present
- Relationship-based environment
- Flexibility of working at the time with the lessons, seating arrangements, students' learning style and lesson content

- Look at practices and traditions endemic in the classroom culture
- Responsive to the needs of all of the students
- High level of respect between scholars and teacher/leader/facilitator

2. What is the purpose for suspending students? What is your philosophy and beliefs around that?

- Enforcement of rights and responsibilities handbooks
- Other kids need to see consequences
- Sends a message to parents that something is going on at school that they need to pay attention to
- Send message to teachers that administrators are supporting you and we are not going to have these behaviors in the classroom
- Classroom safety
- Give students a break
- Productive classroom
- Fresh start for students more effective when parents have to come in to readmit
- Give the child and parents time to reflect outside of the environment
- Suspension is about power
- Drawing a line in the sand for students
- Correcting the behavior
- Suspension when student behavior would be harmful to the whole or to the building
- Sometimes a dismissal is to give us time as a staff to consider—whatever we were doing isn't working so that when this student comes back things are different
- I need time to investigate; if it's a community issue I may need a week to investigate
- Suspension creates order in a school like the judicial system creates order in society
- Gives some parents a sigh of relief knowing things are getting done when students are victims

3. A recent SPPS report found, at the end of quarter 2, “African American students experienced a 22% increase, while all other racial groups experienced a decline in suspensions. Why in SPPS are there a disproportionately higher number of African American/Black students suspended?”

- We often don't want to come out of our comfort zone to consider alternatives to suspensions
- One of the reasons is we have former learning center kids who are in general ed. classrooms
- Classroom culture does not welcome learning center kids

- There continue to be teachers who don't want these students there and will make sure they are not
- Predominantly white teachers working with black students—this is a relationship gap
- Professional development gap, in how we are not reaching these black kids; not because I don't want to
- Without respect and relationships, we get rebellion. If there is an impression of a lack of respect, we get rebellion
- The perception that the school is out of control—from the largely white staff with the largely black population
- What is being asked of black boys does not go with their learning style—kinesthetic in nature
- We don't have the mental health support

4. What solutions do suspensions do you have to offer and what are some alternatives that you have tried?

- In school suspension – kids in my office and I am teaching them
- Pair student with a teacher they have a good relationship with other than their homeroom teacher
- Teachers volunteer to take a student
- Check-in/check-out /PBIS
- Everyone is in the hallway at the start of school
- Intervene with students coming off the bus – get their day off to a good start
- Send scholars on errands or to other classrooms first
- Kids have individual plans and go through other options first
- Student areas, build breaks to their day; sensory rooms, etc.
- Yoga calm
- Focus on a replacement behavior and how we are going to teach
- Family members in classroom
- Social conferencing: Calling the office or our focus room to address the child/teacher to conference with the child. We send our focus room staff to hot spots in the school when we know it may be a challenging environment for kids
- Male role models
- Restitution or community service
- JROTC

5. What do you believe is your role as a member of the SPPS community in ending the over-representation of African American/Black students being suspended in SPPS?

- Performance management

- Hiring practice of knowing who is in my building is a huge help
- Diverse staff
- Ensure community involvement
- Affirm the child every day – “you are good, you are not bad”
- Is your role?
- Show up authentically; model by example
- Get the right people in the classrooms to make a difference with every child
- Culturally relevant teaching
- Provide PD and follow up and continuing to work with staff to see the results
- School-wide racial conversations
- Single out teachers who are having success
- Interrupting the systems for our most marginalized kids
- Hold folks and myself accountable
- Focus on learning
- Don't jump to the end goal because that's what we feel people need to see. We have to do the work in between

6. What do you believe is the district's role in ending the over-representation of African American/Black students being suspended in SPPS?

