

# Addressing Disproportionate Discipline in Maryland

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<http://marylandpublicschools.org/about/Pages/DSFSS/SSSP/DisproportionateDiscipline/index.aspx>



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# Session Information

## Defining disproportionate discipline

- A national problem
- Maryland's definition and data

## How Maryland is working to address the problem

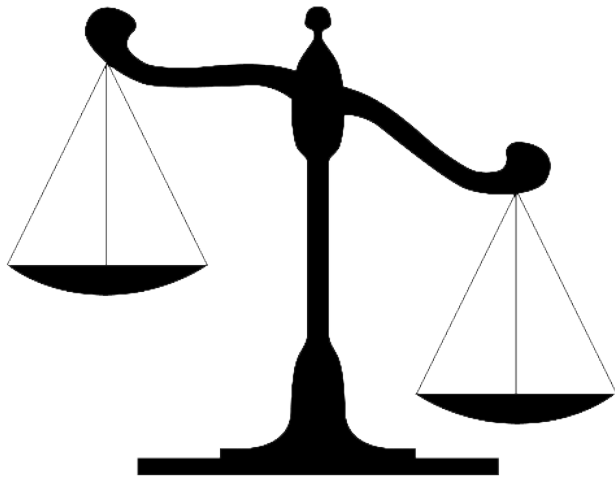
- A systematic process for all 24 Local School Systems
- System level disproportionate review teams – Montgomery County Public Schools

## The root cause analysis

- The root cause analysis tool & training
- System level use of the tool – Charles County Public Schools
- Root causes identified

## Next steps in Maryland

# Disproportionate Discipline



# Data Trends

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Disciplinary removal = out-of-school suspensions and expulsions

Disproportionality = the comparison of removal rates among different student groups

- Students groups of most concern included in research and regulations are special education students and students by race.

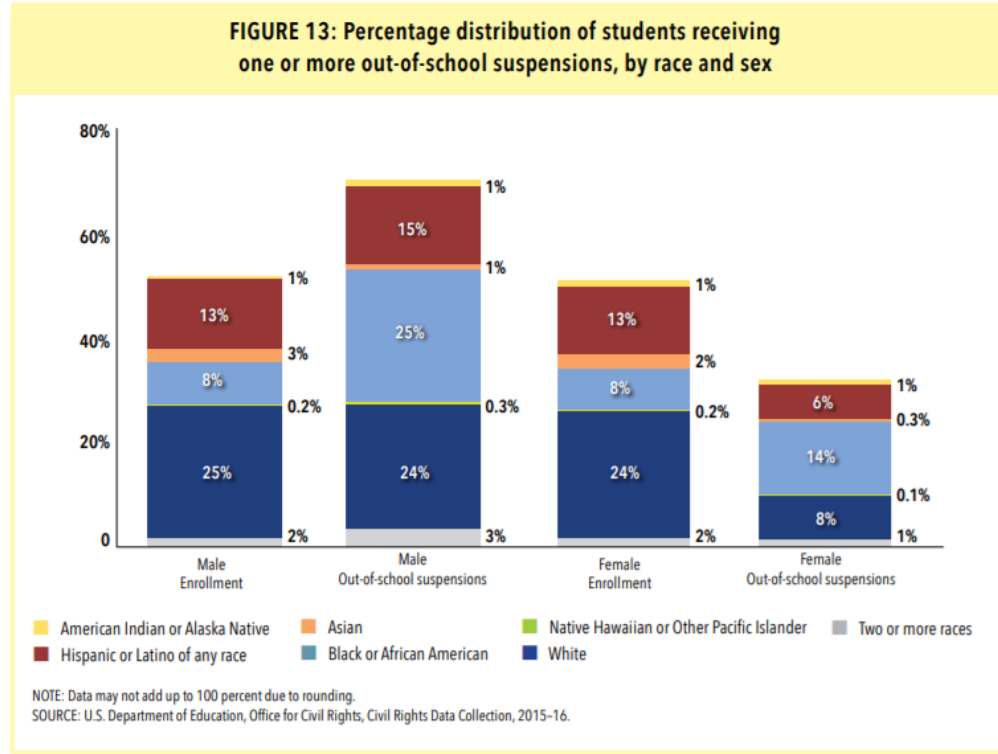
# National Data Trends

<https://nces.ed.gov/programs/maped/storymaps/oss/>

Access to the national data report from the United States  
Department of Education Office of Civil Rights  
(information on the next 2 slides)

<https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/school-climate-and-safety.pdf>

Nationally, “Black male students represented 8% of enrolled students and accounted for 25% of students who received an out-of-school suspension.”



