

# A System of Alternative Programming that Works

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**Background**

# Muncie Community Schools

- An Urban district with significant discipline and climate issues
- Within six months of having local juvenile justice authorities asking for OCR intervention
- 6500 students; poverty rate around 75%
- Approximately 20% Black, 10% mixed race; <5% Hispanic
- Significant police presence due to a mishandled HS incident

# Local Challenges

- Decreasing enrollment but increasing discipline issues
- Increasing student poverty rates
- 47% of children in a single parent household
- Significant problems interacting with juvenile justice system; including the implementation of JDAI
- Increasing numbers of pediatric psychiatric admissions in local hospital
- Poor classroom management across the district
- Over identified number of students in self-contained special education classrooms
- Lack of alternative options for children
- Poor relationships with potential community partners

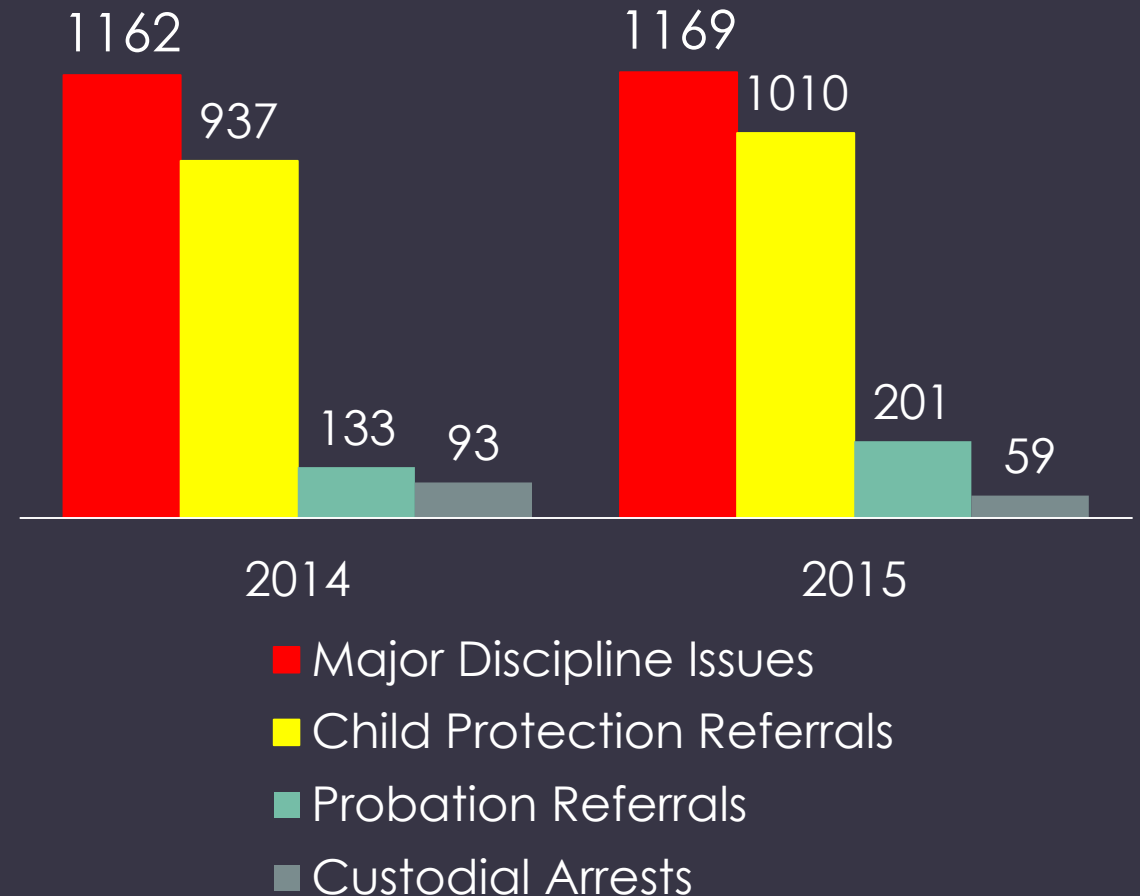
# Local Mental Health Rankings

- Estimated population of 70,085 in 2018.
- Eighty-three percent of the population was white with 10% African-American
- The county is ranked on overall health outcomes as 85th out of Indiana's 92 counties.
- In quality of life, the county is ranked 88th out of 92 counties.
- This includes the measure that on average, the county has 4.5 “poor mental health days” out of the last 30 days. This is about the Indiana average of 4.3 days. Fourteen percent of residents experience “frequent mental distress” compared to 13% across Indiana on the whole and only 10% for top performing US counties.



