An Equity-focused PBIS Approach for Increasing Racial Equity in School Discipline

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Council for Exceptional Children

ies NATIONAL CENTER FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION RESEARCH

Institute of Education Sciences

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- Botham Jean
- Stephon Clark
- Aura Rosser
- Atatiana Jefferson
- Breonna Taylor
- Ahmaud Arbery
- George Floyd
- Rayshard Brooks
- Jonathan Price

Learning Objectives

- By the end of this session, you should be able to:

    A. Describe elements of effective intervention to increase **racial equity** in school discipline

    B. Identify when our **implicit biases** are most likely to affect our discipline decisions

    C. Design a **neutralizing routine** to use in place of our immediate reactions to unwanted behavior

U.S. Schools Using PBIS

August 2020
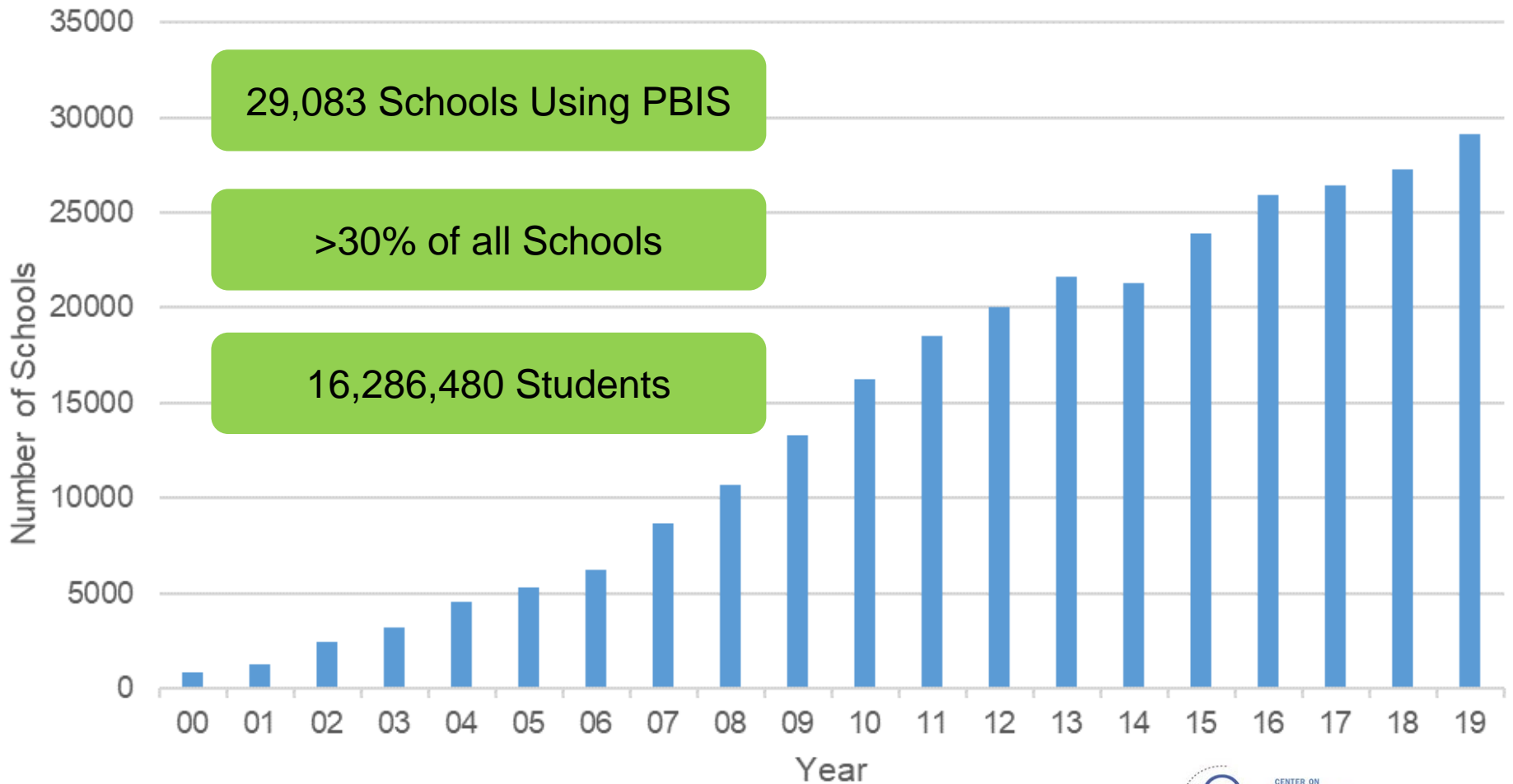
Effects of PBIS on Disciplinary Equity

PBIS Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports

Do Schools Implementing SWPBIS Have Decreased Racial and Ethnic Disproportionality in School Discipline?

Kent McIntosh, Cody Gion, & Eoin Bastable
University of Oregon

Racial and ethnic disproportionality in school discipline is an enduring and wide-scale problem facing schools in the United States (Skiba et al., 2011). Students of color, particularly Black/African American, Hispanic/Latinx, and Native American students, have been shown to be up to 4 times more likely to be suspended than White students (Balfanz, Byrnes, & Fox, 2015; Losen et al., 2015). These findings are especially concerning because receipt of suspensions is associated with negative student outcomes (American Academy of Pediatrics Council on School Health, 2013), including lower academic achievement (Davis & Jordan, 1994), future disciplinary action (Arcia, 2006; Mendez & Knoff, 2003), and future juvenile justice involvement (Fabelo et al., 2011). In response to these disparities, educators are seeking effective approaches to reduce racial disproportionality in school disciplinary outcomes (Skiba & Losen, 2016).

One common approach to reduce the overall use of exclusionary discipline is school-wide positive behavioral interventions and supports (SWPBIS). SWPBIS is a multi-tiered framework implemented in over 25,000 schools for supporting the implementation of evidence-based practices within schools to improve social and learning environments for students (Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports, 2018; Horner & Sugai, 2015). SWPBIS focuses on improving behavior by teaching students prosocial skills and redesigning school environments to discourage problem behaviors (Sugai & Horner, 2006). Multiple trials have shown that SWPBIS significantly reduces both antisocial behavior of students and the use of exclusionary discipline by school personnel
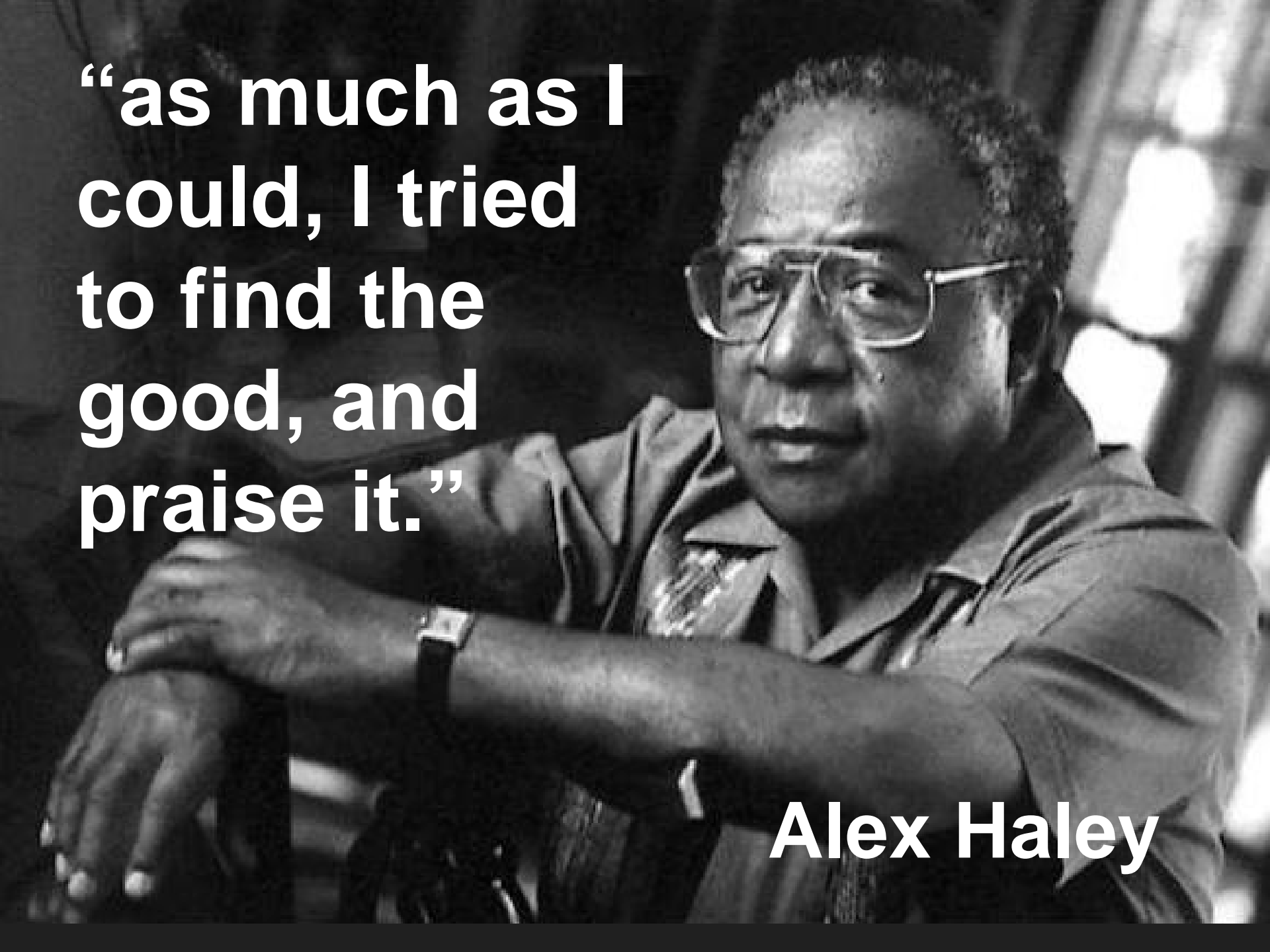
Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports (PBIS)

