

Act 522 Advisory Council on Student Behavior & Discipline  
2016 Annual Report

**1. Overview**

The Act 522 Advisory Council on Student Behavior & Discipline (ACSBD) was created pursuant to statute in the 2016 Regular Legislative Session. The purpose of the ACSBD is to provide advice and guidance to the state Board of Elementary and Secondary Education and the state Department of Education regarding best practices in providing support to public school governing authorities in the adoption and implementation of each school’s master plan for student behavior and discipline as provided in R.S. § 17:252.

Per Act 522, the ACSBD shall annually submit a written report to the Senate Committee on Education, the House Committee on Education, and the state Board of Elementary and Secondary Education regarding its findings and recommendations with respect to the implementation of school mater plans for improving student behavior and discipline as provided in R.S. § 17:252.

Per statutory requirements, the ACSBD convened three meetings in the 2016 calendar year: September 16, December 2, and December 9. Per statute, the following agencies and organizations have appointed the following members to the ACSBD, who elected member Jennifer Coco as Chair during the inaugural September 16 meeting.

<b>Seat</b>	<b>Appointee</b>	<b>Work Title</b>
State Superintendent of Education or Designee	<b>Michael Comeaux</b>	Health and PE Coordinator, DOE
Elementary Principal or asst. principal appointed by LA Principal's Assoc. (LPA)	<b>Diane Smith</b>	Principal, South Thibodaux Elemenatary
Middle School Principal or asst. principal appointed by LPA	<b>Greg Gauthier</b>	Assist. Principal, Oak Park Middle School
High School Principal or asst. principal appointed by LPA	<b>Rob Schlicher</b>	Assist. Principal, New Iberia Senior High School
District Superintendent appointed by LA Association of School Superintendents (LASS)	<b>Kevin George</b>	Superintendent, St. John School System
Child Welfare and Attendance Officer appointed by LASS	<b>Brad Prudhomme</b>	Student Services, Vermilion Parish
Safe and drug-free schools coordinator appointed by LASS	<b>Al Simmons</b>	Child Welfare & Attendance Human Resources Supervisor, Winn Parish
Pupil Appraisal Coordinator appointed by LASS	<b>Michael Ortego</b>	Special Education Psychologist, Jefferson Davis Parish
Director of Special Ed appointed by LA Assoc of Special Education Administrators	<b>Larry Gage</b>	Coordinating Supervisor of Special Education, Vermilion Parish
Parent of child with challenging behavior appointed by the LA Developmental Disabilities Council (LA DDC)	<b>Liz Gary</b>	Parent
Parent of child with exceptionalities, other than gifted and talented appointed by LA DDC	<b>Julie Comeaux</b>	Parent

<b>Seat</b>	<b>Appointee</b>	<b>Work Title</b>
Parent of child with exceptionalities, other than gifted and talented appointed by LA DDC	<b>Shawn McCants</b>	Parent
One member appointed by the LA DDC	<b>Shawn Fleming</b>	Assist. Director, DD Council
One member appointed by the LA Advocacy Center	<b>Debra Weinberg</b>	Staff Attorney with LA Advocacy Center
One member appointed by the LA School Boards Association	<b>Scott Richard</b>	Executive Director
One member appointed by the LA Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges	<b>Judge Kim Stansbury</b>	City Court of Morgan City
DHH Secretary or Designee	<b>Daphne Robinson</b>	MCH Special Projects Coordinator
One classroom teacher appointed by LFT	<b>Angela Reams-Brown</b>	Teacher
One classroom teacher appointed by LAE	<b>Prudence Spooner</b>	Teacher
One classroom teacher appointed by APEL	<b>JoAnn Achord</b>	Teacher, Ascension Parish
One member appointed by the Southern Poverty Law Center	<b>Jennifer Coco</b>	Senior Staff Attorney
One member appointed by the LA Assoc of Public Charter Schools	<b>Roy McCoy</b>	Beekman Charter School in Morehouse Parish
One member appointed by the LA Center for Children's Rights	<b>Rachel Gassert</b>	LCCR Policy Director
One member appointed by the LA Parent Teacher Assoc.	<b>Sherlyn Shumpert</b>	Parent

## **2. Data regarding Student Behavior and Discipline in the 2015-2016 school year**

### ***a. Information Requested, Received, and Pending***

To fully study the issue of student behavior and discipline and make informed recommendations, the ACSBD requested significant data from the Louisiana Department of Education (DOE) regarding various aspects of school discipline.<sup>1</sup> Data noted with an asterisk (\*) has been requested of DOE, and DOE is working to provide it in 2017.