# Need for Intervention

- Southside Middle School is “out of control”
- Discipline issues across the district had been rising for years although enrollment was dropping



# Initial Steps



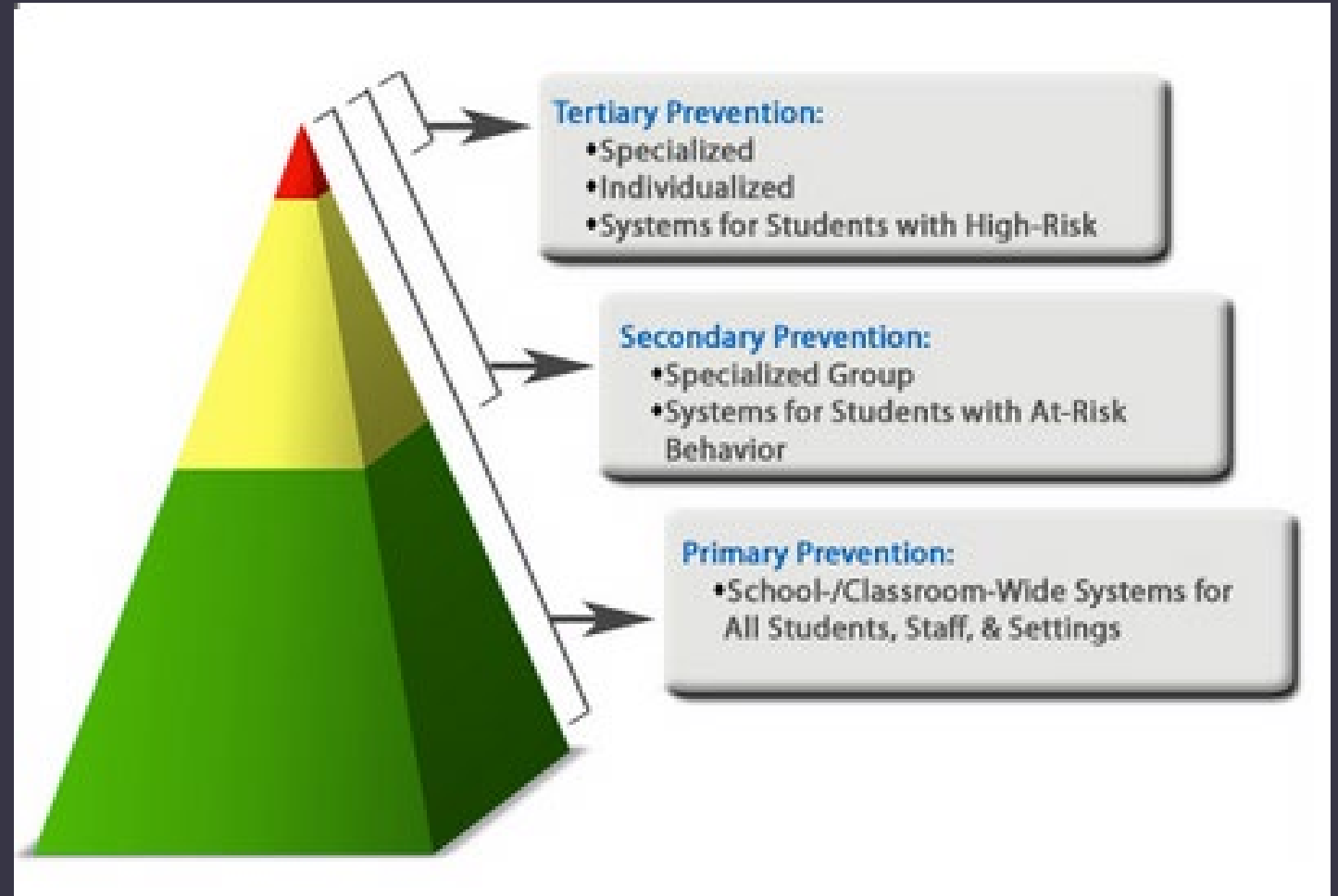
# Positive Behavior Intervention & Supports (PBIS)

- Desire to implement PBIS from two elementary schools.
- The need to immediately address Middle School behavior brought the need to bring PBIS into middle school
- As middle school is too late to begin making changes, allowed PBIS expansion to all schools, all but two principals took advantage of the opportunity
- Slow implementation to give all staff the opportunity to become invested



# Summary of PBIS

- PBIS – POSITIVE BEHAVIOR INTERVENTIONS AND SUPPORTS
  - TRIES TO TEACH AND REINFORCE POSITIVE BEHAVIORS INSTEAD OF ONLY PUNISHING NEGATIVE BEHAVIOR
  - SIMILAR IN CONCEPT TO RESPONSE TO INTERVENTION (RTI)
  - PBIS SITE & EQUITY INFORMATION
    - [HTTPS://WWW.PBIS.ORG/](https://www.pbis.org/)
    - [HTTPS://WWW.PBIS.ORG/SCHOOL/EQUIT Y-PBIS](https://www.pbis.org/school/equity-pbis)
  - CARL BOYD'S CONCEPT:
    - "NOBODY RISES TO LOW EXPECTATIONS"



# Southside Middle School

- Established the SWAGGER Recovery Program
- Brought PBIS into the building



# Background at SMS

During the 2014-2015 School Year, the situation at Southside Middle School was “less than desirable.” The administration at that time switched out several administrators in an attempt to address what had been an ongoing set of problems at Southside and previously, at Wilson Middle School relating to both academic achievement and student body discipline. Addressing the discipline issues at Southside Middle School was one of the key items that I was asked to address upon my arrival at MCS.

