What feedback did staff and families give about the BEP?

To answer this question, Student Services staff organized multiple methods to elicit staff, family, and community feedback on various aspects of the BEP. The findings are organized below, disaggregated by staff and family.

Staff Feedback

Staff feedback was gathered in two ways by Student Services staff: (1) survey and (2) engagement sessions.

Staff Survey

Methods: Student Services developed a survey to capture staff's feedback on BEP policy changes implemented in May and resources staff need to support the plan's implementation. The survey was administered between October 10 and 19, 2018. RPEO staff sent electronic survey links to 3,769 staff and received 1,618 responses for a response rate of 43%. Responses to the open-ended question, *what would make the biggest impact in supporting behavior at your school?*, were analyzed in Qualtrics, the survey software, and codes were assigned to summarize themes among comments. In addition, we asked staff whether they thought three specific policy changes would have a positive effect at their school. We also offered staff a list of 14 resources that could be used at their school and asked them to prioritize those resources.

Findings: The most common theme among open-ended responses related to **more student services staff**. Comments included: *"Additional staff, both SEAs and CC teachers," "Having MORE support people (CC, SEA, BEA) in school,"* and *"Sufficient allocations for support staff–social worker, psychologist, SEAs/EAs."* **Mental health services** was the second most common theme among responses. Staff requested, *"mental health and trauma supports," "therapeutic groups for kids who need extra support,"* and *"Mental Health accessibility for students and families,"* as things that would help support behavior at their schools. Staff also noted that having different options for **consequences** would help support behavior. Staff requested: *"More or better consequences for fighting, watching, and inciting fights," "Level 1 behavioral incidents must have consequence,"* and *"Have consequences for all behaviors. The expectation bar is lower and lower each year."* Staff also cited a need for **consistency and follow through**. Staff recommended: *"Constancy with everyone doing the same thing across the building," "Consistency in expectations for students,"* and *"Consistent response and follow through to inappropriate behavior."* Staff also recommended **alternative settings** such as *"alternate spaces for high needs individuals," "more options for alternative programming,"* and *"alternatives (in/out of school) for students with high needs."*

Among closed-ended questions, when asked if three recent policy changes would have a positive impact at their school, a majority of staff agreed that policy changes around social media threats and fights/physical attacks would be positive, while a minority believed a policy change around vaping leading to suspension would be positive.
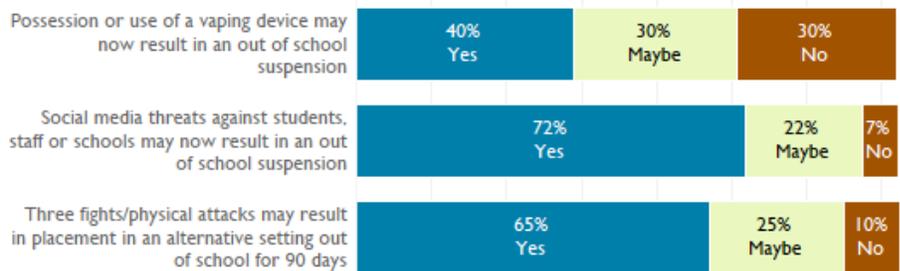
When asked to prioritize among 14 potential resources, staff chose "Mental health supports" and "Additional supports for high need students" at by far the highest rate. Trends generally were similar across staff types and level.
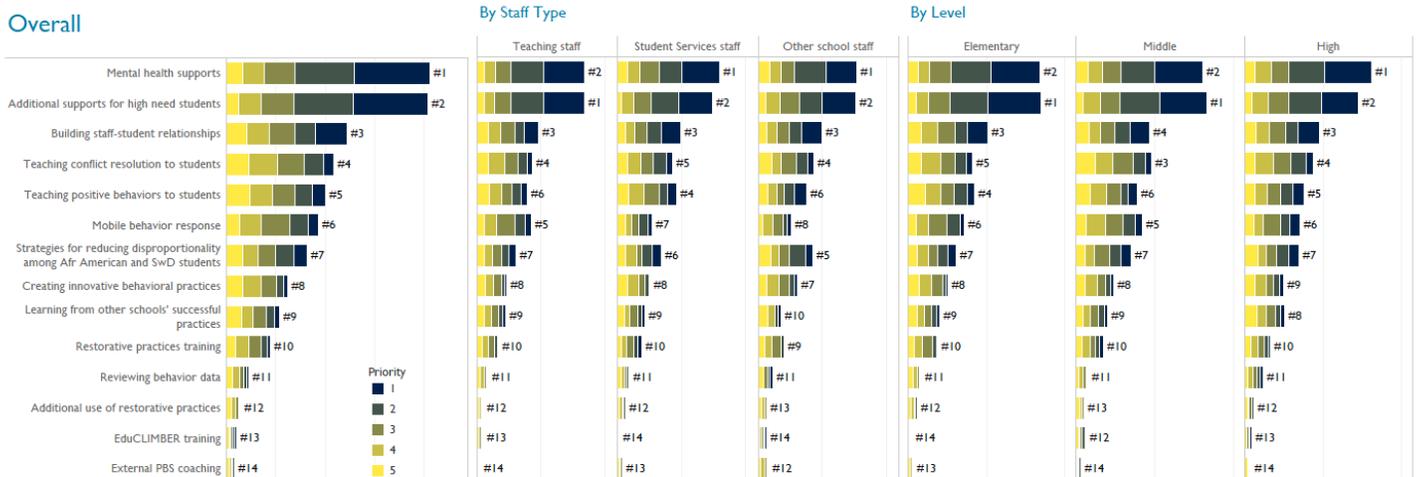
Staff Engagement Sessions

