

# CEA Disciplinary Survey Summary

## Summary

The general trend of the responses is that teachers do not feel the current methodology for discipline is effective or equitable and that the teachers generally do not feel supported by administration.

Administrators generally appear to inappropriately handle disciplinary actions with respect to COMAR regulations and the negotiated agreement roughly half of the time. It is our position that this is likely a contributing factor in our members not feeling supported in their effort to maintain classroom control.

The overarching struggle, based on the several hundred comments that were offered in various questions and at the end of the survey, is that the difficulties that teachers face is the most acute for their most disruptive students. There appears to be a small number of extremely disruptive students that are impacting the quality of education for all their classmates. Teachers do not feel they have the appropriate tools or support to deal with these students, which is compounded by regularly being pressured by administrators to either not complete referral paperwork or to underreport incidents.

## Methods

The survey was conducted by email to members personal and work emails. Measures were taken to prevent responses being replicated between multiple email addresses, with only one recorded duplication.

Requests for survey responses were requested at four different times over the course of the two-week period. Requests and reminders were targeted based on email open rates and the time/day that they were sent in order to maximize the response rate.

## Respondent Demographics

Classroom Teachers: 89.3%  
Non-classroom teachers: 10.63%  
Elementary Teachers: 52.54%  
Middle Schools 21.83%  
High School: 25.63%

There was a total of 402 respondents. The demographic information is roughly representative of the overall proportions of members of the bargaining unit.

## Responses

**Question 3: 87.53% of respondents feel that the “student discipline system in [their] school is [not] effective.”** This broke out evenly among all five demographics of respondents.

**Question 4: 60.93% of respondents do not feel supported by their administrators in the area of student discipline, while 39.07% of respondents do feel supported by their administrators.**

These responses, in addition to the comments, indicate to CEA that while a contributing factor may be that some or many administrators are not effective in overseeing student disciplinary measures. There are numerous comments that indicate that teachers feel pressured not to write referrals or, when they do, the referral paperwork is either ignored or not properly handled.

What is likely a prominent contributing factor is that administrators are not empowered or enabled to offer the types of supports that teachers need to adequately address disciplinary.

There was a total of 240 comments offered. Notable comments include:

“Yes and no.... I feel that admin has their hands tied when it comes to discipline and they may not be supported at the BOE. They are bound by certain laws that make it difficult to properly give consequences to students for behaviors. Time and time again the problem students are back in the classroom. CCPS needs a proper Alternative Program so that administrators have options. THERE ARE NO OPTIONS!! Other counties have proper Alternative Programs. Why can't CCPS?” -- *High School Non-Classroom Teacher*

“Administrators often do not react in a way that shows the students that their inappropriate behavior will not be accepted. By the time I write up behavior, I have tried multiple methods to redirect the student and need full support and outrage from administrators so the behavior will not happen again.” --*Middle School Classroom Teacher*

“When there are chronic discipline problems, admin does little to address student behavior. Our school counselor doesn't know our frequent flyers and does nothing to be proactive. Students who interfere with others' learning are allowed to continue to be classroom disruptions. When a teacher does send for an administrator, the child ends up right back in the classroom within 5 minutes. Teachers basically try to address all concerns within the classroom because little to no help is provided. I have seen our principal victim shame and not contact parents of aggressive students (but call the victims parents to make sure they don't cause a fuss) - it's all about looking good on paper instead of standing up for what's right.” -- *Elementary Classroom Teacher*

**Question 5: 79.74% of respondents do not think that disciplinary measures are consistently applied to all students.**

There is a prevailing sentiment among many responses that either children that are highly functioning are given far too much of a “free pass” on some of the most severe disciplinary infractions. This is similarly the case for students that are repeat offenders. After a certain point, many teachers feel as though they get a pass because there is no more escalation that can take place. Many teachers feel that students with BIPs are not appropriately disciplined to make it appear that they are “making progress” when in fact they are not.

It is also very common that students who are sent to the office return to classrooms with rewards, whether it is a piece of candy or the remediation was a “fun” activity to do. This creates the perception among staff that their students are being rewarded for acting out.

Teachers absolutely feel that there is too much consideration given on a case by case basis to the point that disciplinary policy is ineffective. Too much consideration is given any number of contributing factors, which vary from student to student, resulting in little discipline if any discipline being carried out regularly. This undercuts teachers' ability to control the classroom, as they feel students have learned how to "game the system".

There were 252 comments in response to this question. Notable comments that capture prevailing sentiment include:

"Often exceptions are made for disruptive students at the expense of compliant students." --  
*Elementary Non-Classroom Teacher*

"High flier discipline problems tend to get more chances under the idea of mentoring - equity is not equality but it's also not consistent." --*Middle School Classroom Teacher*

"Repeat offenders keep getting second, third, 45th chances. The students talk and have learned that they can get away with just about anything. There was a fight in our school 2 weeks ago. Both students received 1 day of ISI. 1 DAY!! That does not fix nor deter the behavior. We used to give 1 day of ISI for a cell phone violation. We do nothing for cell phones anymore." --*High School Classroom Teacher*

**Question 6: 69.53% of respondents have written a referral this school year.**

Regarding the number of referrals written, the following averages apply:

Mean: 5.03

Median: 3

Mode: 1

101 respondents have written 5 or more referrals this year, which is roughly 38% of individuals who have written referrals.

**Question 7: 5.51% of respondents (21 people) do not know if the appropriate forms for referrals exist in their building.**

**Question 8: 43.97% of respondents who have written a referral (124 people) did not receive a response from their administrator per COMAR regulations.**

Regarding the number of referrals improperly processed, the following averages apply:

Mean: 2.87

Median: 2

Mode: 1

39 respondents have had 3 or more referrals go without a response this year, which is roughly 34% of individuals who have not had referrals returned to them.

**Question 9: 51.56% of respondents who have had a student removed from their room this year have had that student returned without a verbal or written consultation from the principal per Article 18 of the negotiated agreement (149 people).**

Regarding the frequency of discipline improperly handled, the following averages apply for instances occurring this school year:

Mean: 4.88

Median: 3

Mode: 2 / 3

44 respondents have had 5 or more incidents of students being returned to their class without consultation which is roughly 34% of individuals.

**Question 10: 17.16% of respondents have been assaulted by a student this school year.**

**Question 11: On a scale of 1 to 5, respondents rate student discipline at a roughly 2.5 in terms of how it supports their work.**