1

https://www.pbis.org/topics/equity

Effects of PBIS on Discipline Disproportionality
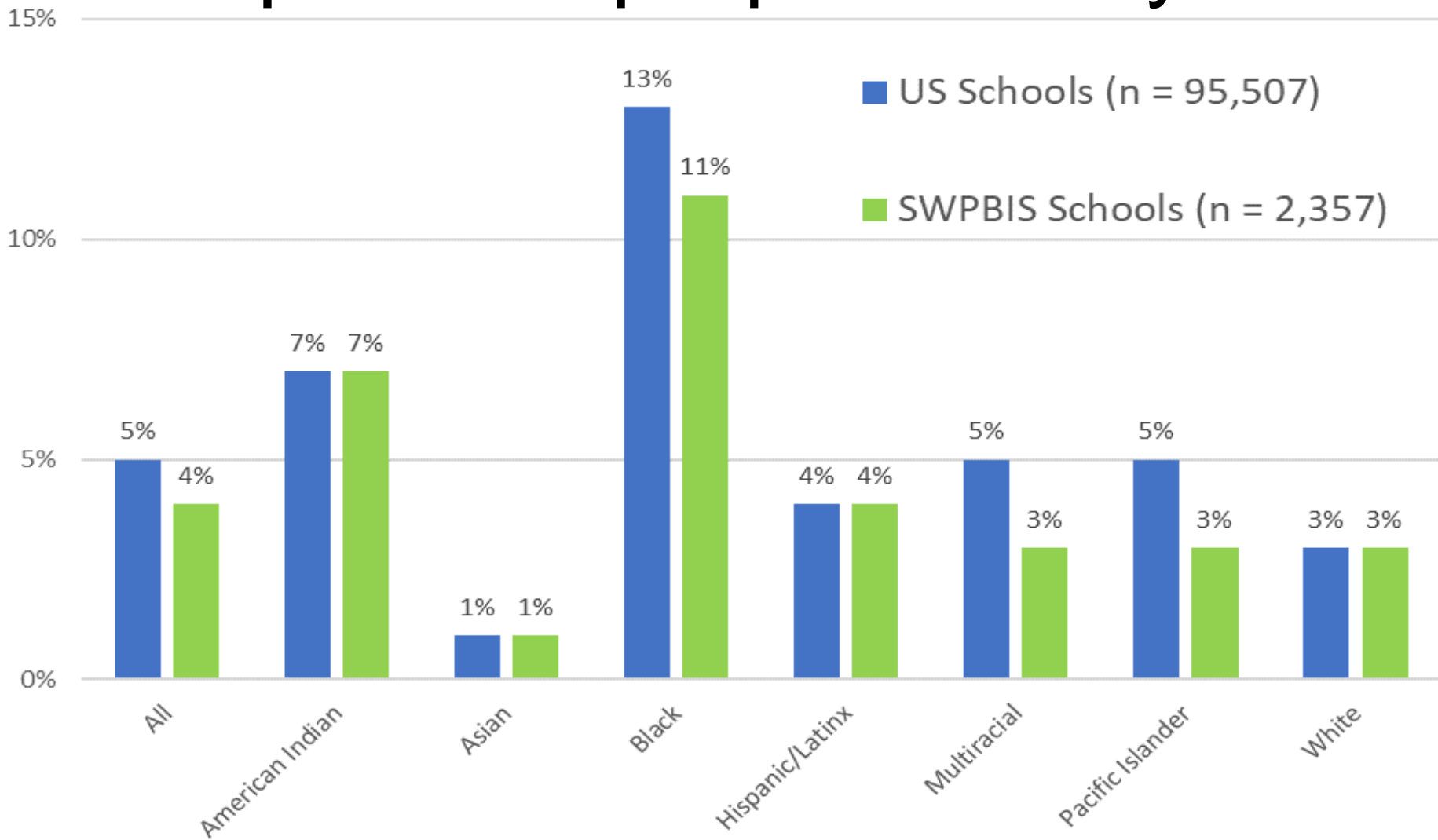
Which PBIS Features are Most Predictive of Equity?

- Significant predictors of decreased disproportionality:

  - ☐ **Regular use of data for decision making** (Tobin & Vincent, 2011)

  - ☐ **Implementation of classroom PBIS systems** (Tobin & Vincent, 2011)

  - ☐ **Use of formal reward systems** (Barclay, 2017; Tobin & Vincent, 2011)

"as much as I could, I tried to find the good, and praise it."

Alex Haley

A 5-point Intervention Approach to Enhance Equity in School Discipline

PBIS Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports
OSEP TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE CENTER

February 2018

A 5-Point Intervention Approach for Enhancing Equity in School Discipline

Kent McIntosh, Erik J. Girvan, Robert H. Horner, Keith Smolkowski, & George Sugai

Discipline disproportionality is one of the most significant problems in education today (Gregory, Skiba, & Noguera, 2010; U.S. Government Accountability Office, 2013). The results of decades of research consistently show that students of color, particularly African American students (and even more so for African American boys and those with disabilities), are at significantly increased risk for receiving exclusionary discipline practices, including office discipline referrals and suspensions (e.g., Fabelo et al., 2011; Girvan et al., in press; Losen & Gillespie, 2012). These differences have been found consistently across geographic regions and cannot be adequately explained by the correlation between race and poverty (Noltemeyer & Mcloughlin, 2010; Morris & Perry, 2016). Given the negative effects of exclusionary discipline on a range of student outcomes (American Academy of Pediatrics Council on School Health, 2013), educators must address this issue by identifying rates of discipline disproportionality, taking steps to reduce it, and monitoring the effects of intervention on disproportionality. Disproportionality in exclusionary discipline blocks us from the overall objective of promoting positive outcomes for every student.

Components of Effective Intervention to Prevent and Reduce Disproportionality

No single strategy will be sufficient to produce substantive and sustainable change. Multiple components may be needed, but not all components may be necessary in all schools. We describe here a 5-point multicomponent approach to reduce disproportionality in schools.

1. Collect, Use, and Report Disaggregated Discipline Data

Any school or district committed to reducing disproportionality should adopt data systems that allow disaggregation of student data by race /ethnicity and provide instantaneous access to these data for both school and district teams. Some discipline data systems for entering and analyzing office discipline referrals

https://www.pbis.org/topics/equity

5-point Intervention Approach

1. Collect, use, and report **disaggregated** discipline data
2. Implement a **behavior framework** that is preventive, multi-tiered, and culturally responsive
3. Use engaging **academic instruction** to reduce the opportunity (achievement) gap
4. Develop **policies** with accountability for disciplinary equity
5. Teach strategies to **neutralize implicit bias**

https://www.pbis.org/topics/equity

Project ReACT

- ***Funding***
  - ☐ 3-year Institute of Education Sciences (IES) NCSER Development Grant
- ***Aim***
  - ☐ Develop and test a school intervention to reduce racial disproportionality in school discipline
- ***Intervention***
  - ☐ Professional development to achieve **R**acial **e**quity, through
    - **A**ssessing data to identify root causes
    - **C**ulturally responsive behavior strategies
    - **T**raining in strategies to neutralize implicit bias

