


4B – How to Use Discipline Data to Assess Disproportionality

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Acknowledgements

Center on PBIS Equitable Supports Workgroup (est. 2013)

Current Membership (2025-26)


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Learning Objectives


1. *Introduce a guide with a four-step problem-solving model for understanding disproportionality in school discipline*
2. *Select and calculate recommended metrics for identifying and progress monitoring disproportionality in school discipline*
3. *Use data to identify "vulnerable decision points" and other root causes of disproportionality*



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A Guide for Using Discipline Data to Assess and Address Disproportionality

This guide is available at the following URL:
<https://www.pbis.org/resource/discipline-disproportionality-problem-solving-a-data-guide-for-school-teams>




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Discipline Data Systems Needs

■ **Required** features:

- Consistent entry of ODR data and student race/ethnicity
- School enrollment by race/ethnicity
- Instantaneous access for school teams (not just district teams)
- Capability to disaggregate ODRs and patterns by race/ethnicity

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Discipline Data Systems Recommendations

■ **Recommended** features:

- Standardized ODR forms with a range of fields
 - Location, time of day, action taken
- Clear definitions of problem behaviors
- Clear guidance in discipline procedures
 - Administrator-managed vs. staff-managed
- Instantaneous graphing capability
- Capability to show graphs by race/ethnicity, IEP status, etc.
- Automatic calculation of disproportionality data

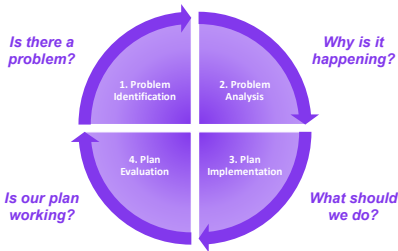
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Finding a Discipline Data System

- The School-Wide Information System (SWIS) meets these criteria
 - Available at <http://www.pbisapps.org/SWIS>

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4 Step Problem-Solving Model



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Selecting and Calculating Disproportionality Metrics



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Disproportionality Metrics

- Select and calculate key discipline outcomes
 - ODRs, suspensions, etc...
 - Multiple metrics are recommended (IDEA Data Center, 2014)

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Equity data can be confusing...



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Common Disproportionality Metrics

- Three recommended ways to measure disproportionality in school discipline:
 - Risk Index
 - Risk Ratio
 - Rates by Group

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Disproportionality Metric #1: Risk Index

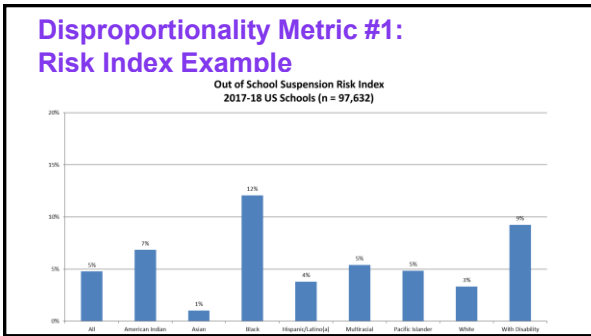
- Percent of a group that receives an ODR (i.e., risk for that outcome)

10 African American Students enrolled in school

$$\frac{\text{Black Students with 1+ ODRs}}{\text{Enrollment of Black Students}} = \frac{5}{10} = .50$$

FLPBIS Project

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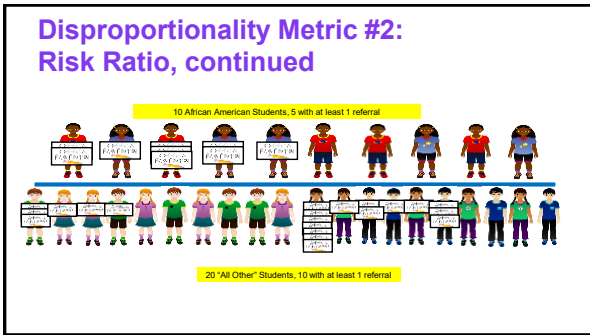


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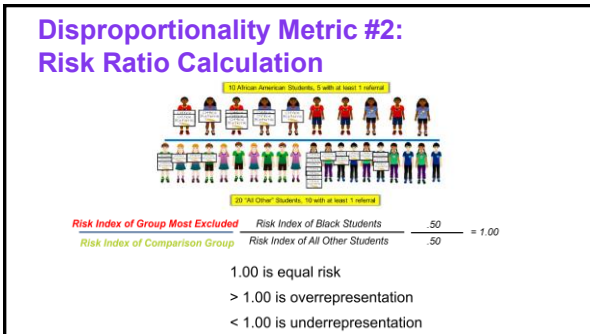
Disproportionality Metric #2: Risk Ratio