# SWAGGER Recovery

- Staff
  - Two teachers
  - One teaching assistant
  - Added a behavior family navigator (mental health worker)
- 27 Students
  - 15 8<sup>th</sup> Graders
  - 12 7<sup>th</sup> Graders



# SWAGGER Recovery Structure

- Two self-contained classrooms
- Students move between two teachers and the teacher assistant
- Eat lunch prior to general lunches
- Ability to earn access to regular courses



# Immediate Impact

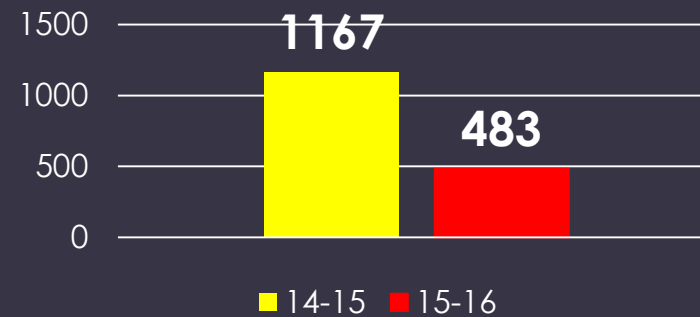
The principal and her staff put together a number of program changes in order to address the climate at Southside. The S.W.A.G.G.E.R. Recovery program being one of the key components. This alternative program was focused on helping students with the most severe behavior problems become successful both academically and behaviorally. Within the first weeks of school, SMS faculty stopped me in the hall to tell me how much the climate of SMS had improved.



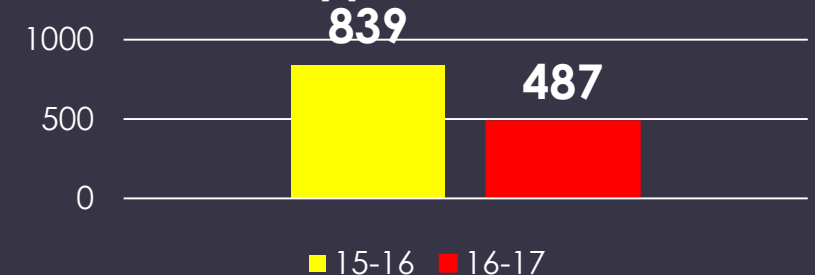
# SWAGGER Data

- Previous year's referrals
  - Range from 7 to 73
- First year of implementation
  - Range from 0 to 35
  - Reductions from -100% to +8%
- Overall reduction of 41.4% reduction
- Average individual reduction 54%

Discipline Incidents – All Types YR 1



Discipline Incidents – All Types YR 2





# STAR Data

## Reading Scores

- 15 of 21 student improved
  - 6 students didn't test
  - 6 students saw no growth
- Largest gain 3.0 years of growth
- Range -2.7 to +3.0

## Math Scores

- 15 of 21 student improved
  - 5 students didn't test
  - 7 students saw no growth
- Largest gain 4.2 years of growth
- Range -7.3 to +4.2

