



1

Restraint and Isolation Laws in Washington State

- **Restraint:** physical intervention or force used to control and/or restrict a student's freedom of movement. This includes chemical restraint, mechanical restraint, and physical restraint;
- **Isolation (also known as seclusion):** restricting the student alone within a room or any other form of enclosure, from which the student may not leave. "Isolation" does not include: (i) A student's voluntary use of a quiet space for self-calming; (ii) Temporary removal of a student from his or her regular instructional area to an unlocked area for purposes of carrying out an appropriate positive behavior intervention plan; or (iii) Using a nonpermanent, removable material or barrier within an instructional setting for the purpose of temporarily separating a student from the rest of the instructional setting for a short period of time in order to address privacy concerns among students when a student engages in actions such as disrobement or similar behavior that raises significant privacy concerns and substantially impacts the ability to maintain a safe environment for learning for all students. The temporary material or barrier must still allow the student to be monitored by instructional or support staff in the classroom. (Source: [WAC 392-172A-02110](#))

2

Restraint and Isolation Laws in Washington State

- Use of restraint or isolation is permitted only when reasonably necessary to control spontaneous behavior that poses an *imminent likelihood of serious harm*.
- Districts must annually submit data for incidents of restraint and isolation to OSPI, and OSPI must publish this data to its website (available in the Data & Reporting Requirements section at the bottom of this page).
- Adults using restraint and/or isolation with a student receiving special education services must be trained and certified in the use of trauma-informed crisis intervention. (Source: [WAC 392-172A-02110](#))

3

Restraint and Isolation Laws in Washington State

- **Imminent:** the state or condition of being likely to occur at any moment or near at hand, rather than distant or remote
- **Likelihood of serious harm:** a substantial risk that: (i) Harm will be inflicted by the student upon his or her own person, as evidenced by threats or attempts to commit suicide, or inflict harm on oneself; or (ii) Harm will be inflicted by the student upon another, as evidenced by behavior that places another person or persons in reasonable fear of sustaining such harm

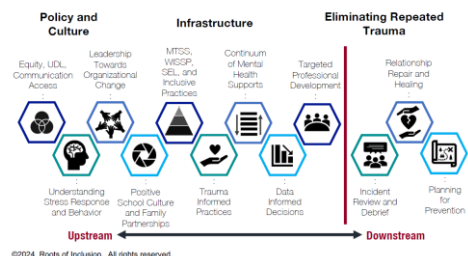
Sources: [RCW 28A.600.485](#)

4

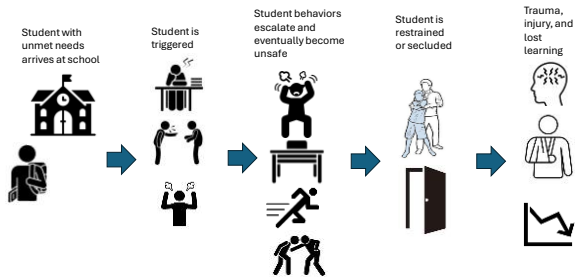
Updates Effective June 11, 2026, from Engrossed Substitute House Bill 1795

- School district staff may not use mechanical restraint, chemical restraint, or physical restraint that is life threatening, restricts breathing, or restricts blood flow to the brain
- No construction of new isolation rooms
- Isolation may not be used as a planned behavior intervention in an IEP
- Restraint may only be used as a planned behavior intervention in the IEP if:
 - The student's parent or guardian request this, and
 - A licensed health care provider documents (written) medical necessity and parent/guardian gives written informed consent

5



6



7

"If I get put in a restraint, it is traumatizing," said a student and sexual assault survivor. "I can find a way out, but it gives me PTSD and trauma, going hands on. I don't like to be touched." This student also shared that teachers assumed he was aggressive because he is black. "You get blamed for things. You get looked at as a weapon. I don't like that. People look at me as an assaultive Black African American teenager. I get looked at way differently. I'm a regular kid."

