SECOND CHANCES:
Reducing Suspensions in the State of Maryland

FILM GUIDE AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT TOOL
In Maryland, more than 50,000 young people are suspended each year.

*Designed by Jadin Goods, Baltimore Polytechnic Institute*
SECOND CHANCES: Reducing Suspensions in the State of Maryland

FILM GUIDE AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT TOOL

This film guide and professional development tool is designed for use with the documentary, Second Chances: Reducing Suspensions in the State of Maryland, produced by Wide Angle Youth Media.

As you screen the film, pause and use the guide to review key points, prompt discussion, and further explore topics through roleplay and research.

INTRODUCTION
vimeo.com/125476730
Mr. Robert Murphy, MSDE School Completion Specialist

SCHOOL PROFILE 1
vimeo.com/125481122 (start at 0:00)
RESTORATIVE PRACTICES AS AN ALTERNATIVE TO SUSPENSION
City Springs Elementary/Middle School, Baltimore City

SCHOOL PROFILE 2
vimeo.com/125481122 (start at 2:40)
A MODEL FOR REFRAMING IN-SCHOOL SUSPENSION
George Washington Carver Center High School for Arts and Technology, Baltimore County

SCHOOL PROFILE 3
vimeo.com/125481122 (start at 6:54)
A SYSTEM WIDE APPROACH TO LONG-TERM SUSPENSION, Anchor Points Academy, Queen Anne’s County

APPENDIX
Roleplaying Scenarios
Suspension InfoPlaylist
INTRODUCTION

Robert Murphy
Maryland State Department of Education
School Completion Specialist
“We want educators in Maryland to see out of school suspension as an absolute last resort.”

Robert Murphy
School Completion Specialist
Maryland State Department of Education

KEY POINTS

• In Maryland, over 50,000 young people are suspended each year.
• 41% of these students are suspended for misbehavior.
• “Misbehavior” is defined in the film as infractions such as falling asleep in class, school uniform violations, talking back to teachers, etc.
• Maryland updated its discipline policy in 2013 with the aim of better managing student misbehavior.
• Of students suspended or expelled for the same type of infraction, black students were more likely to receive out-of-school suspension or expulsion than were Hispanic or white students. (US Dept. of Education, 2014)
• African American students are 35% of Maryland’s school population, yet 61% of the suspended population.
• For every one white student that is suspended, almost three African American students are suspended in Maryland.
• Students with disability make up 12% of Maryland’s school population, and 23% of students who are suspended.
• Young people who are suspended once are 50% less likely to graduate. Young people who are suspended twice are 66% less likely to graduate.
• School disciplinary language mimics criminal justice language with words such as “offenders,” “offenses,” “sanctions,” “consequences,” “penalties.”

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why do you think Maryland school personnel resort to suspensions so much?
2. Have you ever been involved in a student suspension? If so, what precipitated it? What else could have been done? What happened to this student upon his/her return to school? How did s/he act?
3. What changes have you noticed in your school related to the Maryland State Department of Education disciplinary policy updates mentioned in the film?
4. What explains the racial disproportionality in Maryland school suspensions?
5. What explains the disability disproportionality in Maryland school suspensions?
6. What are the implications of the specific “criminal justice” language and vocabulary used in school discipline policies and practices?
7. If school personnel considered the long-term implications of suspensions as mentioned in the film, do you believe that suspensions would be minimized? Why or why not?
8. What sorts of professional development and/or programs might work best for your school to help teachers, administrators, students, and staff to reduce the number of suspensions?
Young people who are suspended once are 50% less likely to graduate.

Designed by Danielle Clapperton, Bard High School Early College & Elijah Austin, Carver Vo-Tech
ACTIVITIES

1. **Research** your school's disciplinary records for the past 3 years. Note and list each instance of suspension by date. List the following variables: Gender, race, IEP, date, class/time of day, teacher, what precipitated the suspension, etc. Look for patterns such as time of day, time of year, school subject, etc. Analyze the data to draw conclusions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>GENDER</th>
<th>RACE</th>
<th>IEP</th>
<th>CLASS/TIME OF DAY</th>
<th>TEACHER</th>
<th>REASON FOR SUSPENSION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. **Interview** someone in your school about suspensions. Ask them the discussion questions above to get a sense of their perspective and how they think things could be different. Share your results with the group.

3. **Examine** the suspension infoplaylist to uncover national statistics on school suspensions to compare Maryland with other states.
SCHOOL PROFILE 1: RESTORATIVE PRACTICES AS AN ALTERNATIVE TO SUSPENSION
City Springs Elementary, Baltimore City
KEY POINTS

- Restorative practices can be an alternative to suspensions.
- Restorative practices enable students and teachers to resolve behavior issues before punishment occurs.
- Circles enable students involved in a dispute to talk through a situation.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How are restorative practices an alternative to suspensions?
2. What is your familiarity with restorative practices?
3. Would restorative practices work in your school? Why or why not?
4. What data supports the use of restorative practices?
5. What other interventions are you familiar with that are similar to restorative practices?
6. What are other alternatives to suspension?
7. Have you experienced an alternative to suspension?