- State guidelines regarding discipline data coding and definitions of various discipline data codes;
- Student demographics disaggregated by race/ethnicity, IEP eligibility, and Section 504 Plan eligibility;
- Disciplinary removal data disaggregated by state, district (Local Educational Agency or "LEA"), and school site
- Disciplinary removal data above further disaggregated by grade and also by subgroup (race, gender, disability, and Limited English Proficient (LEP) status) and then cross-tabulated across subgroups (i.e., compare race and gender together)\*

<sup>1</sup> Where the federal *Family Educational Rights & Privacy Act* (FERPA) and State privacy laws prohibit disclosure of any requested information, the ACSBD requests that the data entry indicate "less than or equal to 10," and/or otherwise comply with all laws and regulations.

- (subgroup disciplinary data received at state and LEA level, but not yet by site nor cross-tabulated across subgroups)
- Disaggregation and ranking of all disciplinary infractions by primary infraction code
- Breakdown of each infraction code by subgroup (race, gender, disability, LEP status)\*
- Data regarding the number of students suspended or expelled that were later evaluated for special education eligibility\*
- Data on disciplinary removals of students with exceptionalities disaggregated by IDEA eligibility code\*
- Data on incidents of Seclusion and Restraint data disaggregated by LEA, with incidents further disaggregated to separately distinguish rates of seclusion from rates of restraint, and separately LEP status.\*
- Data on students referred to Law Enforcement and/or Arrested for incidents occurring at school, disaggregated by LEA, site, and by grade; and also disaggregated by subgroup and cross-tabulated. Additionally, data on the infraction codes that resulted in referral to law enforcement and/or arrest.\*
- Data regarding incidents of Corporal Punishment, disaggregated by LEA, site, and by grade; and further disaggregated by subgroup (race, gender, disability, LEP status).\*

**b. Notable Observations from the 2015-2016 school year discipline data**

**Suspensions – Observations regarding Rates & Disproportionalities**

With regards to suspensions of students in grades Pre-Kindergarten through third grade, data for the 2015-16 school year reflects that 7,895 Pre-Kindergarten through third grade students were suspended out of school and 6,113 students were suspended in school. While the corresponding rates are low (less than 5%), some members of the ACSBD noted concern that thousands of children under 10 years old would be suspended at all, in lieu of an in-school consequence being implemented.

With regards to out-of-school suspensions, ninth graders experienced the largest *number* of out-of-school suspensions of any grade, with 8,664 ninth-grade students suspended out of school at least once (14.5% of all ninth-graders). However, Transitional 9<sup>th</sup> Grade (“T9”) had the highest *rate* of out-of-school suspensions of any grade, with 31.8% of T9 students suspended out of school at least once (891 students).

With regards to in-school suspensions, tenth graders experienced the largest *number* of in-school suspensions of any grade, with 8,756 tenth-grade students suspended in school at least once (16.3% of all tenth-graders). However, Transitional 9<sup>th</sup> grade had the highest *rate* of in-school suspensions of any grade, with 36.9% of all T9 students suspended in-school at least once (1033 students).

The following disproportionalities were documented:

- African-American students were suspended out of school at rates 2.5 times higher than white students, and at rates 1.5 times higher than the state average out-of-school suspension rate.

