

**Guilford County Schools
Psychological Services
Greensboro, North Carolina**

Responsible Discipline Process

Initial Evaluation Report

2001-2002 School Year

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Responsible Discipline Process (RDP) is designed to provide a participating school with a process to develop and implement a safer and more civil school over a three to four year period. It includes two components: (1) a process for developing and implementing school-wide discipline policies and (2) training in effective classroom management practices. The stages of implementation include:

- **Initiation**—schools decide to participate in RDP, develop a team, and are trained in the policy development process.
- **Early Implementation**—schools develop and implement 1 - 2 school-wide policies and procedures for common areas in the school.
- **Partial Implementation**—schools develop and implement school-wide policies and procedures for the remaining selected common areas in the school.
- **Full Implementation**—schools continue to implement policies for common areas in the school and staff are trained in and implement the classroom management techniques.

This report represents the initial evaluation for schools at the Full and Partial Implementation stages.

Program Features

- Fourteen Guilford County Schools participated in RDP during the 2001-02 school year.
- Four schools (3 elementary, 1 middle) achieved Full Implementation of RDP, and four schools (elementary) reached the Partial Implementation stage.
- Schools' rate of implementation was impacted by their participation in other initiatives and changes, such as district-initiated changes and changes at individual schools.

RDP Outcomes (reported only for the eight Full Implementation and Partial Implementation schools)

- 1) Staff perceptions of school safety and civility (measured by the RDP Staff Survey):
 - A comparison of the results of the initial administration to the most recent Spring 2002 administration reveals that both Full and Partial Implementation schools demonstrated an increase in the percentage of staff who perceived the school to be safe and civil.
 - Full Implementation Elementary Schools demonstrated greater improvements in staff perceptions of school safety and civility than Partial Implementation Elementary Schools.
- 2) The number of office referrals for rule violations:
 - Full and Partial Implementation Elementary Schools evidenced a decrease in the number of referrals to the office from Spring 2001 to Spring 2002, while the Full Implementation Middle School demonstrated an increase during that time.
- 3) Trends in suspension rates from 1998-99 to 2001-02:
 - Full and Partial Implementation Elementary Schools demonstrated a slight increase in suspension rates from 1998-99 to 2001-02, while the Full Implementation Middle School demonstrated a decrease in out-of-school and in-school suspensions during that time.
- 4) Teacher ratings of their knowledge and use of effective classroom management practices following CHAMPs training (Full Implementation schools only):
 - Teachers reported an increase in their understanding of effective classroom management practices following training.
 - Over 90% of teachers reported that they fully or partially implemented the techniques learned in training and found the practices to be effective for improving student behavior.

Conclusions

- 1) Full or partial implementation of RDP is associated with positive changes in several measures of a school's safety and civility.
- 2) Schools achieving full implementation status achieved more positive outcomes than schools achieving partial implementation status.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The Responsible Discipline Process (RDP) is designed to provide a participating school with a process to develop and implement a safer and more civil school over a three- to four-year period. RDP has been adapted from the **Foundations** program whose primary author is Dr. Randall Sprick from Eugene, Oregon. Dr. Sprick is known nationally as an expert in school discipline. He is currently working with school districts and state departments of education in Kentucky, South Carolina, Texas, Iowa, Florida, Oregon, and Washington. Guilford County Schools began implementing RDP in six schools in the 1999-2000 school year; 14 schools participated in 2001-02.

RDP involves two components: (1) a process for developing and implementing school-wide discipline policies and practices and (2) training in effective classroom management techniques. Schools typically spend two to three years focusing on school-wide policies and practices and receive training in classroom management during their third year.

Psychological Services is responsible for coordinating the implementation of RDP. Eight school psychologists and one school psychologist intern devote a portion of their time to serving as coaches for the participating schools. Each school typically has either one or two coaches who provides many RDP services, including: consulting with the principal and the Responsibility Team; providing classroom management (CHAMPs) training to staff; completing observations of common areas in the school; coordinating the completion of surveys and collection of data; attending faculty meetings when RDP issues are addressed; giving orientation sessions to new schools; planning and coordinating system-level meetings of participating schools; reviewing the district-wide progress with other RDP coaches; and developing an evaluation of RDP.

