



WHY DOES THE PAT CONTRACT REQUIRE A MANDATORY MINIMUM ON STUDENT DISCIPLINE?

October 26, 2022

Dear PPS families and students,

We believe in the brilliance of every student. As educators that nurture that brilliance, we know students may also struggle. On rare occasions, a student may escalate to a point where a disciplinary response is warranted and necessary for the safety of teachers, staff, and students. We will always preserve safe and positive learning environments for teachers and students.

We also recognize our students are developing people. They are refining physical and social skills, processing new information, and synthesizing the world around them. Their bodies and brains are changing. We meet students where they are by offering circumstantially and developmentally appropriate support to learn, grow, and achieve.

Those supports include discipline policies anchored to the root of the term “discipline:” **to instruct, train, and educate**. We’ve worked with our educators, staff, school leaders, parents, and students to create evidence-based and trauma-informed directives aimed at building relational trust and repairing harm. We want teachers and students to feel safe and supported.

Mandatory minimum punishments conflict with these goals.

We ask the Portland Association of Teachers to strike mandatory minimum punishments from their union contract. **These mandates leave no room for discretion or context and conflict significantly with our shared restorative justice values.** And when you see how overrepresented Black, Latino, Native, and other Students of Color, or SPED students are in [our discipline and behavior reporting](#), you can see how these mandates can divert a PPS student down a road they cannot escape.

To reiterate: we have strong [discipline policies and procedures](#) drafted with input from our educators. These are logical consequences we can *all* feel good about. Mandatory minimum punishments are not.

We look forward to making these arguments in the coming months as we renegotiate the contract between PPS and the Association. You can learn more about this proposal [here](#).

Sincerely,

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