

# **Don't Suspend Me! An Alternative Discipline Framework for Shifting Administrator Beliefs and Behaviors about School Discipline**

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*Traditional exclusionary methods of school discipline have resulted in inequitable practices throughout the nation. The use of suspensions as the only means of school discipline has become a commonly engrained practice even though it has demonstrated to be ineffective in helping students achieve or behave. Fifty-two school administrators across California who participated in the Don't Suspend Me! Alternative Discipline Framework workshop took part in this mixed-methods study to identify school discipline beliefs of administrators and identify factors that support and/or impede implementation of alternative discipline practices prior to and three months after the initial workshop. Findings indicate a shift in ratings from the participants of the Alternative Discipline Framework workshop toward emergent and innovative disciplinarians. The factors identified for supporting implementation included (a) having the practical resources and tools to know how to implement, (b) having a strong tiered system of supports in place for prevention, intervention, and remediation for behavior, and (c) staff willingness to use alternative discipline. The factors identified that impeded implementation are (a) lack of district office level alignment and support for the alternative discipline framework, (b) parent and community pushback, (c) communication gaps between the school administrators and teachers/staff around alternative discipline and (d) lack of administrator follow through due to the time it requires. This article concludes with recommendations for practice.*

## **INTRODUCTION**

Despite the loss of instructional time and consumption of time, energy, and attention, there has been an increase in percentages of disciplinary actions in schools documented nationwide since 2003-2004 (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2009). There is a disproportionality in school discipline nationwide for students of color and students with learning disabilities. As a result, policymakers have pushed for healthy instructional environments without a disproportionate number of students being deprived the opportunity to learn (Skiba & Losen, 2016, p. 4). Therefore, the emphasis in many states has shifted toward schools having to address inequities in school discipline by utilizing other means of correction or alternative discipline methods rather than traditional exclusionary practices such as school detention, suspensions, and expulsions. Addressing inequities in school discipline is a focus as an accountability measure in the state of California; therefore, many schools are tasked with lowering

suspensions rates and utilizing alternative discipline practices rather than relying on suspensions as the only response to misbehavior.

The purpose of the study was to understand school administrator beliefs around school discipline, identify perceptions of factors that may support and impede implementation of alternative discipline, and evaluate whether the workshop helped shift beliefs around school discipline. To address the purpose, the research questions of this study were: (1) What are school administrator beliefs around school discipline practices prior to and three months after the Don't Suspend Me! Alternative Discipline Framework workshop? (2) Was there a shift in the beliefs around school discipline practices prior to and three months after the Don't Suspend Me! Alternative Discipline Framework workshop? (3) What are school administrator perceptions of factors that may support and impede implementation of alternative discipline prior to and three months after the Don't Suspend Me! Alternative Discipline Framework workshop?

## **REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE**

The literature review focused on the analysis of two topics. The first was research related to the use of traditional disciplinary practices in schools, particularly research around the impact of suspensions on student equity. The second focused on educator beliefs toward discipline practices in schools.

### **Research on Traditional Discipline Practices in Schools**

In analyzing over twenty years of research on discipline approaches, researchers found that out-of-school suspension and zero-tolerance approaches do not reduce or prevent misbehavior and correlates with lower achievement (Losen, 2011; Irvin, Tobin, Sprague, Sugai, & Vincent, 2004; Skiba & Peterson, 1999; Skiba & Rausch, 2006). Over the last 10 years, methods to discipline K-12 students have evolved significantly in comparison to traditional discipline methods. Corporal punishment, zero tolerance, and use of exclusionary practices such as suspensions and expulsions have shifted toward creating positive school environments and use of other means of correction or alternative discipline. Research shows that schools using traditional types of discipline continue to experience significant increases in violence and destructive behavior as well as increases in the number of students excluded from instruction due to suspension or expulsion (Skiba & Rausch, 2006). Furthermore, the use of school suspensions and expulsions is negatively related to academic achievement independent of socio-demographic influences and does not contribute to improved learning outcomes.

