External Document Review

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The Student Engagement project, sponsored by the Nebraska Department of Education, has created documents for school personnel. These documents summarize a variety of potential strategies to increase positive student behavior and graduation rates, while reducing exclusion-ary discipline and student drop out. The briefs are not intended to be comprehensive reviews, but to provide basic definitions, a summary of the evidence for that strategy, and some initial in-formation about implementation within a three-tiered model of support for practitioners. Most briefs are around six to eight pages in length.

Reviewers

In February and March of 2015, 327 school and education related professionals were emailed and asked to read and review two of the briefs, assigned at random, with a short 10-minute survey. Forty-four documents had been completed by the time the documents were sent out for review. Since the initial review, more documents have been created and were sent out for subsequent reviews at a later date. Of the 654 requests sent, 184 reviews were returned. Each of the 44 documents which had been completed at that time had at least one review, with an average of four reviews per document (range 1 - 9). The final pool of reviewers consisted of 98 school practitioners (53%), 47 members of higher education (26%), and 39 reviewers affili-ated with a state or local agency or organization (21%). The goal is for every document to have multiple reviews, thus documents that had only one review were sent out to more reviewers at a later date.

The second group of emails were sent out in October of 2015. During this round, new documents and documents which had fewer than 3 reviews were sent out to 91 school and education related professionals. This culminated in 15 documents being reviewed. Of the 182 requests sent out for review, 45 reviews were returned. Each document had at least one review, with an average of 3 (range 1 - 5). The final pool of reviewers consisted of 16 school practitio-ners (37%), 23 members of higher education (53%), and four reviewers affiliated with a state or local agency or organization (9%). Those documents that have too few reviews and new docu-ments were sent out for review in a third round of requests.

The third group of review requests were sent out in April 2016. This round was an extension of the second, and new documents and documents which had less than 3 reviews following the second round were sent out to 30 school and education related professionals. This culminated in 10 reviews. The final pool of reviewers consisted of six members of higher education (60%) and four school practitioners (40%).

Procedures

All three rounds of requests had the same set of procedures. All 448 potential reviewers were sent two individual emails through the online survey software, Qualtrics. Each email included: Student Engagement project information, survey directions, a blank copy of the survey for reference, a pdf of the assigned document for review, and a link to the online questionnaire. The questionnaire contained nine questions; including, two fill in the blank and seven multiple-choice questions. The respondents were first asked to identify their primary role (i.e., school practitioner, member of higher education, affiliate of state of local agency/organization) and the name of the document they were reviewing. These were followed by questions relating to the degree of accessibility, accuracy, and helpfulness of the document; as well as how well tiers for intervention were specified and overall suggestions for improvement. Each multiple-choice question provided space for qualitative comments, examples, and/or suggestions.

Results

For the first round of reviews, the feedback received from these reviews was largely positive. Ninety-seven percent of the reviews rated the document as practitioner friendly, accessible, and easy to understand. Ninety-eight percent of the reviews rated the information in the document as accurate. Ninety-nine percent of the reviews stated that the document accurately reflects the main ideas and research of the topic. Ninety-eight percent of the reviews rated that the information would be helpful to school personnel. Eighty-one percent of the reviews stated the document accurately identifies the tiers of interventions to which each document applies (i.e., universal, targeted, intensive). The information obtained from these comments and ratings were utilized to make the tiers more salient across the current and future documents. Next, 63% of the reviews indicated there were concepts or ideas which were not included in the document that should have been included.

For the second round of reviews, the feedback continued to remain positive. Ninety-three percent of the reviews rated the document as practitioner friendly, accessible, and easy to understand. Ninety-eight percent of the reviews rated the information in the document as accurate. Seventy-three percent of the reviews stated that the document accurately reflects the main ideas and research of the topic. One hundred percent of the reviews rated that the information would be helpful to school personnel. Next, 27% of the reviews indicated there were concepts or ideas which were not included in the document that should have been included.

In the third round of reviews, 100% of reviewers rated the documents as practitioner friendly and accurate. Further, 60% of the documents were rated as containing all substantial concepts or ideas. Finally, 90% of the reviewers felt the information would be helpful for school practitioners.

Together, the reviews and comments from all three rounds of review will continue to be used to edit and improve upon the existing documents. While most of the provided suggestions would make great additions to these documents, it should be noted that many of the suggestions indicating "missing concepts or ideas" are outside the scope of these "brief" documents. See the Table at the end of this document for a tabulation of these results by document.