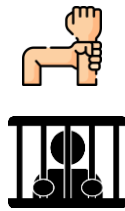
-Anonymous Student

Coming Into the Light: An Examination of Restraint and Seclusion Practices in Washington Schools
 Disability Rights Washington
 2022 of Washington

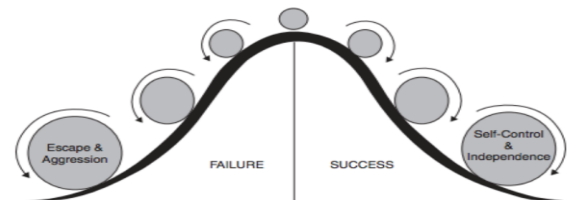
8

Which students are being restrained and isolated the most?

- Students with disabilities
- Students who live in poverty
- Students of color



9



"THE SNOWBALL ROLLING FAST TO THE RIGHT CANNOT BE SLOWED BY THE OCCASIONAL FAILURE. LIKEWISE, THE SNOWBALL ROLLING FAST TO THE LEFT WILL NOT BE SLOWED BY THE OCCASIONAL SUCCESS."

10

Correction without connection just feels like rejection.



11

Quick Reality Check

- We must do better
- This work is messy and hard
- No one has it all figured out
- We must move from shame to support
- We can get better together



12



13

De-escalation without empathy is often misguided—we end up doing what works for us but not what works for the student.



14

Don't Criminalize Our Students

Don't Say This

- "He assaulted me"
- "They were causing trouble"
- "I was attacked"
- "She was harassing the class"
- "Their victim was hurt"
- "He was trespassing in the principal's office"
- "She was terrorizing kids on the playground"
- "Bad things happen to kids who do bad things"
- "They made a bad choice, so they need a consequence"

Instead Say This

- "He kicked my leg"
- "They were pacing around the room looking for paper"
- "They attempted to bite me"
- "She screamed loud while doing math"
- "The classmate was hit by a book"
- "He entered the principal's office"
- "She ran towards students while screaming"
- "Bad things happen when kids are not properly supported"
- "They used an ineffective strategy, let's support them in using a different one"

15



Know Yourself

- What are your triggers?
- What behaviors do you engage in when you escalate?
- What helps you de-escalate?

16

The Auburn School District

- Home to over 17,000 students
- 11.9% access special education services
- 16 elementary schools, 4 middle schools, 3 high schools, 1 alternative high school
- Fastest growing district in the Seattle area
- Very diverse community
 - 44% of students live in multilingual households
 - 11% of students are new to the country within the past two years
 - 113 languages spoken



18

Demonstration Sites

- Dick Scobee Elementary



- Terminal Park Elementary



19



20

Morning Message

- In person and virtual
- Review behavioral expectations
- Review trait of the week (connected to SEL lessons received in class)
- Highlight events happening in the school
- Highlight food options
- Positive behavior acknowledgements (both individual and class)

21

Morning Meeting

- Designated time in which SEL is taught
- Entire school highlights the same theme each day
- Time is given for students to acknowledge each other
- Teachers are equipped to lead the work
 - Teachers are frequently updated with behavioral data from the Tier 1 and Tier 2 team
 - Teachers are provided with the curriculum to teach

22

Using Data to Make Change

- The building noticed a high number of behavior referrals during recess
- Incidents were coming from the soccer field
- Students who were receiving the referrals received coaching to be referees for younger students playing soccer
- Tier 1 support for the younger students, tier 2 support for older students
 - The older students received special referee shirts



23

Regulation Spaces for All Students



- Calming corners in every classroom (TIER 1)
 - Equipped with fidget bins
 - Visual cues for regulation
 - Students are explicitly taught how to use and not use

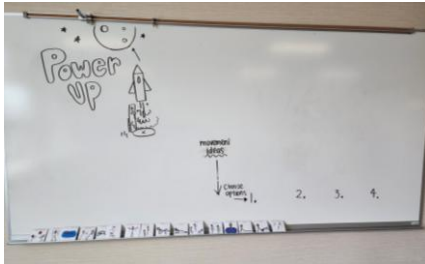
24

Regulation Spaces for All Students

- The Space Station and the Zen Den (TIER 2 and TIER 3)
 - Scheduled breaks in room with trained adult
 - Movement options to power down or fire up
 - Utilizes Zones of Regulation to equip students
 - Check in/ Check out system
 - Data collection via google forms



