

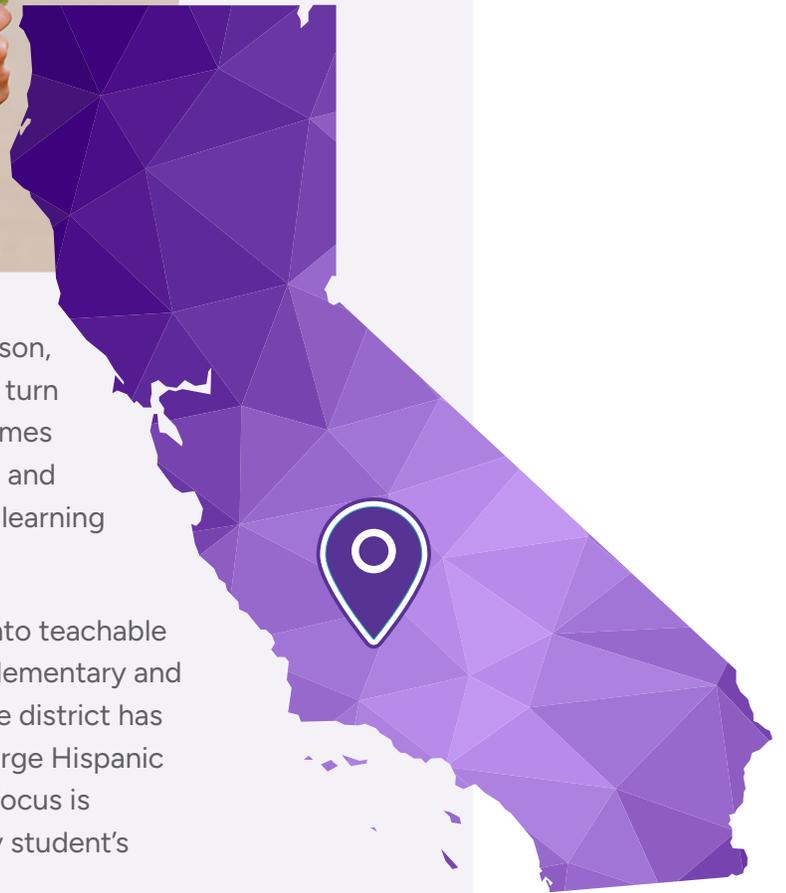


Navigate**360**

The Leader in Holistic Safety

# Fairfax School District Puts the Right Tools Into the Right Hands & Achieves a 35% Drop in Suspensions





Learning from mistakes is an important life lesson, but not every student gets the opportunity to turn mistakes into lessons. Instead, schools sometimes resort to reactive punishments like detentions and suspensions, which keep kids away from their learning environment.

Fairfax School District aims to turn mistakes into teachable moments. Comprising four schools — three elementary and one junior high — in Bakersfield, California, the district has a diverse student population that includes a large Hispanic community and students with disabilities. Its focus is on providing strong programs that meet every student's academic and social-emotional needs.

Fairfax School District wants to ensure a student's behavioral mistake doesn't snowball into much larger mistakes down the road. To do that, they rely on Navigate360.

# Starting From Social-Emotional Zero



Chief Administrator of Student Services Moishe Garde supports the people who support students in Fairfax District schools. That support includes finding the right solutions for staff, so they can get students the help they need. Doing so became more difficult in the aftermath of the pandemic, when school staff noticed a marked change in student behavior.

**“We felt like we were starting from zero when it came to day-to-day expectations and behaviors,” Garde said.** They also began seeing troubling behavior at younger ages than before. The district had an experienced team of teachers, administrators, counselors, and psychologists, but even they were overwhelmed.

There were notable increases in behavior referrals and suspensions compared to before the pandemic. In the 2022–2023 school year, suspensions rose to 6% of all students. Among the students with disabilities, 8.6% experienced a suspension that year. Every suspension meant time away from school, which didn’t help students.

The district used a robust social-emotional learning (SEL) curriculum, but staff couldn’t tailor their existing SEL tools to suit individual students’ needs. For an eighth grader reading below grade level, for example, social skills lessons were frustrating, which made problems worse.



Watch to see how Fairfax created a more connected school culture by meeting students where they are and giving educators the tools to truly make a difference.

# A Customizable Option for Staff & Students

Fairfax School District's goal was to decrease behavior referrals and suspensions while improving the overall climate at district schools. They didn't want a "cookie-cutter program." They needed a flexible solution that received frequent updates and plenty of customization options for individual students.

"We wanted to make sure kiddos weren't missing school when they just didn't have all the pieces to be successful," Garde said.

Garde encountered the [Navigate360 Compass Curriculum for Students, Staff, & Families](#) at a local training event. There, he spoke with Navigate360 Regional VP Ryan Sladek about the school district's recent challenges. Sladek recommended [Behavior Intervention](#), part of the Compass Curriculum library.