Project ReACT Team

- PIs/Developers
  - Kent McIntosh
  - Erik Girvan
- Methodologist
  - Keith Smolkowski
- Trainers/Developers
  - Eoin Bastable
  - Sarah Falcon
  - Sara McDaniel
  - Rhonda Nese
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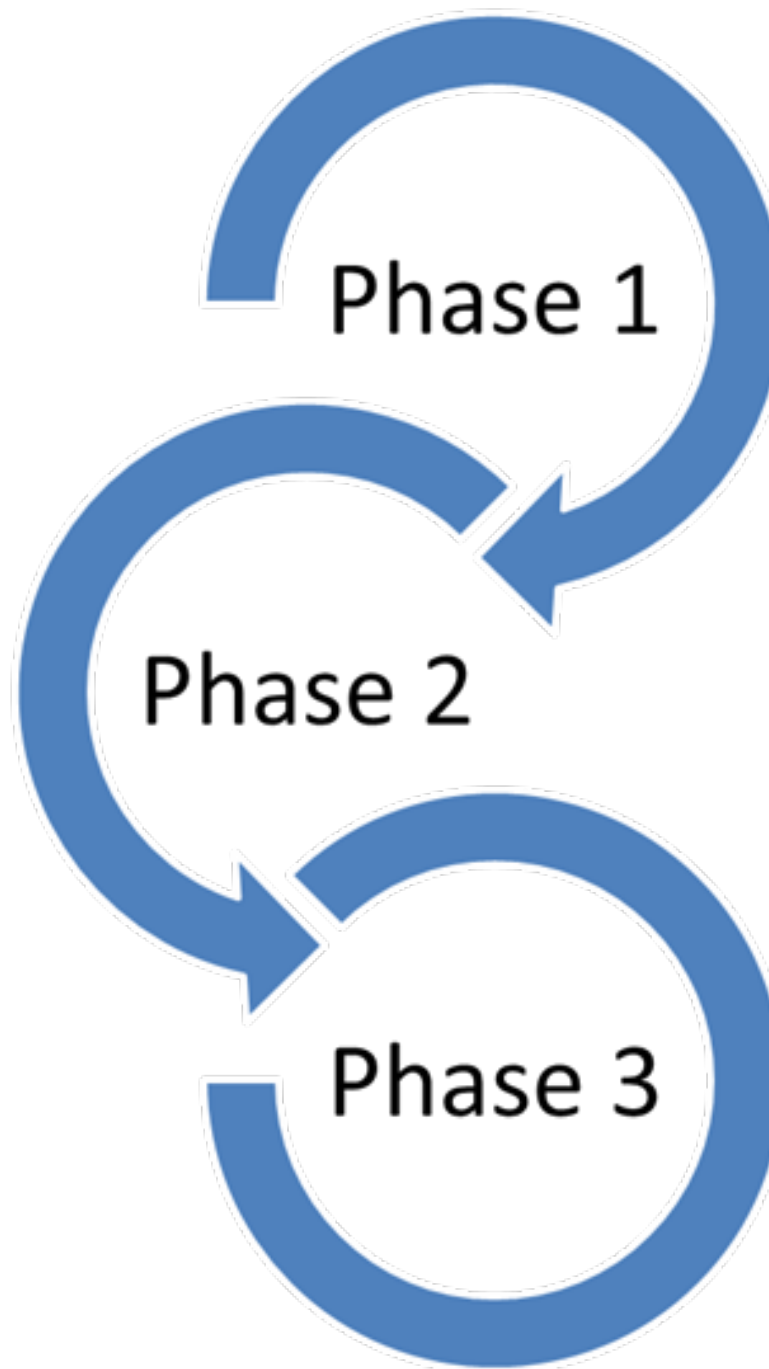- Intervention Advisors
  - Ambra Green
  - Ruth Payno-Simmons
- Research Assistants
  - Sean Austin
  - John Gallo
  - Cody Gion
  - Sara Izzard
  - Sheila Lopez
  - Stephanie St. Joseph
  - Lauren Witherspoon

University of Oregon

Iterative Design

Phase 1

Phase 2

Phase 3

PROJECT ACTIVITIES

- 1.1 Design Team - R
- 1.2 Focus Groups - R
- 1.3 Field Test - R
- 1.4 Facilitators/Barriers
- 1.5 Analyze & Refine - R

- 2.1 Implement in Design Schools
- 2.2 Collect & Analyze Data - R
- 2.3 Refine Intervention & Materials - R

- 3.1 Implement RCT
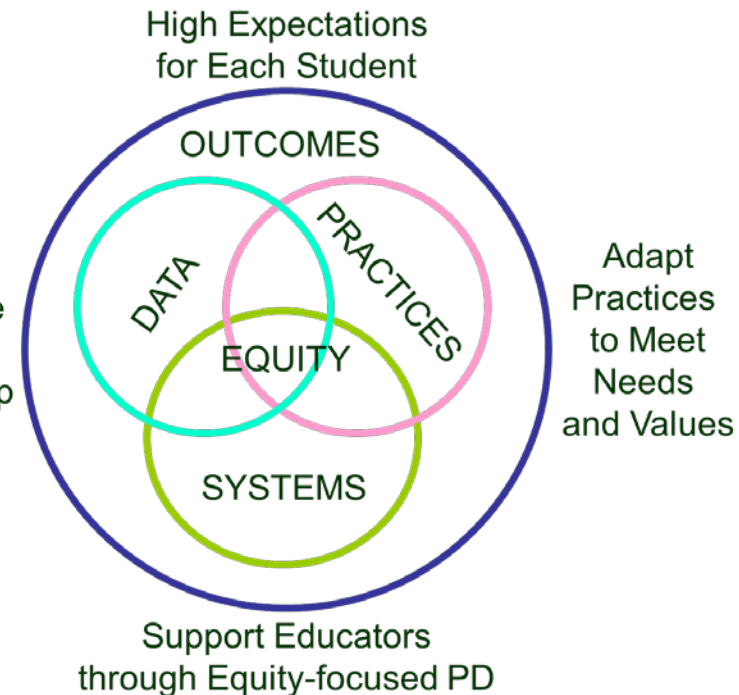- 3.2 Finalize Intervention & Materials - R

Note: R = Refine as needed

What is Project ReACT?

- Using the **PBIS framework** to use school discipline data to increase **R**acial **e**quity through:

  - ☐ **A**ssess data to identify root causes

  - ☐ **C**ulturally responsive behavior strategies

  - ☐ **T**each about implicit bias and strategies to neutralize it

High Expectations for Each Student

OUTCOMES

Disaggregate All Data by Student Group

DATA

PRACTICES

EQUITY

SYSTEMS

Adapt Practices to Meet Needs and Values

Support Educators through Equity-focused PD

Assess data to identify root causes

- Assess racial inequities in:
  - ☐ Discipline data (e.g., ODR, ISS, OSS)
  - ☐ School climate perceptions
- Identify possible causes of inequities
  - ☐ Assess PBIS systems
    - Fidelity
    - Hidden biases in systems
  - ☐ Conduct surveys and walkthroughs
  - ☐ Identify VDPs and EDPs

What is a Vulnerable Decision Point (VDP)?

- A specific decision that is more vulnerable to effects of implicit bias

- Two parts:

  - ☐ Elements of the **situation**

  - ☐ The person's **decision state** (internal state)
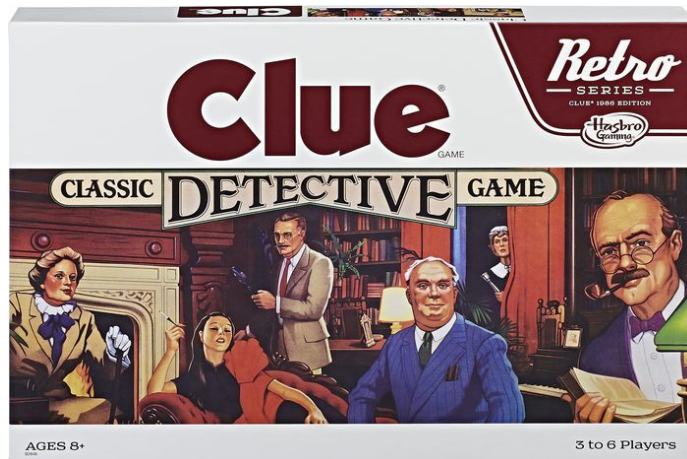
What is an Equitable Decision Point (EDP)?

