

ILLINOIS PARTNERSHIP FOR DISCIPLINARY EQUITY 2021-2022 INFORMATION GUIDE

A partnership between the Illinois State Board of Education, The University of Illinois Springfield, and Loyola University Chicago



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ILLINOIS PARTNERSHIP FOR DISCIPLINARY EQUITY 2021-2022



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Alliance for Experiential Problem-Based Learning
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PROGRAM DESCRIPTION: OUR WHY

Decades of research has consistently shown profound racial/ethnic inequities in exclusionary discipline (i.e., suspension and expulsion) that begin in preschool and specifically impact Black students and children with intersected identities of having a disability (Children's Defense Fund, 1975; Children's Defense Fund, 2007; Losen et al., 2021). Exclusionary discipline has life-altering consequences, including school-dropout, school-based arrests, and involvement in the juvenile justice system. Exclusionary discipline is not effective in changing unwanted behavior, as is associated with poor school climate and may ironically escalate—rather than deescalate—behavior (Mayer, 1995).

To address the long-standing inequities and the lack of evidence supporting use of exclusionary discipline, nineteen states across the country, including Illinois, have proposed and/or passed discipline reform laws and policies (Committee for Children, 2018). Illinois was the first in the country to pass sweeping discipline reform, legislation commonly known as SB 100, which went into effect in September 2016. Significant progress has been made since the passage of this legislation, and there is much more work to be done in order to realize the letter and spirit of this comprehensive reform law, particularly in light of the challenges resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Illinois State Board of Education has formed a partnership with the University of Illinois-Springfield and Loyola University Chicago with the aim of providing school districts with help and support necessary to make enduring changes to discipline and create more equitable, restorative, and empathic schools for children to thrive. This work is aligned with ISBE's strategy 2.1.2, which is to "support district implementation of policy guidance to promote students' safety and well-being, including non-discrimination and inclusion."

This work is multi-layered and multi-disciplinary and therefore, our approach is to combine a scaled and research-based professional learning with Trauma Informed Practice training, a graduate-level certificate program in School Discipline Reform for selected staff, and tailored coaching in restorative practices for select schools. Given that schools need and have the capacity to absorb different supports at different times, the layered supports may be viewed in an 'a la carte' fashion in order to achieve the combination of support optimal for each school. We will focus our energies and time in direct work with the Illinois teachers, administrators, and school-based mental health staff who are positioned to change the trajectory of what has been playing out in discipline for decades to a new imagined reality.

Ultimately, this work is anti-racist in its vision and goals, and our "why" links to the imperative of equity in our faculty's mindsets, school-wide practices, and district-level practice. At its core, equity is built on our ability to view our students with an empathic lens, seeing their challenges in a new light, and responding with interventions that increase the likelihood of student success. Our partnership with nationally-recognized empathy researcher Dr. Jason Okonofua and Mindset Solutions has the potential to decrease punitive discipline and build stronger relationships in the classroom.

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We know and understand schools are doing their very best to support students and staff, and the work is monumental. For this type of work, you need back up! We hope to be able to offer the resources, support, and encouragement that your district needs to realize its goal for all students to thrive.

2.1.2

Support district implementation of policy and guidance to promote students' safety and well-being, including non-discrimination and inclusion.

By end of the 2020-21 school year

ISBE will provide model policies and revise guidance on safety and well-being to include non-discrimination and inclusive practices.

By end of the 2021-22 school year

There will be a 5 percentage point reduction in suspensions and expulsions of students of color.

By end of the 2022-23 school year

There will be an additional 5 percentage point reduction in suspensions and expulsions of students of color.

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Overview of Layered Supports for Districts and Schools

