

Life Skills Alternative to Suspension Program (LSASP)

General Description

The Life Skills Alternative to Suspension Program (LSASP) provides an academic setting for students, 6th to 12th grades, who have been long-term suspended (20 day to 45 days) for level 4 & 5 violations in the District's Guidelines for Student Rights and Responsibilities (GSRR).

What Life Skills offers suspended students is a "time-out" to re-group. The student will not only be able to focus on his/her academics in the Core areas, but will experience success, gain self-confidence, reflect on past behaviors, set goals, attain better grades, be part of a smaller learning community, and know that he/she is safe. Our high school students will know exactly where he/she stands in terms of meeting graduation requirements and he/she will return to regular high school knowing that he/she can do better.

These students will be part of a smaller structured environment that promotes social norms and rules, the implementation of a standards-based, cognitive-behavioral curriculum, and services that enhance positive social-emotional development and physical-emotional needs.

We do this by the following activities:

- Develop a system that nurtures meaningful relationships and learning
- Establish high expectations for student achievement through the implementation of differentiated instruction and academic articulation with the suspending school
- Sustain a positive learning environment
- Implement restorative practices to meet the social/emotional needs and growth of students
- Offer basic core classes
- Review of credits and graduation requirements
- Foster communication with families, agencies, law enforcement, school personnel, and resource staff.
- Offer a look at possible career choices
- Weekly progress reports

LSASP provides an academic setting for students, 6th to 12th grades, who have been long-term suspended (20 day to 45 days) for level 4 & 5 violations in the district's Guidelines for Student Rights and Responsibilities (GSRR).

The expected outcome is to provide academic and behavioral support to suspended students and to decrease mitigating factors that lead to drop-out and retention for this "at risk" population.

We do this by:

1. Academic articulation between the suspending school and LSASP so that students do not fall further behind.
2. With a low student to teacher ratio – we maximize academic scaffolding for students that are very behind their grade levels.
3. Improving attendance rate.
4. Ensures that students complete the AIMS test rather than miss it due to lack of attendance.
4. Ensures FAPE for suspended students with an IEP and or 504.
5. Transition support from LSASP to the home school

Target Population

The majority of these students are Hispanic, American Indian, and African American males, and tend to be in Exceptional Education. On average (beginning in 2005), there were over 180 (6th – 12th grade) students suspended per year since LSASP began tracking in 05 - 06. Long-term suspension is defined as a 20 to 45 day out-of-school suspension. LSASP allows long-term suspended students to receive academic and social instruction by a certified teacher instead of kids serving out the suspension, unsupervised at home; in the streets; or in some cases- in juvenile hall.

Rationale / Data for Selecting the Program

Current researchers conclude that suspension is associated with a host of negative outcomes such as diminished academic achievement and criminal activity. Suspending students who engage in problem behaviors does not identify or address the student's underlying problems and instead impedes the student from obtaining school services such as counselling or social skills instruction that might remediate behavior problems. It is also one of the top reasons students give for dropping out of school.

Please see below: (LSASP Enrollment History and Research for Alternatives to Suspension)

Expected Outcome

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LSC's Role

The LSC's primary duties are to advocate for students, remove barriers to learning, and support teachers in addressing student achievement. This year, the LSC has focused on the integration of the USP into our programs and improving service to students at risk of disciplinary action or of dropping out. She supports teachers in a consultation role regarding classroom management, behavior intervention strategies, and curriculum development. She brings an element of Restorative Practices to conversations about behavior and classroom management, and continues to broaden the understanding of RP with the staff. She continues with the delivery of professional development; consistent outreach to parents and district personnel in order to educate people about our program; scheduling parent/student conferences for student support, collaborative intervention with regard to student behaviors or adverse situations; support of teachers in their endeavors to improve student achievement; keeping a creative and flexible attitude regarding problems and their solutions.

