**Transcript – responding to challenging behaviour**

Schools can do lots of things besides suspending students.

When kids break those major rules, yes, there should be a consequence. That's how our society works, and we want to teach them that there will be consequences. And as they get older, the consequences become much more steep. But also give that opportunity to look at it as this is another learning error.

So, discipline comes from the word discipline, which means to teach. So, if you have interaction with a student, like let's say in the hallway, they're pushing and shoving each other. And you ask them, was that being safe or unsafe or respectful or disrespectful based on the schools' expectations? No, it wasn't. And then you can say, well, can you show me what safe looks like? They drop their hands and they're quiet and they look respectful. They've practised it with you. You've had a disciplinary interaction with them, by definition, because you've retaught the behaviour. So, the more teachers can get equipped to understand what discipline means and to be able to have those short, quick disciplinary interactions, the less likely you're going to need to have

those larger scale things to react to the behaviour as it escalates.

For understanding what to do instead of suspending students. Certainly, we understand that suspending is decreasing the access to effective instruction, so it's really important to keep kids in school accessing instruction. What we do is if we invest in positive behaviour for learning, we can set the stage, the foundation for students to be effective and to have a welcoming, nurturing environment that is safe and predictable. Once we have that, we will also want to support teachers with alternative to suspensions, meaning that they need effective practices, they need academic and

behaviour to make sure that they are supporting students.

But what we know really clearly is that suspension gives us no probability for a change in behaviour. So, removing a kid from the school stops them from having the problem right now. But when they come back, that suspension doesn't provide any probability for them doing something different. So

I think we need to keep an instructional mindset here. When there's an error, what can we do to teach, to create an environment, to set up a set of interventions and systems that make it less likely they'd have that problem in the future.? So, if you keep that mindset, then suspension becomes a last resort because it doesn't give you any of those probabilities. It really comes back to an instructional language and an instructional way of thinking about this. And again, I would put it back into this academic analogy. If the kid keeps getting the math problem wrong, you don't just say you can't be in math anymore, you figure out a better way to do it.

The thing I would love schools to be able to do, and I know they get overwhelmed with problem behaviour and I think it's important for schools to remember students are engaging in problem behaviour for a reason. And until we start answering and figuring out why they're engaging in that problem behaviour, it's going to continue. And so, if we continue using the same interventions such as suspension over and over for the same type of behaviour, at some point we have to say that's not working and what can we do differently.