- A specific decision situation that school data shows is not influenced by bias

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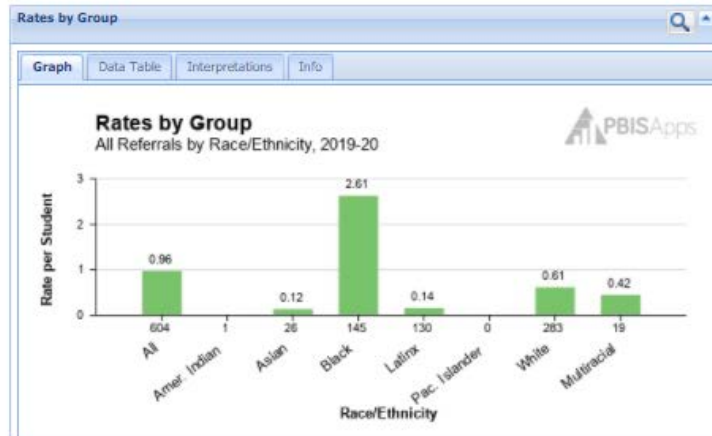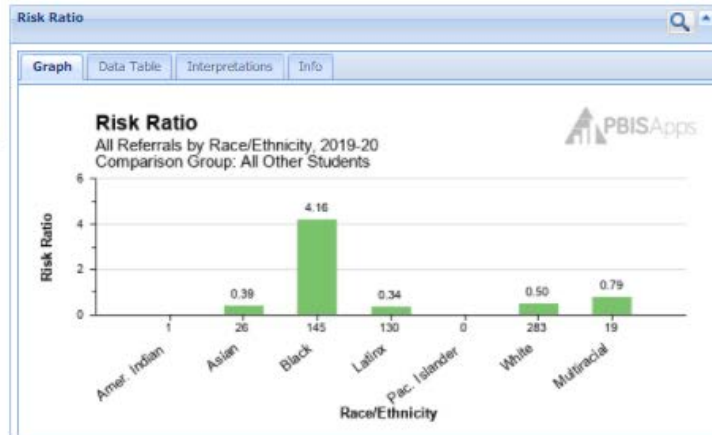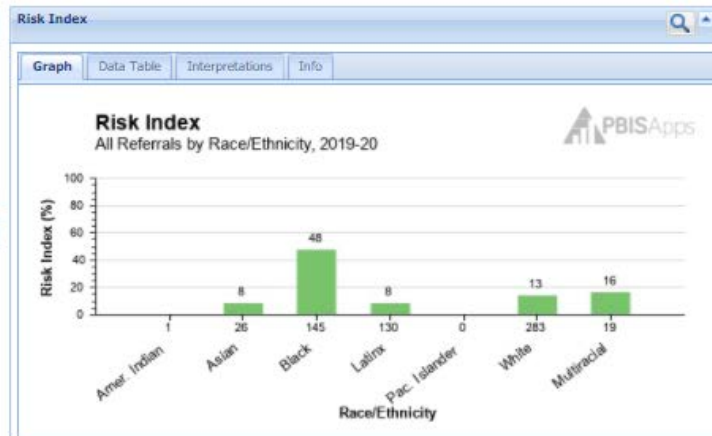
SWIS Equity Report
www.pbisapps.org

Culturally responsive behavior strategies

CORE PRACTICES of school-wide PBIS

1 **DEFINE** school-wide expectations (i.e., social competencies)

2 **TEACH & PRACTICE** expectations

3 **MONITOR & ACKNOWLEDGE** prosocial behavior

4 **RESPOND INSTRUCTIONALLY** to unwanted behavior

5 **MAKE DECISIONS** based on data
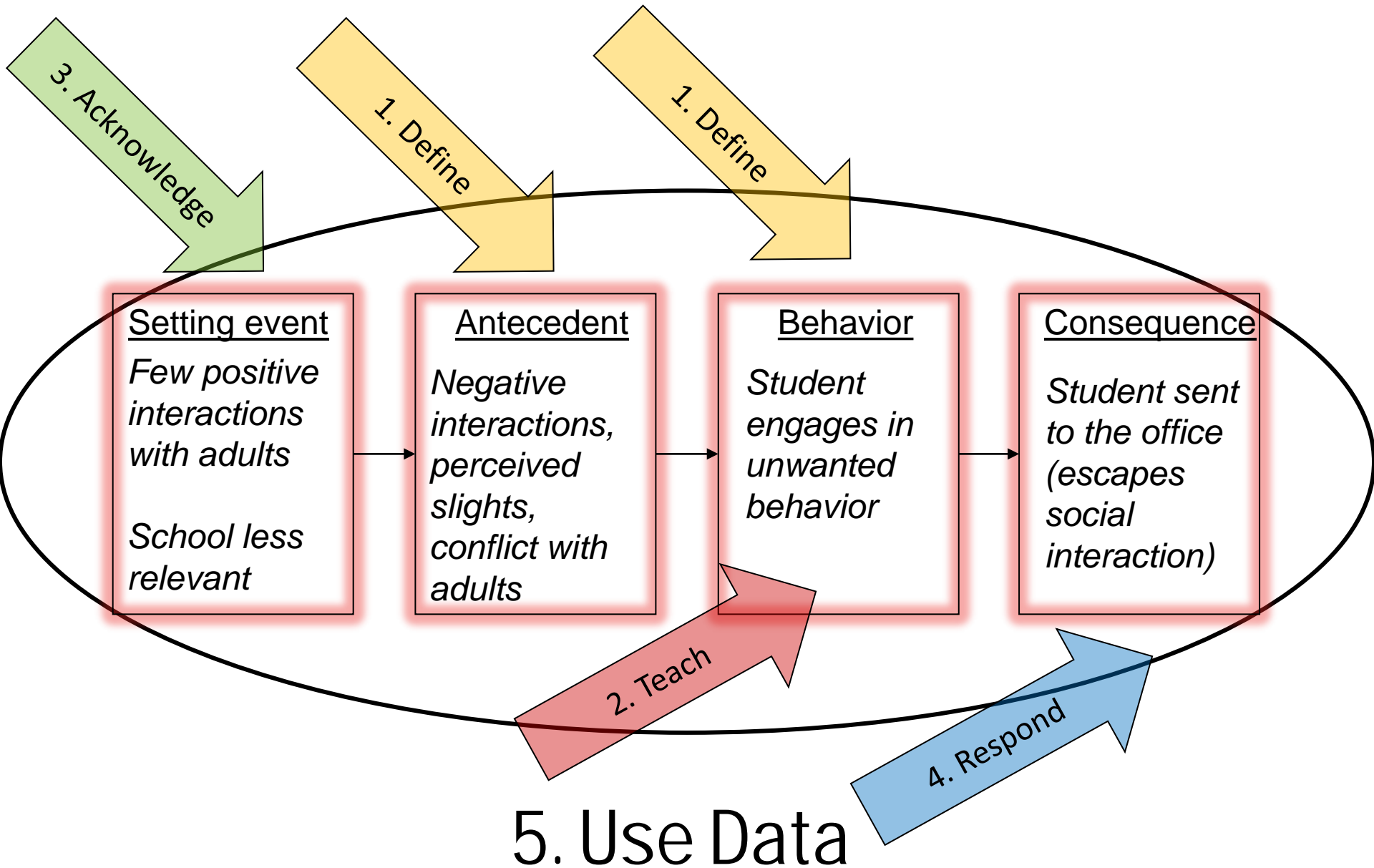
Constructive Cycle of Increasing Equity

Setting event	Antecedent	Behavior	Consequence
Many positive interactions with adults	*Fewer experiences of academic failure, conflict with adults*	*Student uses desired and functional social skills*	*Adult responds instructionally to student behavior*
School more relevant			
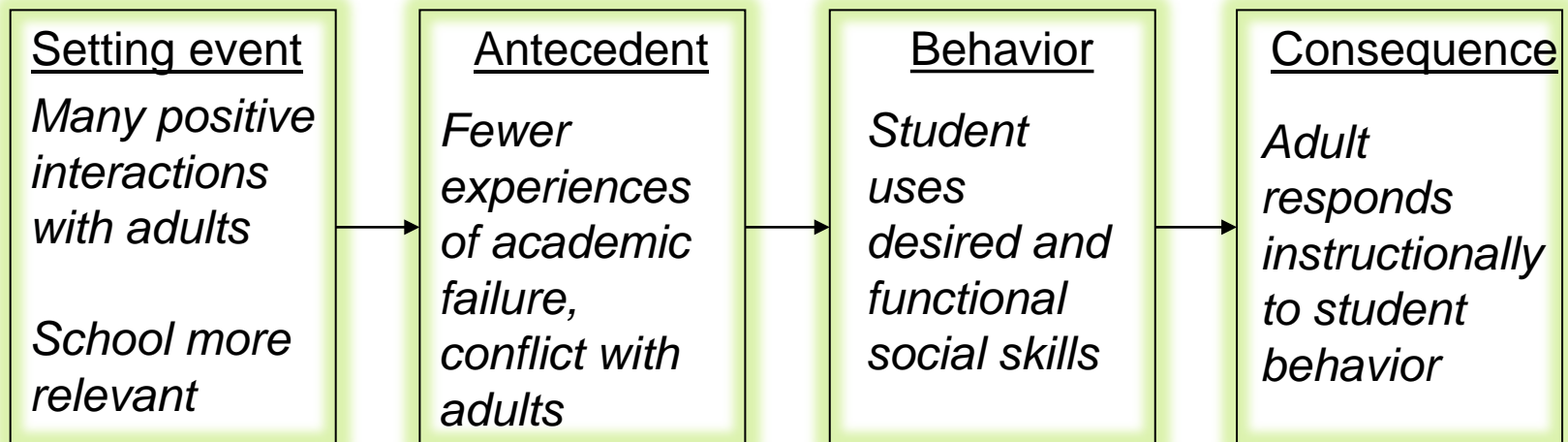
ReACT Classroom Strategies

| Setting event	Antecedent	Behavior	Consequence
Many positive interactions with adults *School more relevant*	*Fewer experiences of academic failure, conflict with adults*	*Student uses desired and functional social skills*	*Adult responds instructionally to student behavior*