Empathic Instruction, Mindset Science Solutions	The Night Before Simulation Training, UIS	Empathy Ambassadors, Loyola	School Discipline Reform Certificate Loyola	Restorative Justice Coaches & RJ Ambassadors, Loyola
Highly regarded research-based professional development supporting teachers to change disciplinary mindsets through an empathic perspective of students. Documented outcomes include improved teacher-student relationships, improved student behavior, increased teacher satisfaction and efficacy, and a 15%-50% reduction in disproportionate discipline.	Trauma informed simulation training that incorporates critical decision-making through problem-based learning. Increases teacher's awareness about the types of trauma and violence exposure that can impact children's behavior in the classroom and integrates the 12 Core Concepts for Understanding Traumatic Stress Responses.	School-sourced-and-based Empathy Ambassadors (EAs) are trained and supported to foster a culture of caring among colleagues. Primarily focused on facilitating the uptake of Empathic Instruction by all building teachers, EAs also send monthly resource newsletters and facilitate regular staff support Circles.	Nationally recognized certificate program which equips educators and administrators with skills in restorative practices, anti-racism, conducting a needs assessment and structuring prevention-oriented practices within existing multi-tiered systems of support.	Customized school-based coaching from alumni of Loyola's School Discipline Reform Certificate. Coaches support the development of restorative culture and climate goals, facilitate customized professional development, and provide systems consultation. School-sourced-and-based Restorative Justice Ambassadors are trained in restorative practices and support systems change within their school.
Free to all district schools	Free to all district schools	Free to 1-3 schools/district +2K stipend provided to Empathy Ambassadors	Partial scholarships for school multi-disciplinary teams of 3-5 staff by application	Free to 1-3 schools/district by application +2K stipend provided to RJ Ambassadors
Two 30-45-min online sessions for teachers, Winter 2022	One in-person or virtual session for teachers, Spring 2022	1 staff member/school Orientation workshops Fall '21 1½ hour monthly EA cohort meetings in SY 21-22 E.A. facilitates regular staff support Circles	Synchronous and asynchronous online learning in two 2-credit courses January-June 2022 + 3-day in-person immersion Program applications due Dec 15 th	2 staff members/school with similar requirements as Empathy Ambassadors School commits to Restorative Justice implementation meetings, making staff available for PD
<div> <div>All district teachers</div> <div>Least Intensive, Foundational</div> <div>Some teachers</div> <div>Selected School Stakeholders</div> <div>Most Intensive, Elective</div> </div>				

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EMPATHIC INSTRUCTION, MINDSET SOLUTIONS

What is Empathic Instruction?

Empathic Instruction is a research-based professional learning program that helps school districts support teachers' growth, improve student behavior, and reduce race-based disparities in discipline rates. Empathic Instruction supports positive behavioral outcomes by helping teachers focus on building supportive relationships with their students, especially when conflict arises. Those positive relationships pay off with better behavior from students, more satisfied teachers, and disciplinary outcomes that are better and more equitable.

Who participates in Empathic Instruction?

This is an intervention designed for scale, and we recommend ALL teachers in ALL district schools engage in the extremely brief Empathic Instruction sessions. As a research-based intervention, districts do not need to create control schools to determine the effectiveness of the intervention.

Why implement Empathic Instruction?

In 2016, Drs. Okonofua, Paunesku, and Walton published a rigorous program evaluation evidencing the power of empathy in teaching practices. In this study, some teachers were randomly assigned to complete a brief, online program focused on empathic teaching practices. Teachers who completed this program were better equipped to support positive behavior: Their students with a history of suspensions felt more respected and *all of their students were 50% less likely to get suspended over the coming school year*. Since then, Dr. Okonofua has replicated and extended these findings.

What is the format of instruction and the time commitment?

Empathic Instruction is a strategic integration of classic and cutting-edge psychology, education, behavioral economics, and sociology compacted into brief online exercises that 1,000s of teachers can efficiently complete from the convenience of their own computers. Teachers engage in the online exercises just twice in a school year for approximately 30-45 minutes.

Where can I learn more about Empathic Instruction?

Theory Behind Intervening on Teacher-Student Relationship to Reduce Discipline:

[A Vicious Cycle: A Social-Psychological Account of Extreme Racial Disparities in School Discipline \(2016\) *Perspectives on Psychological Science*.](#)

Randomized Controlled Studies:

- [Two Strikes: Race and the Disciplining of Young Students \(2015\) *Psychological Science*.](#)
- [When Policy and Psychology Meet to Mitigate Racial Disparities In Discipline \(2020\) *Science Advances*.](#)
- [Brief Intervention Halves Suspension Rates. \(2016\) *Proceedings of the National Academy of Science*.](#)

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THE NIGHT BEFORE SIMULATION TRAINING, UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS SPRINGFIELD

What is The Night Before Simulation Training?

The Night Before is a trauma informed simulation training that incorporates critical decision-making using problem-based learning. The Night Before introduces participants to a family in the midst of a domestic violence call that also may involve child maltreatment. Teachers engage in this experience to understand ways in which the home lives of students impacts learning and behavior in the classroom.

