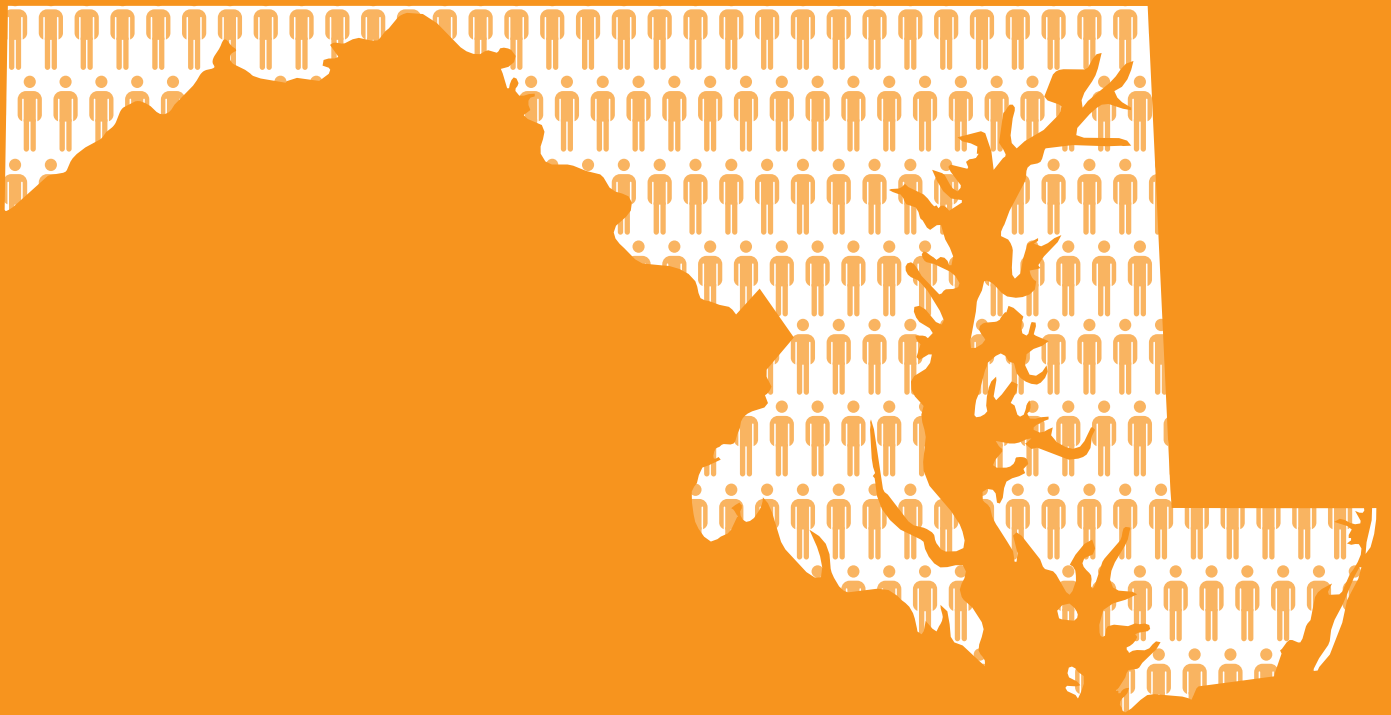




SECOND CHANCES:

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:

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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.”