Garde assembled a team of school admins, counselors, psychologists, and behavior specialists to assess the curriculum. After trialing the platform, the team concluded it was exactly what they needed. Not only did it integrate with their positive behavior interventions and supports (PBIS) and multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS) frameworks, but the curriculum was versatile and covered a wide range of behaviors.

Most importantly, the curriculum was customizable to a student's instructional level and featured lessons geared toward specific interests, like sports, music, or friend groups. For a student who loves playing basketball, asking them, "What would happen if you behaved this way on court?" meaningfully contextualizes the problem.

"It's about learning the impact of their actions and giving the student tools to find alternative ways to respond," Garde said. "We meet students where they are — not just in the classroom, but through their passions. That connection is what makes Behavior Intervention truly effective."

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# Implementing Proactive & Reactive Behavioral Support

Today, Behavior Intervention lessons are part of the district's Tier 1 SEL curriculum and Tier 2 supports for all students. For students with disabilities, schools integrate lessons into classroom learning as well as individualized education plans.

School counselors, behavior aids, and specialists also use Behavior Intervention as part of individual counseling. The school team works with the student's family to create a plan, and the student sets goals that align with the curriculum. The school team then selects appropriate lessons customized to the student. After taking the lesson, the student reflects on ways to avoid the problematic behavior.

Before, an eighth grader reading below grade level would've found social skills lessons frustrating. Now, the school can modify the lesson plan to discuss the material before the student answers the final questions, helping them feel more confident completing the exercise.



**“Behavior Intervention has become a cornerstone of our Tier 2 supports. It gives our team the tools to proactively intervene and help students succeed before behaviors escalate,”**  
Garde said.

# A Positive Environment With Fewer Suspensions

Compass Curriculum Behavior Intervention has enabled Fairfax School District to reach their goals by targeting problem behaviors.

“We now have a resource that we can pinpoint certain behaviors, address them at the student’s level, and make it personal to the kiddo,” Garde said.

It’s had a significant impact on the district, starting with decreases in behavior referrals and suspensions. Over two academic years, suspensions among all district students dropped by 35%. Among students with disabilities, by around 31%.

For one student, individualized learning might help them learn that they need



to walk away from certain situations. For another, it might mean learning to wait a minute before reacting. In all cases, students benefit from adults who understand their struggles and serve as a support network.

The improvement in the school atmosphere is palpable. More than 90% of students surveyed agree an adult at school looks out for them.

“Since implementing Navigate360 Behavior Intervention, we’ve seen a drop in suspensions – but more importantly, we’ve seen a shift in how students respond to support. They’re being heard, not just disciplined.” Garde said.

“We’ve seen a significant increase in school connectedness. Having kiddos who want to be at school every day and feel there are positive adults they can reach out to is the most important thing”

# Staying Ahead of Classroom Challenges

In addition to the flexible options within Behavior Intervention, the district gained a partner who's familiar with the dynamic situations in the modern classroom. Whatever the latest challenge, Navigate360 provides the district with a plan, either from existing lessons or creating new lessons entirely.

"The people at Navigate360 are very responsive to the changing challenges that come up," Garde said.

The program is so effective that Garde is confident they could demonstrate their approach to other districts and help them implement more proactive behavioral supports.

"What I love about Navigate360 is that we are able to reach out to our surrounding districts to train up and build capacity," Garde said. "That has been a great opportunity."



**"Navigate360 has been a big piece of the puzzle for our district's improvements. Nothing is bigger than our people, but giving those people the right tools is powerful."**

Small school districts like Fairfax are often limited in opportunities and funding. That makes the relationship with Navigate360 all the more valuable. Navigate360 Behavior Intervention curriculum has helped bring students and staff together in Fairfax School District, addressing behavioral issues positively instead of punitively.

"Navigate360 has been a big piece of the puzzle for our district's improvements," Garde said. "Nothing is bigger than our people, but giving those people the right tools is powerful."



# A Call to Action: Empower Your Students with Compass

Fairfax School District's story illustrates how the right tools and curriculum can reshape school climate, even in the face of post-pandemic behavioral challenges. With Navigate360 Compass Curriculum, Fairfax achieved a 35% drop in suspensions and built a more connected, supportive learning environment. For leaders ready to take action, Compass Curriculum provides:

- Evidence-based tools that build accountability and empathy
- Restorative practices tailored to individual student needs and interests
- Comprehensive support for educators, aligned with PBIS and MTSS frameworks

Don't wait to transform your school climate. Equip your students and staff with the same tools that help Fairfax School District succeed.



Contact Navigate360 today to schedule a demo and see how Compass Curriculum can help your school reach new heights.