3. Acknowledge
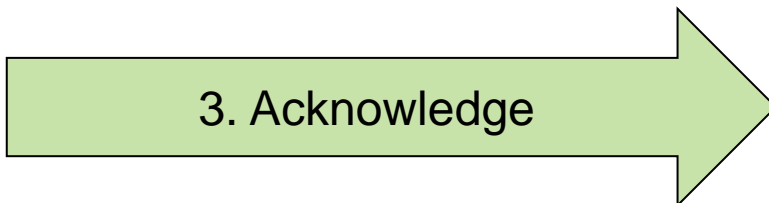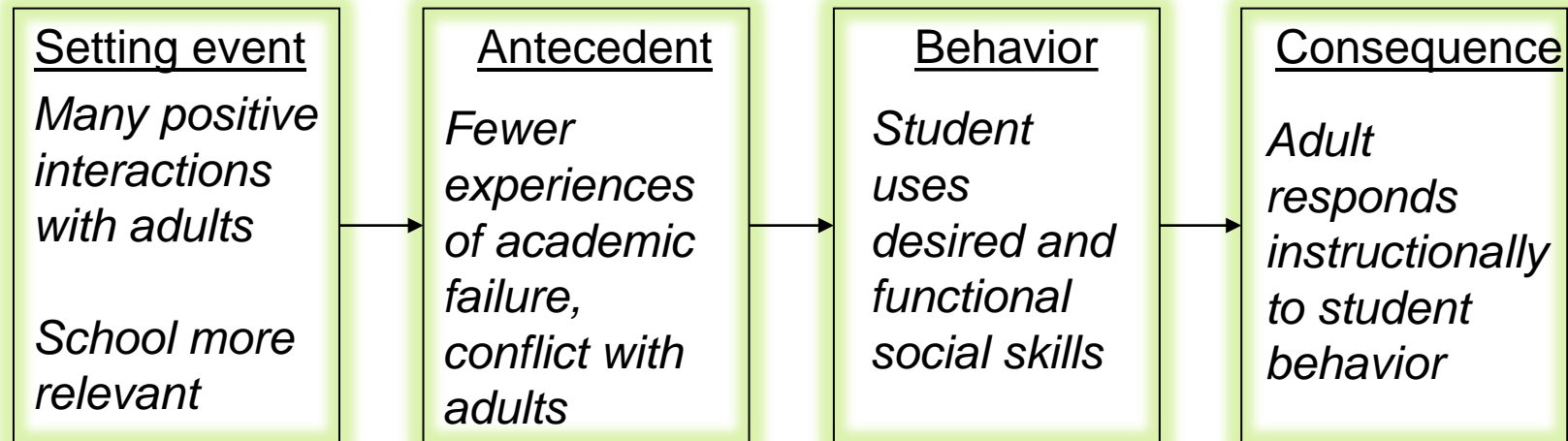
- *Positive greetings at the door*
- *Affirmations & micro-affirmations*
- *Increase specific praise for group*
- *Praise preference assessments*
- *Getting to know you activities*
- *Positive family contacts*

2. Teach
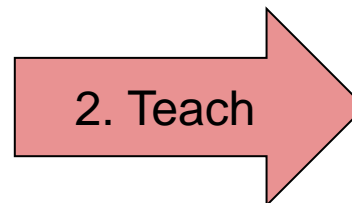
- *Neutralizing routine*
- *Personal matrix*
- *Family sayings*
- *OTRs*

4. Respond
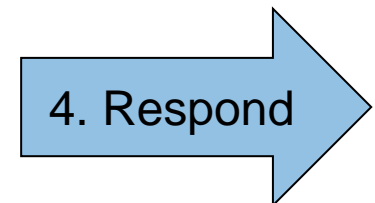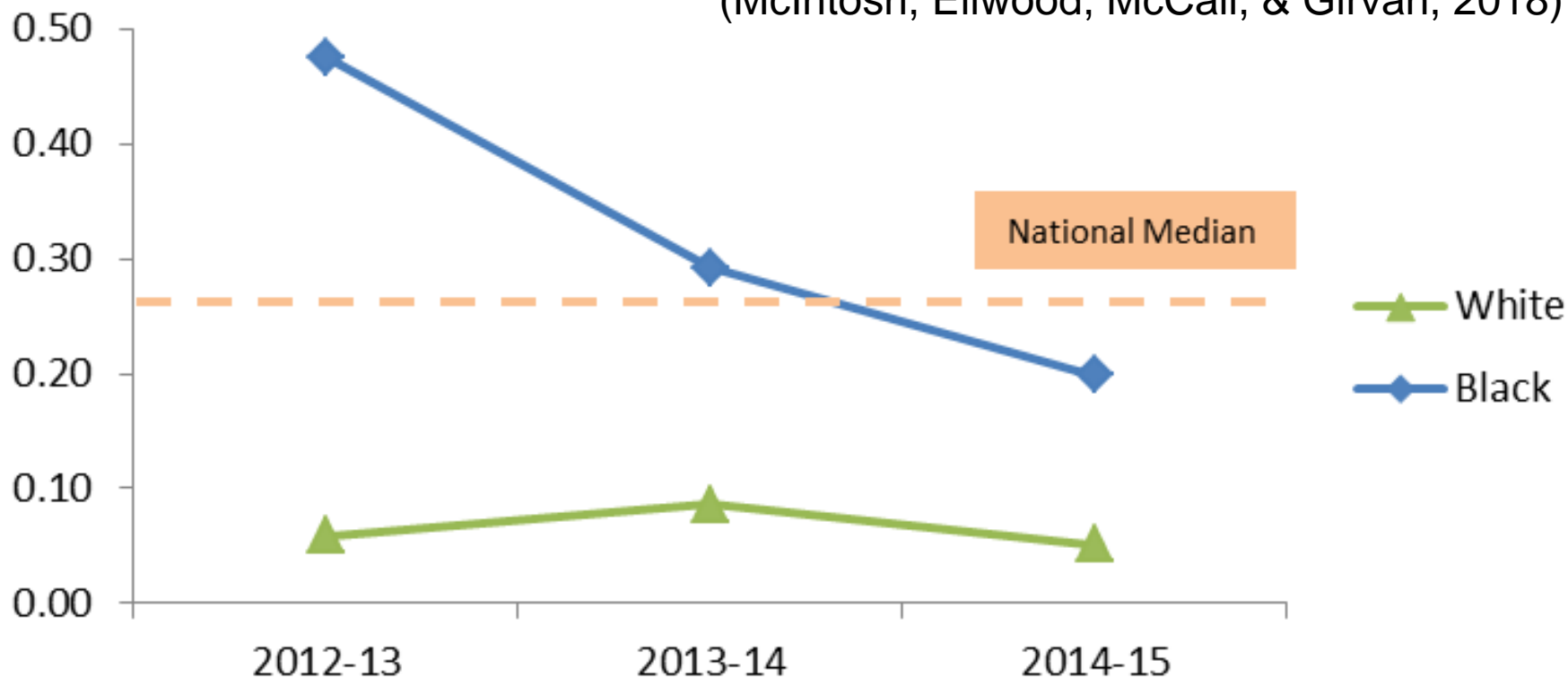
- *Neutralizing routine*
- *Point positive*
- *Praise around*
- *Quick redirects*
- *Wise feedback*

Initial ReACT Findings: School-wide Case Study

Office Discipline Referrals Per Day Per 100 Students

(McIntosh, Ellwood, McCall, & Girvan, 2018)

