

APPENDIX VI – 47

August 8, 2016

To: Parties

From: Bill Hawley

Subject: First-cut Report on the Extent and Disproportionality of Disciplinary Actions

Introduction

The District has very recently provided John Robertson and me with general information about discipline over the last four years in four categories--in-school (IS), in-school suspension (ISS) short term out-of-school suspension (STOSS) and long-term OSS (LTOSS). These data are for incidents (actions) rather than discreet students. For the purposes of this step in the analysis. I looked at trends in incidents. Obviously, we need both measures; each may have different implications.

Disproportionality

Initial analysis of the incident data indicates that the percentage of disciplinary actions involving AA students is greater in all four categories than the percentage of AA students in the District. This is not the case for white or Latino students except that in 2012-13 and 2013-14 Latino student were likely to be suspended more than their representation suggested. For AA students, over representation declines somewhat in 2015-16, but 2014-15 was a "high point" in AA over-representation. See Table 1. It is important to note that some of the apparent over-representation, may be due to greater numbers of incidents for individual AA students, a possibility we will examine when those data are available.

Table 1
Disproportionality in Incidences of Disciplinary Action
2012-13 to 2015-16

Table 1 shows the difference between the percentage of African American, Latino, and White students in the District and the percentage of incidences in which students in each race were disciplined in each of four categories of discipline.

		2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
In school Discipline	AA	+7	+10	+11	+7
	L	-2	-7	-11	-6
	W	-3	-1	0	-1
In school Suspension	AA	+8	+11	+11	+11
	L	-5	-5	-7	-7
	W	-4	-4	-4	-4
Short term Out of school Suspension	AA	+7	+10	+12	+8
	L	-5	-7	-12	-7
	W	-2	-1	0	-2
Long term Out of school Suspension	AA	+4	+8	+10	+9
	L	+2	+3	-6	-9
	W	-6	-9	-5	-1

Extent of Disciplinary Action

Overall, there has been a dramatic drop in the amount of disciplinary action (as a percentage of action compared to percentage of total students) between 2014-15 and 2015-16; 43.3% to 29.7 %.

There were about 710 fewer students in TUSD in 2015-16, but there were 7,547 fewer disciplinary actions. The biggest change came in in-school suspension. In 2014-15 there were 2683 ISS, in 2015-16 there were 589. There was a drop of 78 percent in short-term suspension. Long term suspensions were cut in half—from 298 to 145.

The District attributes the drop in disciplinary action to the following:

1. After discussions with the DOJ, certain offenses were reclassified to a lower level of infraction resulting in fewer offenses for which suspension was an option. But, the number of in-school disciplinary actions also dropped—by 23%.
2. The 2015-16 count of suspensions no longer includes the instances where in-school interventions have replaced in-school suspensions, consistent with the district's emphasis on positive alternatives to suspensions.
3. The number of in-school disciplinary actions dropped because of increased emphasis and training on restorative practices, PBIS and addressing in-classroom behaviors through the MTSS process.
4. Long-term suspensions dropped because of expansion of DAEP. With this program, students were removed from the general population but remained in a classroom environment and continued receiving daily instruction.

Conclusion

These data need more work and data on the number of individual students will be helpful. Of course, we need to look at the data by school and the characteristics of described offenses.

Many school districts are substantially decreasing the number of suspensions, especially OSS. If these big changes in TUSD are the result of effective practices that in schools and classrooms and misbehavior is occurring much less frequently, the District deserves kudos.