Paraprofessionals' Role

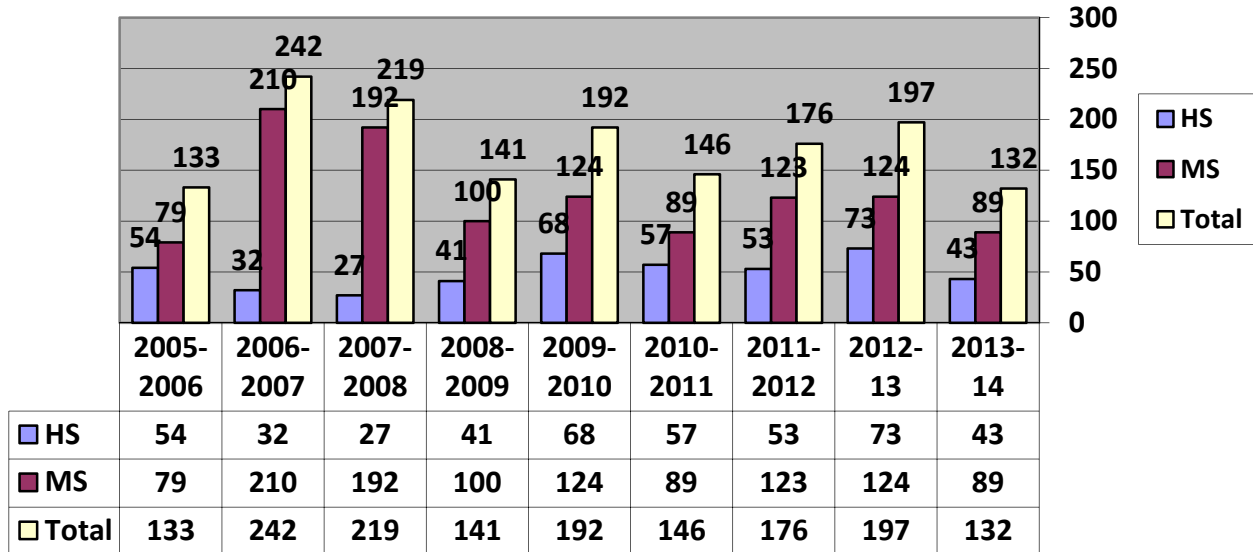
Behavior Intervention Monitors (BIM) are the paraprofessionals used in LSASP. Students referred to LSASP are students "...whose patterns of attendance, classroom performance, or other individual challenges indicate a serious risk of dropping out.", as described in the USP Section V. To further comply with the USP and address the needs of our student population, BIMs incorporate research-based strategies that make up our student behavioral support component(s). These strategies include, but are not limited to, district-wide policies and practices of "Restorative Practices and Positive Behavior Intervention and Support", trauma informed teaching, and the consistent use, with fidelity, of the Daily Point Sheet/Phase System management and communication tools.

Each BIM is supervised by a Lead Teacher at each site, as well by the Senior Program Coordinator for LSASP.

Life Skills Alternative to Suspension Program Enrollment History

Students served from:

2005-06 to 2013-14



- Since 2005-2006, the LSASP has served a total of 1,578 long-term suspended students. This does not include the number of students that were referred and not enrolled.
- In 2009-2010, data was tracked on students that were referred to the program but did not enroll. In total, there have been 296 students that were referred but not enrolled into the program since 2005-2006.

2013 – 2014: Served Level 4 & 5 infractions | LSCs in schools | Abeyance contracts used in TUSD.

- In 2013-14 we served 132 students, 89 middle school students and 43 high school students.
- 37% of students in the program were Ex-Ed students.
- MS demographics:
 - White = 15
 - African American = 16
 - Hispanic / Latino = 55
 - Native American = 3
 - Native Hawaiian or other PI = 0
 - Total MS Students = 89

- HS demographics:

- White = 7
- African American = 6
- Hispanic / Latino = 26
- Native American = 2
- Native Hawaiian or other PI = 2
 - Total HS Students = 43

- Other information:

- 42 other students were referred to the Life Skills Alternative program but were not placed. These students were either referred to Distance Learning or were not able to attend due to transportation, incarceration, entered to a drug rehab facility, left the district or no contact was possible. A portion also chose to attend charter schools.

2012 – 2013: Served **Level 4 & 5** infractions | LSCs in schools | Abeyance contracts used in TUSD.

- In 2012-13 we served 197 students, 124 middle school students and 73 high school students.
- 32% of students in the program were Ex- Ed students.