Results by Role. In the first round of reviews, broken down by role, 99% of the reviews by school practitioners, 98% of the reviews by members of higher education, and 92% of the reviews by those affiliated with state or local agencies/organizations indicated the document is practitioner friendly, accessible, and easy to understand. Next, 100% of the reviews by school practitioners, 98% of the reviews by members of higher education, and 95% of the reviews by those affiliated with state or local agencies/

Table of Documents with Review Information

Document Title	Total # of Reviewers	Reviewers	Reviewers	Agency Reviewers	Friendly	Practitioners	% Rated as Accurate	Ideas/concepts missing
Academic Supports & Tutoring	3	2	0	1	100%	100%	100%	100%
Behavior Monitoring	4	3	0	1	100%	100%	100%	100%
Family Group Conferencing	5	2	2	1	100%	100%	100%	100%
Individual Behavior Plans and FBAs	2	0	2	0	100%	100%	100%	100%
Mentoring	4	2	1	1	100%	100%	100%	100%
Peer Mediation	6	2	4	0	100%	100%	100%	100%
Program Boys Town	5	3	1	1	100%	100%	100%	100%
Program Good Behavior Game	1	0	1	0	100%	100%	100%	100%
Punishment	2	0	0	2	100%	100%	100%	100%
Suicide Prevention	3	2	1	0	100%	100%	100%	100%
Youth Courts	4	1	2	1	75%	100%	75%	100%
Student Engagement	3	0	2	1	67%	100%	100%	100%
Out of School Time Programs	9	5	3	1	100%	100%	100%	89%
Program Check and Connect	7	5	1	1	100%	100%	100%	86%
Character Education	5	2	2	0	100%	100%	100%	80%
Project RENEW	5	2	2	1	100%	100%	100%	80%
Truancy Reduction	5	2	2	1	100%	100%	100%	80%
Reinforcement	5	3	2	0	100%	100%	80%	80%
Staff Student Relationships	5	3	2	0	100%	100%	80%	80%
Parent & Family Involvement	5	1	2	2	80%	100%	100%	80%
Corporal Punishment	3	3	0	0	100%	100%	100%	77%
Grade Retention & Demotion	4	4	0	0	100%	100%	100%	75%
Program Check in Check Out	4	2	1	1	100%	100%	100%	75%
Social Skills Instruction	4	3	1	0	100%	100%	100%	75%
Dropout Recovery	7	1	4	2	100%	100%	100%	71%
Alternative Schooling	3	2	1	0	100%	100%	100%	67%
Bullying Intervention	6	3	2	1	100%	100%	100%	67%
Detention	3	1	2	0	100%	100%	100%	67%
Program Second Step	3	2	1	0	100%	100%	100%	67%
Restorative Practices	3	0	2	1	100%	100%	100%	67%
Service Learning & Community Service	3	2	1	0	100%	100%	100%	67%
Suspension	3	2	1	0	100%	100%	100%	67%
In School Suspension	3	2	1	0	100%	67%	100%	67%
Program Developmental Assets	3	2	0	1	67%	67%	67%	67%
Conflict De-Escalation	8	3	2	3	100%	100%	88%	63%
Middle to High School Transition	5	2	2	1	100%	100%	100%	60%
Saturday School	5	3	2	0	100%	100%	100%	60%
Program Building Bridges	5	0	0	0	100%	80%	100%	60%
Behavior Contracting	7	4	2	1	86%	100%	100%	57%
Lowering Course Grades	4	2	1	1	100%	100%	100%	50%
Motivation	2	0	1	1	100%	100%	100%	50%
PBIS	4	2	1	1	100%	100%	100%	50%
School Values & Expectations	4	1	3	0	100%	100%	100%	50%
Sleep and School	2	0	2	0	100%	100%	100%	50%
Program 3 Anger Management	5	3	1	1	100%	100%	100%	40%
Program Targeting Bullying Intervention	5	3	0	2	100%	100%	100%	40%
Wraparound	5	1	1	3	80%	80%	100%	40%
Restitution	8	5	1	2	88%	100%	100%	38%
Anger Management	6	2	2	2	100%	100%	100%	33%
Bullying Prevention	3	1	0	2	100%	100%	100%	33%
Discipline Recovery	4	2	1	1	100%	100%	100%	33%
Program Character Counts	3	3	0	0	100%	100%	100%	33%
Zero Tolerance	3	1	0	2	67%	100%	100%	33%
Involuntary Transfer	4	3	1	0	100%	100%	100%	25%
Behavior Screening	1	0	1	0	100%	100%	100%	0%

organizations stated the information is accurate to the best of their knowledge. Furthermore, 99% of the reviews by school practitioners, 100% of the reviews by members of higher education, and 95% of the reviews by those affiliated with state or local agencies/organizations suggested that the document would be helpful to school practitioners. Next, 88% of the reviews by school practitioners, 70% of the reviews by members of higher education, and 76% of the reviews by those affiliated with state or local agencies/organizations suggested that the document correctly and clearly identifies the tiers in which the strategy could be implemented in. Lastly, 32% of the reviews by school practitioners, 43% of the reviews by members of higher education, and 42% of the reviews by those affiliated with state or local agencies/organizations stated that there was additional content that could be added to the document.