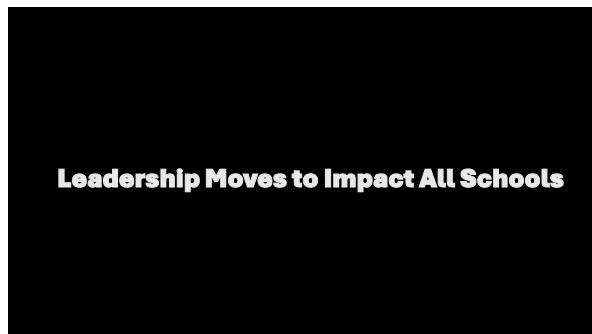
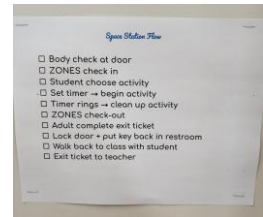
25



26



27



28

Restraint and Isolation Steering Committee

- Made up of classified, certificated, and administrative staff from around the district
- Met monthly for 18 months
- Evaluated our practices, our gaps, and our opportunities
- Sought feedback from other districts
- Researched different de-escalation programs
- Made recommendations for the district to move forward with

29

1: Increase Awareness

- What is restraint, what is it not?
- What is isolation, what is it not?
- When is it permissible, when is it not?
- Who can administer it, who cannot?
- How does it impact students?
- Who reports, how, and by when?
- Who needs to be trained, who does not?
- What are alternatives to restraint and isolation?

30

2: Improve Professional Development

- Adopted Safety-Care
 - ABA based
 - High training standards
 - Equated to better equipped staff
 - Great program flexibility
- Created "Foundations in De-escalation"
 - Intended for staff who didn't need Safety-Care but still needed something
 - Asynchronous



31

3.Improve Reporting System

The image shows two forms side-by-side, connected by a blue arrow pointing from left to right. The left form is titled 'Physical Restraint - Isolation Report' and contains various fields for reporting an incident, including student name, date, time, and a detailed description of the incident. The right form is titled 'Documentation of Restraint/Isolation' and includes fields for 'Student Name', 'Student Date of Birth', 'Date of Incident', and 'Location of Incident'.

32

4: Expand the Use of BCBA's and RBT's

- A Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA) is a graduate level certification in behavior analysis. Professionals certified at the BCBA level are independent practitioners who provide behavior analytic services.
- A Registered Behavior Technician (RBT) is a paraprofessional certification in behavior analysis. RBT's assist in delivering behavior-analytic services and practice under the direction and close supervision of an RBT supervisor and/or RBT Requirements Coordinator, who is responsible for all work an RBT performs.

33

Where It Goes Wrong with BCBA's in Schools

- BCBA's are overloaded
 - Does not get to work on proactive systems
 - May not have time to develop positive relationships
 - Does not have the chance to see the plan all the way through
- They are used to compensate for lack of tiered supports
- There is little buy in from staff
 - Can be viewed as barrier to more restrictive settings and not as a support
 - Is not fully integrated as a part of a team in a building

34

How It Can Go Right with BCBA's in Schools

- Staff understand the scope and practice of a BCBA
- There is a lifeline for BCBA's to reach out to when ethical issues arise
- There is a professional community in which to grow
- Collaboration agreements
 - Clear definition of a BCBA's role
 - Clear timeline of tasks to be accomplished and by who
 - Clear understanding of the nature and extent of BCBA support for each case

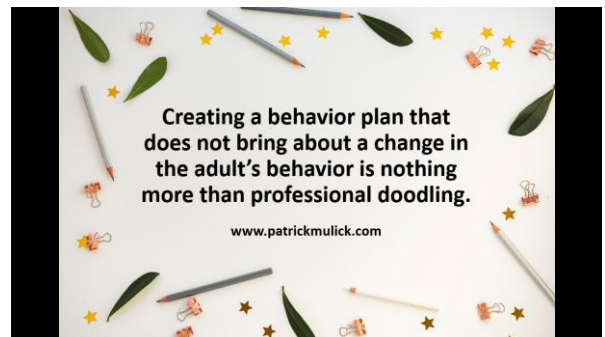
35

"When you work in the clinic or in the home, you are all the lanes. When we walk into the school, you are just one of the lanes and you must learn to stay in it and not step on the toes of others."