10 African American Students, 5 with at least 1 referral

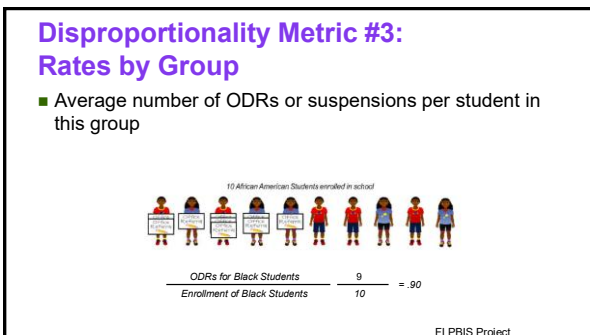
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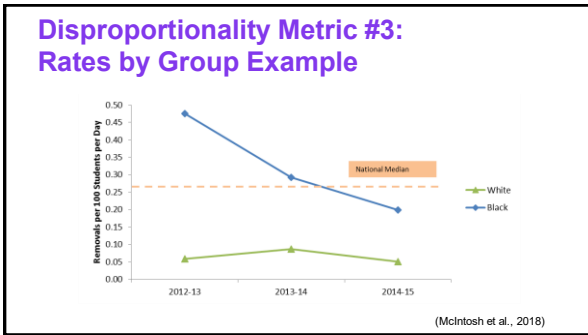
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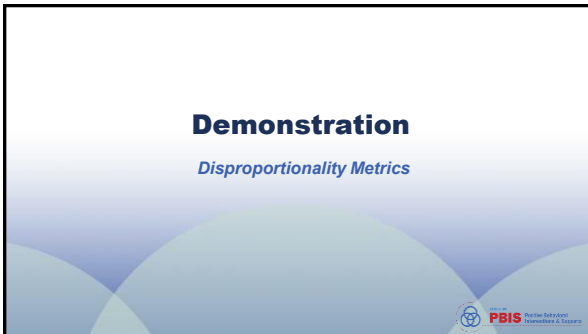
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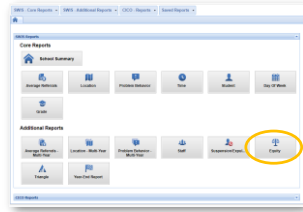


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1. Log in to www.swis.org
2. Click on "View Reports"

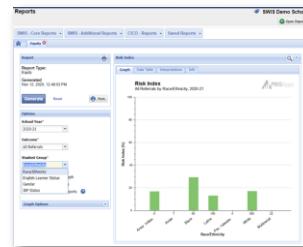
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1. Log in to www.swis.org
2. Click on "View Reports"
3. Click on "Equity"



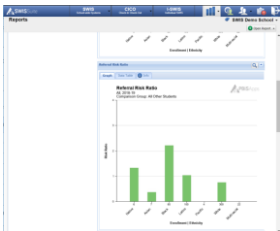
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- ODR risk index
- ODR risk ratio



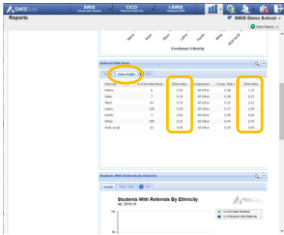
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4. Scroll down to the second (Risk Ratio) chart.



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5. Click the "Data Table" tab to get the numbers for the ODR risk index and risk ratio columns.



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Is There a Disproportionality Problem?

- Risk Ratio
 - National median
 - 2018-2019 U.S. public schools using SWIS with at least 10 Black and 10 White students
 - 25th percentile of Black-All Other ODR risk ratio = 1.49
 - Federal criteria
 - U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) Disparate Impact Criterion
 - Goal: Risk Ratio no more than 1.25

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Disproportionality Metrics: Common Questions

What if my school is 98% Black, Indigenous, or Latino/a/e?