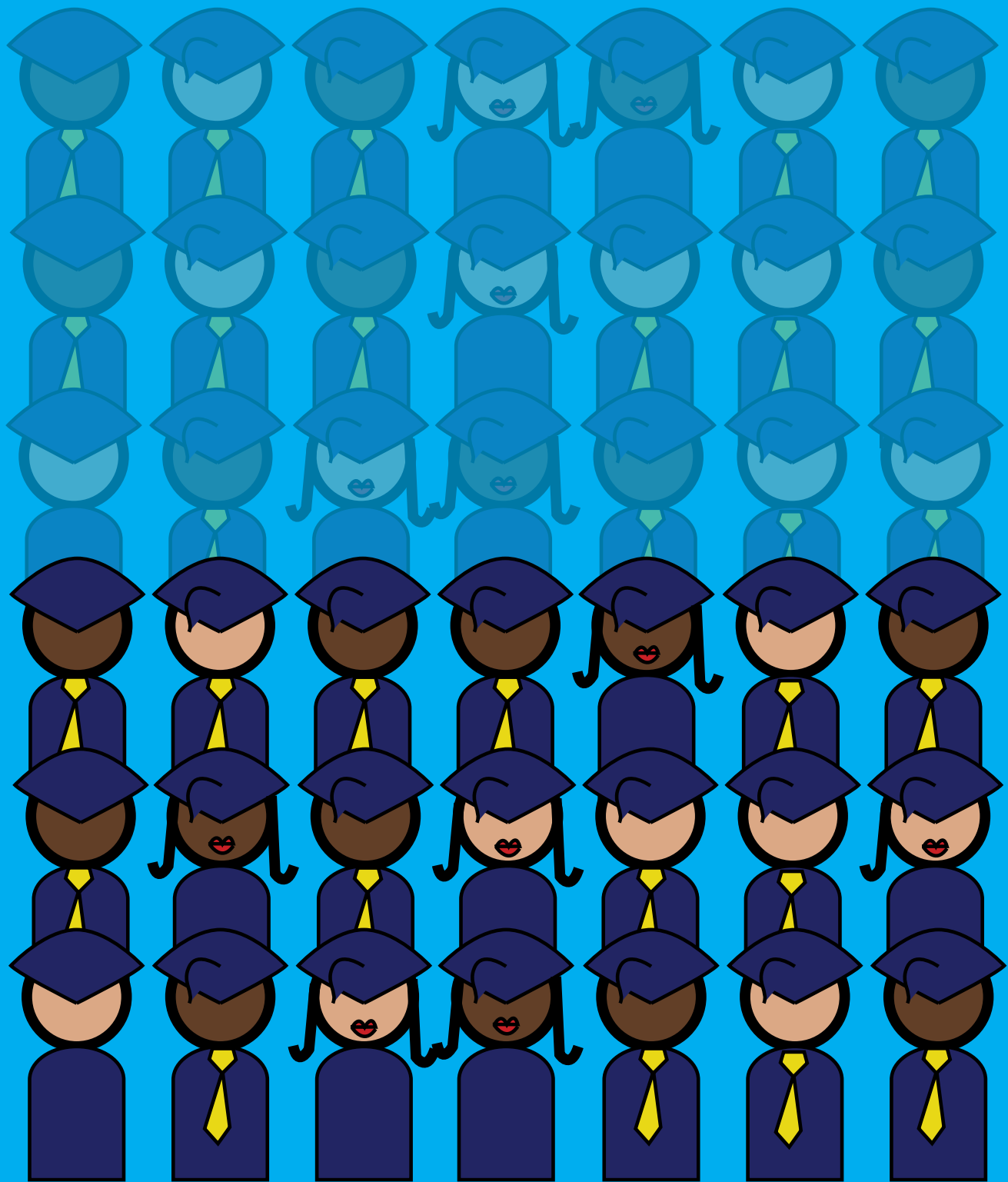
Robert Murphy
School Completion Specialist
Maryland State Department of
Education

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.

| DATE | GENDER | RACE | IEP | CLASS/TIME OF DAY | TEACHER | REASON FOR SUSPENSION |
|------|--------|------|-----|-------------------|---------|-----------------------|
| | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |
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| | | | | | | |

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

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

Rhonda Richetta
Principal
City Springs Elementary/
Middle School

KEY POINTS

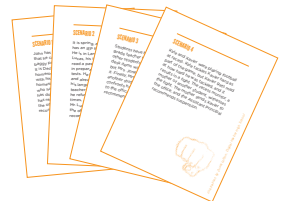
- Restorative practices can be an alternative to suspensions.
- Restorative practices enable students and teachers to resolve behavior issues before punishment occurs.
- Circles enable students involved in a dispute to talk through a situation.

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.





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

KEY POINTS

- Alternative education centers can provide intensive mentoring services for students who cannot or do not attend their local schools.
- Alternative-to-suspension is an academic program at Anchor Points Academy for students who are suspended 8-10 days.
- Addressing a student’s personal problems comes before engaging in academics.
- Strong relationships, mediation, and counseling are key to student success.
- Young people should be held accountable for their actions.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What are the strengths and limitations of a district having an alternative ed program?
2. What qualities are key about Anchor Points Academy that can be replicated in your school or in your district?

ACTIVITIES

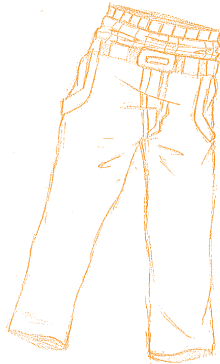
1. **Research** alternative education. How many alternative schools still exist in Maryland? Do they exist in all states?
2. **Debate** the pros and cons of alternative schools.

APPENDIX

Scenario Cards
Suspension InfoPlaylist

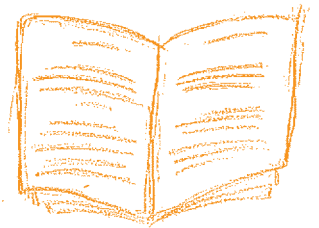
SCENARIO 1

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.



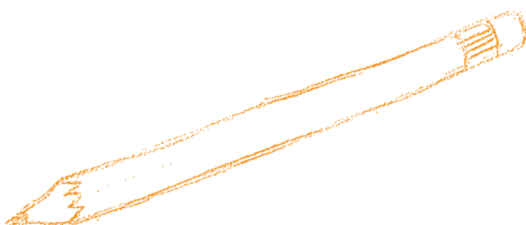
SCENARIO 2

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.



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.

INTRODUCTION TO SCHOOL DISCIPLINE:

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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.

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