

WELLNESS AND STUDENT CARE DEPARTMENT

Per [105 ILCS 5/2-3.162](#) and [Public Act 098-1102](#), districts are required to submit a Progress Report in addition to their previously submitted Discipline Improvement Plan. Within one year after being identified, the school district shall submit this Progress Report to the Illinois State Board of Education and post it on the district's website. The Progress Report describes the implementation of the Discipline Improvement Plan and the results achieved.

PROGRESS REPORT

NAME OF SCHOOL DISTRICT/CHARTER SCHOOL Meridian School District	SCHOOL YEAR 2025-2026	LINK TO PROGRESS REPORT ON THE DISTRICT'S WEBSITE
SCHOOL DISTRICT/CHARTER SCHOOL ADDRESS 1401 Mounds RD Mounds, IL 62964		
SUPERINTENDENT/ADMINISTRATOR NAME Dr. Lisa Thomas		

DISCIPLINE IMPROVEMENT PLAN TEAM

Districts are encouraged to convene a Discipline Improvement Plan team to address exclusionary discipline and/or racial disproportionality.

TEAM LEADER NAME Dr. Lisa Thomas	POSITION/TITLE Superintendent	EMAIL ADDRESS lthomas@meridian101.com
TEAM MEMBER #1 NAME Dorsilla Jones	POSITION/TITLE Elementary Principal	EMAIL ADDRESS dorlissa.jones@meridian101.com
TEAM MEMBER #2 NAME James Walton	POSITION/TITLE Behavior Interventionist	EMAIL ADDRESS jwalton@meridian101.com
TEAM MEMBER #3 NAME Kristy Duncan	POSITION/TITLE Director of Student Services	EMAIL ADDRESS kduncan@meridian101.com
TEAM MEMBER #4 NAME Janice Couch	POSITION/TITLE Teacher	EMAIL ADDRESS jcouch@meridian101.com
TEAM MEMBER #5 NAME Kim Tucker	POSITION/TITLE Pre K Coordinator	EMAIL ADDRESS ktucker@meridian101.com
TEAM MEMBER #6 NAME Malcom Larry	POSITION/TITLE Teacher	EMAIL ADDRESS mlarry@meridian101.com

RECOMMENDED STEPS TO CONSIDER WHEN REFLECTING ON THE PROGRESS REPORT
1. Review of discipline data:

Please go to the ISBE [School Discipline](#) webpage to find district data. Districts/charter schools may also consider any other local data utilized in creation of their plan. **What improvements were evidenced in your recent data as a result of your action plan to reduce the use of exclusionary and/or racial disproportionality? What do you think is contributing to these trends? To what extent has bias played a part in your data?**

Our recent discipline data demonstrates significant progress in reducing both exclusionary discipline practices and racial disproportionality. Over the six-year period, suspensions of White students decreased by 82%, while suspensions of students of color decreased by 90%. Additionally, our racial disproportionality rate declined by 41%. Most notably, our data from the previous school year indicates that the percentage of suspensions by race closely aligns with our student enrollment percentages, suggesting that disciplinary actions are becoming more equitable across student groups.

These positive trends are largely attributable to the implementation of evidence-based intervention programs and a proactive approach to student behavior. The integration of Conscious Discipline, Crisis Prevention Institute (CPI) strategies, and our Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) framework has provided staff with consistent, research-based practices for preventing and responding to behavioral concerns. Furthermore, the addition of dedicated Behavior Interventionists and Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) staff has enabled real-time de-escalation, individualized student support, and restorative interventions before behaviors escalate to the level of suspension.

While these outcomes are encouraging, we recognize that addressing bias is an ongoing process. Implicit bias has the potential to influence discipline decisions in any school system; therefore, we continue to examine discipline data by student subgroup, monitor trends for disproportionality, and

2. Please provide a summary of what you intended to complete or accomplish as a result of your Discipline Improvement Plan.

To accomplish these goals, we focused on strengthening our Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) framework, implementing Conscious Discipline and Crisis Prevention Institute (CPI) strategies, expanding Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) supports, and utilizing dedicated Behavior Interventionists to provide early intervention and de-escalation. We also worked to improve staff consistency in applying discipline procedures, increase the use of restorative practices, and regularly review discipline data to identify trends and ensure equitable outcomes for all student groups.