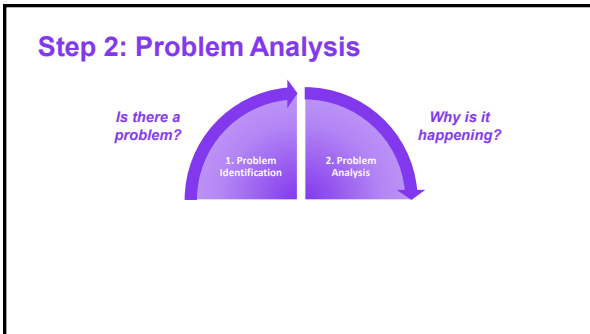
- In schools where the students are predominantly (e.g., 90% or more) a single race or ethnicity, it may not be as useful to compare the majority of students to a very small group of all other students. If so, we recommend calculating the school's overall rate of exclusions (e.g., ODRs per student) and comparing it to the overall exclusion rate of the district or state. That comparison will identify the extent to which the school's use of exclusions is disproportionate in relation to neighboring schools. If the school is almost exclusively one non-White race, any difference would represent disproportionate discipline.

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What would you do?

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Step 2: Problem Analysis

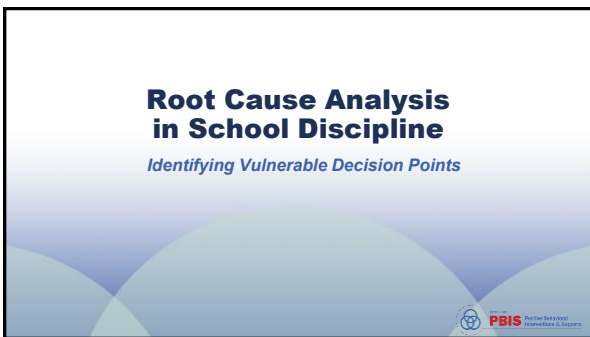
Is there a problem?

1. Problem Identification

2. Problem Analysis

Why is it happening?

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Root Cause Analysis in School Discipline

Identifying Vulnerable Decision Points



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What is a Vulnerable Decision Point (VDP)?

- A specific decision that is more susceptible to effects of implicit bias
- Two parts:
 - Elements of the **situation**
 - The person's **decision state** (internal state)



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What is an Equitable Decision Point (EDP)?

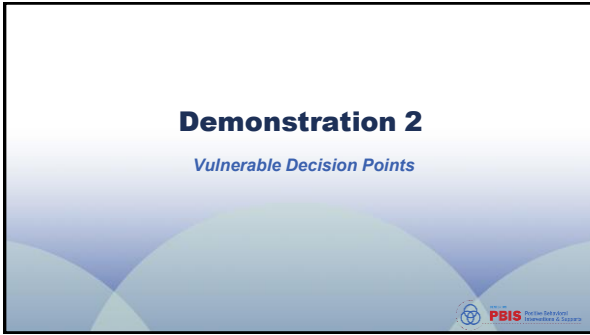
- A specific decision situation that school data shows is not influenced by bias

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Identifying Vulnerable Decision Points

1. All ODR/suspension decisions (general self-instruction routine)
2. Identify specific VDPs
 - a) Through national data
 - b) Your own school or district data
 - c) Your own personal VDPs

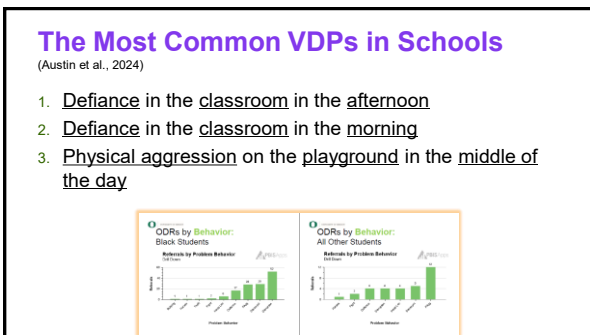
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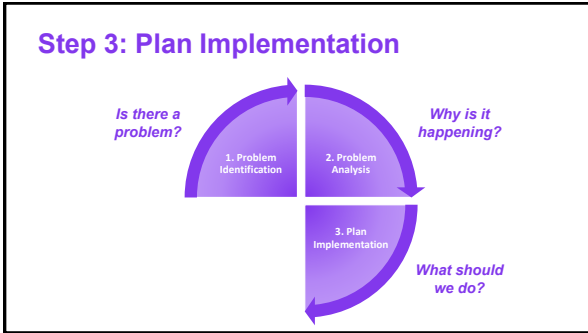
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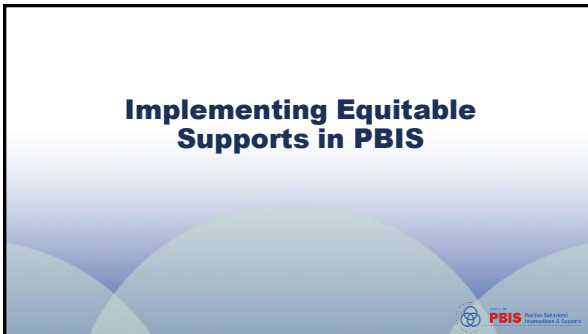
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5-point Intervention Approach