Similarly, African-American students were suspended in school at rates 2.2 times higher than white students, and at rates 1.5 times higher than the state average in-school suspension rate.<sup>2</sup>

- Students with exceptionalities eligible under the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act* (IDEA) for Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) were suspended out of school at rates nearly 1.5 times higher than students without exceptionalities.<sup>3</sup>
- Students with disabilities eligible for Section 504 Individualized Accommodation Plans (IAPs) were suspended out of school and in school at rates 2 times higher those of students without Section 504 Plans.<sup>4</sup>

### **Reasons for Student Discipline – Observations regarding infraction codes**

The ACSBD received data regarding the student infractions that led to disciplinary consequences.

In PreK-3<sup>rd</sup> grade, the top infractions leading to disciplinary consequences were:

1. Willful disobedience
2. Exhibits injurious conduct (*different than below*)
3. Instigates/Participates in fights
4. Disturbs the school and violates rules
5. Treats Authority with disrespect

For PreK-12<sup>th</sup> grade, the top infractions leading to disciplinary consequences were:

1. Willful disobedience
2. Instigates/participates in fights
3. Disturbs school and violates rules
4. Treats Authority with disrespect
5. Leaves school premises without permission (*different than above*)

The ACSBD requested and the DOE provided a copy of the “Student Information System (SIS) User Guide,” 2016-17 Version 3.0, which sets out a comprehensive list of codes for various student infractions available to LEAs when reporting to the DOE. Specifically, Appendix E at pages 220-222 documents forty-nine different “reason codes,” or types of student

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<sup>2</sup> 12.4% of African-American students were suspended out of school at least once, compared to a rate of 4.9% of white students and 7.97% of all students. 13.8% of African-American students were suspended in-school at least once, compared to a rate of 6.2% of white students, and 9.33% of all students.

<sup>3</sup> 11.4% of all students with IEPs were suspended out of school at least once, compared to a rate of 7.8% of all students without exceptionalities. Rates of in-school suspension were nearly identical between students with IEPs and students with no exceptionalities, resulting in no substantial disproportionality (9.9% of students with IEPs, compared to 9.5% students without exceptionalities).

<sup>4</sup> 16.1% of all students with Section 504 Plans were suspended out of school at least once, compared to a rate of 7.7% of all students without Section 504 plans. 17.4% of all students with Section 504 Plans were suspended in school at least once, compared to a rate of 9% of all students without Section 504 plans.

infractions, from which LEAs can select when reporting student misbehavior that necessitated a disciplinary consequence.

The SIS User Guide, Appendix E defines each of the forty-nine infractions. A DOE representative could not speak to the origin of the forty-nine codes nor their definitions, but it is likely that various federal and state laws and discipline-related programs with reporting requirements have contributed to their existence. Notably, state law at R.S. § 17:416 does not provide definitions for these various student infractions, nor enumerate each of the forty-nine reason codes. At different points, ACSBD members repeatedly discussed the lack of definitions in state law, particularly as it related to the student infraction of “Willful Disobedience,” but the ACSBD has not reached any Official Recommendations on the topic.

### **Expulsion Data – Observations regarding Data Coding**

The ACSBD observed that Expulsion data is split between three different expulsion codes: “Out-of-School Expulsion,” “Alternate Site Expulsion,” and “In-school Expulsion.” The ACSBD inquired into the underlying definitions of these expulsion codes and how they differentiated from one another; in response, the DOE provided its “Student Information System (SIS) User Guide,” 2016-17 Version 3.0. A review of the “SIS User Guide” revealed reference to these three expulsion codes at page 74, but no underlying definitions. A similar review of state statutes and regulations failed to provide any definitions or reference to the three different “types” of expulsions.

The ACSBD made several observations about the expulsion data.

On the issue of “Alternate Site Expulsion” vs. “In-School Expulsion,” out of 127 total LEAs, 27 LEAs reported identical data for Alternate Site Expulsions and In-School Expulsions; 4 LEAs reported In-School Expulsions but no Alternate site Expulsions; 35 LEAs reported different numbers for both In-School and Alternate Site expulsions; and 109 LEAs reported zero expulsions under either code. With no state-level definitions differentiating between In-School and Alternate Site suspensions, expulsion data is being reported in a variety of ways across LEAs that makes it difficult to determine an accurate picture of student expulsions statewide.