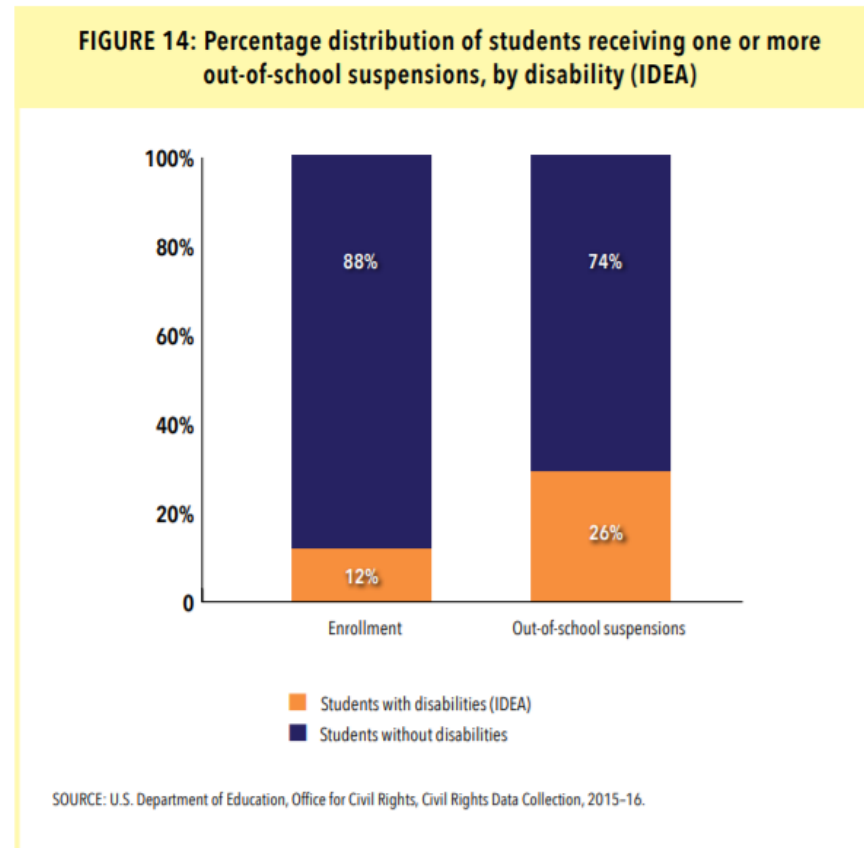
### SUSPENSIONS BY RACE AND SEX

About 2.7 million (between 5 and 6 percent) of all K-12 students received one or more out-of-school suspensions during the 2015-16 school year. **Figure 13** shows the percentage distribution of students receiving one or more out-of-school suspensions, by race and sex.

Black male students represented 8 percent of enrolled students and accounted for 25 percent of students who received an out-of-school suspension. Black female students represented 8 percent of the student enrollment and accounted for 14 percent of students who received an out-of-school suspension. Latino male students represented 13 percent of student enrollment and 15 percent of students who received an out-of-school suspension. Latina female students represented 13 percent of student enrollment and 6 percent of students who received an out-of-school suspension.

American Indian or Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, and male students of two or more races collectively represented 3 percent of students enrolled, and 4 percent of students who received an out-of-school suspension. In comparison, American Indian or Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, and female students of two or more races accounted for 3 percent of students enrolled and 2 percent of students who received an out-of-school suspension.

Nationally, “ Students with disabilities (IDEA) represented 12% of students enrolled and 26% of students who received an out-of-school suspension.”