- Increase the courage of our leaders – Majority of our principals and leaders do not have the courage to do the equity work
- Stay the course. Don't back down now
- Respect the building leaders who are on the ground
- The other piece is that the political frame supersedes the human frame. There is what we morally and ethically should be doing but we often recede because of the political frame. How courageous can we be? For me, it's the whole—how much is the district willing to dilute the political piece that often gets in the way of the moral, humane, and ethical?
- Empower teachers to do this learning with administration and create solutions
- More this type of activity with all of the different stakeholders. To bring in all of the voices. All have to have all stakeholders at the school sites
- Mindsets work would have been great before equity work. People are stuck. Part of the equity work is self-reflective

Responses List 1b Continued. SIA Results by Stakeholder Group

Saint Paul Federation of Teachers

1. **What does the "ideal" classroom/learning environment look like?**
 - Kids working together on their assignment. Peer sharing and group work
 - Where kids and adults know they are safe and respected
 - Relationship with that student
 - Clear expectations
 - Montessori
 - Developmentally geared learning
 - Child centered
 - Classroom belongs to the student
 - Actively learning
 - Year round classrooms
 - Small size classrooms; respectful
 - Teacher teaches and kids learning
 - Students asking why they're learning things
 - Students teaching
2. **What is the purpose for suspending students?**
 - Weapons
 - To create a safe environment for everyone involved
 - Physical safety
 - Bullying
 - For the benefit of the student being suspended and class
 - Consequences for behaviors
 - Sends a message to the students and the parents
 - I don't know if suspension has a purpose
 - Hope is that it is going to be a deterrent

- A tool that is used as the alternative to not having anything else to do
 - It's a punitive system probably meant for a different time than 2014. If it's not effective why do we do it? If my kid came home suspended I would punish him
3. **A recent SPPS report found, at the end of quarter 2 “African American students experienced a 22% increase, while all other racial groups experienced a decline in suspensions. Why in SPPS are there a disproportionately higher number of African American/Black students suspended?”**
- Possible Sped students
 - Possible repeaters
 - Test prep – testing is institutionally racist
 - Poverty
 - Student reputation
 - Lack of electives – students of color take. Broader, global, and social justice
 - Schedules are what is best for school; not for children
 - Children act out once they become disengaged
 - 6th grade changes – number of transitions and 7 period day
 - 47 minutes periods – not enough time to build needed relationships
 - System is not for students
4. **What are three effective alternatives to suspension that would help restore students into their school community?**
- Restoration (Native American value) and restitution
 - Restorative justice
 - In school suspensions
 - Establish clear way back into the classroom
 - Students apologize
 - Peer mediation
 - Have to start somewhere and it will take time
 - Community involvement that circumvents the institutional racism
 - Teach values

- Give the opportunity to realize that the world exists beyond oneself
- Have a panel with faculty, parents, students, liaison, and different people in the community that would talk to students and re-direct the behavior
- Have a parent meeting at the beginning of the year and have parents choose the suspendable offenses
- Parents need to be a part of the conversation. (ie. Parent Academy)
- Establish parental expectations
- Examine the teacher’s contributions – positive and negative

5. What do you believe is your role as a member of the SPPS educational community in ending the over representation of African American/Black students being suspended in SPPS?

- Advocate for the needs of all children
- Advocate for the needs of the students that are being suspended
- Reduce testing requirements
- Self examination and reflections
- Create a community in the classroom that looks and feels like students
- Student voice
- Humble myself
- Affirm Students as individuals
- Be a student of the community; Saint Paul
- Do not assume that children know something particularly in terms of behavioral issues

6. What do you believe is the district’s role in ending the over representation of African American/Black students being suspended in SPPS?

- More counselors, social workers, etc.
- Student affinity groups
- Ensure structural resources to be able to set up community
- Ensure developmental needs of students are being met
- Smaller class sizes
- More positive parent contact

- Jr. High philosophy vs. Middle School

Responses List 1c Continued. SIA Results by Stakeholder Group

Saint Paul Police Department School Resource Officers

1. What is your role as an SRO in educational environments?

- Educate students about what role law enforcement plays in the community
- Provide info on alternatives to criminal behavior/conduct
- To educate students about the criminal justice system
- Resource on careers in law enforcement
- Serve as a mentor/role model
- Work with school safety team to prepare for an effective execution on fire drills, lock down drills, tornado drills, and the evacuation process
- Building positive relationships with law enforcement in general
- Provide safety for the educational environment
- Enforce all criminal matters
- To be present in the schools
- Write reports
- Place children in protective shelter
- Transport students home
- Give citations
- Transport students to the JDC