-Mariah Angele, BCBA

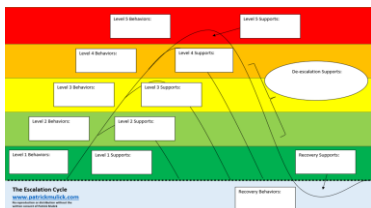


36



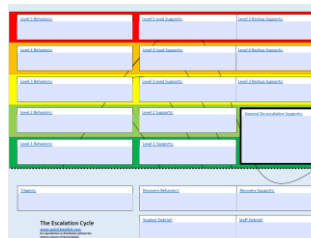
37

5: Improved Behavior Planning



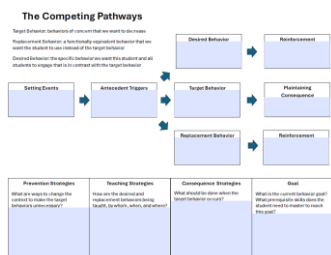
38

5: Improved Behavior Planning



39

5: Improved Behavior Planning

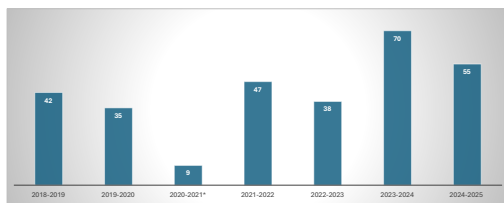


40



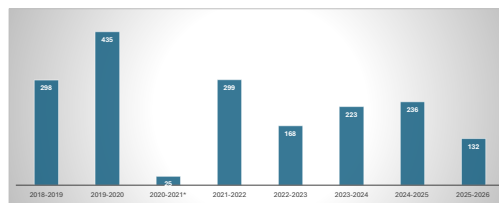
41

Number of People Reporting Restraint or Seclusion



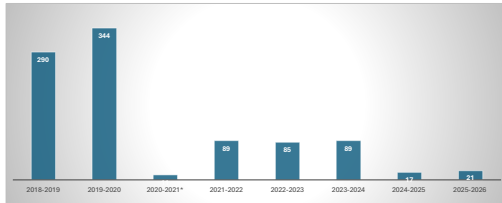
42

ASD's Restraint Data



43

ASD's Seclusion Data



44

"If you are 'othered' from first, second or third grade," he asks, "by middle school or high school, how are you supposed to see yourself any differently?"



45

True inclusion begins when we stop measuring someone's barriers and start building their runway to success.

46

Recommended Conferences to Build Staff Capacity

- Behavior Supports in Schools Conference (every May in Tumwater)
- Northwest PBIS Conferences (every April, rotates between Spokane, Portland, and Tacoma)
- Midwest Symposium for Leadership in Behavior Disorders (every February in Kansas City)

47

Questions to Ask

- Do all educators know what restraint and isolation is?
 - When is it not prohibited?
 - The impact?
 - Is it accurately being reported?
- What preventative practices are being prioritized?
- What training is being provided and by whom?
- Who is receiving this training?
- How are staff's SEL needs being met?
- How does this work align with the district's priorities?
- What barriers exist and how might they be addressed?

48

The Path

- Start with the why
- Find your critical mass
- Remove yourself from the personal connection
- Remain curious and collaborative
- Work with district leaders to forge a plan forward
- Lean on the learning of others

49

Thank You!

patrickmulick@gmail.com
pmulick@auburn.wednet.edu

Demonstration
Site Webinars



NPR Story

