

Memo ---

To: Dr. Kristen Weikle
From: Dr. Brandon Caffey
cc: Unit 5 Board of Education
Date: January 27, 2025
Re: Unit 5 Discipline Improvement Plan

Dear Superintendent Weikle and Board Members,

I am writing to provide an update on the progress of the District's Discipline Improvement Plan, which has been developed over the past several weeks as part of the Illinois State Board of Education's (ISBE) requirements. This plan comes in response to McLean County Unit 5's ranking in the top 20% for racial disproportionality in exclusionary disciplinary practices for three consecutive years.

In accordance with ISBE guidelines, the district leadership team has worked collaboratively to craft a comprehensive plan to address these disparities. Administrative representatives from both elementary and secondary schools participated in the development process, ensuring a broad and inclusive perspective in the creation of the plan. The plan outlines the strategies and actions that will be implemented to address racial disproportionality in student discipline and promote more equitable outcomes for all students.

The Discipline Improvement Plan will remain in effect for a minimum of three years. During this time, we will continuously evaluate its effectiveness, with the intention to review and revise the plan as necessary. Importantly, even if we meet all of the success criteria defined within the plan, our commitment to maintaining and improving these efforts will remain steadfast.

We believe that the strategies outlined will lead to significant improvements in student outcomes and school climate, and we are committed to providing ongoing support and resources to all schools in the district to facilitate successful implementation.

As mandated by ISBE, the plan will be posted on the district website for public access, and we anticipate that questions may arise regarding its implementation and impact on individual schools. We will be providing additional resources to staff to ensure they are well-prepared to answer these questions and support the work outlined in the plan.

Thank you for your continued support as we work to create a more equitable and supportive learning environment for all students in Unit 5. Should you have any questions or require further information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Dr. Brandon Caffey
Director of Student Services
McLean County Unit 5



MCLEAN COUNTY UNIT DISTRICT NO. 5 DISCIPLINE IMPROVEMENT PLAN

(This template is an example to assist in guiding your process. The Discipline Improvement Plan may be combined with other improvement plans required under federal and state law.)

Per [105 ILCS 5/2-3.162](#) and [Public Act 098-1102](#), districts identified on the Top 20% Exclusionary Discipline list are required to submit a Discipline Improvement Plan. The Discipline Improvement Plan must be approved by the district board, placed on the district website, and submitted to ISBE by **February 1, 2025**.

DISCIPLINE IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Name of School District/Charter School: McLean County Unit District 5	School Year: 2024-2025	Board Approval Date(s): TBD
--	---------------------------	-----------------------------

Link to district website where plan is posted:

www.unit5.org

School District/Charter School Address:
1809 W. Hovey Avenue, Normal, Illinois 61761

Superintendent/Administrator Name:
Dr. Kristen Weikle

Discipline Improvement Plan Team

Districts are encouraged to convene a Discipline Improvement Plan Team to address exclusionary discipline and/or racial disproportionality.

Team Leader: Dr. Brandon Caffey, Director of Student Services

Team Members:

- Michelle Lamboley, Assistant Superintendent
- Dr. Kristal Shelvin, Executive Director of Student Supports
- Darrin Cooper, Director of Assessment and Accountability
- Deidre Ripka, Director of Secondary Education
- Leslie Webb, Director of Multilingual Services
- Maureen Backe, Director of Elementary Education
- Carrie Chapman, Director of Special Education
- Christina Ellis, Principal, Parkside Elementary School
- Leslie Davenport, Principal, Fox Creek Elementary School
- Sylvester Davis, Associate Principal, Kingsley Junior High School
- Sarah Crowder, Principal, Parkside Junior High School
- Anthony Clark, Assistant Principal, Normal Community High School
- Isoke Wilson-Pridgen, Assistant Principal, Normal West High School
- Ashleigh Gibler, Special Education Administrator
- Shannon Panetta, Principal, Pepper Ridge Elementary School
- Dr. Mariana Nicasio, Principal, Chiddix Junior High School
- Christina Mables, Principal, Cedar Ridge Elementary School

Recommended Steps to Consider when Creating the Discipline Improvement Plan

1-Review of discipline data:

Please go to the ISBE [School Discipline](#) webpage to find district-level data. Districts/charter schools may also consider any other relevant data, e.g., the district's Illinois Report Card (student and teacher demographics, attendance rates, graduation rates, student mobility rates, academic progress, etc.), Survey of Learning Conditions (5 Essentials Survey or other approved survey) and any other local data.

2-Next steps:

Data Analysis and Identified Trends:

Illinois law requires the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) to identify school districts or state-authorized charter schools that utilize exclusionary disciplinary measures more often than other districts. Specifically, Section 2-3.162 of the School Code requires ISBE to determine the top 20 percent of school districts in the following metrics:

1. The total number of out-of-school suspensions divided by the total district enrollment by the last school day in September for the year in which the data was collected, multiplied by 100.
2. The total number of out-of-school expulsions is divided by the total district enrollment by the last school day in September for the year in which the data was collected, multiplied by 100.
3. Racial disproportionality, defined as the overrepresentation of students of color or white students on October 1st of the school year in which data are collected, concerning the use of out-of-school suspensions and expulsions, which must be calculated using the same method as the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights

School districts and state-authorized charter schools that are identified in the top 20 percent of any of the metrics described above for three consecutive years are required to submit a plan identifying the strategies the school district will implement to reduce the use of exclusionary disciplinary practices or racial disproportionality or both, if applicable.