2. What do you see as your role in the educational discipline review process?

- Prevention
- Intervention
- Apprehension
- Support for administration during the school discipline process
- Appropriate action if the situation is a criminal matter or requires a police report

- I don't believe the SRO's have a role in the review process
- I do not have a role in the discipline review process. The school staff have already determined the discipline of a student before I arrive on scene

Responses List 1d Continued. SIA Results by Stakeholder Group

Saint Paul Black Interdenominational Ministerial Alliance

1. **What does the "ideal" classroom/learning environment look like? This may include, but is not limited to seating arrangement, materials, delivery style and active participation.**
 - Ideal learning environments includes loving knowledgeable/flexible teachers
 - Highly interactive materials that a current and up to date
 - Small class sizes
 - Schools and teachers need an understanding of each student and a sense of the place each student comes from
 - Students need to be known for who they are and not labeled
 - Each student has opportunity to express oneself
 - Students can feel their teacher's and principal's love
 - Good order
2. **What is the purpose for suspending students?**
 - Punish students because the adult doesn't know how to interact with them
 - Keep the school environment safe from physical harm
 - To comfort or control the fear of teachers
 - To get rid of the student
 - It interrupts student behavior
 - A release for the adults; not for the students
 - A show of positional power
 - To send a messages to students about power and expectations
 - To allow teachers time for instruction
 - Definition of suspension is being removed from the learning environment including put in the hallway, focus rooms and dismissals

3. **A recent SPPS report found, at the end of quarter 2 “African American students experienced a 22% increase, while all other racial groups experienced a decline in suspensions. Why in SPPS are there a disproportionately higher number of African American/Black students suspended?**
 - New teachers who probably shouldn’t be teaching
 - Lack of teachers of color
 - Borderline evil to systematically deprive African American/Black students of their humanness
 - White female teacher fear of larger black boys
 - The standardization of the behavior code
 - No relationship or understanding. Between white adults in power and African American/Black students
 - Weak relationship between schools and parents of African American/Black students
 - Institutional racism; expectations when you walk into the classroom are based on skin color

4. **What solutions to suspensions do you have to offer?**
 - Support to the teachers who do most of the referrals
 - Diversify the building staff
 - Neighborhoods need an adult presence in the schools. Parents and community are a part of the solution. Parents have to feel welcome
 - Student voice
 - Re-entry strategies—welcome back in
 - Teaches African American/Black students how to be successful
 - Teachers to parent communication; reach out to the parents, both for good and bad
 - Schools and staff need to create a welcoming environment for parents and community
 - Alternative learning setting; church and Sunday school
 - Two adults in a classroom

5. **What do you believe is your role as a member of the SPPS educational community in ending the over representation of African American/Black students being suspended in SPPS?**
 - Advocate for African American/Black students children
 - Parental involvement
 - Community support diversity in the schools; mentorship
 - Offer children more ways to be creative – sports, music, and recess

6. What do you believe is the district's role in ending the over representation of African American/Black students being suspended in SPPS?

- District leadership needs to be in schools regularly to see things from first hand
- Make SSSC mean something
- Dismantle racism
- PTSA (parents, teachers, and students)
- Support African American/Black students more
- Figure out how to support without suspensions
- Deal with African American/Black students' trauma
- St. Paul Youth Services
- Continued proactive, transparent sharing of information and data between district and community
- Offer children more ways to be creative – sports, music, and recess
- Train teachers and administrators