### **Research on School Administrator Beliefs Toward Discipline Practices in Schools**

Amongst other challenges identified in the research regarding this topic, school administrator beliefs regarding alternative discipline is related to their behaviors with regard to discipline approaches. Particularly, "where remedies call for widespread systemic change, in order to successfully replace counterproductive practices with more effective disciplinary alternatives, it is critically important that educators be fully supported with resources and training" (Skiba & Losen, 2016). School administrators who are willing to use alternative discipline will ensure they and their staff have adequate ongoing training and provide space for difficult conversations concerning school discipline in their schools. Also, to further understand principal opinions and/or beliefs about school discipline, Skiba and Edl (2004) surveyed over 300 principals. Findings around belief were related to both school rates of out-of-school suspension and to principals' reports of their use of preventive discipline practices. Specifically, "schools with principals with a preventive perspective showed a significantly lower rate of out-of-school suspension than schools at which principals supported suspension and expulsion" (p. 4).

## **METHODS**

In order to investigate school administrator beliefs and factors supporting and impeding the implementation of the alternative discipline framework of participating school administrators, a pragmatic, mixed-methods design was used that included the concurrent examination of both quantitative

and qualitative data. This design included the analysis of (a) quantitative data from an online version of the Discipline Belief Self-Inventory (Hannigan & Hannigan, 2016) before and three months after the Don't Suspend Me! Alternative Discipline Framework workshop, and the analysis of (b) qualitative data from three additional open-ended questions added to the Discipline Belief Self-Inventory to help identify possible factors that support and impede implementation of alternative discipline before and three months after the Don't Suspend Me! Alternative Discipline Framework workshop from sixty (n=60) school administrators. We used the theory of planned behavior as a framework lens for understanding the effects of factors such as relationships between attitudes toward behaviors and beliefs; specifically, with regard to beliefs about traditional and alternative school discipline practices. According to this theory, the more favorable the attitude with respect to behavior, the stronger the individual's intent toward the behavior (Mahat, 2008). The researchers also addressed ethical considerations that are important in a pragmatic approach, such as going through the human subject review process, protecting confidentiality and anonymity, and never knowing the names of our participants to prevent developing a bias against them (Walker, 2007). Surveying in qualitative research is not the most common practice. Typically, semi structured interviews and observations are utilized to describe behaviors in an identified population. In alignment with Jansen's (2010) definition of why qualitative survey should be considered a valid research design for "determining the diversity of some topic of interest within a given population" (para. 6), the researchers agree that this method best yields the anonymous perceptions of the identified population, thus identifying variation in a population in addition to the frequency or means of responses based on the online version of the Discipline Belief Self-Inventory. In the case of this study, 60 school administrators were asked about their beliefs and their experiences implementing alternative discipline before and three months after the initial Don't Suspend Me! Alternative Discipline Framework workshop. It was important to conduct a pre and post analysis of this information in order to give the school administrators time to implement or refine their implementation of alternative discipline based on what they learned from the workshop (theory to practice). The methods section includes: (a) a description of the Don't Suspend Me! Alternative Discipline Framework Workshop, (b) population and participants, (c) sampling, (d) data collection, (e) data analysis, (f) mixed methods validity and reliability, and (g) limitations.

### **Description of the Don't Suspend Me! Alternative Discipline Framework Workshop**

The Don't Suspend Me! Alternative Discipline Framework workshop is an 8-hour workshop designed to shine a light on the inequities and disproportionality in school discipline, specifically with students of color and special education students. The purpose of this workshop is to help educators understand the why, the what, and the how in implementing the alternative discipline framework. The alternative discipline framework is provided to help school administrators learn how to design and implement effective discipline using restorative, reflective, and instructional methods of supports to avoid using traditional discipline practices as the only means of discipline. For example, the outcome of the workshop is for attendees to learn how to use the Alternative Discipline Framework which includes at least one restorative, one reflective, and one instructional component as part of the assigned discipline. For the purpose of this framework, restorative, reflective, and instructional are defined as follows: (a) *Restorative*: Provide opportunities for the student to restore relationships between themselves and stakeholder(s) they have affected due to the behavior incident (apology, student contracts, community service, restitution, etc.), (b) *Reflective*: Provide opportunities for students to reflect about the decisions they made that led to the discipline (reflection sheets, role-playing, interviews, etc.), and c) *Instructional*: Provide teaching opportunities for students that target the function of the behavior and helps them learn the skills needed to not engage in such behaviors again (behavior lessons, social skills, teaching opportunities, behavior exams, etc.) (p. 18). This framework is centered around two questions: (1) Is this a discipline incident that is resulting in the student returning back to my campus? If yes, an innovative disciplinarian will use an alternative framework of discipline, rather than simply sending the student home on a suspension; and (2) Does the consequence have real-life application and meaning to help improve student behavior? Essentially, educators will learn how consequences need to be meaningful and

designed to teach individual students from their behaviors rather than a one size fits all traditional approach.

