



*Growing Equity and Democracy:
one child,
one family,
one classroom at a time*

Solution Focused/Positive Discipline A Model for Response To Intervention (RTI) Three Years Experience in Seattle Schools.

Solution Focused Discipline/Positive Discipline is consistent with RTI

The Response to Intervention (RTI) approach for schools identifies appropriate interventions for students based on clearly assessed needs. Sound Discipline works with ten Seattle Schools on a program that is a model for RTI around discipline. The Solution Focused /Positive Discipline model supports schools in “organiz[ing] their intervention resources in an efficient manner that allows them to provide more intensive, individualized support as students display increased ... difficulties” with behavior in school.¹

- The Solution Focused/Positive Discipline model recognizes that groups of students require different strategies and interventions using a tiered approach.²
- A systematic approach for tracking discipline is used, and discipline data is the basis for designing appropriate interventions.
- Interventions are tailored to the appropriate level. Some of these are school-wide or in the classroom (these correspond to tier 1 interventions under RTI). Others are individualized and may take place in the classroom or small group based to enhance social and self regulation skills (tier 2). Yet others focus teams of adult support and intervention (tier 3). Tier 3 interventions sometimes occur inside the school (SIT meetings, special accommodations) and other times utilize outside resources (eg. counseling, mentorship).
- Solution Focused/ Positive Discipline expects schools to track and assess interventions using their own data. The immediacy and efficacy of a school’s own data supports the imperative for continual learning, assessment, and application of higher level strategies, resulting in continued school improvement.

¹ From the description of RTI in: Wright, Jim. *RTI Toolkit: a practical guide for schools*, Dude Publishing, New York, 2007 p.3

² See, pages 4,5 of the Positive Discipline School: Using Solution Focused Discipline to Build a Powerful Learning Community http://www.sounddiscipline.org/assets/PDS_brchr-11%2007_SD.pdf

- Solution Focused Discipline uses an RTI approach both beginning implementation and throughout implementation at the school. For schools beginning the RTI process, this means the preliminary steps related to discipline required by RTI have been completed. Like RTI, Solution Focused/Positive Discipline requires:
 - Strong principal support,
 - Staff review of the model,
 - That the process and improving school climate/discipline is a top school priority,
 - 80% staff buy in,
 - Organizing behaviors and interventions into three levels (For staff we talked about green, orange and red as a way of sorting behaviors, for the discipline team we use the data to sort.),
 - Diverse teams that problem solve and monitor discipline data and
 - Continual monitoring of data on the school and student level.

Solution Focused/Positive Discipline also:

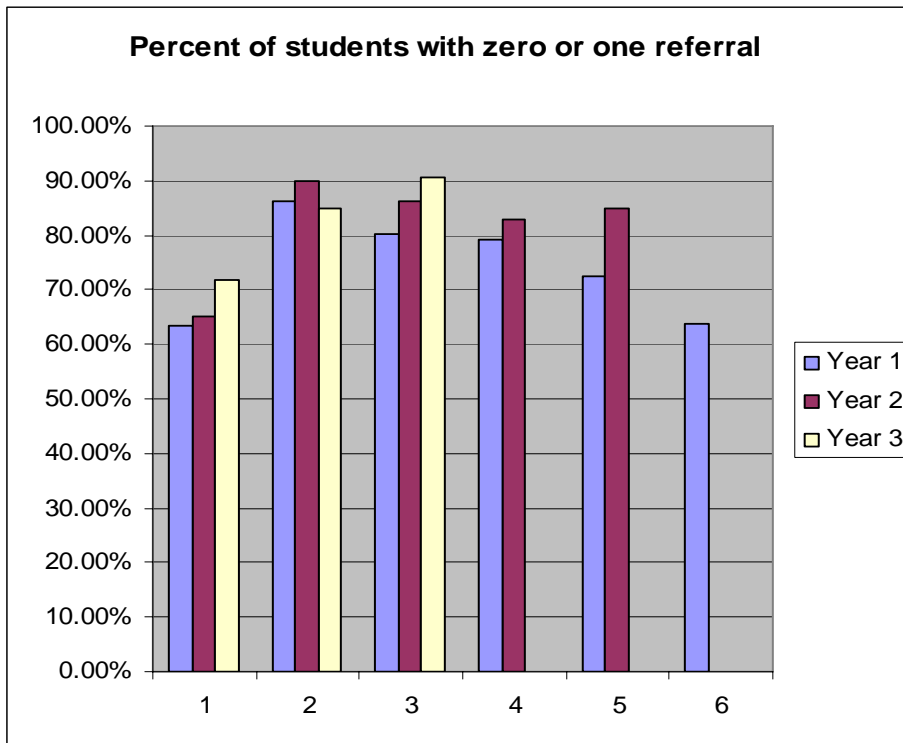
- Uses a strengths-based problem solving model,
- Considers root causes of a student's difficulties,
- Tailors solutions to be student specific, doable, and practical in a real-world classroom and
- Expects follow up from students and teachers.

Solution Focused Discipline/Positive Discipline offers more than RTI requires.

In addition to individual behavioral challenges that are tracked in this tiered system, the Solution Focused/ Positive Discipline model goes several steps further. It uses data to specifically track whole school climate and discrepancies in how groups of children are treated (race/ gender/ age), understanding that in order for schools to function well, all students must be treated equitably within the larger community. This model also calls for direct parent engagement in a process that is site based and site created. These added features of the model carry it beyond direct monitoring and intervention and address community prevention and the root causes of some of the challenges schools face.

Solution Focused Discipline/Positive Discipline is effective.

The Solution Focused/ Positive Discipline approach has been demonstrated to decrease referrals to the office. This has occurred at the same time that the consistency of reporting has demonstrably increased. In other words, even though the staff is now better at consistently reporting, which should increase the numbers of referrals, the actual need for referrals is decreasing. The proportion of students in tier one has increased in every school using the model.



This graph represents the percentage of students in Tier I for six schools at various stages of the program. The drop in percentage of students in Tier I at school 2 (year 3) is because of a bus driver problem at the beginning of the year. The school was able to address the problem successfully, but it did skew the data.

Individual schools and data teams are carefully examining data and grappling with how to become more effective in their responses to challenging behavior, carefully designing processes that benefit the student and the school long term.

Our experience is that adopting the RTI model within a school takes planning, collaboration and time as the school shifts its approach. The lessons learned in this early adoption of RTI for discipline might be applicable to other RTI implementations in Seattle Schools.