Who participates in The Night Before?

This is an intervention designed for scale, and we recommend ALL teachers in ALL district schools engage in The Night Before sessions. Initially the teachers participating in the Empathic Instruction will have access to The Night Before training with plans to expand across Districts.

Why implement The Night Before?

The training increases awareness about the type of trauma and violence exposure that can impact children's behavior in the classroom. Because the training uses a simulation medium, the content is relevant and captivating for teachers. Offering teachers insight into the lives of their students provides an additional opportunity to cultivate empathy which may compound the positive outcomes of Empathic Instruction.

What is the format of instruction and the time commitment?

Teachers access the training either in person or through a facilitator-led virtual environment in the Spring of 2022.

Where can I learn more about The Night Before?

The Night Before training was developed through the Alliance for Experiential Problem-Based Learning at the University of Illinois Springfield. The Alliance team, in partnership with the University of Missouri STL developed simulation scenarios and PBL trauma-informed training through a SAMHSA grant, training over 10,000 professionals nationwide over the past 5 years. The partnership with ISBE supports the expansion of the trauma-informed training, building on the lessons learned and designed specifically to build empathy and awareness of the 12 Core Concepts for Understanding Traumatic Stress Responses in Children and Families (NCTSN <https://www.nctsn.org/resources/12-core-concepts-concepts-understanding-traumatic-stress-responses-children-and-families>). The UIS simulation model can be reviewed at this website (videos that feature the UIS Residential Simulation Lab and the training partnership with the IL Department of Children and Family Services <https://capacity.childwelfare.gov/states/topics/workforce-development/simulationexperience>) and research about the model can be found [here](#)

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EMPATHY AMBASSADORS, LOYOLA UNIVERSITY

What are Empathy Ambassadors?

Empathy Ambassadors are school staff and faculty members committed to cultivating a caring collegial community. Specifically intended for schools that implement the Empathic Instruction Program, Ambassadors serve to amplify and extend the goals of Empathic Instruction. School-based Empathy Ambassadors will help ensure that colleagues attend Empathic Instruction virtual trainings, thereby securing greater saturation of the mindset among staff. Trained in Community Building Circles, Ambassadors will host regular voluntary gatherings for school staff. In these spaces, staff support each other to refine empathic instruction and extend and receive empathy. Additionally, Ambassadors develop an ongoing Empathy Engagement Plan to offer resources and training opportunities encouraging school-wide proactive restorative approaches.

Who participates in the Empathy Ambassadors Program?

Any school implementing Empathic Instruction is eligible to receive a financial stipend and professional development support for 1-2 Empathy Ambassadors. Approximately 5 schools per district will be included in the program. Certified and non-certified staff are eligible to apply. Excellent candidates for the program are self-starters, great relationship builders with high emotional intelligence, and those who take pride in their school. Administrators may choose the mode of selection, with some schools electing to offer an open invitation to staff while others may invite specific staff members based on their roles within the building. Materials are available to support both types of selection processes.

Why implement Empathy Ambassadors?

As an embedded support, Empathy Ambassadors will increase your staff's internal capacity, ensuring sustainability of the practices in which Ambassadors are trained. In addition, school-based staff are well-positioned to meet the specific programming needs and context of their school. As this is a staff-facing role, creating the position of an Empathy Ambassador in your school signals the value your administration places on staff development and self-care—without the need to hire a professional learning coordinator.

What is the format of instruction and the time commitment?

Empathy Ambassadors will receive a stipend of \$2,000 in compensation for time spent both in professional development sessions and engaging with staff. The initial professional development will include a 30-minute recorded program orientation, a 4-hour community building Circle workshop (over 2 sessions), and monthly cohort gatherings of Ambassadors in other schools. Ambassadors should plan to spend ~2 hours/week planning and facilitating school-based programming.

Where can I learn more about Empathic Ambassadors?

Please contact rj.educators@gmail.com to receive guidance materials for the selection/application process.

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SCHOOL DISCIPLINE REFORM CERTIFICATE, LOYOLA UNIVERSITY

What is the School Discipline Reform Certificate?