### **Population and Participants**

From this Alternative Discipline Framework workshop designed for school administrators, 52 school administrators participated in the pre and post components of this study. This gave us an 87% response rate (60 total school administrators were registered for this workshop). Thirty-six of the participants were school administrators at the primary level and 24 were school administrators at the secondary levels. All 60 workshop participants had an average of 4-6 years of experience as a school administrator prior to enrolling in this workshop. Out of the 60, 32 were female and 28 were male. Twenty-seven identified as White, 17 Latina/o, 8 Asian American, and 8 identified as Other. Potential school administrator participants whose California Department of Education (CDE) Accountability Dashboard Suspension indicator performance levels for their schools were in the red, orange, and/or yellow range ([Red (lowest), Orange (second lowest), Yellow (medium), Green (second highest), Blue (highest)]) were emailed a description of this alternative discipline framework workshop opportunity and requested their participation. It is important to note although red is labeled as the lowest performance level, it means “highest” level of suspension rates. Therefore, green and blue performance levels are where school administrators should ideally want their school suspension levels to be. Out of the 60 participants, 22 self-reported their school was in the red, 26 self-reported they were in the orange, and 12 self-reported yellow. All 60 participants self-reported they were at the same school the previous school year in which they were the primary person responsible for assigning school suspensions.

### **Sampling**

Purposeful sampling was utilized consisting of school administrators who had schools in the Red, Orange, and/or Yellow performance levels on the dashboard for suspensions and who agreed to participate in the Don't Suspend Me! Alternative Discipline Framework workshop and study. Purposeful sampling is commonly utilized to help the researcher form generalizations from individual cases, in this case school administrators participating in the Don't Suspend Me! Alternative Discipline Framework workshop who were responsible for assigning suspensions (see sample populations in Sandelowski, 2000) at the school the previous school year. Performance on this state measure is based on data from both the current and prior years. All participants of the workshop were asked to participate in this study before and three months after completing their first Don't Suspend Me! Alternative Discipline Framework workshop. Our participants were the best to participate before the workshop and three months after because they all had opportunity to experience the application of the alternative discipline framework at their schools in order to assess if they had a shift in their discipline beliefs and can identify possibly additional factors that supported or impeded implementation at their schools.

### **Data Collection**

We obtained institutional review board approval was for the research inventory/tool utilized in this study. All participants were provided and accepted the conditions under the informed consent form prior to participating in the Don't Suspend Me! Alternative Discipline workshop and taking the inventory. School administrators as part of this workshop ( $n = 60$ ) were surveyed to explore their beliefs around school discipline before and three months after the workshop. The Discipline Belief Self-Inventory is designed to provide educators with a look into their individual beliefs about discipline. The Discipline Belief Self-Inventory online version is comprised of 20 closed-ended statements around school discipline ranging in a likert scale of 1 strongly disagree to 5 for strongly agree. Three additional open-ended questions were added to the end of the Discipline Belief Self-Inventory giving the opportunity for participants to further expand on what they believe to be possible supportive and impeding factors for implementing alternative discipline in their schools. The researchers wanted to utilize these data and the feedback gathered from the school administrators who are responsible for assigning suspensions at their

schools to help understand and improve the processes of utilizing alternative discipline lieu of suspensions.

