



Family and Community Directory of Federal School Climate and Discipline Resources: 2017 Update

U.S. Department of Education

Why are School Climate and Discipline Important?

School climate reflects how members of the school community experience the school. Positive school climates help students stay engaged, learn, and maintain respectful, trusting relationships with each other and school staff. While various practices, conditions, and norms have influence over school climate, a school's discipline policies and practices can send a clear message to students as to whether they are valued in the school community and whether they are seen as partners in their education.

School discipline practices that remove children from schools and classrooms – such as suspension and expulsion – hinder students' ability to learn. Nearly three million K-12 students nationwide received at least one out-of-school suspension in the 2013-2014 school year. Suspensions are linked to poor academic performance, higher dropout rates, lower graduation rates, decreased academic engagement, and increased risk of involvement with the juvenile justice system. Suspensions have been proven to be ineffective ways of improving student behavior or school climate. Additionally, suspensions are not distributed equitably in many school districts across the nation. Often students of color, those with disabilities, and male students bear the brunt of the burden.

Fortunately, research shows that there are practices that support students' physical safety and emotional well-being, while contributing to a positive school climate. These practices can reconnect students to their school environments, particularly historically marginalized groups.

Who Should Use this Directory?

This directory is designed to support families and community members – including parents of students, local advocates, community-based organizations, and other stakeholders invested in student outcomes – in improving school discipline practices. Because families and communities feel the impact of school policies, these groups are integral to the process of creating and implementing discipline practice.

Improving school discipline requires a shift in mindset and practice, as well as strong community leaders who share a commitment to helping kids stay in school. Families have a critical role in communicating the broad and varied effects of school discipline within their homes. Such stakeholders can work with school staff and local officials to create fair, positive discipline environments for all students.

How to Use this Directory

The U.S. Department of Education has laid out three [Guiding Principles](#) to help communities improve school discipline practice: 1) positive school climates; 2) clear, appropriate, and consistent expectations and consequences; and 3) equity and continuous improvement. This directory contains resources to help families and communities become active partners in the creation of supportive school environments.

Directory Resource Topics

- Capacity Building Tools
- Data Measurement and Reporting
- Policy Guidance
- Technical Assistance

Capacity Building Tools

Federal agencies have funded the development of a variety of products to inform families and communities about the relevance of school climate and discipline to the school experience. The items below are intended to provide families and communities with tools and strategies to help these groups become partners in the effort to create safer, more supportive school environments.

Title and Link	Topics Covered	Applicable Populations	Description
Charter School Discipline: Examples of Policies and School Climate Efforts from the Field https://www.charterschoolcenter.org/sites/default/files/files/field_publication_attachment/Disipline%20Report_0.pdf	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Climate and prevention Equity and continuous improvement 	General student body	This product focuses on charter schools which honor their missions using inclusive disciplinary practices. Additionally, the report discusses academic gains that can follow school climate improvement.
Guiding Principles: A Resource Guide for Improving School Climate and Discipline https://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/school-discipline/guiding-principles.pdf	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Climate and prevention Clear, appropriate, and consistent expectations Equity and continuous improvement 	General student body	This resource focuses on the creation of safe and productive learning environments, including the intentional development of safe climates and prevention of misbehavior, adherence to clear and consistent expectations, and evaluation to improve the equity of school environments.
Restraint and Seclusion: Resource Document https://www2.ed.gov/policy/seclusion/restraints-and-seclusion-resources.pdf	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Climate and prevention Clear, appropriate, and consistent expectations Equity and continuous improvement 	General student body with a focus on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disconnected youth/students Students with disabilities 	This document outlines 15 principles for educational stakeholders around the use of restraint and seclusion. It strives to promote students' dignity and limit the use of physical restraint to only situations in which there is immediate danger.
Safe School-based Enforcement through Collaboration, Understanding, and Respect https://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/school-discipline/files/sro-local-implementation-rubric.pdf	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Climate and prevention Clear, appropriate, and consistent expectations Equity and continuous improvement 	General student body	This policy guide and rubric includes action steps to ensure that school resource officers (SROs) are involved in the creation of safe school climates. Steps range from ensuring that local school-police agreements are constitutional to recognizing good performance from SROs.
Supportive School Discipline e-Digest http://ssdcop.neglected-delinquent.org/subscribe-ssdedigest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Climate and prevention Equity and continuous improvement 	General student body with a focus on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students of Color 	This newsletter addresses school climate and discipline issues with a variety of resources including news, recommendations, and events.

Data, Measurement, and Reporting

As part of any effort to improve school climate and discipline practices, it is imperative that families and communities are kept informed about the implementation of new approaches, diagnosis of emerging issues, and progress of school climate improvement efforts. Federal agencies provide a range of products to help families and communities understand data relevant to school climate and discipline practices, including data briefs, interpretation guides, and other tools. This section highlights the most significant products that may assist families and communities with data-informed reflection and decision making.

Title and Link	Topics Covered	Applicable Populations	Description
Civil Rights Data Collection (CRDC) http://ocrdata.ed.gov	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Climate and prevention Equity and continuous improvement 	General student body with a focus on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disconnected youth/students Dual language learners LGBTQ* youth Students of color Students with disabilities 	This tool from the U.S. Department of Education’s Office for Civil Rights provides detailed data and reports, at the school and district level, based on data around equity, disability, language learner status, and more. Data include measures of proficiency, discipline, and disparities. Reports are also available at the state and national levels.
Civil Rights Data Collection (CRDC): A First Look 2013-2014 https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/2013-14-first-look.pdf	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Climate and prevention Equity and continuous improvement 	General student body with a focus on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dual language learners Male students Students of color 	This report covers student discipline, restraint and seclusion, early learning, college and career readiness, absenteeism, education in justice facilities, and staff equity, using 2013-2014 CRDC data.

