

APPENDIX VI – 25

Positive Alternatives to Suspension Section
Dropout Prevention and Graduation (DPG) Plan pages 18-20
March 13, 2015

Positive Alternative to Suspension (high school and middle school grades)

The District's alternatives to suspension will be implemented as a tiered-approach. The alternatives listed below are, generally, listed in the order that Administrators should consider.

Option 1: Restorative Conference: These can range from small impromptu circles where a few people meet to briefly address and resolve a problem to formal restorative conferences that address serious problems of behavior that may involve wrongdoers, victims, parents, and school administrators.

Option 2: Required Interventions: For all serious mid-range misbehaviors (misbehaviors coded at level 3 in the GSRR) such as fights or disorderly conduct, students may not be suspended unless interventions and/or restorative practices have first been used to redirect the student away from the misbehavior.

Option 3: Abeyance Contracts: A student is placed on a behavior contract in place of some or all suspension days.

From the TUSD GUIDELINES FOR STUDENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES (GSRR): An administrator may offer to not immediately impose the assigned out-of-school suspension if (1) the administrator believes it is in the best interest of the student and the school community, (2) the student admits to committing the infraction, (3) the student and parent/legal guardian agree to certain conditions, and (4) the student and parent/legal guardian sign a contract, called an abeyance contract. The term of the abeyance contract may not exceed the maximum suspension term for the offense level. If a student violates his/her abeyance contract with a suspendable offense, the student must serve the remaining term of the initial offense plus the suspension for the additional offense. These two suspensions would be served concurrently. (The last days of the first suspension would also be the first days of the additional suspension)

Option 4: In-School Intervention (ISI): The District's ISI will focus on students' academic, behavioral, and social/mental health concerns with a goal of promoting social and emotional learning to complement academic skills and encourage positive behavior. For an alternative to short term suspensions, students are placed with a certified staff member (either an administrator or teacher) who continues their instruction on an individual basis including counseling and problem solving education. The District will implement a "team" model whereby the certified staff member will collaborate with counselors, paraprofessionals, social workers, and/or the site's MTSS team. The District anticipates offering this alternative using a phased approach. This alternative will begin at every comprehensive high school (not including UHS) for SY 2015-16, and may expand to middle and K8 schools in SY 2016-17, for a total of 15-25 schools. Each student will have a 'success action plan' (exit plan) to transition each student from ISI back into the classroom. Social workers are key in collaborating with "local mental health, child welfare, law enforcement, and juvenile justice agencies and other stakeholders to align resources, prevention strategies, and intervention services." The plans would include a grade/transcript analysis, character-building, analysis of the students' social and/or family situation, etc... The team will work to engage the parents and/or families, and to follow up on the students' success action plan. "[S]tudents who need to be removed from the regular classroom setting for even a short period of time should have access to an alternative program that provides comparable academic instruction to that provided to students in the regular school program."

Option 5: Life Skills: The Life Skills Alternative to Suspension Program (LSASP) allows long-term suspended students (more than ten days) to receive academic and social instruction by a certified teacher instead of students serving out the suspension unsupervised at home, in the streets, or in some cases, in juvenile hall. The model resembles the ISI model above but is implemented as a much more long-term engagement with the student.

Currently the Life Skill Alternative to Suspension Program (LSASP) is at Magee Middle School, Southwest Education Center (middle school and high school), and Whitmore Annex (high school). TUSD agrees to expand the District's efforts by restoring this program at Doolen Middle School.

The LSASP can support additional students beginning in 2015—2016 and provide services for non-long-term suspended students. The District will explore the use of LSASP in partnership with the MTSS model. Students who are not successful through Tier 1, 2, and 3 interventions at the school site may be suggested to Academic Directors by the site MTSS team as possible candidates to determine if LSASP will be provided to them as an alternative.