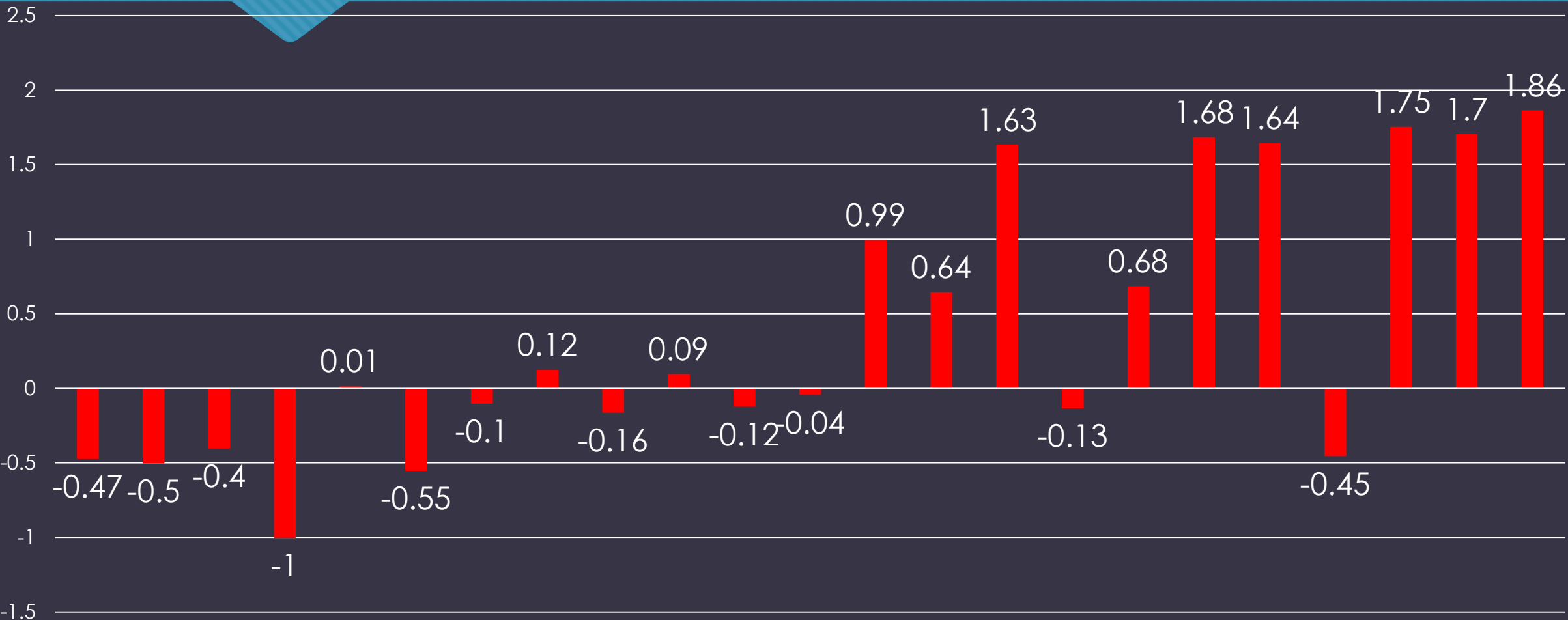
# GPA's

|       | 14-15 | 15-16 |
|-------|-------|-------|
| GPA's | 0.989 | 1.41  |
| Range |       |       |
| Low   | 0.35  | 0.17  |
| High  | 1.68  | 3.54  |

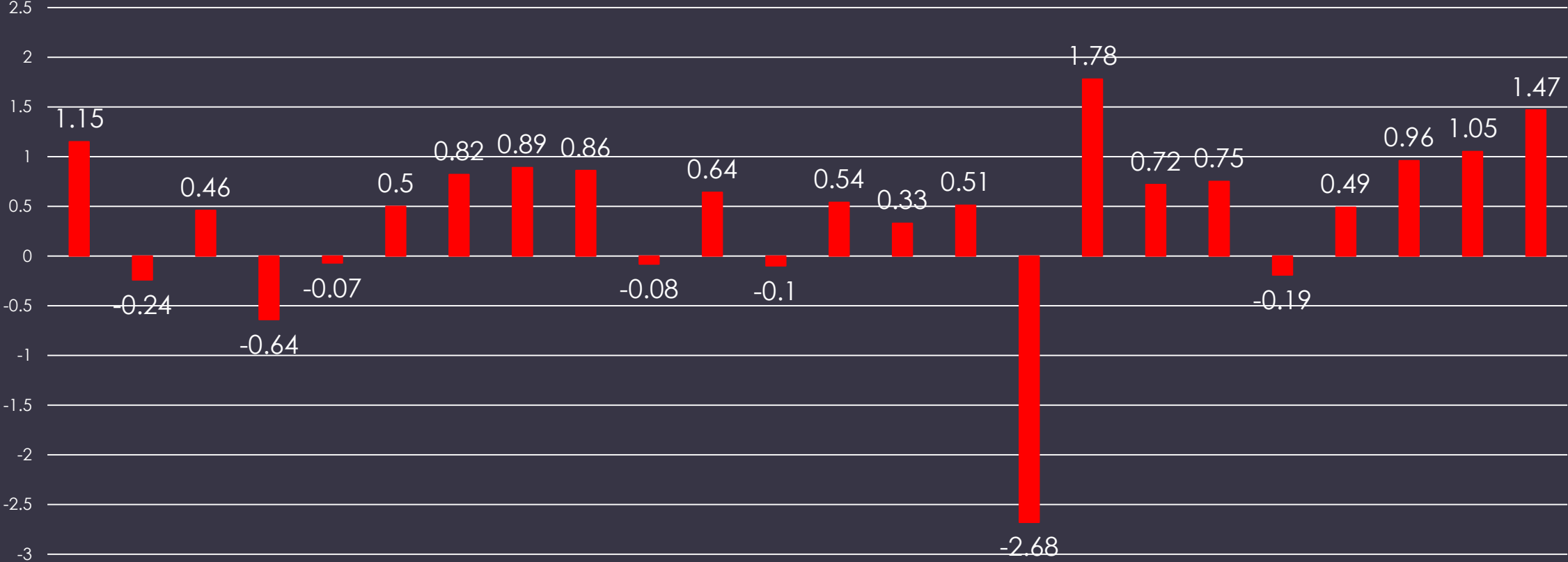
|       | 15-16 | 16-17 |
|-------|-------|-------|
| GPA's | 1.25  | 1.74  |
| Range |       |       |
| Low   | 0.29  | 0.29  |
| High  | 3.33  | 2.79  |