**Figure 14** illustrates the percentage distribution of students receiving one or more out-of-school suspensions, by disability (IDEA). Students with disabilities (IDEA) represented 12 percent of students enrolled and 26 percent of students who received an out-of-school suspension.

# Maryland Data Trends

Overall, the rate of removals for all students in Maryland declined between 2009/10 to 2017/18:

- Middle and high school student removals from 10.4% to 6.9%
- Elementary school student removals from 2.8% to 2.3%

Despite the overall decline the rate of DISPROPORTIONATE removal remained constant from 2009/10 to 2017/18:

- 7.6% of African American students compared to 2.6% of non-African American students
- 8.9% of students with disabilities compared to 3.7% of students without disabilities
- African American students with a disability 13.5% compared to African American students without a disability at 6.7%



# Maryland Regulation

## COMAR 13A.08.01.21C *Reducing and Eliminating Disproportionate/Discrepant Impact*

“If the department identifies a school’s discipline process as having a disproportionate impact on minority students or a discrepant impact on special education students, the local school system shall prepare and present to the State Board a plan to reduce the impact within 1 year and eliminate it within 3 years.”

# Maryland's Definition of Disproportionate

TWO measures – each must be met for a school to be identified as disproportionate

1. Risk ratio of 3.0 or greater
2. Meet or exceed the state comparison ratio; elementary 1.54 and secondary 6.75

Must meet the threshold as disproportionate each year in the three year data window (2015-16, 2016-17, 2017-18) for either student group, race or special education

# How Maryland is Working to Address Discipline Disproportionality



# Creating and Supporting a Process in Each Local School System

Each local school system (LSS) engaged in the process of completing a system wide root cause analysis to examine conditions that impact student discipline

## Identify disproportionate discipline lead person

Superintendents were prompted to select a person to lead the initiative in their system

## Participate in training on completing a root cause analysis

Each system selected individuals to participate in a 3 hour training with the MSDE specialist

## Create a system level disproportionate review team

Each lead determined a model that worked best for their unique system (size, capacity, community)

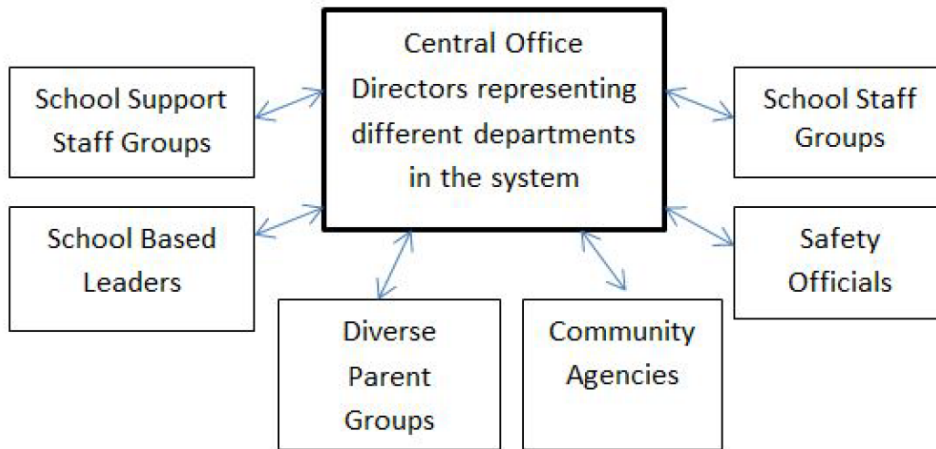
## Complete the root cause analysis

Systems completed the root cause analysis to determine those causes most likely leading to disproportionate discipline