The School of Education at Loyola University offers a certificate in School Discipline Reform for professionals committed to serving their students and their communities by understanding, shaping, and implementing prevention-oriented approaches to school discipline. This part-time program is designed to equip education professionals with the tools and skills needed to lead comprehensive initiatives to reduce the use of suspensions and expulsions and their adverse impacts on vulnerable students.

Who participates in the School Discipline Reform Certificate?

As a multidisciplinary program, the certificate is appropriate for teams (i.e., universal SEL) within a district or school; superintendents, principals, other school and district-level administrators, school attorneys, discipline deans, school psychologists, school social workers, counselors, and teachers are all appropriate for the program. Because partial scholarships are available to ~5 staff per district, district and school leaders should thoughtfully consider its selection of team members. A healthy composition of a team is multi-stakeholder, with individuals possessing both positional and relational power to effect culture change.

Why send a team to the School Discipline Reform Certificate?

By sending a team to learn with Loyola, they will be equipped to understand multiple dimensions of school discipline reform, from nuances of the law to conducting a need assessment/discipline data analysis, understanding the historical context of racism, and approaches such as restorative practices aligned with multi-tiered systems of support. Your team will develop an individualized action plan to implement tiered prevention-oriented school discipline practices in their respective settings.

What is the format of instruction and the time commitment?

The Certificate in School Discipline Reform is primarily online, with a mandatory 3-day in-person immersion where students learn principles of anti-racist education and restorative practices. The 5 graduate courses are offered through a combination of synchronous and asynchronous instruction. ISBE will cover the cost of the first 2 classes which will be System Consultation in School Discipline Reform and Restorative Justice in Schools, beginning in January of 2022.

Where can I learn more about the School Discipline Reform Certificate?

For more detailed information and to apply by December 15th, go to [The School Discipline Reform Certificate web site](#)

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RESTORATIVE JUSTICE COACHES & RESTORATIVE JUSTICE AMBASSADORS, LOYOLA UNIVERSITY

What are the Restorative Justice Coaches & Restorative Justice Ambassadors?

Recruiting its members from the alumni base of Loyola's School Discipline Reform Certificate, Restorative Justice (RJ) Coaches will provide customized support to individual schools through professional development, culture team co-facilitation, and technical assistance to administrators. RJ Coaches will offer both on-the-ground and remote support. With the core coaching work crafted around a school's strategic goals, RJ Coaches can provide the thought [partnership, facilitation expertise, and resources to advance a school's restorative practices implementation to the next level. Given that this is the most intensive layer of support, districts should consider schools that are ready to embark on—or have already begun—their journeys toward a culture shift. To ensure the greatest success, RJ Coaches are paired with RJ Ambassadors who, like Empathy Ambassadors, are recruited from school faculty and staff. RJ Ambassadors will collaborate with the RJ Coaches to co-facilitate restorative practice implementation team meetings, liaise between the RJ Coach and school staff, organize professional development opportunities for staff, and model restorative practices.

Who participates in the RJ Coaches & RJ Ambassadors?

Schools that participate in this layer of support will be 'all in'. This means that multiple stakeholder groups will need to communicate and collaborate to begin or accelerate the restorative culture change process. These stakeholders are, broadly: administrators at all levels, disciplinary staff, counseling and social work staff, security officers, paraprofessionals, teachers, and caretakers/community members. Though this is a multi-stakeholder effort, it is critical that principals and other high-level administrators are committed to disciplinary reform through restorative practices, as their leadership will be key to the initiative's success.

Why engage RJ Coaches & RJ Ambassadors?

Schools that have been looking for that 'extra nudge,' support, and guidance in their restorative journeys will find that in RJ Coaches. Most of the coaches are currently engaged in school-based RJ work and will inspire staff that this work *can be done*. In addition, RJ Ambassadors will increase your staff's internal capacity, ensuring sustainability of the practices in which Ambassadors are trained.

What is the format and the time commitment?

RJ Ambassadors will receive a stipend of \$2,000 in compensation for time spent both in professional development sessions and liaising with RJ Coaches. The initial professional development will include a 30-minute recorded program orientation, a 4-hour Restorative Justice workshop (over 2 sessions), and monthly cohort gatherings of Ambassadors in other schools. Ambassadors should plan to spend ~2 hours/week planning and facilitating school-based programming. Other school staff involved with RJ Coaches will engage in an initial RJ

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readiness screening, a half-day strategic planning meeting, and regular touchpoints, including one staff-wide professional development session.

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