

**Alternatives to Out-of-School Suspension:  
What alternatives to out-of-school suspension exist to facilitate improvement in  
student behaviour?**

**David Baldasso  
Jerome Francis  
Cheryl Loewen  
and  
Adrienne McLeod**

David Baldasso, Secondary Teacher, Surrey School District, [baldasso\\_d@sd36.bc.ca](mailto:baldasso_d@sd36.bc.ca)  
Jerome Francis, Secondary Teacher, Arch Bishop Carney Regional Secondary,  
[mfrancis@acrss.org](mailto:mfrancis@acrss.org)  
Cheryl Loewen, Secondary Teacher, Surrey School District, [quashie\\_c@sd36.bc.ca](mailto:quashie_c@sd36.bc.ca)  
Adrienne McLeod, Secondary Teacher, Langley School District, [amcleod@sd35.bc.ca](mailto:amcleod@sd35.bc.ca)

This abstract is based upon Baldasso, D., Francis, J., Loewen, C., McLeod, A. (2006).  
Alternatives to Out-of-school Suspension: What alternatives to out-of-school  
suspension exist to facilitate improvement in student behaviour? (Masters  
Graduating Paper, University of British Columbia, 2006).

Electronic copies of a short article on the study and of the complete graduate paper are  
available from any of the authors.

## Abstract

Students who face serious disciplinary action in secondary schools are commonly suspended out-of-school in hopes that it will change their behaviour. The literature alludes to the fact that out-of-school suspension does not improve student misbehaviour. As well, students who are at-risk are vulnerable to facing disciplinary action. The best method to change their behaviour is by building strong relationships between caring adults. This paper reports the results of a study conducted to determine the alternatives to out-of-school suspension that exist to facilitate an improvement in student behaviour.

This research was conducted in order to address the overuse of out-of-school suspension as a disciplinary measure and to examine the alternatives to out-of-school suspension that will change student behaviour. An examination of literature was completed in order to address the following themes: 1) the effectiveness of in-school suspension as an alternative method of student discipline, 2) the importance of the identification of at-risk youth in order to reduce the number of out-of-school suspensions, and 3) the importance of interpersonal relationships between the student and administrators, teachers, peers, counsellors and parents in preventing the reoccurrence of problematic behaviour. A questionnaire was completed by thirty-two secondary vice principals in both the Langley and Surrey School Districts. Interviews with twelve administrators who volunteered to further discuss the topic were then conducted.

The following conclusions resulted from the study conducted: 1) in-school suspension programs are an effective method of student discipline that aid in improving student behaviour; 2) the identification of at-risk youth is not a clear indicator that this group of students will engage in problematic behaviour, however, identification, along with a program of intervention may lead to a change in student behaviour; 3) relationships between students and administrators, teachers, peers, counsellors, and parents play an important role in supporting the student in order to prevent the reoccurrence of problematic behaviour.

The study conducted on alternatives to suspension has resulted in the following recommendations: 1) the Ministry of Education must host a yearly symposium on alternatives to suspension, and allocate specific funds for districts to implement suspension programs; 2) the creation of a pilot in-school suspension program supported by an evaluation program to measure the benefits and analyze the successes of in-school suspension programs; 3) the implementation of a collaborative framework for individuals involved in the suspension process to work more closely together to be supportive for students who are suspended.