

# Suspensions Won't Work: Changing Student Behavior For the Long Term

A teacher who gives up on a student who can't read is similar to an administrator who gives up on a student by only using suspensions to discipline. Handling discipline with only this approach is the easy way out and does not get to the symptom of the problem. It takes a special type of administrator to work harder and understand the art of discipline when it comes to changing student behavior for the long term.

## What would a PBIS Champion Model Administrator do?

In [our first post](#), we discussed setting up an effective PBIS system, the PBIS Champion Model. There are some key differences between a Traditional Disciplinary Administrator vs. a PBIS Champion Model Administrator.

| Traditional Disciplinary Administrator   | PBIS Champion Model Administrator  |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Believes suspensions will change behavior</li> <li>· Prefers a black and white discipline handbook with exact number of days outlined for suspensions based on behavior</li> <li>· Argues that parents need to be inconvenienced with suspensions</li> <li>· Gives in to pressures from others to suspend students</li> <li>· Wants to use the student to set an example</li> <li>· Argues that suspensions do work and need justification for doing alternative discipline approaches</li> <li>· Have many excuses for why they do not have time to do the alternative approaches at their school</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Believes that teaching behavior should be similar to teaching academics</li> <li>· Believes that discipline should be a teaching opportunity</li> <li>· Addresses behavior in an individualized fashion</li> <li>· Provides reflection and teaching opportunities as part of the consequence/intervention</li> <li>· Monitors the behavior on an ongoing basis</li> <li>· Works hard to find the function of the behavior</li> <li>· Involves parents and teachers</li> <li>· Establishes a relationship with the student</li> <li>· Does whatever they can to provide a consequence/intervention without having to use suspensions</li> <li>· Has the confidence to justify the reasoning for using alternatives</li> <li>· Has the skills to build other believers by demonstrating the positive effects of using alternative discipline appropriately</li> <li>· Innovates based on the discipline incident</li> </ul> |

Let's look at how each type of Administrator would handle the following behavior incident: two students fighting during lunch:

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| <b>Behavior Incident:</b> Two students get into a fight during lunch. |  |
| <b>Traditional Disciplinary Administrator</b>                         | <b>PBIS Champion Model Administrator</b> |

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· 3-5 days suspension for both students</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Administrator will conduct a conflict resolution using a restorative approach to get to the root of what caused the fight in the first place. This conflict resolution will be ongoing – up to 3-4 times to ensure the conflict is resolved throughout the next few weeks.</li> <li>· Students will create a contract together ensuring this will never take place again and have to progress monitor their contract together with an administrator for at least six weeks.</li> <li>· Students will go through at least six sessions of hands off academy behavior teaching opportunities where they will have to learn and practice strategies and apply them to scenarios to demonstrate their mastery of learning.</li> <li>· Students will be required to take an exit behavior exam demonstrating what they have learned from this experience prior to getting privileges back on campus</li> <li>· Students will have to prepare a lesson to teach to younger students or peers on the importance of solving problems appropriately</li> <li>· Students will have to write an apology letter to any stakeholders they have affected due to this behavior incident</li> <li>· Students will be on a structured schedule until they have completed their consequence requirements</li> </ul> |
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As you can see, doing it the PBIS Champion Model way takes more time and work, but is more meaningful and will decrease the probability of this incident occurring again. In our next blog post, we'll provide 7 ways to make time for the right discipline.

### **What kind of administrator are you?**