

Counseling Info for P&O 4/5/24

The questions:

1. What is the most common reason for referrals?

Currently, each site tracks referral data independently. We do not have a common collection system. Counselors keep track of the source of each referral which can be initiated any number of ways such as a student referring themselves, teacher referral, Coordination of Service (COS) referral, parent/guardian referral, site administrator, or safety officer.

Our counselors track how many students they and their interns serve, and for how many scheduled and unscheduled sessions per student. Counselors track students seen for 1-1 sessions, and for small counseling groups, as well as unplanned crisis support sessions.

Counselors also track students who they have on Check In/Check Out plans and behavior plans. Some sites also track the students seen in the less structured affinity groups, like the Gender Sexuality Alliances and social skills groups.

Moving forward, we are working on developing a centralized tracking system to make data available for analysis and reporting.

2. What are the most common reasons for suspension?

Middle School Suspensions - Fall 2023

Number of Suspensions	California Education Code Violation
26	48900 (a)(1) - Caused, attempted to cause, or threatened to cause physical injury to another person
4	48900 (a)(2) - Willfully used force or violence upon the person of another, except in self-defense
3	48900 (i) - Committed an obscene act or engaged in habitual profanity or vulgarity
2	48900 (f) - Caused or attempted to cause damage to school property or private property.
2	48900 (e) - Committed or attempted to commit robbery or extortion.

2	48900 (h) - Possessed or used tobacco, or products containing tobacco or nicotine products, including, but not limited to, cigarettes, cigars, miniature cigars, clove cigarettes, smokeless tobacco, snuff, chew packets, and betel.
3	miscellaneous vi

3. How does staff address behavior before it gets to suspension?

Principals and other staff implement a range of interventions and alternatives to suspension. Those include, but are not limited to referrals to intervention counselors, restorative justice, conflict mediation, parent conferences, checkin/checkout, mental health counseling, etc.

Administrators utilize the Positive Behavior Matrix as a tool as well. The Positive Behavior Matrix (PBM) was developed for all schools within the Berkeley Unified School District and establishes a uniform discipline code for the district. Additionally, the PBM outlines the Alternative Means of Correction and interventions that school sites may use, as well as consequences that may be issued for inappropriate student behaviors.

Interventions and consequences are most effective with students when they deal directly with the problems fairly, impartially, and equitably, and are culturally responsive. Therefore, the BUSD Positive Behavior Matrix provides schools with supportive responses to behavior practices. Each administrator must consider several factors in determining the appropriate interventions, and consequences to correct inappropriate student behaviors. These factors include, but are not limited to:

- Age, health, and maturation of the student
- Cultural considerations
- Are behaviors related to a student's disability (IEP or Section 504)
- Student's understanding of the impact of their behavior
- Student's willingness to repair the harm caused by their behavior
- Seriousness of the behavior offense and the degree of harm caused
- Impact of the incident on overall school community
- Whether the student's violation threatened the safety of any student or staff member
- The likelihood that a lesser intervention, consequence or AMC would adequately address the violation

4. What training do staff receive to help address behaviors proactively?

Administrators have received training on education codes, discipline, due process, as well as the positive behavior matrix. VPs receive ongoing training at bi-weekly meetings.

5. Is there a way to share the broad context for behavioral support - what's available at each school (i.e. counselor, school psych)? And, what determines if a site has a school

psychologist or a counselor. What determines if a student is referred to a school psychologist or a counselor?

There are a range of staff who provide behavioral support, beginning with the classroom teacher. School site principals and Vice Principals also provide this type of support. While the FTE might vary across sites, each middle school has at least three counselors including a Restorative Justice counselor, Mental Health Counselor and an Academic Counselor. Each middle school also has a school psychologist and counseling interns.

In regards to which students are referred to a school psychologist vs. a counselor:

Our school psychologists are expanding the services they offer to our students now, since we have brought ERMS in house. Generally speaking, a psychologist would work with a student who has counseling as part of their IEP, and a school counselor supports the gen ed students, but there is often collaboration, especially around the tier 1 and 2 level services.

Of note, we also collaborate with Berkeley Mental health (they are on the Mental Health Student Support Act (MHSSA) grant and we work to find referrals in the community for our students w/ mental health needs. Berkeley Youth Alternatives and other Community Based Organizations are also collaborators w/ us.