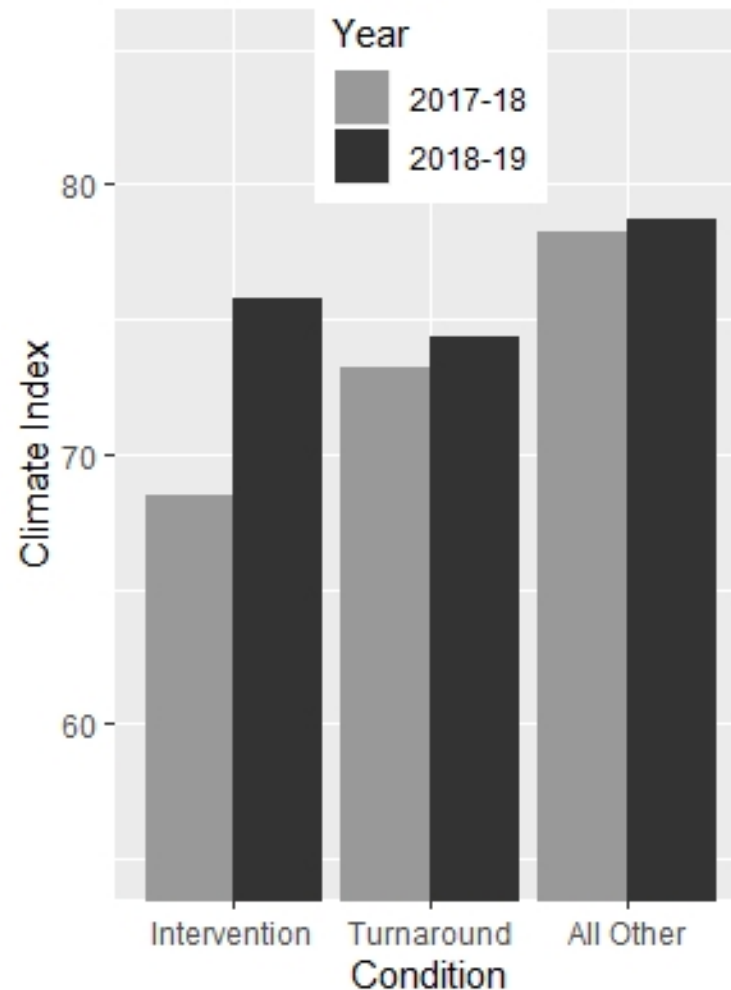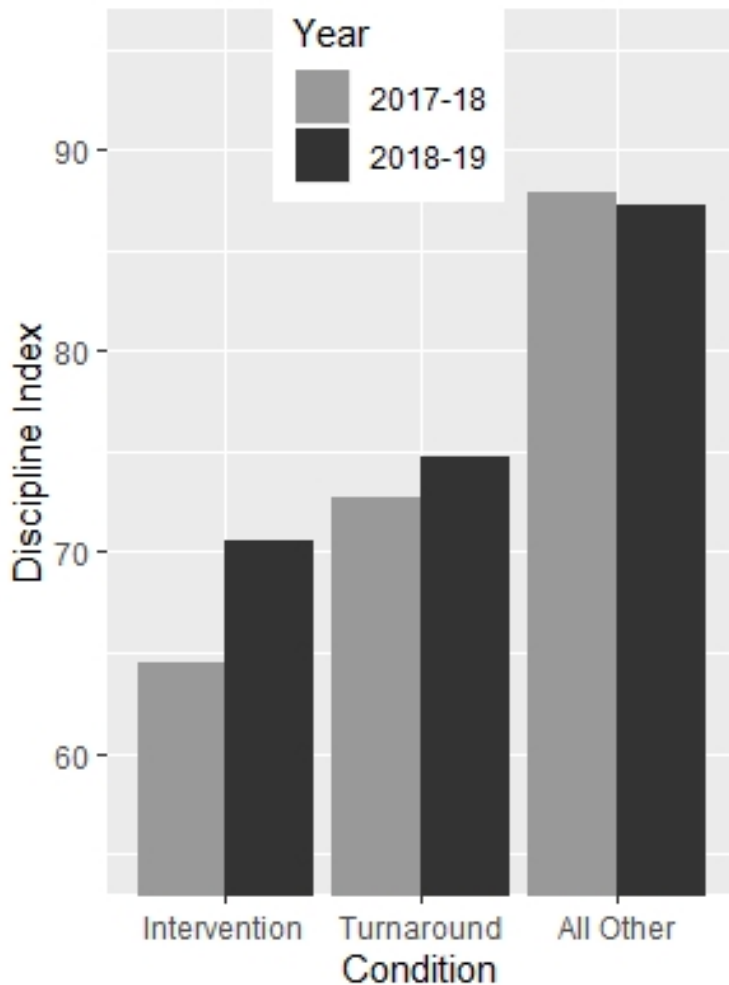# Initial ReACT Findings: Classroom Single-Case Study

1. Increase in teacher rates of praise for Black students

2. Decrease in teacher rates of reprimands for Black students

3. Racial equity in office discipline referrals

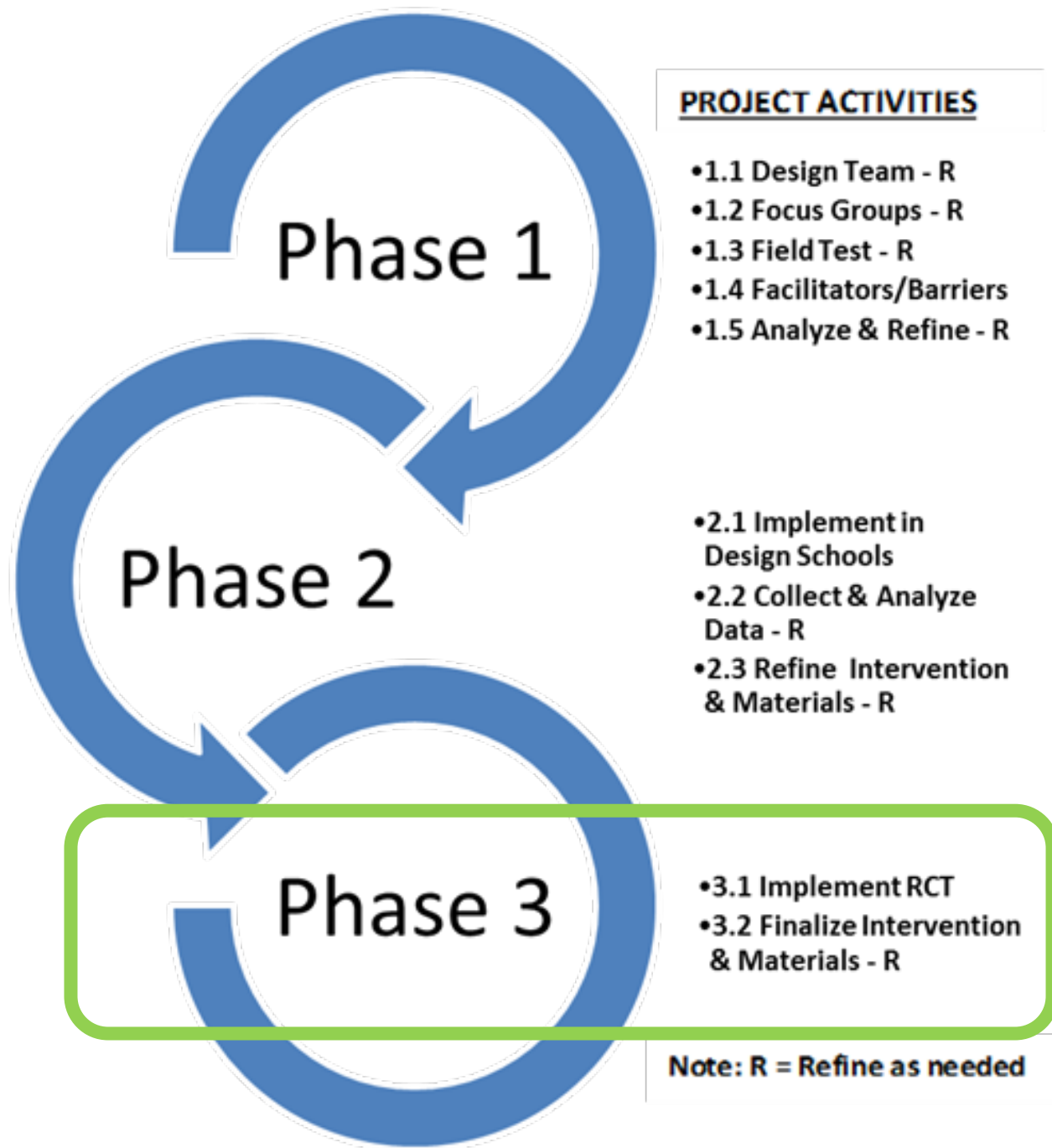4. Rated as socially valid

(Gion et al., 2020)

Initial ReACT Findings: Quasi-experimental Study

(McIntosh et al., in press)

Iterative Design

PROJECT ACTIVITIES

Phase 1

- 1.1 Design Team - R
- 1.2 Focus Groups - R
- 1.3 Field Test - R
- 1.4 Facilitators/Barriers
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Phase 2

- 2.1 Implement in Design Schools
- 2.2 Collect & Analyze Data - R
- 2.3 Refine Intervention & Materials - R