The first two years of RDP are devoted to developing a mission statement, guidelines for success (life-long skills needed to be successful in school and life), and policies for common areas in the school (e.g., hallways, cafeteria, playground, before/after school, bathrooms, assemblies, etc.). The policies and procedures are then endorsed by the entire faculty, taught to the students, implemented by faculty, and consistently monitored and evaluated. These policies are designed to create more responsible student and staff behavior which, in turn, will result in fewer behavior problems in the common areas. A trained school-based team, called the Responsibility Team, guides the process of developing and implementing school-wide discipline policies. The Responsibility Team receives training in the fall of their first year of involvement in RDP, as well as ongoing training and coaching throughout the process.

During the third year, all licensed teachers and staff members are trained to implement effective classroom management techniques. The training (called CHAMPs) is comprehensive and yields 2.5 renewal credits. When a school completes both components, it is given the option of committing to continued implementation of RDP with reduced coaching support. At the end of the 2001-02 school year, 14 Responsibility Teams had participated in the RDP team training and 230 staff members in six schools had received CHAMPs training. Below is a chart of the typical training sequence.

Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Responsibility Team training w. Randy Sprick (fall) including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • safe, civil, productive schools • teaming • the improvement cycle • common area procedures Ongoing training and coaching support on site.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsibility Team training w. Randy Sprick (fall) for new team members • Ongoing training and coaching support on site. 	CHAMPs training including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Classroom management practices • Encouragement procedures • Corrective procedures Responsibility Team training w. Randy Sprick (fall) for new team members

In the 2001-2002 school year, six schools in the Guilford County Schools were completing their third year of involvement, three schools entered their second year, and five schools began the process. The participating schools and their principals are listed below.

School	Year RDP initiated	Years in program	Principal (* denotes change during RDP)
Jackson Middle	1999-00	3	Jeff Parris
Mendenhall Middle	1999-00	3	Loretta Rowland*
Millis Road	1999-00	3	Wade Hampton*
Morehead	1999-00	3	Martha Snavely
Rankin	1999-00	3	Susan Britt*
Union Hill	1999-00	3	Jennifer Jones*
Johnson Street	2000-01	2	Gilda Scott
Kirkman Park	2000-01	2	Cheryl Spaulding
Sumner	2000-01	1.5**	Marilyn Davis*
Vandalia	2000-01	2	Kim Erwin
Allen Jay E.	2001-02	1	James Battle
Jamestown Middle	2001-02	1	Beverly Tucker
Montlieu	2001-02	1	Angella Hauser*
Oak View	2001-02	1	Tony Meachum

**Withdrew from RDP for one-half year; resumed participation in March 2002.

Stage of Implementation

As schools progress through the sequence of training, their use and implementation of the components of RDP is expected to increase. Four stages of RDP implementation have been identified:

- **Initiation**, in which schools decide to participate, develop a team, and learn the policy development process;
- **Early Implementation**, in which schools develop and implement school-wide policies and procedures for one to two common areas in the school;
- **Partial Implementation**, in which schools develop and implement school-wide policies and procedures for the remaining selected common areas in the school;
- **Full Implementation**, in which schools continue to implement policies for common areas in the school and are also trained in and implement the classroom management techniques.

The concept of implementation is important to program evaluation, because the outcomes of a program can only be ascertained once schools have implemented a program with integrity. Thus, only schools that have partially or fully implemented RDP will be evaluated for outcomes, with the expectation that, if RDP is effective, schools at Full Implementation should demonstrate more positive outcomes than schools at Partial Implementation. Schools at the Initiation and Early Implementation stages also collect data to serve as a baseline to measure future changes. In addition, all schools use the data for the purpose of formative evaluation; that is, Responsibility Teams analyze and review their data regularly to determine what components of RDP are working well and what components need continued improvement. A more complete description of the implementation stages is provided below.