Methods: While hosting six engagement sessions with over 240 staff members from at least 12 schools (ranging between 14 and 85 people), Student Services staff took notes in Google Docs of the large group conversations centering on the Behavior Education Plan. RPEO staff downloaded the notes as Word documents, then uploaded them into NVivo, a software program used for qualitative analysis. We used coding, a way of organizing and sorting qualitative data that involves assigning labels, or codes, to each comment or response. Using the constant comparative method, we isolated the **major themes** below. Quotes were taken from the session notes.

Findings: When participants articulated strengths or aspects of the Behavior Education Plan they believed were working, they mentioned items such as *"It is a plan and there is a process,"* and *"Students having a chance to fix [their] behavior is great."* However, the majority of participant responses related to challenges and unmet needs of the Plan. Many called for **additional staff**: *"We need more people!"* indicated one participant, and another observed, *"We need more support staff and more hands in the classroom. We need to quickly put out fires in the classroom with people that are well-trained."* Some participants specified needing more SEAs, school psychologists, and social workers. As one participant said, *"Even if we have the greatest plan, it's meaningless if we don't have the people to implement it."* Participants also recognized a need for **student supports**, including mental health supports, academic supports, alternative options, and education around behavior. *"We need to offer support as they walk into the door. Academic supports are critical!"* urged one participant, while another emphasized, *"Academics and behavior are so linked. Academic difficulties often cause behaviors."* Another participant suggested, *"We need more elementary options for alternative placements."* **Consequences and concerns around existing interventions** surfaced in conversations, with participants wondering about how *"kids seem to feel they can do anything, and there's nothing teachers can do."* Some staff were concerned about *"no consequences,"* as participants expressed concern around the idea that *"If we give kids zero consequences, they think they can behave that way in public."* **Resources** (including time) emerged as a critical point for staff too. One participant desired *"A thorough review of allocation and use of resources."* Another lamented, *"Trying to correct the culture, but not [having] enough resources."* **Additional training and staff support** surfaced in conversations as well. *"We need consistent training of all staff,"* urged one participant, *"Teachers need support, not blame."* Another questioned, *"How are we supporting teachers to use best practices to support their students in classrooms?"* Others described the **challenges faced when working with high needs students** (e.g., those with intense needs, and those that have Tier 3 needs). One participant said, *"There are a handful of students that are tying up all of our systems at a school."*

Family-Specific Feedback: Engagement Sessions

Methods: Student Services staff hosted four engagement sessions with over 55 family participants (mostly white). During these large-group discussions (ranging between 10 and 20 people) on the Behavior Education Plan, a Student Services staff member took notes in Google Docs. Then, RPEO staff downloaded and uploaded them into NVivo again, where coding took place. Again, the constant comparative method was used to isolate **major themes** detailed below. Quotations were taken from the provided notes.

