



Transforming Behavior: Jonesboro Math & Science Magnet Elementary Achieved a 53% Drop in Major Referrals in One Year

Case Study

Improved Behavioral Data

Jonesboro Math & Science Magnet Elementary, Jonesboro, Arkansas

Major Office Referrals Down from October 2024-25
53%



Overall Referrals Down from October 2024-25
17.5%



More incidents are now proactively managed at the classroom level, indicating that RCD's "Give 'Em Five" process is empowering teachers and reducing disruptions.

Executive Summary

Jonesboro Math & Science Magnet Elementary, a STEM-focused school, faced challenges with disruptive student behavior and inconsistent discipline. By implementing Responsibility-Centered Discipline™ (RCD™), the school shifted from a punitive model to one focused on teaching responsibility and building relationships. This new framework led to a 53% reduction in major office referrals and a 17.5% decrease in overall referrals in just one year.

Introduction

Jonesboro Math & Science Magnet Elementary is a public STEM school within the Jonesboro Public School District in Arkansas. Serving approximately 460 students in grades 1-6, its mission is to guarantee high levels of learning for every student, every day. As a 100% free and reduced lunch campus, the school supports a diverse student population with a strong emphasis on both academic achievement and character development.

Principal Marcus Jones leads his talented team of educators in creating a positive, structured and engaging learning environment by focusing on instructional leadership, supporting teacher growth and building systems that promote consistency, accountability and student success.

Before adopting the Responsibility-Centered Discipline approach, the school struggled with student behaviors that frequently disrupted classroom instruction and negatively impacted teacher morale.

The Problem

Before adopting the Responsibility-Centered Discipline approach, the school struggled with student behaviors that frequently disrupted classroom instruction and negatively impacted teacher morale. The staff found themselves constantly reacting to discipline issues rather than proactively teaching the skills students needed to manage their own behavior.

This reactive approach created a significant challenge: inconsistency. Without a unified, schoolwide framework, responses to student behavior varied from classroom to classroom, leading to confusion among students and frustration among teachers. It became clear that the existing discipline model, which centered on control, was ineffective. The school's leadership recognized the urgent need for a new approach—one that prioritized building relationships and fostering student responsibility.

The Solution

The school's leadership team began researching various behavioral frameworks, seeking a solution that would create lasting change. Responsibility-Centered Discipline (RCD) immediately stood out. After attending a professional learning session with RCD creator Larry Thompson, the team was convinced it was the right fit.

"RCD aligned perfectly with our belief that lasting behavior change happens through teaching, not punishment," shared Principal Marcus Jones. "It emphasizes building relationships, maintaining student dignity and holding students accountable in meaningful ways. Unlike other programs, RCD didn't just offer strategies, it provided a mindset shift that empowered both adults and students."

The Responsibility-Centered Discipline framework includes:

- **Developing Strong Relationships:** Fostering positive connections between staff and students.
- **Supporting Student Dignity:** Ensuring every student feels respected, even when being held accountable.
- **Creating a Culture of Accountability:** Helping students understand the impact of their choices and learn from their mistakes.

The decision to implement RCD was a collective one, supported by the leadership team and staff who were eager for a consistent, schoolwide approach. They integrated RCD with their existing PBIS framework to create a cohesive system that empowers both educators and students. After two years of implementation, RCD has fundamentally transformed the school's culture and its approach to student behavior.

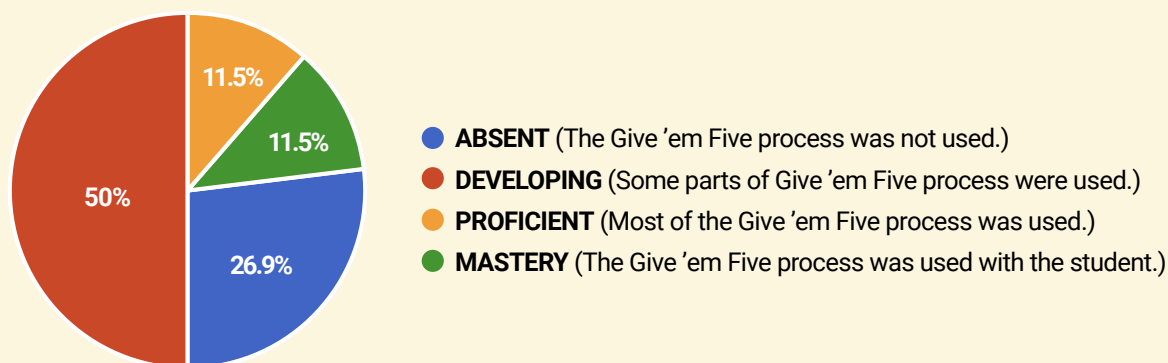
Result

The shift to Responsibility-Centered Discipline has yielded significant, measurable improvements in school culture and student behavior at Jonesboro Math & Science Magnet Elementary.

Staff members now feel more confident and supported in managing challenging behaviors. Conversations have moved from frustration to reflection, with teachers guiding students to take ownership of their choices. This proactive approach has strengthened relationships and fostered a more positive learning environment. Students are demonstrating greater self-regulation and a clearer understanding of cause and effect.

The impact is apparent in the school's discipline data:

- In one year, **major office referrals decreased by an astounding 53%** (from 72 in October 2024 to 48 in October 2025).
- **Overall referrals declined by 17.5%** in the same period.
- More incidents are now proactively managed at the classroom level, indicating that RCD's "Give 'Em Five" process is empowering teachers and reducing disruptions.
- The level of RCD implementation is measured by tracking office referrals, with nearly 25% of the staff using the Give 'Em Five process at a Mastery or Proficient level.

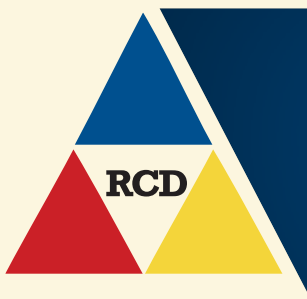


These metrics provide clear evidence that RCD is helping Jonesboro build a sustainable culture of responsibility, respect and academic success.

Conclusion

By transitioning from a traditional, punitive discipline model to the relationship-focused framework of Responsibility-Centered Discipline, Jonesboro Math & Science Magnet Elementary has successfully created a more positive and effective learning environment. The dramatic reduction in office referrals and the shift toward proactive, classroom-based problem-solving demonstrate the profound impact of teaching responsibility over simply reacting to behavior.

This partnership has equipped teachers with the tools and confidence to manage their classrooms effectively and has empowered students to develop crucial self-regulation skills. The school's success serves as a powerful testament to the value of a consistent, respectful approach to student discipline. As Jonesboro continues to embed RCD into its culture, it reinforces its commitment to helping every student achieve high levels of learning, both academically and personally.



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Discipline to your School or District**

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