On the issue of “Out of School Expulsions,” the ACSBD referenced R.S. § 17:416.2, which mandates that all expelled students shall remain under the supervision of the governing educational authority using alternative education programs. Thus, the ACSBD discussed the relevancy of the “Out of School expulsion” code and whether, pursuant to state law, a student could truly be expelled out of school when state law mandated his continued education at an alternative education program. Notably, out of 127 LEAs, 61 LEAs coded expulsions using the “Out of School Expulsions” code, of which 34 LEAs used this “Out of School Expulsions” code exclusively to report their expulsions.

### **Restraint & Seclusion – Observations regarding Incidents & Fidelity of LEA Reporting**

Pursuant to Act 522 of the 2015 Legislative Session, the DOE is required to collect data on the use of seclusion and restraint practices on students with disabilities. DOE summarized the data received for its first reporting period, the 2015-2016 school year. Out of 138 LEAs, 28 submitted data on seclusion and restraint (or 20%) to the DOE.

Amongst the 28 LEAs who reported data, there were a documented 1,180 incidents of seclusion and restraint applied to 206 students with disabilities, or roughly 5 instances of seclusion or restraint per each student with a disability of those reported. These reported incidents reflect .2% of the population of students with disabilities in Louisiana. Of the documented 206 students with disabilities who experienced either seclusion and/or restraint, the ACSBD documented the following:

- Students with emotional disturbance (21%), other health impairments (17%), and autism (13%) experienced the most instances of seclusion and restraint, respectively, when instances are disaggregated by IDEA eligibility classification.
- Students with disabilities aged ten (17%) and eleven (16%) experienced the most instances of seclusion and restraint, when instances are disaggregated by student age.
- African-American students received 52% of the documented instances of seclusion and restraint, when instances are disaggregated amongst seven classifications of race/ethnicity.
- Male students received 69% of the documented instances of seclusion and restraint, when instances are disaggregated by gender.

Multiple members of the ACSBD expressed concerns that there are significantly more instances of seclusion and restraint that are occurring but not reported to the DOE. The ACSBD has not yet reached any official recommendations with regards to fidelity of data reporting on this specific issue (see more below).

### **Integrity of Discipline Data – Observations regarding Fidelity of Reporting Practices**

At the December 2, 2016 meeting, the ACSBD asked the DOE to provide information regarding data reporting practices, and specifically inquired into DOE's practices regarding data integrity. The ACSBD learned that the DOE does make inquiries to LEAs if the data looks unusual. The ACSBD did not learn of any formal data audit policies. The ACSBD also learned that in the event an LEA fails to respond to a data request, the DOE will send reminders regarding the data collection and keep logs of contacts with LEAs regarding their need to report data; however, the DOE is not formally empowered to put in place any consequences should an LEA fail to report data. If the DOE does not receive responsive data, "zeroes" are entered rather than a notation of "no response." Thus, it is unclear how many entities may have failed to report data versus had no disciplinary removals. A review of the 2015-2016 discipline data shows that

46 K-12 school sites<sup>5</sup> (out of over 1400) reported “zeros” for all categories of disciplinary removals, of which 17 are charter schools.

The ACSBD agreed on the need for further discussion of discipline data and its integrity, based on the previously discussed DOE’s “primary reason codes” to categorize student infractions; the codes to categorize expulsions; the documented reporting of seclusion and restraint incidents; and the DOE’s ability to procure data from non-responsive entities. Accordingly, the ACSBD will take the following actions in 2017 to continue the discussion:

1. The ACSBD has asked the DOE to provide recommendations for necessary changes or amendments to current discipline data coding in its SIS User Guide.
2. The ACSBD has asked the DOE to provide further information on how it currently handles integrity of data that appears incomplete or inaccurate.
3. The ACSBD has moved to create a subcommittee that will work with DOE on improving data integrity and streamlining data coding, upon receiving the DOE’s initial recommendations.