Responses List 1e Continued. SIA Results by Stakeholder Group

Somali Parent Advisory Council

1. What does the "ideal" classroom/learning environment look like?

- Ideal learning environments include both home and school
- Different ethnic groups come together
- Somali students and staff
- More Somali speakers in every school, then we would get some of those teachers who can help us; come to our homes or close to our homes
- Somali community, the principal, the teachers and all the community working together
- Parental involvement welcomed
- Teacher communication with parents
- Communication from the school to parents in our language
- Teachers who speak the language
- Parent education regarding school expectations
- Consistent expectations for all racial groups of students
- Teachers honestly teach kids and manage kids honestly
- A principal that listens
- Strong teacher
- Bully free
- Safe

2. What is the purpose for suspending students?

- Some kids discipline is out of the norm
- Help teachers with kids with bad behavior
- Kids don't have enough conscience/sense to stop, and the teachers need to show them
- Fighting

3. **A recent SPPS report found, at the end of quarter 2 “African American students experienced a 22% increase, while all other racial groups experienced a decline in suspensions. Why in SPPS are there a disproportionately higher number of African American/Black students suspended?**
 - Miscommunication – because we don’t understand and our kids fall into suspension all the time (from the buses, from the classroom)
 - Language discrimination
 - Family literacy
 - Students’ language skills
 - Parents may not be taking their responsibility seriously

4. **What do you believe is your role as a member of the SPPS educational community in ending the over representation of African American/Black students being suspended in SPPS?**
 - Parents may not be taking their responsibility seriously
 - Try to do everything we can at home
 - Make sure students do their homework
 - Feed students

5. **What do you believe is the district’s role in ending the over representation of African American/Black students being suspended in SPPS?**
 - Make schools safe
 - Provide an environment where children can learn
 - Ensure students come back home without injuries
 - Principal do everything they can
 - Hear our community and provide answers
 - Stop ignoring parents
 - Provide somebody who speaks Somali instead of a machine

Responses List If Continued. SIA Results by Stakeholder Group

Parents of African American Students Advisory Council

1. **What does the "ideal" classroom/learning environment look like? This may include, but is not limited to seating arrangement, materials, delivery style and active participation.**
 - Black teaching staff and additional Black staff outside their traditional roles of policing and discipline
 - Curriculum that includes African American/Black students and scholars; not just black history month
 - Vetted curriculum that allows for African American/Black voice to be part of the process
 - An environment, which does not require African American/Black students continually, navigates to be successful
2. **What is the purpose for suspending students?**
 - To suspend learning
 - To suspend achieving
 - To suspend self-actualization
 - To suspend from a tree
 - To dismiss the presence of
 - To provide a cooling off period
 - To perpetuate a value and belief system that black people don't want to learn
 - To impede and oppress the black community
 - To render the student and community powerless
 - The support is racism
 - Teachers are afraid of students
 - It's a weapon used against African American/Black students and our community
3. **What's your definition of suspension?**
 - Suspended animation
 - Time stops
 - Community punishment

4. **A recent SPPS report found, at the end of quarter 2 “African American students experienced a 22% increase, while all other racial groups experienced a decline in suspensions. Why in SPPS are there a disproportionately higher number of African American/Black students suspended?”**
 - There’s zero tolerance for tolerance
 - Negative reaction to everything an African American child says or does
 - Fear of African American/Black students
 - Peer affirmation validation students who have been suspended
 - Child’s records following them from year to year
 - Stereotypes
 - Poor systems in place to allow parents access to information regarding their students
 - Lack of respect from African American/Black students
5. **What solutions to suspensions do you have to offer?**
 - Boycotts schools – keep African American/Black student out of school
 - Parent and community partnerships – we have to advocate, be willing to do more and pay more
 - Stipends for parental involvement to help offset cost and encourage being part of the solutions
 - Parental assistance in the classroom
6. **What do you believe is your role as a member of the SPPS educational community in ending the over representation of African American/Black students being suspended in SPPS?**
 - To be involved in meetings both at a district level and at our students schools and classrooms
7. **What do you believe is the district’s role in ending the over representation of African American/Black students being suspended in SPPS?**
 - Remove poor tenured teachers
 - Remove poor teachers
 - Mandatory evaluation process of teachers and administrators
 - Higher divers teaching staff
 - Mandatory training in diversity