### **Instrumentation**

The Discipline Belief Self-Inventory online version will be utilized to gather data for the purpose of this study before and three months after the workshop. The inventory items and open-ended items were reviewed by subject matter experts (SMEs) and piloted with individuals similar to the target audience to ensure face and content validity (Patton, 2015). There are three categories possible as a result of the total score from the Discipline Belief Self-Inventory online version: **Traditional Disciplinarian:** A traditional disciplinarian is a disciplinarian who prefers the black-and-white discipline handbook as a guide on how to conduct discipline. This type of disciplinarian believes this form of discipline works and prefers taking the safe route with a business-as-usual approach to discipline. *Total odd questions in the 40- to 50-point range and Total even questions in the 10- to 20-point range,* **Emergent Disciplinarian:** An emergent disciplinarian is inconsistent with his/her discipline practices. This type of disciplinarian assigns discipline based on his/her disposition and/or pressures from others. This type of disciplinarian does not have a strong belief about discipline one way or another. An emergent disciplinarian will experiment with alternative discipline methods but does not have the skill set or tools to do so. This usually results in using alternatives ineffectively. *Total odd questions in the 21- to 39-point range and Total even questions in the 21- to 39-point range,* and **Innovative Disciplinarian:** An innovative disciplinarian believes in teaching behavior similar to teaching academics. This type of disciplinarian will innovate based on discipline incidents and takes the time to assign, implement, and monitor effective discipline. This type of disciplinarian is confident in having difficult conversations about behavior and has the ability to work with stakeholders on appropriate assignment of discipline that addresses the behavior. *Total odd questions in the 10- to 20-point range and Total even questions in the 40- to 50-point range.* Included in the online discipline belief self-inventory, were demographics and three additional open-ended questions giving the opportunity for participants to further expand on what they believe to be possible supportive and impeding factors for implementing alternative discipline in their schools. In the invitation email, participants will be asked to complete the demographics section, the 20-item inventory, and the three open ended questions which will be accessible through a link. Completing this information will take approximately 20 minutes. The consent of the participants will be implied by the completion of the inventory however, participants will be informed in the statement of consent that they may stop at any time without consequence.

### **Data Analysis**

Data was analyzed and triangulated for both the closed-ended and open-ended components of this study before and three months after the Don't Suspend Me! Alternative Discipline workshop. The closed-ended items from the online Discipline Belief Self-Inventory was analyzed with SPSS statistics software and through the Discipline Belief Self-Inventory scoring rubric identifying responses that are traditional, emergent, and innovative range based on how they rated themselves on the alternative discipline statements. Means and standard deviations were calculated. Inductive analysis was also utilized to attach meaning to the transcriptions from the open-ended responses before and three months after the workshop (Hatch, 2002). The open-ended questions asked the participants about their perceptions of factors that supported or impeded the implementation of alternative discipline in their schools. What are factors that support the implementation of alternative discipline practices? What are factors that impede the implementation of alternative discipline practices? Provide any additional information regarding the implementation of alternative discipline practices in your school? The data analysis for the open-ended responses was done using NVIVO 11 (NVIVO 11), a qualitative data analysis program used for coding, indexing, searching, and developing theory from qualitative data. The program helps organize data in a hierarchical, tree-like form, which, in turn, provided the ability to connect concepts and make relationships between themes and subthemes in the data. All the data were input into NVIVO 11 and coded for the common themes presented in the findings section.

### **Validity and Reliability**

There were two identified factors that affected the validity and reliability of this mixed method study: (a) Nonrepresentative sampling and (b) Nonrepresentative research context. First, although the participants in the research study represent people who need to be understood, they may not be a full representation because the participants exclude school administrators in the green and blue range of the CDE accountability dashboard. It would be beneficial to also hear their beliefs and perceptions toward alternative discipline practices in their schools. Second, the research context may not be representative of school administrators in general since this group of participants were identified based on their performance levels on the CDE accountability indicator, so the generalization of the research may be impacted.

### **Limitations**

There were two limitations identified by the researchers in this study: (a) a lack of group homogeneity and (b) insufficient sample size. Regarding the lack of group homogeneity, there were different levels of experiences (e.g., primary and secondary administration levels). In addition, there were different ranges of CDE accountability levels in regards to suspension data (e.g., not all were in the same performance levels, some were red, orange, and yellow). Second, the samples size was also not sufficient. A population of this study was comprised of a small sample size, making generalizability a challenge. Also, no comparison group exists, rendering it difficult to compare to others school administrators in a similar position.

### **FINDINGS**

The findings were divided into before (pre) and after three months (post) Don't Suspend Me! Alternative Discipline Framework workshop to specifically answer the three overall research questions: What are school administrator beliefs around school discipline practices prior to and three months after the Don't Suspend Me! Alternative Discipline Framework workshop? Was there a shift in the beliefs around school discipline practices prior to and three months after the Don't Suspend Me! Alternative Discipline Framework workshop? What are school administrator perceptions of factors that may support and impede implementation of alternative discipline prior to and three months after the Don't Suspend Me! Alternative Discipline Framework workshop?