14 GPA's decreased; 7 improved; 6 removed from program

# Individual GPA Comparison YR 1



# Individual GPA Comparison YR 2



# ISTEP+ Data

|                         | Reading |     | Math |     |
|-------------------------|---------|-----|------|-----|
| 7 <sup>th</sup> Graders | 456     | 481 | 489  | 486 |
|                         |         |     |      |     |
| 8 <sup>th</sup> Graders | 443     | 454 | 450  | 471 |

# SWAGGER Recovery Tiers

- Tier 5- 80% check sheet completion for six consecutive weeks, no individual iPads, total student population isolation
- Tier 4- 85% check sheet completion for six consecutive weeks, no individual iPads, lunch back, classroom assignment/job is awarded
- Tier 3- 90% check sheet completion for six consecutive weeks, no individual iPads, earned rewards (music, games), lunch back and one class outside of S.W.A.G.G.E.R Recovery
- \*After completing a minimum of 18 weeks of S.W.A.G.G.E.R Recovery requirements, a B.I.P. (Behavior Intervention Plan) will be created on a per student basis and students will be re-introduced to normal daily activities on a probationary condition.
- Tier 2- 90% check sheet completion for six consecutive weeks, students will return to science and social studies classes as well as group lunch and breakfast times, individual iPad will be issued
- Tier 1- students will be placed on a full semester probationary period while they return to full normal daily activities/schedules/classes, individual iPad will be issued

# SWAGGER Recovery Schedule

- 7:40- Students report to tables outside auditorium with Mr. Strong
- 8:05- Students are accompanied to their lockers and to get breakfast (after announcements)
- 8:15- Students return to tables outside auditorium to eat breakfast and begin Success
- 8:40- Students begin the normal daily bell/class schedule
- 11:00- Students break for lunch outside auditorium and then report to Room 1062 with Mr. Strong for F.I.T. (Focused Instructional Time)
- 12:35-Students return to the normal bell/class schedule
- 2:15- Life Skills/F.I.T./Reward



# SWAGGER Recovery

## Student comments

One male student had the following to say at the end of the year:

*S.W.A.G.G.E.R. Recovery student during the 15-16 school year –  
“S.W.A.G.G.E.R. Recovery had a big impact on my education. I went from 63 referrals and 7 F’s to 11 referrals and made the A/B honor roll with a G.P.A. of 3.5. At first, I hated the decision strongly. It was hard to adapt to the process of how the program worked. I wasn’t the only one who disliked the classes, but as a result, it was a good decision. As of right now, I am in the general population, I don’t have all A’s, but I don’t have any D’s or F’s either.*”

# SWAGGER Recovery

## Student comments

Male, grade 8, S.W.A.G.G.E.R. Recovery student during the 15-16 school year :

*S.W.A.G.G.E.R. Recovery has impacted me by showing me how to be a man. As I got out of S.W.A.G.G.E.R. Recovery and I realized that Mr. Strong, Ms. Berry, and Mr. Craft have prepared me for the general population. Mr. Craft helped me a lot and pushed me to do more. Now, I'm a star player on the football team and I also have straight A's.*

# SWAGGER Recovery

## Student comments

Female, grade 7, Current S.W.A.G.G.E.R. Recovery student :

*I have improved this school year. The teachers have patience, we study, and we get our work done at school. They keep us motivated and the work they give us is pushing us. If you make good choices, you don't get referrals to the office. S.W.A.G.G.E.R. Recovery is helping me to become a better person.*

# SWAGGER Recovery

## Student comments

Female, grade 7, Current S.W.A.G.G.E.R. Recovery student :

*S.W.A.G.G.E.R. Recovery has helped me a lot! When I first came, I had a G.P.A. of 1.8, but now I have the best grades I have ever had. Mr. Craft is a very funny, serious guy that has helped me so much. Ms. Berry cares so much about me. She is my role model and I love being her student.*

# MACC Credit Recovery Program

- Allowed students to remotely, but they had to return to campus to take exams.
- Passing rate for courses increased from 51% to 86%



# Local Strategic Planning

- In July, 2015, the local district had no long term planning and had none for some time
- The strategic planning effort took the better part of a year
- Invited a range of community partners including health care providers, law enforcement, public library, university, etc.
- One of the goals was better holistic approach to student learning