### **3. Information Received by the ACSBD:**

The ACSBD has received the following statutes, regulations, and public reports to guide and inform the council’s work:

- R.S. § 17:252
- Act 136 (Senate Bill 527) of the 2010 Legislative Session (*vetoed*)
- Act 1225 of the 2003 Legislative Session
- State Board of Elem. & Sec. Educ., “Response to Senate Resolution 130 of the 2015 Regular Session”
- State Board of Elem. & Sec. Educ., “Response to Senate Concurrent Resolution 134 of the 2014 Regular Session”
- U.S. Dep’t. of Educ., “Louisiana Compilation of School Discipline Laws & Regulations” (January 12, 2016)
- U.S. Dep’t. of Educ., Office of Elem. & Sec. Educ., “Non-Regulatory Guidance: Student Support & Academic Enrichment Grants,” Washington D.C. (2016), *available at* <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/essa/index.html>

The ACSBD invited and received information from the following speakers:

- **Mr. Frank Pasqua**  
**Director of Child Welfare & Attendance, Lafourche Parish Public Schools**

Mr. Frank Pasqua presented before the ACSBD on December 2, 2016 and December 9, 2016. He provided a document entitled “Recommendations for Revisions of R.S. § 17:416,” which

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<sup>5</sup> For purposes of this count, schools serving students who are hospitalized or adjudicated or schools serving children under five were excluded.

reflects many of the proposed revisions made by a previous advisory council around 2010. The ACSBD discussed the proposal with Mr. Pasqua at length, who answered many questions.

The ACSBD moved to create a working group that will continue to review these recommendations and present its own set of recommendations for revising R.S. 17:416 for the ACSBD's consideration. The working group will convene in 2017.

- **Dr. Alan Coulter**  
**Direct of Program Area, Louisiana State University Health Sciences Center, School of Allied Health Professions, Human Development Center**

Dr. Coulter serves as the Program Director for School-Age and Interdisciplinary Training at the LSU Human Development Center, where he has provided continuing professional development in more than 45 states and is currently licensed as a psychologist in Louisiana. Dr. Coulter presented before the ACSBD on December 9, 2016, and was asked to provide information on "Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports" (PBIS) programming and implementation.

Dr. Coulter summarized scientific research into child behavior and its relationship to academic performance, as well as the importance and impact of school staff:

- Student behavior/discipline and their academic performance are inextricably intertwined.
- Student behavior/discipline interacts with the competencies of the adults who manage this behavior.
- Most inappropriate student behavior can be prevented by well-trained adults who systematically design learning environments (classrooms, etc.); teach, model, and reinforce expected behaviors; and respond proactively to infrequent challenging student behavior.
- In summary, student discipline issues cannot be meaningfully separated from the context of classroom task requirements and adult competencies in student behavior management and instructional delivery. Without well-trained adults, student behavior can be variable and frequently inappropriate.

Dr. Coulter addressed the concept of "zero tolerance" for student misbehavior, and discussed a 2008 study of its effectiveness as a disciplinary intervention:

- Researchers Skiba and Sprague concluded that "zero tolerance" policies for student misbehavior do not work, because exclusion from the learning environment may act as a reward for student misbehavior and not a deterrent or consequence.
- The researchers found that zero tolerance for student misbehavior failed to improve the school climate for other students in the classroom.
- Implementation of zero tolerance policies correlated with lower academic outcomes for students.

Dr. Coulter spoke to PBIS fundamentals, as well as its relationship to "Multi-Tiered Systems of Supports (MTSS):

- Structure in school induces the student behavior we want to see. PBIS is about creating that structure and school climate that models the behavior expected from students.

- PBIS consists of preventing undesirable behavior by defining and teaching expectations and positively reinforcing good behavior; having an effective MTSS program; and making data-based decisions like addressing known skill deficits for staff or tackling specific behavioral problems with students.
- PBIS is now a part of a bigger concept, known as “Multi-Tiered Systems of Supports,” or MTSS, which is referenced in the *Every Student Succeeds Act* (ESSA) at Title IX, Section 8002(33). MTSS is a comprehensive continuum of evidence-based, systemic practices to support a rapid response to students’ needs, with regular observation to facilitate data-based instructional decision-making. It consists of three tiers of interventions. ESSA provides multiple funding sources for districts and schools to implement MTSS.