#### **School Administrator Beliefs Around School Discipline Practices Prior to and Three Months after the Don't Suspend Me! Alternative Discipline Framework Workshop**

We identified two main findings: 1) For the pre alternative discipline framework workshop component, out of the 52 school administrators who participated in the alternative discipline workshop and completed the pre and post components, twenty-one out of the 52 participants (40%) scored in the "traditional" disciplinarian range, 25 scored in the "emergent" disciplinarian range (48%), and six scored in the "innovative" disciplinarian range (12%) based on the Discipline Belief Self-Inventory scoring rubric, 2). For the post alternative discipline framework workshop component, out of the 52 participants 11 out of 52 (21%) scored in the "traditional" disciplinarian range, 30 scored in the "emergent" range (58%) and 11 scored in the "innovative" range (21%).

#### **Shift in the Beliefs Around School Discipline Practices Prior to and Three Months after the Don't Suspend Me! Alternative Discipline Framework Workshop**

We identified one main finding when comparing pre and post alternative discipline workshop discipline belief self-inventory results: For the "traditional" disciplinarian belief category there was a shift from pre 21 to post 11 participants (-10), for the "emergent" disciplinarian belief category, there was a shift from 25 pre to 30 post (+5), and for the "innovative" disciplinarian belief category, there was a shift from 6 pre to 11 post (+5).

## **School Administrator Perceptions of Factors that May Support and Impede Implementation of Alternative Discipline Prior to and Three Months after the Don't Suspend Me! Alternative Discipline Framework Workshop**

We identified three themes for factors that support and four main themes for factors that impede implementation of alternative discipline practices in schools. The factors identified for “supporting” implementation of alternative discipline practices included (a) having the practical resources and tools to know how to implement (noted by 40 school administrators, or 77%) (b) having a strong tiered system approach in place for prevention, intervention, and remediation for behavior (noted by 28, or 54%), and (c) staff willingness to try alternative discipline (noted by 42, 81%). First, regarding having the practical resources and tools to know to implement, one school administrator stated “[o]kay I am drinking the kool aid but I don’t know what to do instead of suspend students.” Another school administrator noted, “[s]uspending students was what I was taught by my mentors, I was not taught any other way.” Second, in regards to having a strong tiered system of supports in place, the majority of the school administrators noted “[h]ow important it was to have a system for identifying and providing supports for students to prevent escalation of behaviors.” Repeatedly school administrators, mentioned “[t]he positive impact of having a strong foundation for behavior and having interventions to offer to students in need.” Third, staff willingness to try alternative discipline was repeatedly mentioned by the school administrators, a statement that captures the theme among the school administrators was, “[I] am concerned my staff will feel like I am not supporting them if I do not suspend students who are not behaving.” In addition, another statement from an administrator confirms this fear, “[I] will lose the support of my staff if I do not help them with discipline in the way they expect.” The factors identified that “impeded” implementation was (a) lack of district office level alignment and support for the alternative discipline framework implementation (noted by 40 school administrators, or 77%), (b) parent and community pushback (noted by 48 school administrators, or 92%), (c) communication gaps between the school administrators and teachers/staff around alternative discipline (noted by 35 school administrators, or 67%) and, (d) lack of administrator follow through due to the time it requires (noted by 41 school administrators, or 79%). First, regarding the lack of district office level alignment and support, one school administrator noted, “[i]t is hard to implement alternative discipline if your bosses are not supporting your decisions, I was called in and told to reverse my decision.” Similarly, another school administrator stated, “[I] was called in by my supervisor and told to reverse my alternative discipline decision.” Also, several school administrators noted, “[t]he difficulty of implementing alternative discipline if the district policy and handbook language does not reflect it is okay to do so.” Second, in regards to parent and community pushback, a school administrator noted, “[s]tudents talk and parents get involved even if we are not allowed to tell them our decisions about the discipline.” Several other school administrators noted, “[i]t appears as if the school campus is not safe and nothing was done in regards to discipline if the student is back on campus.” Third, in regards to communication gaps between school administrators and teachers/staff, the majority of school administrators noted, “[t]he perception is that I am not doing anything about discipline because I am not suspending students.” Lastly, school administrators stated that lack of follow through of alternative discipline implementation was often brought up by teachers and staff. For example, one school administrator noted, “[a]lthough I have good intention to follow through with the alternative discipline, it requires a lot of time and I get distracted or busy.” Similarly, another school administrator noted, “[I] try to implement alternative discipline on my own, and then I am not able to follow through as I would like due to how much time it requires, making my staff feel like it is a joke and students are getting away with doing whatever they want.”