## Determine causes for action

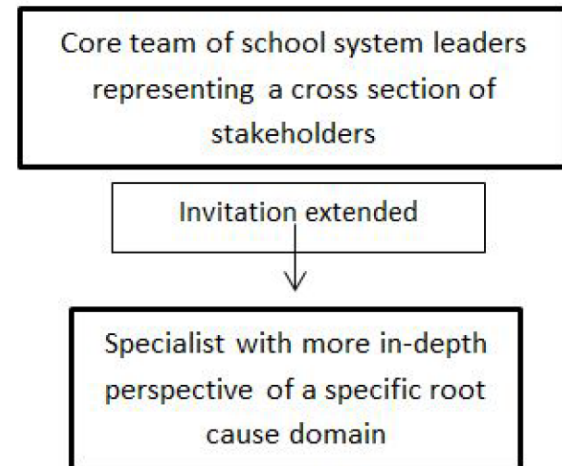
Each lead and team determined what root causes would be addressed by specific actions within the MSDE system level action plan

## Different Disproportionate Discipline Review Team Models



**Model B – Invitation to Specialist**

**Model A – Reaching Out**



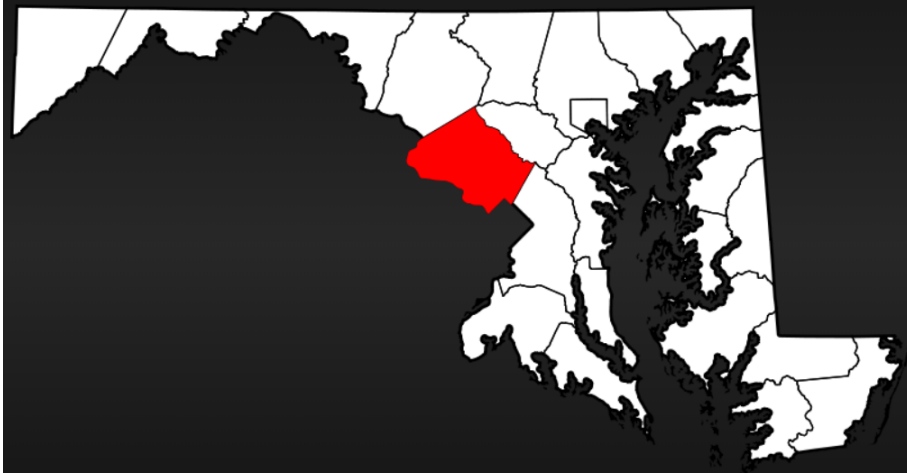
## Different Disproportionate Discipline Review Team Models (cont.)



Model D – All Together

Model C – Committee Coordination





# Montgomery County Public Schools

207 Schools  
162,680 Students  
31% Hispanic/Latino, 28% White, 22% Black or  
African American, 14% Asian, 5% Two or More  
Races

# Assembling the Disproportionality Workgroup

Conscious decision to remain small, and extend outward for input and feedback

## Rationale:

- Large workgroups have great philosophical discussions, get very little done
- Smaller workgroup would be better able to incorporate multi-stakeholder feedback into actionable items, which would then go back out to stakeholders



# Makeup of the Disproportionality Workgroup

Although small, included stakeholders across multiple offices:

- Office of Special Education
  - Resolution and Compliance Unit
- Office of Student and Family Support and Engagement
  - Division of Pupil Personnel and Attendance Services
  - School Counseling Unit
  - Restorative Justice Unit
- Office of School Support and Improvement
- Office of the Chief Academic Officer
  - Equity Initiatives Unit
- Office of the Chief Operating Officer
  - Appeals/Transfer Team

# Why Get Stakeholder Input?

It is easy for central office leaders to think they know the reasons for things, when those out in the schools and the community often communicate very different information.

# Root Cause Analysis Process

- After technical assistance meeting provided by MSDE, chose a root cause analysis process that involved all-participant energy voting, followed by dialogue

## Rationale:

- Wanted to hear from all voices, not merely the most vocal or those in leadership roles
- Non-threatening
- Comparable across stakeholder groups

# Stakeholders Engaged

- Disproportionality Workgroup
- Equity Initiatives Unit
- Elementary Counselors
- Special Education MCAAP Advisory Group
- Pupil Personnel Workers
- Special Education Advisory Council (Parent Group)
- Leadership teams from 4 high schools and 3 middle schools