Findings: When participants described what they thought was working about the Behavior Education Plan, they honed in on relationship-building and restorative practices. The majority of conversations in these sessions revealed challenges or needs related to the Plan. Families thought schools could use **additional staff** and staff with particular characteristics. *"More Student Services staff needed at elementary schools,"* recommended one participant, while another emphasized, *"More teachers and staff allocation. I'm afraid for what I hear from teachers. High levels of stress. We need more folks to help them do what they do best."* Others believed more African American staff, more male staff, and more female security staff would be helpful. When describing concerns around **consequences**, a participant observed, *"Students see students fighting and then they're in class an hour later or at football practice. If there's no consequence then kids feel empowered to do anything."* There was a general perception of a lack of consequences, with one participant questioning, *"…can there be quick changes to put more consequences back in place? I'm seeing bad habits developed in my son's kindergarten class. We're losing staff, we're losing families. Teachers seem to feel they can't do anything about it."* Another discussed hearing about this perception of no consequences: *"My experience has been that students have gotten the impression that they can do whatever they want and there's not going to be any consequence."* Participants also described concerns related to **documentation and accountability**. In particular they described concerns about the system, inaccurate or inconsistent documentation practices, and the types of data being collected. *"If our District focus is on a certain variable,"* began one participant, *"that creates a culture among staff to hesitate to do anything that will make that data look worse."* Other participants focused on **relationships**, with some noting its importance, others describing the challenges, and still others discussing the foundation of those relationships: trust and respect. While one participant recognized that the perception is more about loving kids and the solution is based on relationships, this participant said, *"That's ridiculous. There need to be boundaries*

set and enforced. It's what any good parent would be doing." Conversely, another participant argued that "Relationship building should start much younger than high school. If a parent or school has not connected with a child before high school, they may already be checked out. Can we 'double down' on relationships K-8?" Finally participants brought up **challenges faced when working with high needs students**. Some described how "There seems to be a small percentage of students who need the majority of the resources," while others described how "Behaviors are often direct manifestation of disabilities and they are treated as if they are not" and "We're not following IEPs when applying the BEP. Behaviors are just treated the same unless it's an expulsion."

Family, Staff, & Community Feedback: Feedback Form

Methods: As part of ongoing communication efforts around the BEP, Student Services maintains a feedback form on its website, so community members, parents, staff and students can relate their feedback on policy suggestions, concerns, questions or other comments related to the plan. Stakeholders were invited to give feedback during the same period in which the staff survey was being conducted, October 10-19, 2018. Responses to the open-ended question, "*what is your feedback?*," were analyzed and codes were assigned to summarize themes among comments.

Findings: Ninety-one stakeholders used the feedback form to comment on the behavior education plan. Sixty-nine identified themselves as parents, 21 as staff and one as a community member. The most common theme among comments related to **consequences**. One respondent asked, "*Can you give examples of actual punishments that are given in the school district?*" Others stated, "*Teachers are unable to do anything to students that misbehave and disrupt the class,*" and "*students need concrete consequences, and this seems to be lacking in the current behavior plan.*" Respondents also raised concerns over **lost instructional time**. Comments included: "*I would like to see data/feedback on what effects the BEP is having on kids who don't require intervention regarding the number of minutes of teaching time lost to BEP implementation/events,*" "*As practiced, the BEP is literally destroying the education of children who are ready to learn,*" and "*if disrupting children are kept in the classroom, the learning of the children who are paying attention is negatively affected.*" Stakeholders also expressed concerns about a **lack of safety**. Feedback included: "*Our family is debating leaving the school district because of the increasing violence in the schools and concerns for our daughter's safety,*" "*why is it that is schools are a "gun free zone" and how is it that a child can bring one to school and that child can return back?!*" and "*This BEP is not strong enough to keep our kids safe.*" Respondents also cited a need for **policy changes**. Stakeholder comments included: "*Students who are not ready to learn cannot remain in the classroom. There has to be another plan or the majority of our students suffer. The BEP does not work and is causing so many great educators to leave our district,*" "*Educate all children about what sexual assault is BEFORE it happens, not after it happens,*" and "*There has been too many discussions and planning meetings on safety and the BEP. Make some changes and make our schools safe again or step aside and let new people in to do so.*"