Phase 3

- 3.1 Implement RCT
- 3.2 Finalize Intervention & Materials - R

Note: R = Refine as needed

Schools Participating in Project ReACT **RCT**

- 8 Elementary schools
- Enrollment between 25 and 75% Black
- Using SWIS
- Implementing PBIS with adequate fidelity
- Still experiencing racial disproportionality in school discipline
- District and school administrator commitment to equity in school discipline
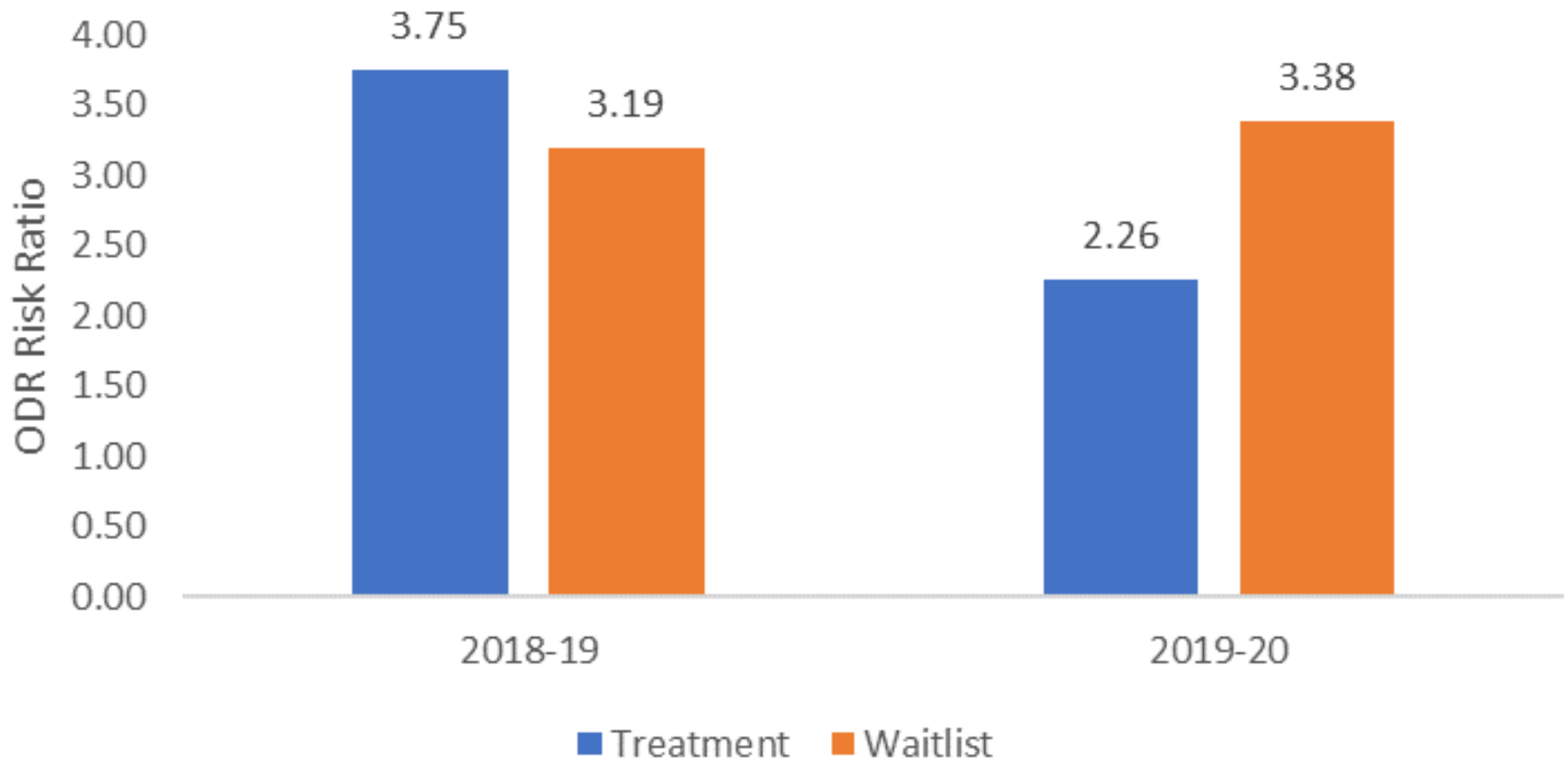
ReACT RCT Outcomes

ODR Risk Index: Black Students
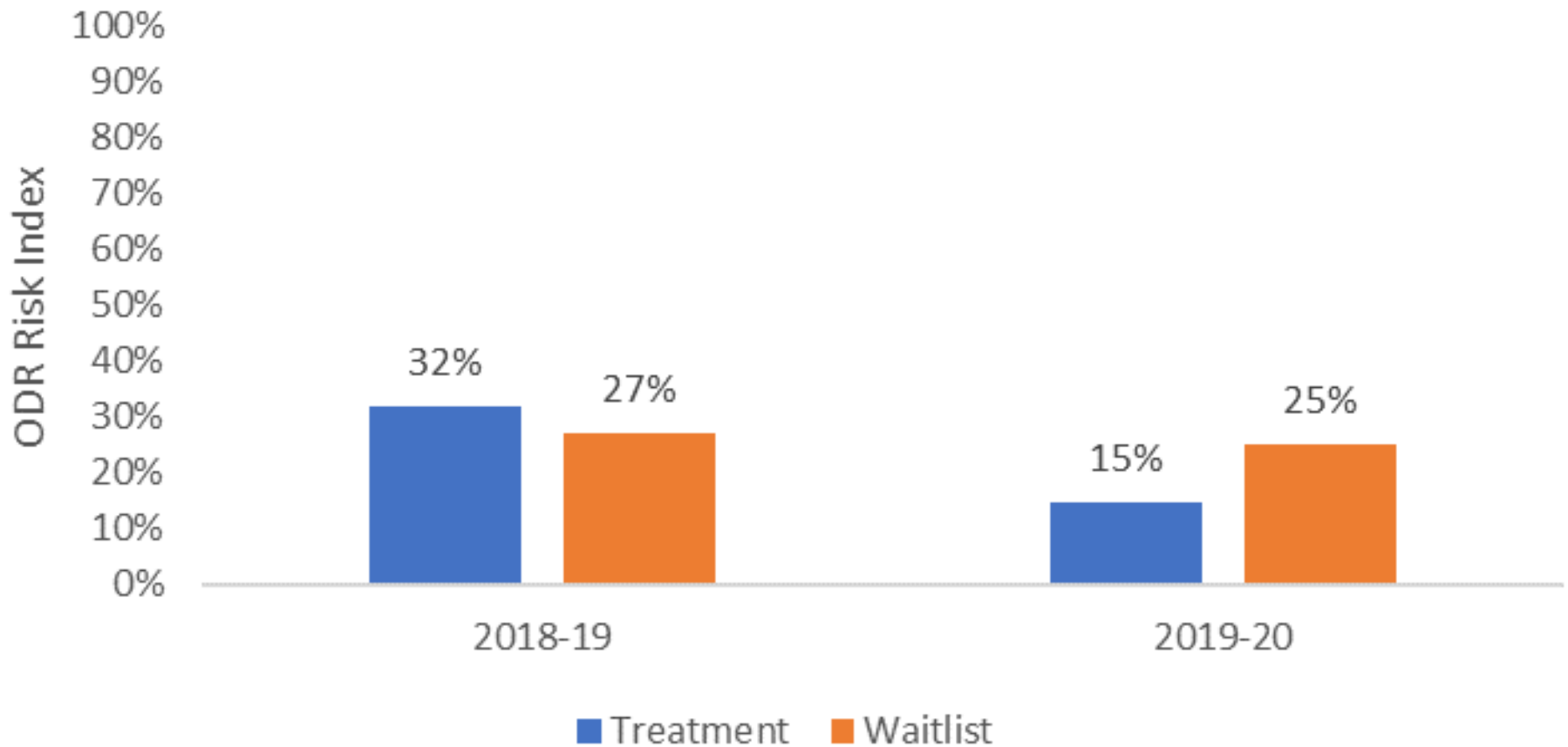
ReACT RCT Outcomes
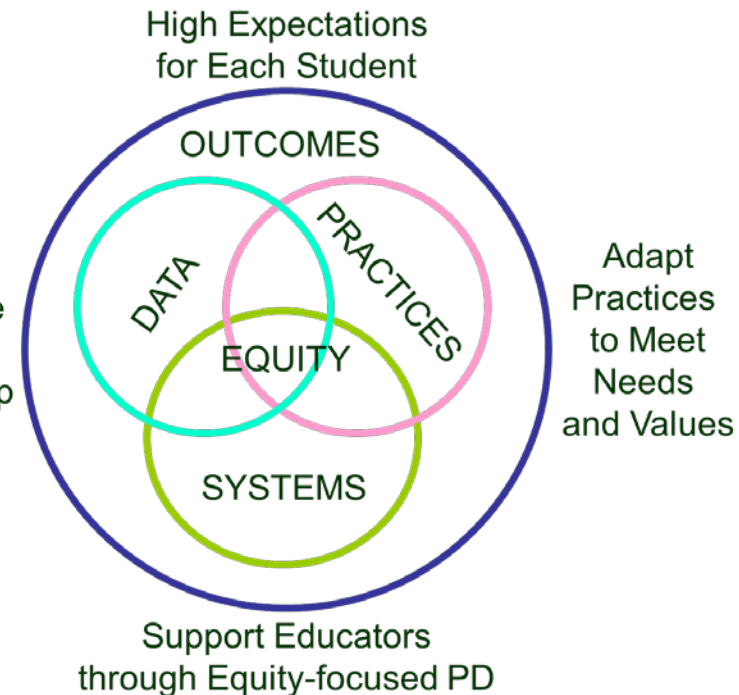

ODR Black-Other Risk Ratio

What is Project ReACT?