- MS demographics:

- White = 22
- African American = 8
- Hispanic / Latino = 89
- Native American = 5
- Native Hawaiian or other PI = 0
 - Total MS Students =124

- HS demographics:

- White = 15
- African American = 7
- Hispanic / Latino = 46
- Native American = 3

- Native Hawaiian or other PI = 2
 - Total HS Students = 73

- Other information:

- 71 other students were referred to the Life Skills Alternative program but were not placed. These students were either referred to Distance Learning or were not able to attend due to transportation, incarceration, entered to a drug rehab facility, left the district or no contact was possible. A portion also chose to attend charter schools.

2011 – 2012: Served Level 4 & 5 infractions –|LSC in schools | Abeyance contracts used in TUSD.

- In 2011-2012 – we served 176 students, 123 middle school students and 53 high school students.
- 32% of students in the program were Ex- Ed students.

- MS demographics:

- White = 14
- African American = 14
- Hispanic / Latino = 80
- Native American = 15
- Native Hawaiian or other PI = 0
 - Total MS Students = 123

- HS demographics:

- White = 9
- African American =7
- Hispanic / Latino =32
- Native American =4
- Native Hawaiian or other PI =1
 - Total HS Students =53

- Other information:

- 59 other students were referred to the Life Skills Alternative program but were referred to Distance Learning or were not able to attend due to transportation, incarceration, entered to a drug rehab facility, left the district or no contact was possible.

2010 – 2011: Served Level 4 & 5 infractions –|LSC in schools | Abeyance contracts used.

- In 2010 – 2011 we served 146 students, 89 middle school students and 57 high school students.
- 40 % of our students this year were Ex Ed.
- MS demographics:
 - White = 13
 - African American =14
 - Hispanic / Latino =54
 - Native American =7
 - Native Hawaiian or other PI =1
 - Total MS Students =89
- HS demographics:
 - White = 19
 - African American =3
 - Hispanic or Latino =32
 - Native American =3
 - Native Hawaiian or other PI =0
 - Total HS Students =57
- Other information:
 - 47 other students were referred to the Life Skills Alternative program but were referred to Distance Learning or were not able to attend due to transportation, incarceration, entered to a drug rehab facility, left the district or no contact was possible.

2009 – 2010: Served Level 3, 4 and level 5 infractions | No LSC in Schools |Abeyance contracts use

- In 2009 – 2010 we served 192 students, 124 middle school students and 68 high school students.

- 35% of our students this year were Ex Ed.
- MS demographics:
 - White = 72
 - African American =11
 - Hispanic / Latino =72
 - Native American =12
 - Native Hawaiian or other PI =0
 - Total MS Students =124
- HS demographics:
 - White = 13
 - African American =12
 - Hispanic / Latino =40
 - Native American =3
 - Native Hawaiian or other PI =0
 - Total HS Students =68
- Other information:
 - 77 other students were referred to the Life Skills Alternative program but were referred to Distance Learning or were not able to attend due to transportation, incarceration, entered to a drug rehab facility, left the district or no contact was possible.

Life Skills Alternative to Suspension Program Research on Alternatives to Suspension

Alternatives to Suspension; Joel Rosch and Anne-Marie Iselin, Center for Child and Family Policy, Duke University, April, 2010

http://childandfamilypolicy.duke.edu/pdfs/familyimpact/2010/Alternatives_to_Suspension.pdf

The purpose of this brief is to inform policymakers of the range of evidence-based practices that can be adopted to reduce suspension rates without burdensome costs to schools. Overall, research suggests that there are various ways to limit the use of suspension and to mitigate its negative effects. These include programs that (1) prevent disruptive behaviors that lead to suspension, (2) offer alternatives to out-of-school suspension, and (3) mitigate the impact of suspension.

Why we should have an Alt to Susp program: While the value of middle school is generally acknowledged, research suggests that suspension at the middle school level may have significant long-term repercussions. A recent study conducted by Robert Balfanz of Johns Hopkins University provides one of the most comprehensive efforts to connect the dots between youths that experience difficulty in school and those who wind up in prison. (Balfanz 2003). By carefully chronicling the educational paths of over 400 individuals incarcerated in ninth grade in one major northeastern city, Balfanz found that the youths most at risk of incarceration were clearly identifiable by middle school, and that nearly all had “struggled profoundly” in school.