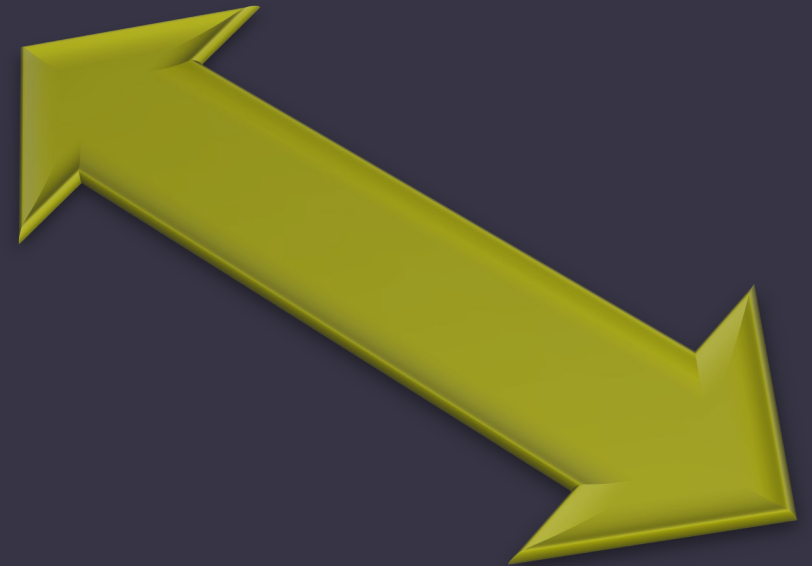
Meanwhile, worked with juvenile justice leadership to immediately change the way the school and law enforcement address student issues.

# Expansion of Alternative Options



# Expanded Alternative Programming @ HS

- Computer based instructional program
- Half-day instruction for students
- Ability to work from home or school
- One full time teacher + one full time assistant
- Significant time from behavior specialist
- All students were not assigned based upon discipline issues



# High School Data

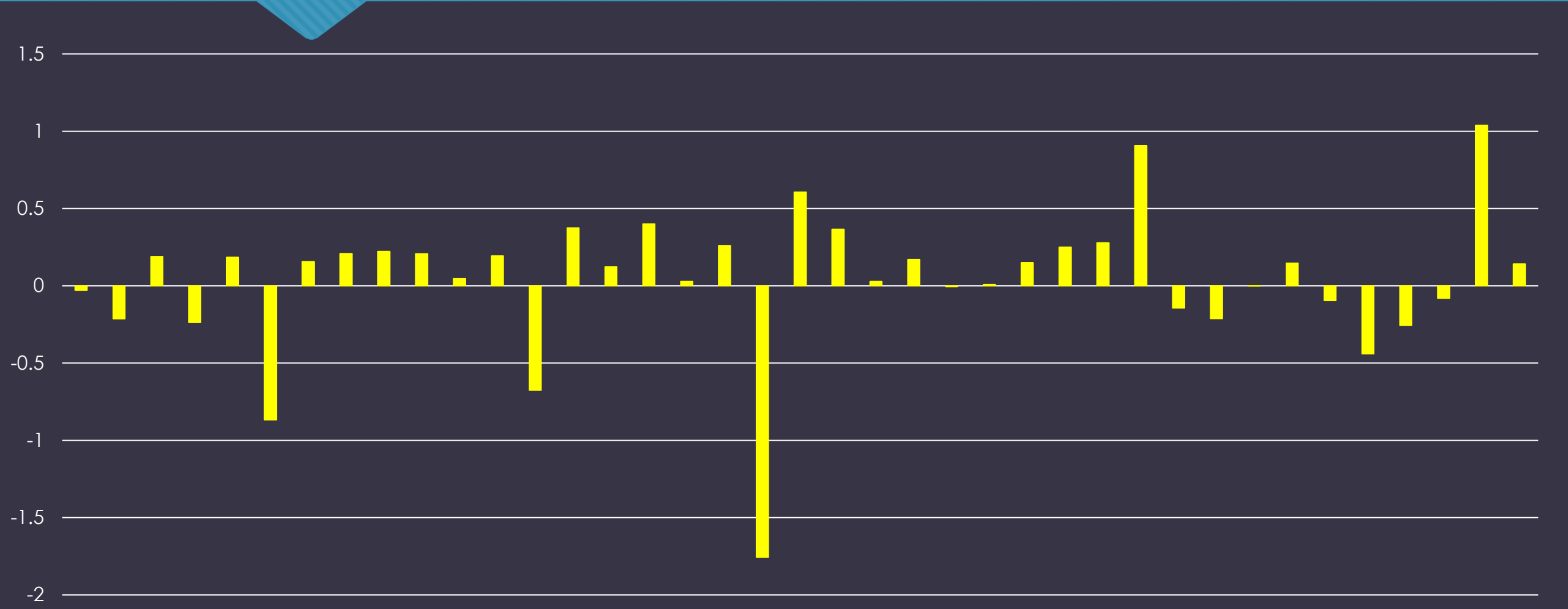
|                           | Total Discipline Incidents | Average | Range   |
|---------------------------|----------------------------|---------|---------|
| Semester Prior to Program | 468                        | 12      | 0 to 42 |
| First Semester in Program | 29                         | 0.74    | 0 to 4  |