3. What specific resources have you been using to counteract punitive discipline (e.g., restorative justice; peace circles; an alternative recourse, such as a mediator)? Did you incorporate any of these strategies/practices into your plan?

To counteract punitive discipline practices, we implemented a comprehensive system of proactive, evidence-based interventions designed to prevent behavioral incidents and reduce the need for exclusionary discipline. These resources included Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS), Conscious Discipline, Crisis Prevention Institute (CPI) de-escalation strategies, Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) instruction, mediation, restorative conversations, Healing Circles, Behavior Interventionists, and individualized Behavior Intervention Plans (BIPs). These strategies emphasize relationship building, conflict resolution, emotional regulation, accountability, and skill development rather than punishment alone.

Yes, these practices were central to our Discipline Improvement Plan. We also used monthly discipline data to guide proactive, tiered interventions rather than simply documenting disciplinary consequences. This data-driven approach allowed students, families, staff, Behavior Interventionists, and school leadership to collaborate in identifying behavioral trends, monitoring the effectiveness of interventions, and developing individualized supports. By using data to inform decision-making, we strengthened prevention efforts, improved student outcomes, and promoted equitable, restorative responses to student behavior.

4. Did you increase the use of restorative practices? Please describe any increase in social-emotional learning opportunities for students.

Yes. We significantly increased the use of restorative practices as part of our Discipline Improvement Plan by shifting our focus from punitive responses to preventative, relationship-based interventions. Rather than relying primarily on suspension, staff consistently implemented restorative conversations, Healing Circles, mediation, and individualized Behavior Intervention Plans (BIPs) to help students understand the impact of their behavior, repair relationships, and develop appropriate coping and problem-solving skills. Behavior Interventionists worked with students to de-escalate conflicts, facilitate restorative conferences, and provide ongoing behavioral support before incidents escalated to exclusionary discipline.

We also expanded social-emotional learning (SEL) opportunities for students across all grade levels. Through our implementation of Conscious Discipline, Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS), and Crisis Prevention Institute (CPI) strategies, students received explicit instruction in self-regulation, emotional awareness, conflict resolution, communication, empathy, and responsible decision-making. Dedicated SEL staff and Behavior Interventionists provided individual and small-group interventions for students with behavioral or emotional needs, while teachers reinforced SEL competencies within the classroom. These expanded opportunities equipped students with the skills needed to manage emotions, resolve conflicts constructively, and remain engaged in learning, contributing to the continued reduction in exclusionary discipline and improved school climate.

5. Describe how you utilized a multi-tiered system of support (MTSS).

We utilized a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) by aligning student interventions with a multi-tiered Professional Learning Community (PLC) model for staff. Foundational professional development in Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS), Conscious Discipline, and Crisis Prevention Institute (CPI) provided all staff with a common understanding of behavior prevention, de-escalation, and emotional regulation strategies. Rather than relying on one-time workshops, these practices were reinforced through ongoing PLC meetings, coaching, classroom support, and collaborative problem-solving. This "in-the-trenches" coaching ensured that evidence-based strategies became the daily language and practice of the school.

At Tier 1, all students benefited from schoolwide PBIS expectations, SEL instruction, Conscious Discipline practices, and consistent behavior supports implemented by trained staff. At Tier 2, students requiring additional support received targeted interventions such as restorative conversations, Healing Circles, mediation, check-in/check-out, and small-group SEL instruction led by Behavior Interventionists and SEL staff. At Tier 3, students with intensive behavioral needs received individualized supports, including Behavior Intervention Plans (BIPs), individualized counseling, family collaboration, and frequent progress monitoring.

Monthly PLC meetings were used to review discipline and behavioral data, evaluate the effectiveness of interventions, and collaboratively adjust support plans. This continuous improvement process helped shift our school from a reactive disciplinary model to a proactive, prevention-focused system that reduced exclusionary discipline, strengthened staff capacity, and promoted equitable outcomes for all students.

6. Describe any change seen in your district's discipline data when comparing this year's data to last year's. Can any of these changes be attributed to amendments to the district's discipline policies and/or procedures?