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  - ☐ **C**ulturally responsive behavior strategies

  - ☐ **T**each about implicit bias and strategies to neutralize it

High Expectations for Each Student

OUTCOMES

PRACTICES

DATA

EQUITY

Disaggregate All Data by Student Group

Adapt Practices to Meet Needs and Values

SYSTEMS

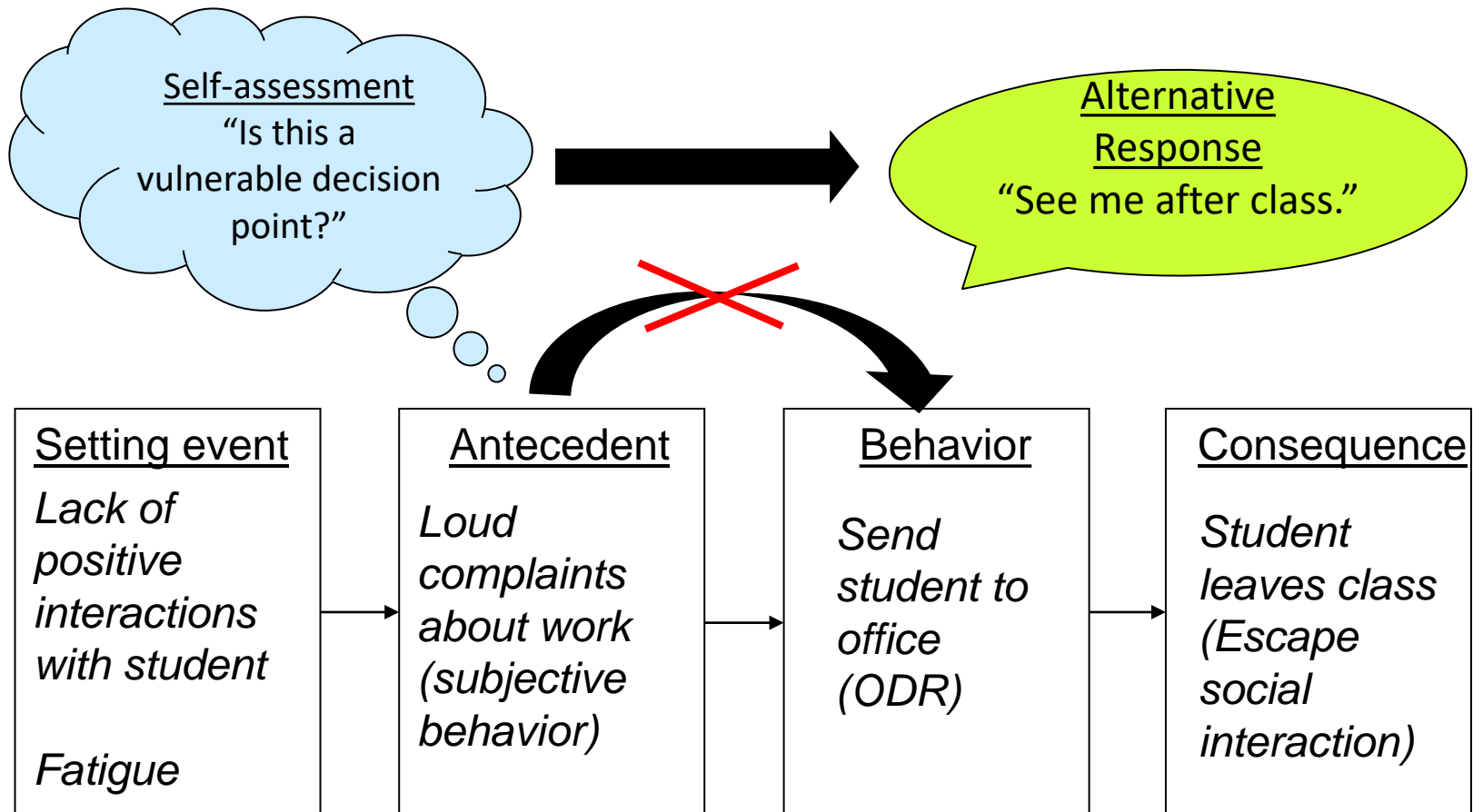Support Educators through Equity-focused PD

What is **implicit bias?**

- Unconscious, automatic
- Generally **not** an indication of our beliefs and values
- We all have it (even those affected by it)
- Based on stereotypes
- More likely to influence:
  - ☐ Snap decisions
  - ☐ Decisions that are ambiguous

Neutralizing Routines for Reducing Effects of **Implicit Bias**

Neutralizing Routine:
What is it?

- Defined

  - An instructional response to unwanted behavior to use instead of a harsh response during VDPs

Neutralizing Routine:
Why do it?

- Helps us pause before responding, so we can proceed in a way that…
  - ☐ **Increases** positive behavior
  - ☐ **Decreases** unwanted behavior (Cook et al., 2018)

Neutralizing Routine:
What is it?

- 5 critical features
    1. If-then statement
    2. Brief
    3. Clear steps
    4. Doable
    5. Interrupts the chain of events

Neutralizing Routine:
What is it **NOT?**

x Something that is done to us

Having a privilege taken away

x A gentler way to exclude students

Cross-class timeout

x A long procedure

Stop class for a restorative circle

Running a lap around the field

Neutralizing Routine:
What is it ~~NOT?~~ NOW?

Something that is done to us

- ✓ *Make it an action you can do*

A gentler way to exclude students

- ✓ *Keep students in instruction*

A long procedure

- ✓ *Keep it brief – a quick pause and back into the game*

Neutralizing Routine: How do we do it?

- When you see unwanted behavior, stop and ask yourself:

1. Is this a **VDP?**
   - ☐ **Situation**
   - ☐ **Decision state**

2. If so, use an agreed-upon alternative response (the **neutralizing routine**)

Neutralizing Routine: Examples

- When I see unwanted behavior…
  - **Delay decision until I can think clearly**
    - "See me after class/at the next break"
    - Ask the student to reflect on their behavior/feelings
    - Am I acting in line with my values?
  - **Reframe the situation**
    - "I love you, but that behavior is not ok"
    - "How do we do that at school?"
    - Picture this student as a future doctor/lawyer
    - Assume student's best effort at getting needs met
    - Respond as if the student was physically injured
  - **Take care of yourself**
    - Take two deep breaths
    - Recognize my upset feelings and let them go
    - Model school-wide "reset" strategy

Neutralizing Routine: School-wide example

- **TRY**
  - □ **T**ake a deep breath
  - □ **R**eflect on your emotions
  - □ **Y**outh's best interest
    - "Let's **TRY** that again."
    - "Let's **TRY** it a different way."
    - "Let's **TRY** it how we do it at school."

YIELD

Neutralizing Routine: School-wide "Reset"

- ■ *TRY* for <u>students</u>
  - ☐ *T*ake three deep breaths
  - ☐ *R*eflect on your feelings
  - ☐ *Y*ou got this!
- ■ Social-emotional Theme
  - ☐ Mistakes are part of the learning process
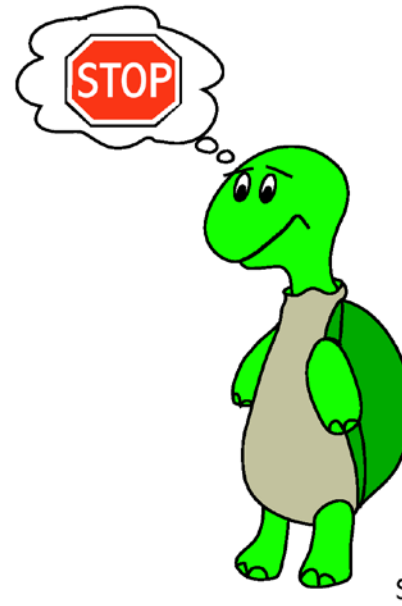 - ☐ We won't always do it right the first time
  - ☐ We can't succeed unless we *TRY*

https://bit.ly/studentlessonplan

Turtle Technique

Recognize that you feel angry.
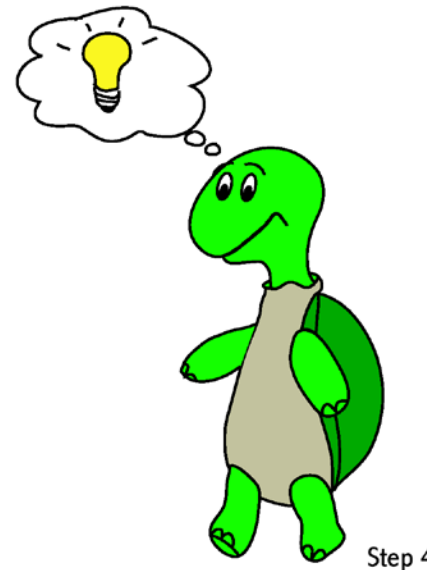
Step 1

"Think" Stop.

Step 2

Go into shell. Take 3 deep breaths. And think calm, coping thoughts.

Step 3

Come out of shell when calm and thinking of a solution.

Step 4

Question (use the Questions box)

- How many of you already have and use a neutralizing routine?

Neutralizing Routine:
How do we do it well?

- Peer testimonials
- Self-assessments
- Visual prompts

YIELD **T**ake 3 deep breaths

YIELD **R**eflect on your feelings

YIELD **Y**ou've got this!

Neutralizing Routine: Self-guided Resources

- 1-page overview
- Editable materials
- Narrated voice-over ppt videos

https://bit.ly/Neutralizingroutine

Contact Information

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  ECS **EDUCATIONAL AND COMMUNITY SUPPORTS**

  CENTER ON PBIS **Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports**

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Handouts: http://www.pbis.org