

Court Assisted Resolution to Expulsions and Suspensions (CARES)

Evansville Vanderburgh School Corporation is Making it Happen!



WE ARE Evansville Vanderburgh School Corporation (EVSC). We are the 3rd largest urban district in Indiana with 36 schools and 22,799 students. 7 schools have kindergarten classrooms.

OUR STUDENTS & FAMILIES are 70% white, 13.9% black, 9.6% multi-racial and 1.4% Asian. 58% of our students receive free & reduced lunch.

OUR TEACHER in the C.A.R.E.S program is a licensed special education teacher. She has training in culturally responsive PBIS, MindUP, restorative practices, and trauma informed care to support the social-emotional needs of students attending the program. She is provided support by the director of mathematics to utilize curriculum maps and district math curriculum with fidelity.

OUR PROMISING PRACTICE is an alternative to suspension program for students in grades 4-8. The program is a collaboration with the juvenile court and is intended to prevent further suspensions by providing positive interventions. Students are placed at CARES for 1-2 days. While there, the teacher provides daily math instruction, classroom assignments are completed for grades and MindUP curriculum is utilized so students have an opportunity to learn about their brain and practice focused attention. Each student meets with a behavior specialist who utilizes restorative practices, develops a function based behavior plan to prevent the behaviors from re-occurring, and works with families, guidance counselors, social workers, juvenile court judge, and community agencies to ensure supports are in place when needed. During the 15-16 school year, middle schools have experienced a 46% reduction in out of school suspensions.

OUR STEPS include staffing with a licensed special education teacher, behavior specialist, and court representative. All schools agree to assign students to CARES rather than an out of school suspension. Schools agree to utilize restorative practices upon the students return, implement the function based plan, and work with families and community agencies to wrap supports. All interventions in the plan align with district PBIS practices. A district behavior specialist is available to schools that need additional support for a student. District administration and the juvenile court provide oversight. Ongoing professional development is provided to schools to improve the fidelity of PBIS and restorative practices.

IN OUR OWN WORDS Middle school AP: "Having CARES as an option changes the entire conversation with the student and family. Rather than talking about poor choices and consequences, the conversation is focused on what we can do to prevent it from happening again, and we have the CARES program to provide tools for improvement."

Teacher: "It is great that you work so hard to keep them on track when they are gone from school."

Student: "I don't like the choices I make sometimes but I like having a quiet place to catch up on my work and talk to someone about what is going on."

Parent: "I am glad my son just does not come home like it's free time."

Student: "I think the CARES program is good and I really liked learning about my brain and getting focused breathing breaks."

For more information about our school or corporation, email: susan.phelps@evsc.k12.in.us
or visit our website: www.evscschools.com