*LGBTQ refers to students who are Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and/or Queer

Policy Guidance

To encourage the creation of safe supportive learning environments and compliance with applicable laws, federal agencies have compiled relevant state statutes and clarified federal laws to address specific emerging issues. These include bullying and discipline, as well as their implications for schools’ civil rights liability. The following are the primary policies and guidance the federal and state governments have developed related to school climate and discipline.

Title and Link	Topics Covered	Applicable Populations	Description
Dear Colleague Letter: Charter Schools https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/letters/colleague-201405-charter.pdf	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Climate and prevention Clear, appropriate, and consistent expectations Equity and continuous improvement 	General student body with a focus on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Elementary to high school Dual language learners Students of color Students with disabilities 	This letter details expectations for how charter schools must comply with Federal civil rights laws with regard to admissions, discipline, and inclusion

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Dear Colleague Letter: Nondiscriminatory Administration of School Discipline https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/letters/colleague-201401-title-vi.pdf	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climate and prevention • Clear, appropriate, and consistent expectations • Equity and continuous improvement 	General student body with a focus on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disconnected youth/students • Dual language learners • Students of color 	This guidance focuses on making school discipline procedures more equitable for students of various racial/ethnic groups.
Dear Colleague Letter: Preventing Racial Discrimination in Special Education https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/letters/colleague-201612-racedisc-special-education.pdf	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climate and prevention • Clear, appropriate, and consistent expectations • Equity and continuous improvement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students of color • Students with disabilities 	This letter offers guidance to teachers, school staff, and administrators on reducing racial disparities in special education. It covers issues around access, impact, discipline, and legal framework.
Dear Colleague Letter: Restraint and Seclusion of Students with Disabilities https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/letters/colleague-201612-504-restraint-seclusion-ps.pdf	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climate and prevention • Clear, appropriate, and consistent expectations • Equity and continuous improvement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elementary to High School • Students with disabilities 	This letter interprets data to show how the use of restraint or seclusion may result in discrimination against students with disabilities. It provides guidance around the regulations that protect students with disabilities regarding discipline.
Dear Colleague Letter and Resource Guide: Students with Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/letters/colleague-201607-504-adhd.pdf	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climate and prevention • Clear, appropriate, and consistent expectations • Equity and continuous improvement 	Students with disabilities	This letter provides teachers, school staff, and administrators with information and policy guidance around students with ADHD, as well as section 504.

Compilations and Technical Assistance Centers

Federal agencies fund several technical assistance centers that serve a variety of audiences and topics, many of which are related to improving school climate and discipline directly or indirectly. Technical assistance centers provide a range of services, which may include direct, or Web-, or phone-based assistance; resource sharing; websites with valuable research and resources; and, in some case, on-site support to schools, districts, and states.

Title and Link	Topics Covered	Applicable Populations	Description
Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center http://ectacenter.org/default.asp	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climate and prevention • Clear, appropriate, consistent expectations • Equity and continuous improvement 	Pre-K children	This center provides families, educators, and policymakers with resources around early childhood climate. By searching expulsion or suspension, one can find several resources on discipline as well.

Title and Link	Topics Covered	Applicable Populations	Description
Equity Assistance Centers https://www2.ed.gov/programs/equitycenters/contacts.html	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climate and prevention • Clear, appropriate, and consistent expectations • Equity and continuous improvement 	General student body with a focus on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dual language learners • Female students • LGBTQ students • Male students • Migrant students • Students of color 	These centers offer resources and training to public school districts around race, sex, national origin, and religion to promote equitable education opportunities.
National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments (NCSSLE) https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climate and prevention • Clear, appropriate, consistent expectations • Equity and continuous improvement 	General student body with a focus on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elementary to high school • Disconnected youth/students • Dual language learners • LGBTQ students • Students of color • Students with disabilities 	This TA center contains comprehensive training and resources for states, schools, and other stakeholders working to improve conditions for learning.
National Clearinghouse on Families and Youth https://ncfy.acf.hhs.gov/	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climate and prevention • Clear, appropriate, consistent expectations • Equity and continuous improvement 	General student body with a focus on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LGBTQ students • Students of color 	This clearinghouse contains a variety of resources related to school climate and discipline, especially relating to LGBTQ students and the school to prison pipeline. Information includes research summaries, toolkits, organizing guides, and more.
National Resource Center for Mental Health Promotion and Youth Violence Prevention http://www.healthysafechildren.org/	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climate and prevention • Clear, appropriate, consistent expectations • Equity and continuous improvement 	General student body with a focus on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-k to high school • Disconnected youth/students • Students with disabilities • Students of color 	This TA center provides materials to states, districts, communities, and schools to promote the mental health and well-being of children and youth, including strategies for violence prevention.
Promote Prevent Positive School Discipline Resources/Tools http://positiveschooldiscipline.promoteprevent.org/about-us	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climate and prevention • Clear, appropriate, consistent expectations • Equity and continuous improvement 	General student body with a focus on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disconnected youth & students • Dual language learners • Students of color • Students with disabilities 	This website’s “Resources” & “Tools” pages include research briefs, action guides, templates, tools that help schools, families, and communities understand positive school discipline. Users can either browse the pages or search for resources based on content and setting.

Title and Link	Topics Covered	Applicable Populations	Description
Youth.gov http://www.youth.gov/youth-topics/school-climate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climate and prevention • Clear, appropriate, consistent expectations • Equity and continuous improvement 	General student body with a focus on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disconnected youth & students • Students of color • Students with disabilities 	This website's "School Climate" page includes various resources and data on school climate, school safety, and discipline practices.