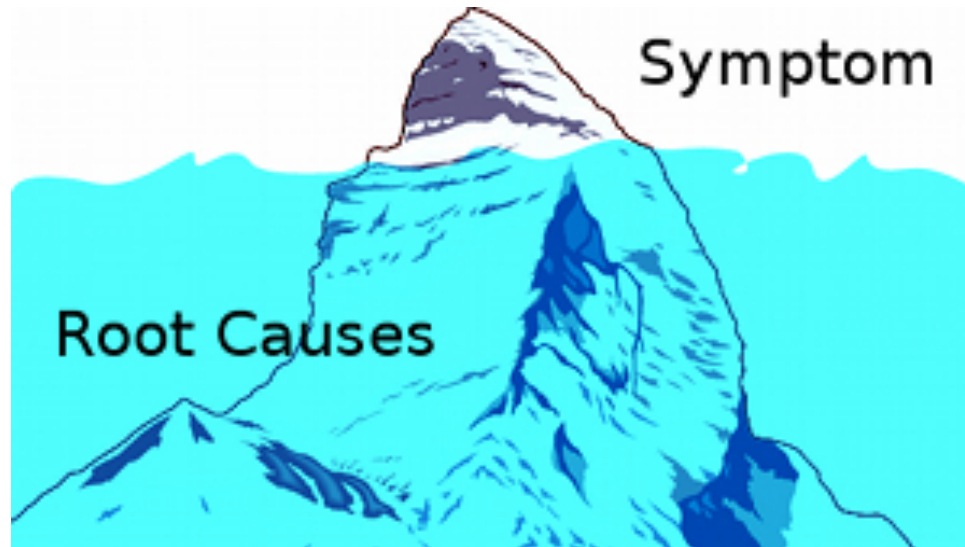
# What We Learned

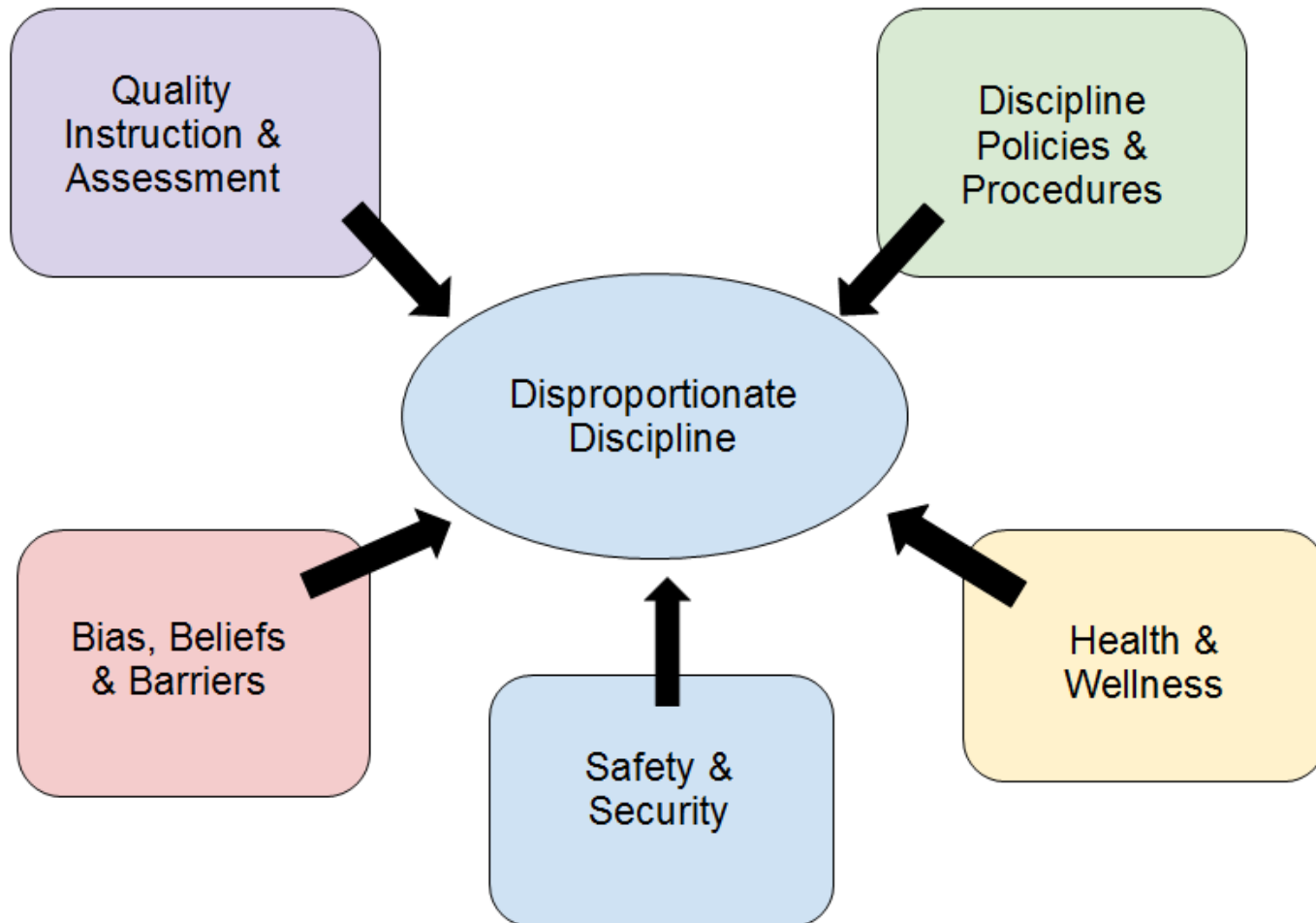
- As expected, many workgroups felt that “Bias, Beliefs, and Barriers” contributed to disproportionality in student discipline, noting that school staff members and community members believe that the best way to stop misconduct was to suspend or expel students.
- Surprising to us, several stakeholder groups felt that “Health and Wellness” was an important contributing factor to disproportionality in student discipline, noting that only a select few members of school and district staff have knowledge related to signs of mental health concerns