Suspended Education: Urban Schools in Crisis http://www.njcn.org/uploads/digital-library/Suspended_Education_SPLC_2010.pdf

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Research Brief: Alternatives to Suspension <http://gearup.ous.edu/sites/default/files/Research-Briefs/ResearchBriefAlternativesToSuspension.pdf>

In a Nutshell

Suspension from school is directly related to student learning. When students are suspended from school they are deprived of instructional time. Often the students that are suspended most frequently are those behind academically. Principals have worked with their staff to identify several alternatives to school suspension. First and foremost, is the importance of a clear discipline code that supports positive student behavior. It is also important to be proactive rather than reactive and to build capacity for appropriate student behavior.

From: <http://www.educationpartnerships.org/>

Evaluation of Effectiveness of Alternative to Suspension: ProQuest LLC, 2011

There was a significant difference in the increase in the returning ACE (Achievement Character Excellence) and OSS students' GPA, improved behavior and credit retrieval. These results are in favor of the ACE program.

<http://eric.ed.gov/?q=effectiveness+of+alternative+to+suspension+programs&id=ED534766>

“Key Components of Dropout Prevention” from Essential Tools: Increasing Rates of School Completion; Natl. Center on Secondary Education and Transitions;

<http://www.ncset.org/publications/essentialtools/dropout/part1.5.asp>

- Personal/affective (e.g., retreats designed to enhance self-esteem, regularly scheduled classroom-based discussion, individual counseling, participation in an interpersonal relations class);
- Academic (e.g., provision of special academic courses, individualized methods of instruction, tutoring);
- Family outreach (e.g., strategies that include increased feedback to parents or home visits);
- School structure (e.g., implementation of school within a school, re-definition of the role of the homeroom teacher, reducing class size, creation of an alternative school); and
- Work related (e.g., vocational training, participation in volunteer or service programs).

Alternative to suspension program’s potential to impact drop out rates:

Sent Home and Put Off-Track: The Antecedents, Disproportionalities, and Consequences of Being Suspended in the Ninth Grade

Robert Balfanz, Vaughan Byrnes, and Joanna Fox; Everyone Graduates Center, School of Education, Johns Hopkins University <http://civilrightsproject.ucla.edu/resources/projects/center-for-civil-rights-remedies/school-to-prison-folder/state-reports/sent-home-and-put-off-track-the-antecedents-disproportionalities-and-consequences-of-being-suspended-in-the-ninth-grade/balfanz-sent-home-ccrr-conf-2013.pdf>

“...but 49% of students who entered high school with three suspensions on their record eventually dropped out of school, according to "[Sent Home and Put Off Track](#)," a new report by Robert Balfanz of Johns Hopkins University.”

National Drop Out Prevention Center/Network Model Program: Prevention Not Suspension 468 Boyle Road; Port Jefferson Statin, NY 11776

http://www.dropoutprevention.org/modelprograms/show_program.php?pid=217 “Prevention Not Suspension is an alternative high school program for high-risk youth grade 9-12. We aim to help youth on suspension and those in danger of suspension continue their education. We provide both academic support as well as social/emotional learning.” The TUSD LSASP program is very similar to this program.

A Comprehensive Model of School Violence Prevention: <http://www.indiana.edu/~safeschl/cmodel.html>

Recently, a comprehensive model of preventive discipline has begun to emerge as the model most likely to successfully address the complexity of emotional and behavioral problems in schools⁴. The approach, grounded in the belief that there is no single solution to school violence, prescribes intervention at three levels:

I. Creating a Safe and Responsive School Climate.

To some degree all students require instruction in appropriate methods of solving problems. At the level of school climate, preventive programs such as bullying prevention and conflict resolution teach all students alternatives to violence for resolving conflict.

II. Early

Identification and Intervention.

The tragic school shootings of the last three years have highlighted the importance of attending to early warning signs of violence. When used to provide help rather than to profile, early identification is a critical

component of school violence prevention.

III. Effective Responses to Disruption and Crisis.

School violence prevention demands that we be prepared for the eventuality of violence. Schools that are safe and responsive have plans and procedures in place to deal with violent and disruptive behaviors that may occur. Over-reliance on suspension and expulsion is replaced by an extensive array of options that can be matched to the severity of the offense