ACTIVITIES

1. **Research** restorative practices. What sorts of programmed restorative practices exist? How do they differ? How are they similar?
2. **Research** what is required for a school to take up restorative practices. Name the commitments time-wise, resource-wise, and financially.
3. **Roleplay** restorative practices as an alternative to suspension using the scenario cards on page 13.

“The goal should be to change the behavior, it shouldn’t just be about a punishment”

Rhonda Richetta
Principal
City Springs Elementary/Middle School
SCHOOL PROFILE 2: A MODEL FOR REFRAMING IN-SCHOOL SUSPENSION

George Washington Carver Center High School for Arts and Technology, Baltimore County
“It behooves every educator in the state to be willing to look below the surface.”

Karen Steel
Principal
Carver Center for Arts and Technology

KEY POINTS

- Relationships are key to school success.
- Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) can have an impact on a student’s behavior.
- Examples of Adverse Childhood Experiences are divorce, parental incarceration, illnesses in a family, etc.
- “Having four or more Adverse Childhood Experiences more than doubles a child’s risk of chronic suspension.”
- Expressions of anger in a student may not have anything to do with the teacher or administrator.
- Refocus rooms allow students to learn from their mistakes outside the classroom, within the school, while maintaining their schoolwork throughout one whole school day.
- School counselors can play a role in a student’s refocus room experience.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Name Adverse Childhood Experiences that you know your students have experienced.
2. Describe meaningful, personal connections that you have established with your students recently. How have you done this?
3. What other ways can school personnel establish deep, meaningful connections with their students?
4. What are the strengths and limitations of a refocus room in lieu of classroom-based alternatives to suspension?
5. Would a refocus room work in your school? Why or why not?
6. How do you think age-appropriate development plays a part in a refocus room’s effectiveness?

ACTIVITIES

1. Research refocus rooms. What are the different ways that refocus rooms can be established and run in a school?
2. Research the commitments time-wise, resource-wise, and financially that are required for refocus rooms.
3. Roleplay refocus rooms as an alternative to suspension using the scenario cards on page 13.
SCHOOL PROFILE 3: A SYSTEM WIDE APPROACH TO LONG-TERM SUSPENSION

Anchor Points Academy, Queen Anne’s County
“Suspensions don’t work because kids are at home. They’re not getting their work done.”
Carrie Mitten
Program Director
Anchor Points Academy
SCENARIO 1
John has been reminded multiple times that he cannot come to school wearing baggy pants that show his boxer shorts. It is December, and he comes into his homeroom dressed in baggy pants with his boxers showing. His female homeroom teacher has been the teacher who has reminded him each time he has done this (at least 6 times), and she has reached her limit. She sends him to the office, and the Assistant Principal recommends suspension.

SCENARIO 2
It is spring, and Darien, a 6th grader, has an IEP for learning disabilities. He is in Language Arts class and Mr. Lucas, his teacher, is asking him to read a passage and answer questions in preparation for the upcoming state tests. He has just gotten over a cold and already experiences anxiety over his language-based disability. When the teacher asks him to read the passage, he refuses. Mr. Lucas asks two more times, and finally, Darien curses at Mr. Lucas. Mr. Lucas sends Darien to the office, and the Assistant Principal recommends suspension.

SCENARIO 3
Students have been telling their 5th grade teacher that Eloise has been taking other students’ pencils, pens and other desk items without asking for some time, but Mrs. Jones has not yet witnessed it. Finally, Mrs. Jones sees Eloise take another student’s belonging and she confronts her. Mrs. Jones sends Eloise to the office and the Assistant Principal recommends suspension.

SCENARIO 4
Kyle and Xavier were playing football at recess. Kyle tackles Xavier hard as part of the game, but Xavier gets mad at how hard he was tackled, and it results in a fight. The recess monitor, a mother of another student, witnesses the fight. The mother sends Xavier to the office, and the Assistant Principal recommends suspension.
**INTRODUCTION TO SCHOOL DISCIPLINE:**

- “Five Things to Know About School Discipline.” Child Trends. bit.ly/1VIHNjA
- “Compendium of School Discipline Laws and Regulations for the 50 States, Washington, D.C. and the U.S. Territories.” US Department of Education. 1.usa.gov/1QOh9mx

**EFFECTS OF SCHOOL DISCIPLINE:**

- Opportunities Suspended: The Devastating Consequences of Zero Tolerance and School Discipline, Report from a National Summit on Zero Tolerance, The Advancement Project & The Civil Rights Project, Harvard University. bit.ly/1K5q4nA
- “Discipline and Participation: The Long-Term Effects of Suspension and School Security on the Political and Civic Engagement of Youth.” The Civil Rights Project at UCLA. bit.ly/1RHkDhe

