

Minnesota's School-based Diversion Model (SBDM)

School Year 2019-20 Findings

Minnesota's School-Based Diversion Model (SBDM) is a student-centered plan to keep youth from entering the criminal justice system due to arrests at school or during school hours. A team of professionals, students, and parents from various backgrounds and constituent groups created it. The project is funded by a MN legislative appropriation and two Department of Human Services grants; one for grant management and the other for project evaluation. The team published an implementation manual outlining shared decision-making, community partnership services, and alternatives to exclusionary practices in schools in 2019.

SBDM provides a decision-making protocol for student incidents and presents an opportunity for schools and law enforcement to work together as a shared decision-making authority to address students' academic, behavioral health, and criminogenic needs. The model outlines three possible responses to student incidents: (1) no action-inform parent; (2) school case conference or behavior support team consultation, which can result in referrals to restorative justice conflict resolution, mental/chemical health services; or (3) school resource officer/law enforcement involvement.

The model emphasizes a variety of approaches to meet the needs of students. Critical elements of the triage system include: involvement of families at every stage; referral for screening, assessment, and treatment for early identification of youth at risk for juvenile justice involvement; and development and access to preventive and supportive resources within the school environment, using community supports such as restorative practices, mental health screening and support, and chemical dependency evaluation and services. The model is general enough to be applied to any school setting and allows for some adaptation based on local context and resources.

Each MN SBDM site received \$19,500 in funding from the MN Department of Human Services

In spring 2017, an RFP was issued across the state; it was open to school districts and nonprofit agencies. The first site, Robbinsdale Cooper High School, began implementation in all 2017, and five more sites were added in January 2018: Minneapolis Roosevelt High School, Duluth Denfeld High School, Owatonna High School, Cloquet Alternative School (transferred to Cloquet High School in fall 2019), and St Cloud McKinley Area Learning Center. Robbinsdale Area Schools' school based diversion has also expanded to include Armstrong High School.

Wilder Research is working with DHS to help collect and analyze information about how the SBDM is helping each pilot program increase screenings, assessments, and referrals to mental and chemical health treatments, as well as to improve students' school attendance and responses to behavioral situations. Additional long-term outcomes may include reduced school arrests, out-of-school suspensions, and expulsions. This report focuses on data for the 2019-20 school year. It is important to note that two significant events occurred during this reporting period: the outbreak of the novel coronavirus that causes COVID-19 and the resulting pandemic, and the killing of George Floyd and the civil unrest that followed. These factors may have affected some parts of the School-Based Diversion Model, including referrals and service provision.

Minnesota's School-Based Diversion Model

Pilot schools	Students referred into program	Students declined services	Students served by program
7	294	39	255

Minnesota's School-Based Diversion Model responses to behavioral incidents



- Applied restorative practices (e.g., conducted a chat or circle)
- Informed parent/s or caregiver/s
- Had a school case conference



- Referred to a behavior support team
- Referred to principal or school administration
- Referred to SRO or law enforcement
- Referred to mental health or chemical health services

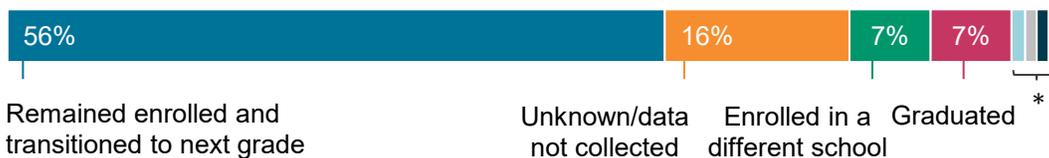


- Screened/assessed for co-occurring disorder
- Screened/assessed for trauma

Types of behavioral incidents that led to student referrals to Minnesota's School-Based Diversion Model:

- Bullying
- Disruptive behaviors toward another student, staff, volunteer, or visitor, including verbal fighting WITHOUT physical contact or insubordination/refusal to comply with reasonable requests or rules
- Drug or alcohol usage/possession (not distribution)
- Electronics violation
- Fighting with physical contact/physical assault
- Inappropriate dress/language
- Insubordination/refusal to comply with reasonable requests or rules
- Tobacco use or paraphernalia, including vapes
- Vandalism
- Weapons possession

End of year status for student served (2019-2020):



* <1% in out-of-home placement; <1% Remained enrolled, but held in same grade; <1% Pursuing GED/Adult diploma; <1% Dropped out of school

Note: End of year statuses were not available for all pilot schools.

Wilder Research

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