1. Collect, use, and report **disaggregated** discipline data
2. Implement a **behavior framework** that is preventive, multi-tiered, and culturally responsive
3. Use engaging **academic instruction** to reduce the opportunity (achievement) gap
4. Develop **policies** with accountability for discipline disparities
5. Teach strategies to **neutralize implicit bias**

<https://www.pbis.org/equitable-supports>

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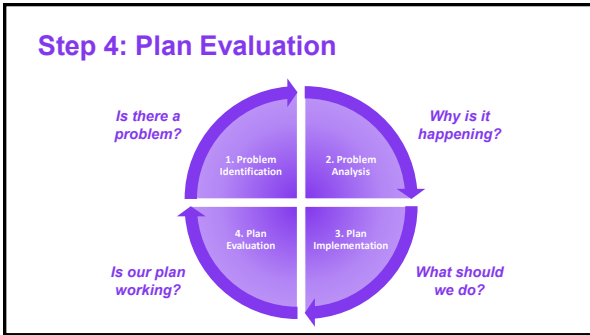
Effects of Equitable Supports in PBIS on Racial Equity in School Discipline

- Fox et al., 2021
- Gion et al., 2022
- McIntosh et al., 2018
- McIntosh et al., 2021a
- McIntosh et al., 2021b
- Muldrew & Miller, 2021
- Payno-Simmons, 2021
- Swain-Bradway et al., 2019

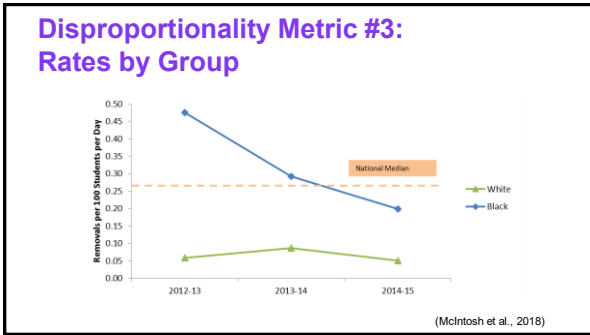


<https://www.pbis.org/resource/centering-equity-within-the-pbis-framework-overview-and-evidence-of-effectiveness>

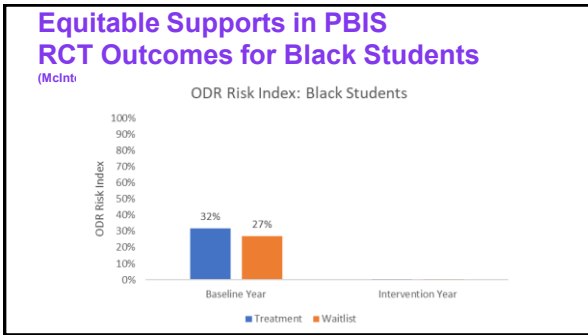
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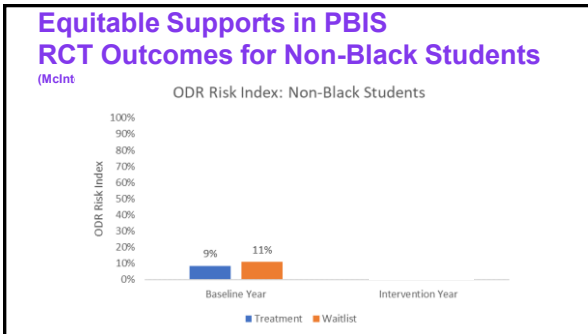
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Big Ideas

- Disproportionality in school discipline is one of the biggest challenges in education today
- We can use data to assess and monitor how we are doing
 - If you don't have the data you need at hand, advocate for it
- The same steps we have for solving discipline problems work for disproportionality

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