McLean County Unit 5: Racial Disproportionality Rate [E: Expulsion S: Suspension]

School Year	RD Rate Eligibility	Total White Students	Total Students of Color	E/S White Students	E/S Students of Color	Racial Disproportionality Rate	Students of Color Rate	Top 20% Rate	Disproportionality Rate Rank
2017	Yes	1537	2933	52	284	2.8639		Yes	70
2018	Yes	1455	2889	34	364	5.3846		Yes	23
2019	Yes	1378	2971	77	590	3.5539		Yes	41
2020	Yes	1300	2955	64	368	2.5296		No	92
2021	Yes	1183	2819	1	9	3.7769		Yes	11
2022	Yes	1176	3032	90	814	3.5080		Yes	46
2023	Yes	1182	3183	153	1191	2.8907		Yes	78

Data Reflection

Unit 5 ranked in the top 20% of schools for racial disproportionality for the 3rd consecutive year in 2024.

The top five incidents resulting in out-of-school suspensions for students of color were physical aggression, fighting, insubordination/non-compliance, gross misconduct, and disruptive behavior.

- Unit 5 saw a 24.85% decrease in out-of-school suspensions from the 22-23 to the 23-24 school year. (1340 → 1007)
- In overall suspensions, Unit 5 ranked 147th in Illinois, 31 spots away from the top 20% cutoff. This is the furthest away from the top 20 Unit 5 has been since 2020.
- Unit 5 saw a 21.45% decrease in suspensions and expulsions of students of color from the 22-23 to 23-24 school year.
- In racial disproportionality, Unit 5 ranked 71st in Illinois the closest to moving out of the the top 20% they have been since 2020.
 - Unit 5's rate is .33% away from the 20% benchmark.

- Although Unit 5 saw a significant decrease in suspensions for all students including students of color the disproportionality rate did not decrease.
- Our suspension numbers are improving overall and for students of color due to training and practices that Unit 5 is implementing.
- We acknowledge that while we've made significant strides in reducing our suspension and expulsion rates, our efforts to improve our ranking are challenged by the concurrent focus of other school districts across the state on similar goals. The statewide emphasis on reducing suspensions and addressing disproportionality underscores a shared commitment to fostering inclusive and supportive learning environments. Despite these challenges, our commitment to continuous improvement remains steadfast as we navigate the evolving landscape of educational priorities and practices.

3. Has your district completed implicit bias training as required by PA 100-0014? Have you incorporated the [Diversity Equity and Inclusion Provider Evaluation Tool](#)? If you did, what are your thoughts regarding your current implicit bias training (e.g., effective or ineffective)?

Yes, our district has completed implicit bias training as PA 100-0014 requires. The team will begin using the **Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Provider Evaluation Tool** to review our implicit bias training sessions. Based on previous evaluations, the training has effectively provided new information to staff and an opportunity to practice strategies to identify and combat bias.

Unit 5 has provided comprehensive training on bias and implicit bias since 2021. The training began with a shared understanding of the Unit 5 adopted definition.

Implicit bias is an unconsciously held set of associations, about a social group. This can result in the attribution of particular qualities to all individuals from that group, also known as stereotyping. Implicit biases are the product of learned associations and social conditioning. They usually begin at a young age, and these biases do not necessarily align with a person's identity. It's possible to unconsciously associate positive or negative traits with one's race, gender, or another identity marker.

The 2024-2025 training examined implicit bias within the context of adult responses during highly emotional situations. Additionally, annual school improvement planning requires a root cause analysis that includes questions to determine the impact of implicit bias in assigning discipline consequences.

4. Potential Action Plan to Reduce the Use of Exclusionary Discipline and/or Racial

Disproportionality: (Goal/Objective, Strategy/Action, Timeframe, Responsible Individual(s), Success Criteria, and Method of Evaluation)

Goal/Objective: Reduce Racial Disproportionality in Exclusionary Discipline

The following action plan will be utilized for the 2025-2026 academic school year to reduce the use of exclusionary discipline and/or racial disproportionality:

Strategy/Action:

- I. Each school will collect and examine discipline data trends available through our MTSS/PBIS/SEL systems to:
 - Formulate clear and concise action steps to address and reduce disproportionate discipline trends.
 - Identify strengths and opportunities for improvement.
[Responsible Individual(s): Building Principal]
- II. Each school administrative team, in collaboration with the MTSS/PBIS teams, will utilize our data information system Infinite Campus in conjunction with the EduClimber platform, to review disciplinary data, identify root causes, and determine appropriate interventions for students of color to track and address racial disproportionality.
- III. The District Equity Leadership Team (DELT) will implement Year 4 of the Equity Action Plan and address the systemic recommendations from the findings of our comprehensive, district-wide equity audit which concluded in the Spring of 2021.
 - a. **Systems Strand Objective(s):** Develop a plan to recruit and retain diverse staff. Review BOE policies and procedures through an equity lens
 - b. **Teaching and Learning Strand Objective(s):** ECRP Developed de-escalation training
 - c. **Student Voice, Culture and Climate Strand Objective (s):** Increase the number of students participating on the Student Equity Action and Advisory Team (Junior High/High School) and increase their capacity for action within their schools
 - d. **Professional Development Strand Objective:** Embed implicit bias training and other relevant training into the SIP process with ongoing root cause analysis discussions.
 - e. **Family and Community as Agency Strand Objective:** Leverage the "Diversity Advisory Council" to inform policies and build relationships with families and community entities to reduce discipline infractions.
- IV. The district will, in collaboration with school buildings, develop a course of action to address and reduce recidivism for students identified as Tier 2/Tier 3 repeat offenders of school rules/expectations, leading to the use of exclusionary practices. The course(s) of action can include but is not limited to:
 - Restorative Circles / Practices / Implementation of Calming corners & mindful spaces at the secondary levels

- Professional development
 - Scenario-based training in which administrators and staff have the opportunity to reflect and develop discipline strategies
 - Explore and implement restorative alternatives to suspension
 - Provide Senate Bill 100 training for all administrators
 - Develop and implement a behavior matrix aligned with SB100 guidelines
 - Professional development on classroom management/discipline strategies/de-escalation
 - Provide professional development for staff/administration on Zones of Regulation incorporated into SEL time (Elementary / Junior High)
 - Universal PBIS training for building-based administrators and staff
- V. Develop and implement culturally responsive teaching strategies/pedagogies among certified teaching staff, paraprofessionals, and culturally responsive leadership practices for administrators.
- VI. Recruit and retain BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) teachers and staff
- VII. The district will investigate, provide professional development, and implement alternatives to suspension and expulsion (e.g., community service learning, abeyance contracts, etc.)
- VIII. Building leadership [administrators] will meet monthly with the Director of Student Services to review exclusionary discipline data and monitor trends
- IX. District leadership, including building-level administrators & members of the District Equity Leadership Team, will meet annually to review discipline data to ensure that students are disciplined without discrimination or because of implicit/explicit bias based on race, color, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, ability status, or other protected group/status. The review will include a systematic review of all disciplinary policies and procedures.

Timeframe:

- (a) Short-term: Develop discipline behavioral matrix for secondary schools (Spring 2025)
[Person(s) Responsible: Director of Student Services]
- (b) Short-term: Begin training, implementation, and evaluation of PBIS systems within the first month of the 2025-2026 school year. [Person(s) Responsible: Director of Student Services]
- (c) Short-term: Begin racial bias training and cultural competency workshops within the first 2 months of the 2025-2026 school year. [Person(s) Responsible: Executive Director of Student Services | ECRP]
- (d) Medium-term: Review and implement the goals/tasks of the Equity Action Plan per strand.[Person(s) Responsible: District Equity Leadership Team]

- (e) Long-term: Provide ongoing training and review of Senate Bill 100 policies for administrators [Person(s) Responsible: Director of Student Services]
- (f) Long-Term: Achieve a significant reduction in racial disproportionality in exclusionary discipline by the end of the 2025-2026 school year (9-12 months). [Person(s) Responsible: All District Administrators]
- (g) Long-term: Adoption and implementation of SEL curriculum at all building sites/grade levels.[Person(s) Responsible: Director of Elementary Education, Director of Secondary Education, Building level Administrators]

Success Criteria:

- (a) Reduce racial disproportionality in suspensions and expulsions by at least 15% by the end of the 2025-2026 school year.
- (b) Increase in Restorative Practices: At least 25% of disciplinary incidents are handled through restorative justice methods (e.g., circles, conferences) by the end of the first semester/term.
- (c) Staff Competency: 100% of staff complete implicit bias and cultural competency training by the end of the first semester/term.
- (d) Increased Family Engagement: Increase the participation of families of color in reintegration meetings post-exclusionary discipline by 25%.
- (e) Teacher and Student Feedback: Positive feedback from teachers and students about the effectiveness of restorative practices and PBIS (through surveys).
- (f) At least 80% of students engage in SEL programming by the end of the first semester/term.

Method of Evaluation:

- (a) Building-based Data Tracking: Analyze exclusionary discipline data (suspensions, expulsions) monthly, specifically by race, to track reductions in exclusionary discipline / racial disproportionality.
- (b) Review: Monthly meetings with school leadership to assess the implementation of restorative practices, SEL programming, and PBIS and adjust strategies as necessary.
- (c) Feedback: Surveys of staff, students, and families to gauge perceptions of fairness and cultural responsiveness in discipline practices.
- (d) Committee Reviews: Regular reports from the District Equity Leadership Team on progress and areas needing adjustment.
- (e) Administrator Reviews: Periodic assessments of administrators' accountability in reducing racial disproportionality and implementing equitable discipline strategies.