

Inconsistencies in School Disciplinary Procedures

School discipline is an extremely important issue for parents, students, educators, and the general public. We all want schools that are safe and humane places where all students can learn and teachers can teach.

What school disciplinary practices are most effective? What data is available and what approaches to school culture and discipline carry promise? Are there differences and disparities between school communities in how students are disciplined? Are students treated fairly and equitably after infractions? And in fact, are we asking the right questions?

UMAPS encourages creating positive school cultures and restorative justice for children rather than relying on retributive and punitive models. What can be done to stop the 'school to prison pipeline' pattern? What explains differences in the data collected in North Carolina's discipline reporting among districts, schools, and sub-groups of students? Are teachers and principals versed in how to grow and sustain positive school cultures and climates? Outlining punishments is not enough and is only a small fraction of what communities require in order to be safe and thriving places to learn.

In addition mental health issues among students often have a significant impact on how they behave and are treated as disciplinary problems in the schools. The National Association on Mental Illness www.nami.org conducts research on the effects of disciplinary procedures on student mental health and behavior plus provide a range of education programs to inform parents, teachers, and students with information about resources and warning signals. Their programs inform everyone about what to do when student behavior exhibits those warning signs of mental health problems.

Resources on School Climate and Discipline:

'The Root of Discipline Disparities' from The Public School Forum
<https://www.ncforum.org/the-root-of-discipline-disparities/>

'School Climate and Discipline: Rethinking Discipline', US Dept. of Education
<https://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/school-discipline/index.html>

National Association of Secondary School Principals and National PTA sites have search functions. Search 'discipline' and 'school climate' to learn more about these issues.

<https://www.nassp.org/>

<https://www.pta.org/>

School systems and individual schools publish 'Student Codes of Conduct' as part of Parent and Student Handbooks. These can be accessed through school and school system websites or by a search for 'NCDPI Student Code of Conduct' to find examples.