**SCHOOL-TO-PRISON PIPELINE:**

- “The School-to-Prison Pipeline: Time to Shut It Down.” National Education Association. bit.ly/1C0wlDa
- “Out of Detention: How to Stop the School-to-Prison Pipeline.” Harvard Politics. bit.ly/1F1VuUA
- “Keeping Young People Out of Prison and in the Classroom.” American Institutes for Research. bit.ly/1UkIO2U
- “Obama Wants to Stop ‘school-to-prison Pipeline’ for Minorities.” Los Angeles Times. lat.ms/1Sd6rLm
- “The School-to-Prison Pipeline.” Teaching Tolerance. bit.ly/1hhwBXo
- “Stop the School-to-Prison Pipeline.” Rethinking Schools. bit.ly/1r9uYSM

**DISPARITIES:**

- “Disproportionality in school discipline: An assessment of trends in Maryland, 2009-12.” US Department of Education. 1.usa.gov/InsNk57
- “Out of School and Off Track Policy to Address Disparate Impact and Racial Bias in Discipline.” The Center for Civil Rights Remedies at The Civil Rights Project at UCLA. bit.ly/1K5pPZY
- “Suspension, Race, and Disability: Analysis of Statewide Practices and Reporting.” Journal of Emotional and Behavioral Disorders. bit.ly/1WHGPXI
- “Are Black Kids Worse? Myths and Facts about Racial Differences in Behavior.” Indiana.edu. bit.ly/1S3ZBtx

---

**Suspension InfoPlaylist**

A collaboration between Towson University, Wide Angle Youth Media, and Center for Innovation in Urban Education at Loyola University Maryland

Created by students at Towson University in Tara Bynum’s Hip Hop to Barack Class: Taylor Kvilhaug, Gabriel Perez, Amanda Shorr, Jarka Alam, Jennifer Russo, Alexandra Chin, Chelsea Oliver, Elizabeth Barry, Sarah Fossaceca, Pratibha Gurung and Jessica Reese

The Center for Innovation in Urban Education at Loyola University Maryland intends to have a positive impact on education in Baltimore and other urban communities through collaborative research, innovative program development, and community engagement.
**EARLY CHILDHOOD SUSPENSION:**

- "Black Preschoolers Far More Likely To Be Suspended." NPR. n.pr/1LoCmHs
- "The School-To-Prison Pipeline Can Start Even Before Kindergarten." The Huffington Post. huff.to/1rU9Txz
- "Time To Reroute the School-to-Prison Pipeline." The Huffington Post. huff.to/1S3ZQVD
- "Pre-K Suspension Data Prompt Focus on Intervention." Education Week. bit.ly/P9HAM7
- "The School-to-Prison Pipeline Starts in Preschool." The Nation. bit.ly/1YKlWc1
- "My Son Has Been Suspended Five Times. He’s 3.” Washington Post. wapo.st/1JmEfC8
- "Suspensions and Expulsions in Preschool." The Hill. bit.ly/1PvUpHU

**POVERTY:**

- "Poverty and Its Impact on Education: Today and Tomorrow." The NEA Higher Education Journal. 1.usa.gov/1nsNKsh
- "Teaching with Poverty in Mind.” ASCD. bit.ly/InHx8Ie
- "Statistics on How Poverty Affects Children in Schools." Seattle Pi. bit.ly/1nhLseN
- "Prison and the Poverty Trap.” The New York Times. nyt.m/s/1Pt9qcs

**ALTERNATIVES TO SUSPENSION:**

- "Creating Community Service Opportunities for Suspended and Expelled Youth: A Final Report on Virginia’s Experience.” Virginia Department of Education. 1.usa.gov/1K5gk5U
- "The Value of Mentoring.” Mentor. bit.ly/1Jc9xJz
- "Safety Without Suspensions.” pbs.org. bit.ly/1PMswMd
- "Three Types of Logical Consequences.” Responsive Classroom. bit.ly/1nHLYDb
ABOUT WIDE ANGLE YOUTH MEDIA

The film Second Chances: Reducing Suspensions in the State of Maryland, was developed by young people in a Wide Angle Youth Media workshop supported by OSI-Baltimore.

Youth Producers:
Da’el Clapperton
Danielle Clapperton
Ben Loviglio-Wolf
Jeffrey Obike
Tyson Sanford-Griffin
LeRee’ Simmons

Youth Designers:
Hassan Abu-Hakim
Elijah Austin
Michael Bonner
Jadin Goods

Production Manager:
David Sloan

Assistant Instructor:
Amissa Miller

Production Intern:
Malcolm Douglas

Executive Director:
Susan Malone

Development & Communications Director:
Sheila Wells

Program Manager:
Moira Frantantuono

Design Team Instructor:
Becky Slogeris

SPECIAL THANKS

Special thanks to Dr. Tara Bynum and Towson University for partnering with Wide Angle’s Design Team students to develop the Suspension InfoPlaylist, Dr. Stephanie Flores-Koulis and Dr. Robert Helfenbein at Loyola University’s Center for Innovation in Urban Education for helping to develop this film guide and professional development tool, and Robert Murphy at Maryland State Department of Education for being a thought partner.