

## Competency 11: Student Personnel

- **11.2 Related Task:** Knowledge of principles of discipline, student control, etc.
- **11.2.2 Specific Task:**
  - o Analyze discipline referral and suspension data for a school year to identify the nature and frequency of student misbehavior. Based on findings, recommend a plan to reduce most common form of misconduct.
- **Narrative Description of Task:**
  - o Take an active role in student discipline by joining the school’s MTSS team. Attend meetings to gain feedback on behavior issues within the building and district and engage in discussion to promote improvement. Take active notes regarding the topics of discussion and items on the agenda. Analyze SWIS data to identify building wide behavior patterns and address them with the committee. Create, amend or continue with an already in place action plan to continue improving discipline issues within the building.

**Smart Goal:** By April of 2016, analyze discipline and suspension data for the current school year and discover the nature and frequency to such student misbehavior and make an action plan to improve such student misbehavior.

Specific:	Analyze SWIS data to identify the nature and frequency of student misbehavior and make an action plan to improve the discovered patterns.
Measurable:	SWIS data should be analyzed for patterns and should be continued to be analyzed to look for areas of improvement once action plan is in place.
Attainable:	Improving student misbehavior allows for a healthier learning environment.
Relevant:	Identifying the nature of student misbehavior and addressing the issues will improve the culture of learning present in each of the classrooms.
Timely:	By April 2016 I will have analyzed the SWIS data and made an action plan to help improve student misbehavior.

### Description and Rationale of Project:

Every year, the conversation of student behavior arises. Most teachers seem to share the same feelings and think that there are even more behavioral issues in schools now than there ever has been. Whether in the form of fights, suspensions, referral slips, or simple trips to the office, it is evident that demographics and issues at home are on the rise. When you look at the percentage of single family homes or even the number of students who qualify for Free and Reduced Lunch, it is no surprise that behavioral issues are a major concern.

Gaines Elementary isn’t any different, and behavioral issues are always a topic of concern. Gaines Elementary has an MTSS committee that helps to deal with academic and behavioral issues building wide. However, through my discussions with a variety of teachers, they felt there has been a lot of focus on the academic side while losing track of the behavioral side. In 2012, Lauren Hunter took over as principal at Gaines Elementary. Prior to her was Michael Gibbons, who some say micromanaged in a lot of aspects. He was very specific with

how he wanted the discipline process handled and wanted referral slips filled out for every behavioral incident so that there was a paper trail and evidence of specific behavior patterns. When Lauren took over, the referral process among other things became a little foggy. Michael had been the principal for over 20 years, and so much of the staff was simply used to how he handled things. With Lauren taking the helm, the behavioral aspect has been a little more unclear in recent years as many of us are stuck between how Michael used to handle it and how she handles it now. Thus, I had found it to be imperative to study the behavioral data over the last several years and identify an action plan to help promote positive behavior and limit learning disruptions.

Back in February, I emailed our building aide and office secretary who handle the behavioral data (SWIS). I asked for them to print me a report of all behavioral incidences from this year and last year, as well as a report comparing the number of referrals over the last 6 years at Gaines which would allow me to compare Michael's time to Lauren's. The response was almost immediate as they sent me the reports via email as well as printed me hard copies to analyze later at home. Of course, with the daunting tasks and challenges of the other tasks at hand, it would be some time before this data was given a full analysis as other projects and tasks were given a higher priority.

When finally analyzing the data, I looked at patterns in behavior. I looked for where infractions were taking place, what time they were taking place, how frequently, which grade level, what day of the week, and the specific infraction. I then graphed all of these patterns in a Microsoft PowerPoint to later share with Lauren and possibly the rest of the school if she wanted. The results were eye opening. Some of the key observations I noted were the amount of referrals towards the end of Michael's time, 668, to the number now under Lauren, 258. The difference is shocking, and it shows the difference in administrative management of behavior. Another observation was that the majority of the referrals were that of disrespect through verbal or physical aggression to others and that these infractions are taking place in the classroom and on the playground more than any other places. It was also interesting, but not shocking, to see that most incidents were taking place during morning transitions, lunch and recess time while also having a much larger number of referrals in the PM hours compared to the AM hours. This pointed out to me that when there is less structure, supervision, and routine, more behavioral issues come about. It was also noted that afternoons are more chaotic because many students run out of endurance going through the long school day, as well as become more energetic in the afternoons compared to mornings. Another interesting point was that Mondays and Fridays have less referrals than the other days of the week, even though those days are deemed the worst by teachers and major assessments typically do not take place on those days because of that. Lastly, since Lauren took over, the pattern of how many referrals each month between classrooms has been very inconsistent. For example, this year alone there were 0 referrals in December which is typically characterized as a rough month and yet there were 11 referrals in February which more than doubles the rest of the months this school year. This is a major inconsistency which suggests that teachers are no longer sure on when to fill out referrals and for what specific infractions.