# Next Steps

- Monthly meetings of Suspension Data Workgroup
- For targeted schools, conduct root cause analyses based on their real-time suspension data
- Following root cause analyses, help schools to obtain the resources and services they need to effectively support students
- Continue to monitor the effectiveness of Restorative Justice strategies and scale to more schools as appropriate
- Implement the Be Well 365 initiative to address issues of school culture and climate

# The root cause analysis





*Figure illustrating some of the factors to examine when considering possible root causes of disproportionate discipline.*



## Domain: Instruction & Assessment

Likely Cause for Action	Not Likely Cause for Action
<input type="checkbox"/> Learning is passive, with the teacher talking at students for the majority of class.	<input type="checkbox"/> Students are actively engaged in learning activities with minimal teacher directed instruction; teacher as facilitator.
<input type="checkbox"/> Instructional activities are mass produced with little application to the real world.	<input type="checkbox"/> Instructional activities are connected to real world applications.
<input type="checkbox"/> The master schedule is rigid and time blocks are either too short or too long for active, engaging instruction.	<input type="checkbox"/> The master schedule supports student learning through flexibility and time blocks that are developmentally appropriate.

Step 2: Root Causes & Celebrations What are we doing? What can we do in the future?	
Celebrations	Causes for Concern
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.
4.	4.
5.	5.

Step 3: Analyze Root Causes Evidence of Cause for Concern How do we know this is happening? Why is this happening?
1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

## Domain: Discipline Policies & Procedures

Likely Cause for Action	Not Likely Cause for Action
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> School and district leaders adhere to defined consequences for any student misconduct. The same consequence is used repeatedly for consecutive infractions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> School and district leaders use, and support the use, of a progressive discipline model focused upon identifying reasons for misconduct and seeking solutions.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Teachers believe that students should be compliant and attentive at all times. Teachers pay little attention to classroom management tools, procedures, and expectations.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Teachers utilize classroom management tools, procedures, and expectations that support the success of all learners within the classroom setting.</li> </ul>