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Our nine recommendations for shifting beliefs from traditional toward alternative discipline practices and putting in place supportive structures for implementation success:

## Recommendations for School Administrators

1. **Participate in Alternative Discipline workshops to understand the essential components necessary for implementing Alternative Discipline in schools.** The school administrator may consider participating in ongoing training workshops around implementation of alternative discipline practices.
2. **School administrators feel competent in explaining the reasons for their alternative discipline decisions.** If a school administrator does not believe in this work, then he/she is going to have a difficult time getting the support of the teachers and staff. It is essential that the school administrator is clear the culture of his or her school is to support all students academically and social-emotionally.
3. **Ensure staff are provided with education around the reasons behind implementing Alternative Discipline in schools.** The school administrator may consider providing adequate training to teachers and staff around the reasons for implementing alternative discipline practices. Often, when teachers and staff are not informed about the why around implementation, they tend to establish their own perceptions of what it is.
4. **Ensure follow through of the implementation of Alternative Discipline Framework.** Ensuring implementation of alternative discipline practices with fidelity is critical in order to demonstrate the positive outcomes for students and get support from teachers and staff with implementation efforts.
5. **Make sure the school and district discipline handbook language includes support of alternative discipline practices.** If the district level and school level discipline policy or handbooks do not incorporate language allowing for use of alternative discipline practices at the discretion of the school and district office level administrators, then school administrators may find themselves in conflict with the policy language they have to follow.
6. **Provide training for the community and school board around alternative discipline practices.** Educating the community and school board is also critical so misconceptions are not developed and alternative discipline receives the blame for no discipline and lax discipline structures in schools.
7. **Strengthen communication of alternative discipline with teacher and staff stakeholders.** Without timely communication and stakeholder feedback on the development and implementation of the alternative discipline framework, it will not work. Teachers and staff will feel as if nothing was done about discipline at the school due to alternative discipline practices without ample communication between administration and stakeholders affected.
8. **Make sure to invest in developing a strong tiered system of supports to help with prevention, intervention, and remediation of students needing different levels of behavioral supports.** It is also critical to invest in establishing a strong foundation to prevent the high number of students needing alternative discipline at the school. If a school administrator works with his school team to ensure a foundation is in place for prevention, intervention for students demonstrating at risk behaviors, and remediation is in place for intensive behavioral supports, then there will be fewer students requiring alternative discipline.
9. **Use schoolwide behavior data and SMART goals to ensure implementation and progress monitoring of alternative discipline practices.**

If behavior data is not being utilized to identify SMART goals around behavior and progress monitoring of students needing ongoing interventions, there will be no evidence to advocate for the effectiveness of putting alternative discipline in place.

## DISCUSSION

The drive toward utilizing alternative discipline in schools is expanding throughout the nation. Although, it is difficult to argue the rationale that students need an opportunity to learn from their



mistakes rather than being sent home and expected to return behaving decently or having their behaviors “fixed.” This work is more difficult to do when compared to traditional, exclusionary methods of discipline. In fact, the use of the alternative discipline framework requires both the beliefs and the behaviors of school administrators working in alignment to be truly meaningful in changing a student’s behavior and confronting any factors impeding a successful implementation. However, with new mandates and state accountability measures, comes a more recent need for schools to employ intentional supports and preventive measures while removing impeding factors for implementation of alternative discipline. External pressures such as the California Department of Education accountability dashboard publically holding schools accountable for inequities in school discipline is a starting point in requiring school administrators to shift from their traditional approach in dealing with student misbehavior. Accountability systems such as CDE dashboard focusing on equity trends around suspensions are helpful, but if the leadership from district office down to the school sites do not make an intentional effort in supporting this work through training, funding, policy, and education, it too will become another compliance based policy, and fail to sustain when the impeding factors arise. Furthermore, if school administrators (those in charge of assigning discipline) do not see value in or have the willingness to innovate using alternative discipline practices, then alternative discipline will not work for the students at their school. Using the theory of planned behavior as a framework lens for understanding the relationship between behaviors and beliefs, one thing is clear: the more favorable the beliefs toward the use of alternative discipline in alignment with the supportive factors for strong implementation, the larger the shift in beliefs and behaviors away from traditional practices toward the use of alternative discipline (innovative). Adequate training and challenging the beliefs about school discipline in order to educate and shift approaches from traditional exclusionary practices into an innovative alternative disciplinarian are at the crux of its success.

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