Stage of Implementation	Implementation activities	Program evaluation
Initiation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responsibility Team with appropriate membership is trained, meets regularly, and has good attendance. 	Baseline & formative evaluation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> RDP surveys Suspension data
Early Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responsibility Team follows the RDP process to develop, teach, and review policies. School adopts and implements 1 - 2 common area policies. 	Baseline & formative evaluation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> RDP surveys Office referral data Suspension data
Partial Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responsibility Team follows the RDP process to develop, teach, and review policies. School adopts and implements 3 or more common area policies. 	Outcome & formative evaluation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> RDP surveys Office referral data Suspension data
Full Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to implement and monitor policies in the common areas of the school. 70% or more of the faculty participates in classroom management training (CHAMPs) and implements practices from the training. 	Outcome & formative evaluation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> CHAMPs surveys RDP surveys Office referral data Suspension data

Program Context and Change Variables

Typically, schools in their third year of involvement will achieve Full Implementation; schools in their second year will achieve Partial Implementation; and schools in their first year will achieve Early Implementation or Initiation. However, the rate at which schools progress through these stages is impacted by many factors, including district-initiated changes and changes at individual schools. For example, a number of RDP schools began implementation of Literacy First and lost teacher assistant positions in order to reduce class size. While these major changes in instructional practices and school organization were implemented to increase student achievement, they necessarily diverted time and energy from the implementation of RDP. In addition, individual school factors such as changes in school leadership and changes in student population related to redistricting also impacted a school's rate of implementation.

The chart below indicates each RDP school's stage of implementation and whether it had any individual school factors that affected implementation. Overall, the majority of RDP schools reached the stage of implementation expected for their year of involvement in the program. Of the three schools that did not, both Union Hill and Sumner experienced changes in principals and redistricting, and implemented Literacy First, which clearly impacted their rate of progress. Both schools elected to continue implementing RDP at the end of the year and are expected to increase their level of implementation in the 2002-03 school year. Jackson Middle School experienced enrollment changes and other individual school factors during 2001-2002 that compromised their implementation of RDP.

School	Years in Program	Level of Implementation	Principal Change	Redistricting	District Changes*
Jackson Middle	3	Early	No	Yes	No
Mendenhall Middle	3	Full	Yes	Yes	No
Millis Road	3	Full	Yes	Slight	No
Morehead	3	Full	No	Slight	No
Rankin	3	Full	Yes	Yes	LF, CSR
Union Hill	3	Partial	Yes	Slight	LF, CSR
Johnson Street	2	Partial	No	Slight	LF, CSR
Kirkman Park	2	Partial	No	Yes	LF, CSR
Sumner	1.5	Initiation	Yes	Yes	LF
Vandalia	2	Partial	No	No	LF
Allen Jay Elementary	1	Initiation	No	Yes	LF
Jamestown Middle	1	Initiation	No	Yes	No
Montlieu	1	Early	Yes	Yes	LF
Oak View	1	Early	No	Yes	LF

* LF = Literacy First; CSR = Class Size Reduction

Evaluation Design

As indicated above, the four schools that reached Full Implementation and the four schools that achieved Partial Implementation will be included in the outcome evaluation. The following outcomes were evaluated for all eight schools:

- Changes in staff perceptions of the safety and civility of the school, based upon the RDP Staff Surveys administered in the school's first year of RDP involvement and Spring 2002;
- Changes in the number of office referrals for rule violations from Spring 2001 to Spring 2002 (Note: RDP schools began tracking office referrals in Spring 2001);
- Trends in the number of suspensions from 1998-99 to 2001-02.

For the four schools that reached Full Implementation of RDP, the evaluation design also includes evaluation of the outcomes of the classroom management training. These include:

- Changes in teachers' understanding of effective classroom management practices from before the training to after the training, based upon CHAMPs Training Survey responses;
- The percent of teachers who reported that they found the practices effective, based upon CHAMPs Training Survey responses.

The results of each outcome measure are presented separately for schools at the elementary and middle school levels and are combined according to the schools' stage of implementation. Thus, data are presented for three groups: (a) three elementary schools at Full Implementation; (b) four elementary schools at Partial Implementation; and (c) one middle school at Full Implementation.