In the second round of reviews, 100% of the reviews by school practitioners, 96% of the reviews by members of higher education, and 50% of the reviews by those affiliated with state or local agencies/organizations indicated the document is practitioner friendly, accessible, and easy to understand. Next, 100% of the reviews by school practitioners, 96% of the reviews by members of higher education, and 100% of the reviews by those affiliated with state or local agencies/organizations stated the information is accurate to the best of their knowledge. Furthermore, 100% of the reviews by school practitioners, 100% of the reviews by members of higher education, and 100% of the reviews by those affiliated with state or local agencies/organizations suggested that the document would be helpful to school practitioners. Last, 31% of the reviews by school practitioners, 26% of the reviews by members of higher education, and 25% of the reviews by those affiliated with state or local agencies/organizations stated that there was additional content that could be added to the document.

During the third round of reviews, 100% of the reviews by members of higher education, and 100% of the reviews by school practitioners were rated as practitioner friendly, as well as accurate. One hundred percent of reviews by members of higher education, and 75% of reviews by school practitioners were rated as being helpful to school personnel. Further, 25% of the reviews by school practitioners, and 50% of the reviews by members of higher education were not lacking any substantial ideas.

Results by Document. Furthermore, the review feedback was broken down by document in order to help make specific revisions and make these resources as beneficial as possible. Refer to the table attached below to view review data for each individual brief. Twelve documents were rated as perfect with no changes required or substantial suggestions for improvement (21%). Forty-three (78%) of the documents were rated by all of their reviewers as being practitioner friendly, accurate, and helpful, but made suggestions about missing concepts or other content suggestions. Forty-four (79%) of the documents were rated as missing something by at least one reviewer, and of those documents, 16 (29%) were rated as missing something by at least half of the reviewers for the brief. The briefs that were indicated as having the greatest opportunity for additional content were behavior screening, involuntary transfer, anger management, bullying prevention, discipline recovery, zero tolerance, restitution, program targeted bullying intervention program, wraparound, and program Character Counts. The types of content which reviewers thought were missing ranged from minor omissions to a few with more substantive suggestions for additions. Examples of minor omissions include typos and ordering of sentences or paragraphs. An example of substantive suggestions includes missing an important topic within the subject. Only five documents (9%) rated below 100% on presumed accuracy (conflict de-escalation, reinforcement, staff-student relationships, youth courts, and program- Developmental Assets). Four documents (7%) rated below 100% for helpfulness to practitioners (wraparound, program Building Bridges, in-school suspension, and program- Developmental Assets). Only eight documents (14%) rated below 100% on practitioner friendliness, with student engagement, zero tolerance, and program Developmental Assets rated as needing the most improvement for friendliness.

Examples of Suggestions. The following comments are a sample of suggestions we received for each question. For example, a review for the Character Education brief suggested, "I would have liked to have more information about state policy, i.e. what schools are doing to follow this statue". Further, a suggestion for adding content to the Anger Management document was "Perhaps more specifics on the training needed to implement a successful anger management program." Next, comments to improve the accuracy of documents were mostly related to technical editing. A suggestion for improving the accuracy of the Conflict De-Escalation document was to look into an updated version of a reference that was used in order to ensure the document stays current and accurate.

A review of the Staff-Student relationship document made a suggestion regarding practitioner friendliness, "The first four pages came across very "researchy". I would focus more on the benefits instead of what happens should a student fall through the cracks and not establish a solid staff-student relationship." A reviewer suggested that in order to make the document Program Building Bridges more helpful to practitioners "more information needs to be provided on the specifics of the program. i.e., what is the tools for tomorrow program. More explanation needed" Last, in reference to clearly identifying the appropriate tiers of intervention, one review for Dropout Recovery suggested "It would be helpful to understand why this is concept is linked to Tier 3. The clarity would be helpful. More clarity would be helpful in explicitly identifying fir the reader why this is a tiered 3 concept."

How Will Results Be Used?

The comments and suggestions will be used to improve upon our existing documents and make them as useful of resources as possible. Some of the suggestions will be relatively easy to fix and others will require more substantial revision. Additional requests will be sent to review documents that have undergone substantial revision. Additional reviews will also be made for documents that had less than three reviewers, and for documents created since the last set of reviews were requested.

Overall, the feedback for the Student Engagement Project's documents was very positive, indicating high accessibility, high accuracy, and usefulness. Most suggestions were for additional content, some of which might be beyond the scope of these documents. Several documents will be revised based on these comments.

Recommended Citation

Kane, E., Palmon, S. & Peterson, R. L., (2016, November 22). External Document Review Report. Lincoln, NE: Student Engagement Project, University of Nebraska-Lincoln and the Nebraska Department of Education. http://k12engagement.unl.edu/.