When comparing the district's 2025 discipline data to 2024, there was an increase in the number of students receiving suspensions. In 2024, 61 of 431 students (14.15%) received one or more suspensions. In 2025, that number increased to 113 of 406 students (27.83%). While this represents a year-over-year increase, it should be viewed within the context of our longer-term trend. Since 2018, the district has significantly reduced exclusionary discipline overall, decreasing the suspension rate from 33.77% to 27.83%, with the lowest rate of 6.11% occurring in 2023.

Although the increase from 2024 to 2025 cannot be attributed solely to amendments in the district's discipline policies and procedures, our revised practices have strengthened the consistency, fairness, and documentation of disciplinary decisions. The district has continued to implement Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS), Conscious Discipline, Crisis Prevention Institute (CPI) de-escalation strategies, Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) supports, restorative practices, Healing Circles, mediation, and individualized Behavior Intervention Plans (BIPs). Staff also participate in ongoing Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) and coaching to ensure these strategies are implemented with fidelity.

The increase in suspensions during 2025 appears to reflect the severity and frequency of student behaviors requiring disciplinary action rather than a return to punitive practices. Throughout the year, the district continued to prioritize early intervention, restorative approaches, and tiered behavioral supports before exclusionary discipline was considered. Monthly reviews of discipline data were used to identify trends, adjust interventions, and ensure that disciplinary decisions remained consistent, equitable, and aligned with district policies.

7. What changes are you going to implement moving forward?

Moving forward, the district will continue to refine its MTSS framework, strengthen restorative practices, and use data-driven decision-making to reduce exclusionary discipline while maintaining a safe and supportive learning environment for all students.

8. Have you completed implicit bias training? Have you incorporated the [Diversity Equity and Inclusion Provider Evaluation Tool](#)? If you did, what are your thoughts regarding your current implicit bias training (e.g., effective or ineffective)?

Yes, district staff have completed implicit bias training as part of our ongoing professional development efforts to promote equitable discipline practices and improve student outcomes. The training increased staff awareness of how implicit biases can influence perceptions of student behavior and reinforced the importance of making discipline decisions based on objective evidence, consistent expectations, and established procedures.

We believe our implicit bias training has been effective, particularly when combined with ongoing coaching, Professional Learning Community (PLC) discussions, and regular reviews of discipline data. Rather than functioning as a one-time training, implicit bias awareness has been reinforced through continuous professional learning, data analysis, and collaboration among administrators, teachers, Behavior Interventionists, and support staff. This approach has helped improve consistency in disciplinary decision-making and has contributed to more equitable outcomes for students. However, we recognize that addressing implicit bias is an ongoing process, and we remain committed to providing continuous professional development and monitoring discipline data to ensure equitable practices are maintained and strengthened over time.

9. Reflect on what did and did not work from your Discipline Improvement Plan. Do you anticipate making any changes to this plan? Why or why not?

Discipline Improvement Plan was successful in shifting the district toward a more proactive, preventative, and equitable approach to student discipline. The implementation of Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS), Conscious Discipline, Crisis Prevention Institute (CPI) strategies, Social-Emotional Learning (SEL), restorative conversations, Healing Circles, mediation, and individualized Behavior Intervention Plans (BIPs) strengthened our ability to address student behavior before it resulted in exclusionary discipline. Ongoing Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), coaching, and monthly reviews of discipline data also improved staff consistency and promoted data-driven decision-making.

One of the greatest successes was the increased use of restorative and preventative practices, which helped improve relationships, strengthen students' social-emotional skills, and reduce racial disproportionality in discipline. Staff became more confident in using de-escalation techniques and tiered interventions, allowing many behavioral incidents to be resolved without removing students from the classroom.

While many aspects of the plan were effective, we also identified areas for improvement. During the 2025 school year, the district experienced an increase in suspensions compared with the previous year, indicating that additional support is needed for students with intensive behavioral needs and for consistent implementation of interventions across all classrooms. We also recognize the need to strengthen family engagement, expand opportunities for restorative practices, and continue providing coaching to ensure all staff implement MTSS, PBIS, Conscious Discipline, and CPI strategies with fidelity.

As a result, we anticipate making targeted revisions to the Discipline Improvement Plan rather than replacing it. We will continue to expand restorative practices, strengthen Tier 2 and Tier 3 behavioral interventions, increase coaching through PLCs, and use monthly discipline data to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions and identify trends early. These refinements will help ensure the district continues to reduce exclusionary discipline, improve school climate, and provide equitable, supportive learning environments for all students.

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