After I analyzed the SWIS data, I then compiled a list of possible recommendations to help improve the school's behavior. The first thing I suggested as a result of the referral

inconsistencies was to have a staff refresher on the referral process in regards to when to fill out referrals and to make sure we are maintaining consistent behavior practices between classrooms. The next thing I pointed out was that the majority of problem behaviors were all related to some type of inappropriate touching or verbal abuse of others. I noted that this could be a result of the lack of recess and play where social skills are developed. To combat this I suggested we increase time of play and social time to build students' social stamina. Teachers can do this through providing frequent brain breaks, social time, group activity, and team building time that also enhances classroom learning. Additionally, I pointed out that the school social workers could conduct whole class mini-lessons on a monthly basis discussing proper social skills and peer behavior. I also recommended that we take note of the issues occurring during unstructured times such as lunch or recess. I pointed out that we need to be sure the aides are given refreshers and training on behavior management and the referral process in order to effectively monitor the students during these less structured times. It was then also noticed that these less supervised areas are filled with high volumes of students which can lead to chaotic and very energetic behavior. So, I recommended that rules and procedures should be practiced and repeated occasionally in these areas such as the playground and cafeteria. These playground and cafeteria expectations should be reviewed and reinforced by all staff members consistently. Lastly, I noted that lunchroom, recess, and classroom rules should be posted in viewable locations and serve as a reminder to students even when there is less adult supervision.

I took all of my SWIS analysis and compiled it all into a 37 page PowerPoint presentation and then shared it with Lauren. Ideally, I would prefer it to be shared with a larger scope, such as the MTSS committee at the building level as data like this can be incredibly useful to promoting building success. Finally, based on my findings, I developed a building discipline plan that encompasses all of the observations I made in an effort to promote positive behavior and limit school disruptions.

### **Project Outcomes:**

As noted, the behavioral data was analyzed in depth and patterns building wide were noticed. Based on these observations, key recommendations were made and compiled into a 37 page PowerPoint presentation. This presentation was then shared with Lauren in an effort to promote consistent management on schoolwide behavior, promote positive behavior among students, and limit learning disruptions. Finally, all of the evidence and findings were then used to develop a building wide discipline plan which would promote positive behavior and limit the number of referrals moving forward in the years to come.

### **Reflection:**

One lesson I learned early on in the analysis of the SWIS data, is the importance of having a system that can easily track behavioral data and having people who know how to use it. The SWIS system makes it so easy to analyze and identify building wide patterns. It took no more than 10 minutes for the educational aide and secretary to get the SWIS reports to me which is incredibly efficient given there are so many other responsibilities happening daily. The ease of access to these reports allows for other projects to be worked on and not have the issue of racking up all of the necessary data in order to make the analysis I needed to.

Another lesson I learned is the importance of having a consistent discipline plan in place. Consistency in regards to discipline is key to promoting positive behaviors as well as limiting poor choices on a daily basis. Students need structure, clear and established expectations, and routines in place that allow them to be safe but yet flourish in the educational environment. When you have inconsistent behavior handlings, behaviors can increase, inconsistencies in the SWIS data can develop, and staff members can become confused on the behavior process and expectations for the building.

The analysis of this data also helped me realize the important of teamwork and delegating through other staff members in the building. As an administrator, having employees who are willing to lend a hand, even if for simple tasks, can alleviate a lot off of your shoulders and allow you to be more efficient at your administrative duties.

Having people who buy-in to your administrative efforts and assist in many of your daily tasks, a consistent discipline plan in place that is understood by all, and a system to easily analyze behavioral data for your building, are all essential to promoting a sound educational institution. Without any one of these key ingredients, your school could become prone to behavioral issues that disrupt the culture of learning that is or was established in your building and is needed to promote staff and student growth.