# High School Data - Academic

|                           | GPA  | Median | Range        |
|---------------------------|------|--------|--------------|
| Semester Prior to Program | 1.13 | 1.167  | 0.1 to 2.76  |
| First Semester in Program | 1.17 | 1.029  | 0.13 to 2.35 |

**At least 12 students graduated in YR 1 through the Alt Program;  
199 credits earned; 39 student participated**

# Net Change to GPA



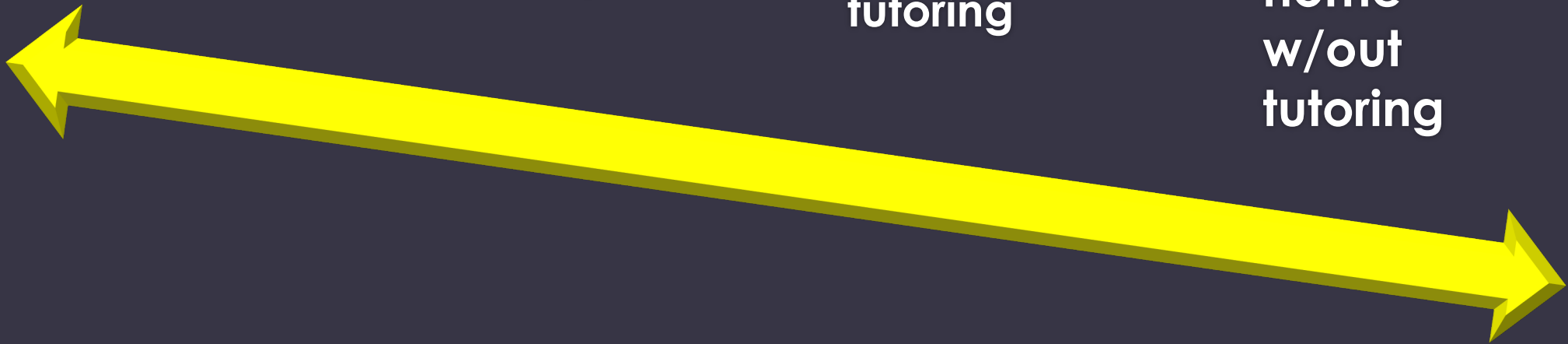
# Continuum of Services

Students  
report daily

Students  
report  
weekly

Work from  
home w/  
tutoring

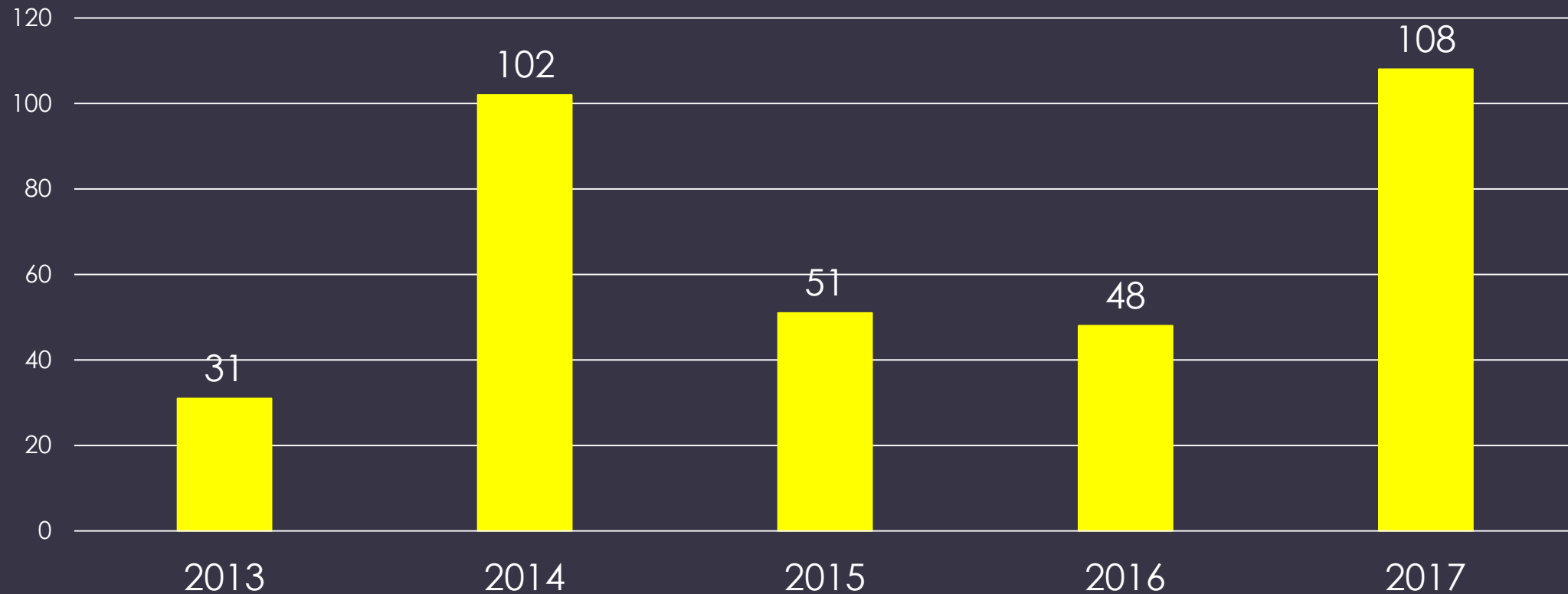
Work from  
home  
w/out  
tutoring



# Elementary Alternative Programming

- Initially the focus was on 3<sup>rd</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> Grade to try to address issue prior to moving students to middle school
- Changed the focus to working with entering kindergarteners who were without any socialization
- Least successful facet of the alternative programming