## Domain: Bias, Beliefs & Barriers

Likely Cause for Action	Not Likely Cause for Action
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> School and district level <u>staff say</u> they believe all students can succeed, but actions taken demonstrate otherwise.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> School and district level <u>staff believe</u> that all students can succeed when given the appropriate supports and interventions.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Students receive messages from staff that lead them to feel inadequate and that leaving school is their best option.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Students receive a message from staff (hidden and direct) that they are valued and can succeed in school.</li> </ul>

## Domain: Health & Wellness

Likely Cause for Action	Not Likely Cause for Action
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ School structures do not include thoughtful consideration of the physical health of students with no defined plans for movement or healthy food choices.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ School structures demonstrate that the physical health of students is valued through plans for developmentally appropriate movement intervals and healthy food choices.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ Systems do not acknowledge that some students may need support accessing dental, medical, visual and hearing services.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ Systems recognize the importance of students having access to dental, medical, visual, and hearing services. Provisions are made as needed.</li> </ul>

## Domain: Safety & Security

Likely Cause for Action	NOT Likely Cause for Action
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ School communities have little knowledge of potential threats to students as they transition to and from school. Reports of unsafe conditions are delegated to others to resolve.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ School communities take consistent steps to ensure students can move safely to and from school every day. Reports of unsafe conditions are dealt with immediately through collaboration with local law enforcement agencies.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ School <u>staff</u> are not aware of “hot” zones on school grounds. Supervision of unstructured areas is infrequent. While <u>staff</u> are assigned duty locations to supervise there is no monitoring or adjustments made by school leaders during the school year.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ School <u>staff</u> are aware of “hot” zones on school grounds where bully behavior and student misconduct is likely to occur. An effective plan exists to increase supervision in these areas. School leaders closely monitor the plan making adjustments as needed during the school year.</li> </ul>

## The Root Cause Analysis Training

- 3 hour session – 5 regional trainings across the state
- Each Local School System asked to bring 2-5 disproportionate review team leaders (some systems had 2 and some had 40)
- The training was designed to model “HOW TO” conduct the root cause analysis process with various teams back in their system
  - \*”What is a root cause?” example and matching activity
  - \* Information for leading effective teams to an outcome; norms, navigating difficult conversations, effective facilitator tips
  - \* Guided through each domain of the root cause analysis tool by modeling different methods of gathering input from others
  - \* Reviewed multiple data sources that should inform root causes



# Charles County Public Schools

37 Schools & 3 Centers

27,108 Students

9% Hispanic/Latino, 24% White, 56% Black or African  
American, 3% Asian, 8% Two or More Races

# Conducting the Root Cause Analysis in Charles County

- All schools have a disproportionate review team
- Three meetings conducted at each school using an agenda and questions provided by the system level disproportionate review team
- Each Principal brought results from the school level meetings to an administrative meeting in February 2018 where it was used to create a system wide picture of root causes
- Community members engaged in a “discipline review committee” during the Spring of 2019
- Principals with special education disproportionality came together in the Spring of 2019 to begin to conduct a full root cause analysis that went back to the system lead in April

# Outcomes Achieved Through The Process

- Involvement of many stakeholders to identify “real” root causes and lead necessary change
- Many voices were heard
- Controlled the dissemination of information – perceptions and misperceptions
- Created administrative buy in to the process and future changes for ALL schools
- All schools mindful of proportionality of discipline practices

# Root Causes Currently Identified by Systems

## Instruction & Assessment

- The school system communicates the value of reading proficiency but fails to provide adequate resources to ensure all students master basic levels for future success – combined with Multi-tiered intervention systems

## Discipline Policies & Procedures \*\*\*\*

- Behavior interventions are implemented inconsistently within schools and are not used effectively. There is no system by which to monitor student behavior trends. **(Many systems have embraced this root cause for action.)**
- School and district leaders adhere to defined consequences for any student misconduct. The same consequence is used repeatedly for consecutive infractions.

## Bias, Barriers & Beliefs \*\*\*\*

- Staff have had no training or only a select few have been trained to recognize “blind spots” related to race, gender, religion, poverty, sexual orientation, and disabilities. The school and system culture is one of silence. **(Many systems identified this root cause with a few focusing efforts in their action plan this year.)**
- School staff and students believe that your street address, zip code, or last name determine how you should behave and how successful you will be in school.