Dr. Coulter also addressed necessary programming and training to appropriately implement effective interventions:

- To affect student behavior/discipline, attention must be directed at preparing adults to use evidence-based practices to manage student behavior, prevent inappropriate behavior, and react proactively to behavior crises when these occur. It’s very much about what we do to support adults.
- Evidence-based practices should always have a measure of the fidelity of implementation. Failure to measure implementation fidelity is a fundamental error in the leadership and support of educators.
- It has been well established that professional development without in-classroom follow-up and ongoing coaching is largely a waste of resources. Simply doing workshops will not work – the training, support, and observations must continue in the classroom.
- Effective PBIS programming takes 2-4 years to establish and secure meaningful, lasting buy-in from staff. The biggest barriers to appropriate PBIS implementation include lack of buy-in from the adults; insufficient modeling and support from school leadership; staff lacking a clear vision for how it will personally impact them; insufficient use of data regarding behavior and discipline; poor fidelity of implementation
- PBIS should not be said to be “in place” or “implemented” without publicly reported, routine monitoring on the fidelity of implementation, using well-established measures such as the “Benchmarks of Quality” (BoQ) or Standard Evaluation Tool (SET).
- With no mandatory monitoring of PBIS implementation, PBIS in Louisiana exists largely in name only without systematic, validated measurement of fidelity.

The ACSBD continued to discuss the implementation of PBIS in Louisiana at the December 9 meeting, and had also received information from the DOE on its PBIS programming at the September 16 meeting:

- Dr. Coulter informed the ACSBD that as of 2011, Louisiana ranked second in the nation for the number of schools implementing PBIS.
- Between 2011 and 2016, members of the ACSBD discussed how state-level funding for PBIS training and monitoring had been reduced or cut. Specifically, members discussed that statewide monitoring using the BoQ and SET tools had ended, leading to a decline in fidelity of implementation. Members also discussed that reduced training opportunities led to a new generation of school administrators with no leadership around PBIS implementation.

- The DOE stated that it does maintain funding for eight regional PBIS consortiums to serve districts and provide ongoing training. Each consortium must develop a Plan of Action for serving their region.
- The DOE stated that every LEA is expected to identify and support a PBIS district coordinator with implementation and expansion of PBIS, and every school is expected to establish a PBIS leadership team that sets a school improvement goal of implementing PBIS with fidelity.
- **Ms. Troi Bechet**  
**Executive Director and Founder, Center for Restorative Approaches (New Orleans)**

Ms. Bechet runs the Center for Restorative Approaches (CRA), which provides restorative justice programming to schools, amongst other entities. CRA both trains school administrators and educators on implementing restorative justice programs, and in some instances facilitates the restorative justice program directly in schools.

Ms. Bechet provided the following information about restorative approaches generally:

- Restorative Approaches are processes that proactively nurture healthy relationships and an obligation to community in order to prevent destructive conflict and address wrongdoing in ways that meet the needs of those impacted.
- Restorative approaches utilize a three-tiered process. At the universal, whole-school level, students and staff build relationships and develop social and emotional skills. At the middle, targeted tier, students and staff strengthen relationships by solving problems in the moment. At the intensive tier (about 1-5% of the population), students and staff repair relationships when conflict or wrongdoing occurs, through the use of restorative circles.
- The premise of restorative approaches in schools is that children must take accountability for their actions and accept responsibility for the harm they cause others. After undesirable, harmful, or hurtful student behavior has occurred, restorative approaches offer an alternative to suspension that holds students accountable for their harmful behavior.
- Restorative approaches require a paradigm shift for adults in a school, by asking adults to rethink how they exercise their authority in the disciplinary process and to refocus that authority on repairing harm and reinforcing a student's obligation to the school community through the restorative process.
- People are more likely to avoid and resolve conflict when they have care and regard for others and have established a pre-existing relationship. Restorative approaches build these relationships.
- Successful restorative approaches require the following: creation of a safe space where no harm can occur; commitment to build upon community; ensuring voluntary participation of all involved; promoting equality where everyone speaks and is heard; supporting people in resolving issues themselves; focusing on repairing harm and not dwelling on the rules that were broken; addressing the needs of those impacted by the wrongdoing;

separating the wrongdoing from the doer; ensuring everyone takes responsibility and acknowledges their part in the incident.