PROGRAM OUTCOMES

Staff Perceptions of School Safety and Civility

Staff perceptions of the school's safety and civility were assessed with the RDP Staff Survey. This survey includes 15 questions that target staff perceptions of four areas: (1) staff members', students', and parents' understanding of the school's approach to discipline, (2) students' behavior in common areas of the school, (3) staff members' use of a consistent and fair approach to discipline; and (4) communication with administration. The first three areas (12 questions) are included in this analysis. Staff members were asked to respond to questions using a four-point Likert scale, where 1 is "not at all" and 4 is "all of the time." Ratings of 3 or 4 are considered to be positive responses. The survey was initially administered to each school during the fall of its first year of RDP involvement and then during the spring of each subsequent year of involvement. Figures 1 – 6 depict the results for Full and Partial Implementation Elementary Schools, and Figures 7 – 9 depict the results for the Full Implementation Middle School.

A comparison of the results of the baseline administration to the most recent Spring 2002 administration reveals that both Full and Partial Implementation schools demonstrated an increase in the percentage of staff who perceived the school to be safe and civil overall. The staff in the Full Implementation Elementary Schools and Middle School reported improvement in the safety and civility of the school in all three areas surveyed: (1) a clearer understanding of the school's approach to discipline by school constituents, (2) safer and more orderly behavior in the school's common areas, and (3) a more consistent and fair approach to discipline. Partial Implementation Elementary Schools demonstrated an increase in the first two areas but not the third. When Full and Partial Implementation Elementary Schools' Spring 2002 surveys were compared, it was evident that a higher percentage of staff perceived the school to be safe and civil in Full Implementation schools than in Partial Implementation schools on all but two (out of 12) questions. **This suggests that schools that fully implemented RDP demonstrated greater improvements in staff perceptions of safety and civility than did schools that partially implemented RDP.**

Office Referrals

Schools began tracking the number of students referred to the office for rule violations in Spring 2001 and continued throughout the 2001-02 school year. In other districts implementing RDP, it has been found that the number of office referrals sometimes initially increases due to the consistent application of behavioral expectations among the staff and the gradual implementation of effective behavior management strategies. Figures 10 – 12 illustrate the average number of office referrals made for Full and Partial Implementation schools during Spring 2001 and Spring 2002.

The results demonstrate that both Full and Partial Implementation Elementary Schools decreased their average number of office referrals from Spring 2001 to Spring 2002. In Spring 2001, the Full Implementation Elementary Schools had a higher number of office referrals than the Partial

Implementation Elementary Schools; but the two groups had a similar number of office referrals in Spring 2002, indicating that the Full Implementation Elementary Schools had a greater decrease in office referrals than the Partial Implementation Elementary Schools. The Full Implementation Middle School demonstrated an increase in the number of office referrals from Spring 2001 to Spring 2002. This may represent the initial increase described above, especially given that there were significant changes in administrators in 2001-02.

Thus it appears that the number of students referred to the office decreased in RDP Elementary Schools while it increased in the RDP Middle School. In the elementary schools, a greater decrease was evident in the Full Implementation schools than in the Partial Implementation schools.

Suspensions

The third outcome measure is trends in suspension rates over the past four years. Suspension rates were totaled and averaged for the Full and Partial Implementation Elementary Schools and for the Full Implementation Middle School. Figures 13 – 14 illustrate the trends in elementary school suspensions, and Figure 15 depicts the middle school in-school and out-of-school suspension trends.

On average, the Full Implementation Elementary Schools have demonstrated slight changes in suspension rates from year to year, with an overall slight increase from 1998-99 to 2001-02. Partial Implementation Elementary Schools on average evidenced a noticeable increase from 1998-99 to 1999-00, and then have hovered around the same level since. When comparing these two sets of schools, it appears that the Full Implementation Elementary Schools have lower suspension rates than the Partial Implementation Elementary Schools overall. The Full Implementation Middle School demonstrated a marked decrease in out-of-school suspensions during the 2001-02 school year in comparison with the previous three years and a lower level of in-school suspensions in 2000-01 and 2001-02 than the previous two years.