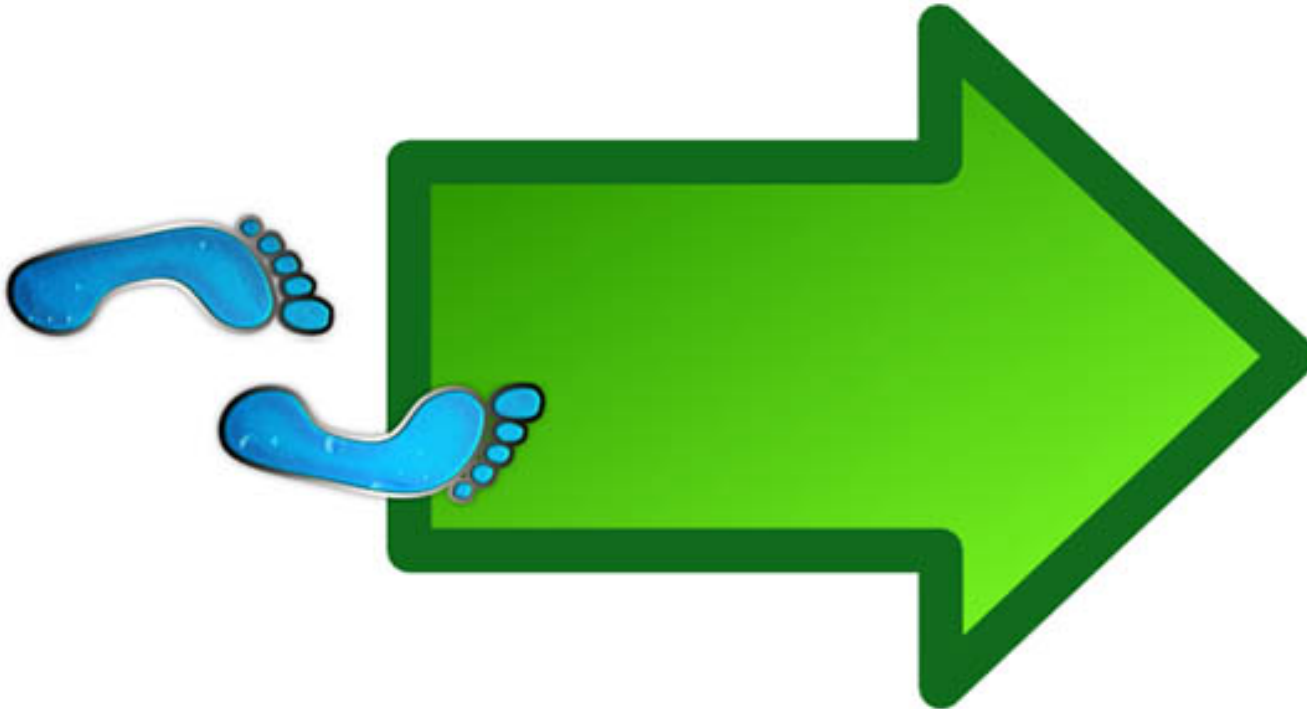
## Health & Wellness

- School and district leaders spend little time considering the physical and mental wellness of staff.

## Safety & Security

- School communities have little knowledge of potential threats to students as they transition to and from school. Reports of unsafe conditions are delegated to others to resolve.





**2022**  
**2<sup>nd</sup> Cohort**

## Next Steps in Maryland

- Goals and action steps that connect to the identified root cause – technical support to make this purposeful with observable implementation strategies and outcomes
- Sharing the root cause analysis process at the school and classroom level to increase school level staff engagement in the initiative
- Collaboration amongst Maryland system level and school leaders related to sharing effective intervention strategies
- Monitoring disproportionality and removal rates across all schools in all systems. Early intervention with goal of at least a 2022 cohort 50% reduction in identified schools

# Questions

## Contact Information for Presenters

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