Ms. Bechet offered information about the success of the restorative approaches program in multiple Louisiana public schools:

- CRA has facilitated over 600 restorative circles in Louisiana public schools from 2009-2016. 96% of these restorative circles resulted in an agreement between the wrongdoer and the victim, and 86% of these agreements were fulfilled.
- One Jefferson Parish middle school adopted the program, and agreed to limit out-of-school suspensions to situations posing threats to safety. The principal was a strong proponent, the entire staff was trained, and one staff person was hired to continue training and facilitate restorative justice circles. After one semester, suspensions dropped 50%.
- Another Jefferson Parish middle school chose to adopt restorative approaches, and instead focus on the high rates of behavioral referrals by using restorative approaches to reduce referrals. The middle school reduced its referrals by 40%.
- A New Orleans middle school contracted with CRA directly to provide the restorative justice programming. Use of restorative justice led to a 50% reduction in incidents of violence at school, and reduced out-of-school suspension rates by 51%.
- Another New Orleans middle school principal noted that after attending the training, “relationships between adults and students ... shifted drastically,” and out-of-school suspension rate fell by over 65% at his school.
- Restorative justice circles were used to hold students accountable in the following ways: a student who bullied another student presented in front of the student body on bullying prevention; students who trashed a cafeteria had to clean for three weeks; and students who vandalized painted what they had destroyed.
- 40% of the students referred for restorative circles are students with disabilities. Restorative approaches can be scaled to the pre-school developmental level, making them available to a wide array of ages and cognitive abilities.

Ms. Bechet provided the following information on implementation requirements for schools:

- The biggest cost is staff time. CRA’s program involves 12 hours of training; CRA also offers a summer institute for training.
- Districts and schools will also likely need to change the student code of conduct to ensure restorative approaches are built in alongside other consequences. This prevents confusion and improves implementation.
- Good implementation requires buy-in from the school administration and strong leadership, as well as buy-in from teachers to refer students for restorative circles.
- Schools can improve buy-in by embedding restorative approaches into the school-wide PBIS program and discussing it at monthly PBIS meetings or grade-level staff meetings.

#### **4. Priority Issues for 2017 and beyond**

In addition to the above working groups formed to discuss issues of data integrity and proposing revisions to current statutes, the ACSBD has identified the following as Priority Issues for further study and discussion in 2017 and beyond.

- Teacher Training for New Educators & Ongoing Professional Development for Veteran Educators – determining whether new or improved programming is needed around classroom management, cultural competency, implicit bias, and conflict resolution to help educators address student behavior.
- Addressing & Remediating Disproportionalities in Disciplinary Removals – determining appropriate steps that schools and districts should take when they identify disproportionalities in disciplinary removals based on race, disability, and other equity indicators.
- Disciplinary Removals of Young Students (preK-3) – targeted discussion of developmentally appropriate interventions for children’s behavior, and available programming on the behavioral health needs of young children.
- PBIS Implementation statewide – determining whether there are barriers to increased fidelity of implementation Statewide, and improving coordination of efforts statewide.
- Addressing Mental Health Needs of Students – identifying evidence-based programming to address students’ mental and behavioral health needs at school, and determining whether there are statutory or regulatory barriers to identified programs and their staff accessing students at school.
- Restorative Approaches – identifying whether there are barriers to further implementation in public schools.
- Corporal Punishment – identifying the extent of corporal punishment practices occurring in Louisiana schools, and discussing its efficacy as a disciplinary tool for improving student behavior and discipline.