Thus, it is evident that a middle school that fully implemented RDP showed a trend toward decreased suspension rates, while elementary schools that have fully implemented RDP have lower rates of suspension than elementary schools that have partially implemented RDP.

Knowledge and Perceived Effectiveness of Classroom Management Practices

A CHAMPs Training Survey was developed to assess teachers' perceptions of the CHAMPs training on effective classroom management practices. Specifically, teachers were asked to rate their understanding of the practices before and after the training and then to rate how effective the practices were six weeks after implementing them. Three types of general classroom practices were assessed: (1) CHAMPs practices, which is establishing behavioral expectations for student behavior during classroom activities (e.g., large group instruction) and classroom transitions (e.g., end of day dismissal), (2) encouragement procedures, which are strategies like non-contingent attention, positive feedback and classroom motivation systems, and (3) corrective procedures like classroom rules, responding to mild misbehavior, and dealing with chronic misbehavior. Figures 16 – 18 depict Elementary School survey responses, while figures 19 – 21 depict Middle School survey responses. Only Full Implementation schools were surveyed because the Partial Implementation schools have not received the training at this point.

The CHAMPs Training Survey results for the Full Implementation Elementary Schools demonstrate that teachers reported a greater understanding of effective classroom management practices after the training in all three areas. In addition, 98% of teachers indicated that they were fully or partially implementing the practices six weeks later (76% fully implemented; 22% partially implemented). Finally, 95% of teachers found the practices to be effective for improving student behavior (66% fully effective; 29% partially effective).

Teachers in the Full Implementation Middle School also reported an increased understanding of effective classroom management practices in all three areas following the CHAMPs training. Furthermore, 96% of teachers reported that they fully or partially implemented practices (73% fully implemented; 23% partially implemented); and 98% of teachers reported the practices to be effective for improving student behavior (74% fully effective; 24% partially effective). **Overall, a high percentage of teachers in both elementary and middle schools indicated that they improved their knowledge and use of effective classroom management practices following CHAMPs training.**

Conclusion

During the 2001-02 school year, 14 GCS schools were involved in implementing RDP, which is designed to help schools develop and implement a safer and more civil school over a three- to four-year period. Research on school change indicates that it takes three to five years to implement a moderately complex innovation in a school. Four schools (3 elementary, 1 middle) attained Full Implementation of the model, indicating that they had developed and fully implemented school-wide policies for common areas, as well as effective classroom management practices. Four additional elementary schools reached Partial Implementation, indicating that they had developed and implemented school-wide common area policies but not the classroom management practices. Outcome measures were reviewed for these eight schools only.

Outcomes were measured in four areas: (1) Staff perceptions of the school's safety and civility, based on RDP Staff Surveys; (2) Number of office referrals; (3) Trends in suspensions; and (4) Teacher ratings of their knowledge and use of effective classroom management practices following CHAMPs training, measured by CHAMPs Training Surveys. The Full Implementation schools demonstrated positive outcomes in most areas: staff perceptions of the school's safety and civility improved from baseline to Spring 2002; teachers reported that they gained knowledge and implemented effective classroom management practices following CHAMPs training; and the number of office referrals decreased from Spring 2001 to Spring 2002 in elementary schools, while the number of suspensions decreased in 2001-02 in the middle school. The Partial Implementation Elementary Schools also evidenced positive outcomes in the areas of improved staff perceptions of school safety and civility from baseline to Spring 2002, and decreased office referrals from Spring 2001 to Spring 2002. However, the Full Implementation Elementary Schools' outcomes showed greater positive changes than the Partial Implementation Elementary Schools on all measures.

Outcome measures suggest two conclusions regarding the success of implementing RDP: (1) Full or partial implementation of RDP is associated with positive changes in several measures of a school's safety and civility; and (2) Schools reaching full implementation status achieved more positive outcomes than schools reaching partial implementation status.