# Kindergarten Significant Discipline Issues



2016 – Significant Discipline incidents down in every grade PK-8  
2017 – Significant Discipline incidents down in every grade 5-12

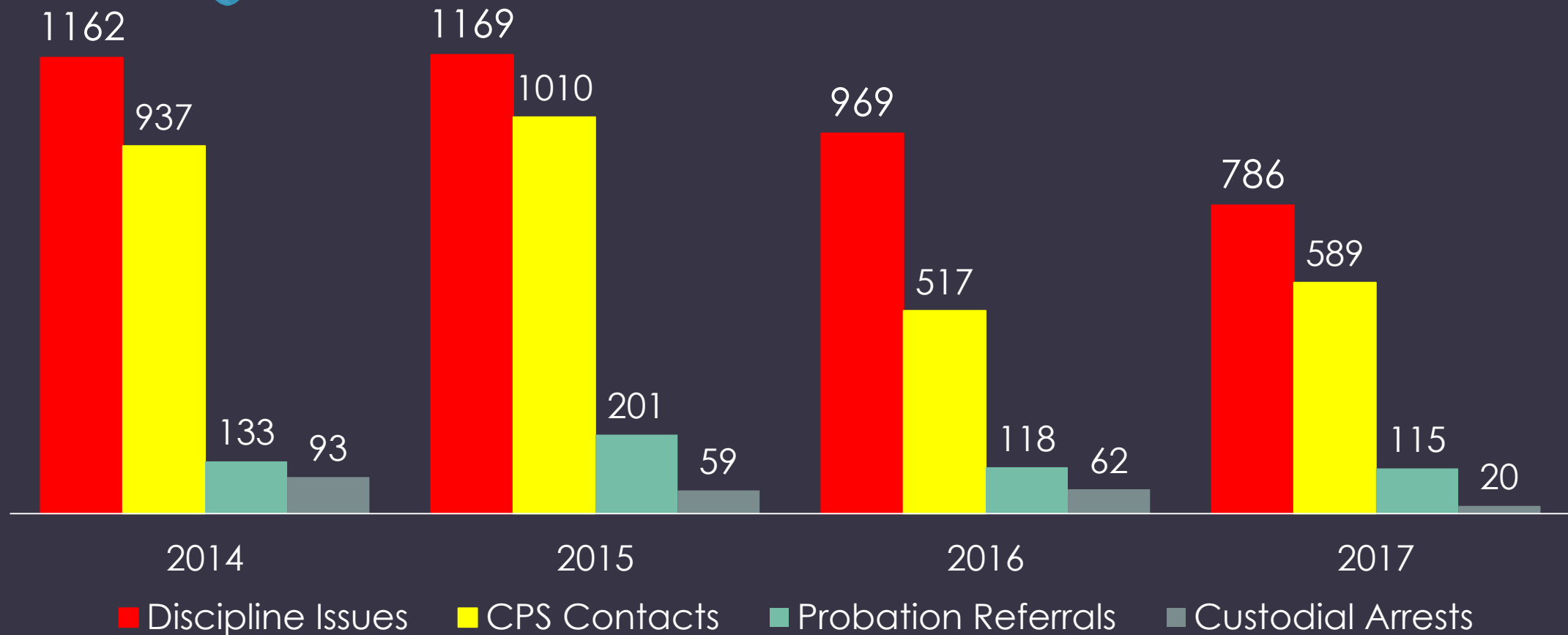


# Embedded Mental Health Staff

- District reached out to two mental health providers and local hospital
- Meridian Health immediately offered to assist by providing 4.5 FTE staff at the HS, one middle school, and four elementary schools
- A second (smaller) MHP provided 1 FTE
- Leadership team to meet monthly to coordinate services; moved to quarterly after 6 mo.
- Quickly expanded staffing



# Discipline Incidents



# Data

- 67% decrease in mental health related discipline incidents
- 62% reduction in all discipline incidents
- 67% reduction in middle school suspensions
- 34% reduction in high school suspensions
- 85% of students seen by embedded staff were already involved in mental health services
  
- 38% increase in pediatric psychiatric admissions at local hospital
- 200% increase in child abuse cases in county court
- Poverty rate increased to over 80%

**Wrap Up**

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# Discipline Data By Ethnicity

2014-2015 HS Referral Data

