

Restraint and Isolation

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Washington Office of Superintendent of
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

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Restraint:

Physical intervention or force used to control a student, including the use of a restraint device to ***restrict a student's freedom of movement***.

Isolation:

Restricting a student ***alone*** within a room or any other form of enclosure, from which ***the student may not leave***.

Restraint and Isolation are a prohibited practices.

"except* when the student's behaviors poses an imminent likelihood of serious harm to that student or another person."

*** There are no exceptions for students with IEPs or ERPs.**



2019-2020 vs. 2020-2021

Two years affected by the pandemic

2019-2020

- 25,415 incidences of R&I
- 3,825 students subject to R&I
- 54 days of remote learning
 - March 16th: state-wide school closure

2020-2021

- 7,316 incidences of R&I
- 1,309 students subject to R&I
- 0-180 days of remote learning
 - Fluctuation in mode of instructional delivery between districts



Who is being restrained and isolated?

- Elementary students (PK-5)
- Students with disabilities
- Low income students
- Male students
- Students who identify as Black/African American and students who identify as two or more races.

Dispelling Myths About R&I

Myth: Restraint and isolation keeps students who are out of control safe, as well as others.

Restraint and isolation can escalate a student's agitation. Physical restraint or isolation can cause students to act more aggressively, increasing the possibility for harm to themselves, teachers, and others. Restraint should only be used when all other attempts to address behavior have failed.



Dispelling Myths About R&I

Myth: Restraint and isolation are therapeutic interventions that can improve behavior

No evidence-based research has demonstrated restraints or isolation are therapeutically effective. However, research has demonstrated that restraint and isolation can be physically and psychologically harmful.



Dispelling Myths About R&I

Myth: There are no alternatives to restraint and isolation.

There are numerous alternatives to restraint and isolation, including positive behavioral interventions and supports and other de-escalation techniques.



Dispelling Myths About R&I

Myth: Property damage needs to be prevented.

No child's safety is as important as protecting property. Protection of property has lead to violent restraints in response to offenses as simple as a student breaking a pencil in an act of defiance.



Crisis Response Workgroup

During the 2022 legislative session, the legislature asked OSPI to convene a workgroup:

To identify trauma informed strategies, approaches, and curricula for supporting students in distress and with challenging behaviors that prioritize relational safety.



Crisis Response Workgroup

Eliminate Isolation and Chemical Restraint from Schools

The workgroup has determined that isolation should be immediately prohibited in public schools in Washington. The use of isolation is detrimental to students. The workgroup has determined the use of chemical restraint is unnecessary in public schools within Washington and should be prohibited.

Improve Access to Proactive and Effective Mental Health Supports and Trauma-Informed Behavior Supports

The workgroup finds that support and funding for sustained training and coaching should be provided to expand the implementation of the [Washington Multi-Tiered System of Support Framework](#) focused on improving social, emotional, behavioral and mental health supports along with overall school and classroom climate.



Crisis Response Workgroup

Increase Educator Training of De-escalation Practices

To eliminate isolation and reduce the need for restraint, the workgroup finds that ongoing educator training of crisis prevention and de-escalation practices is necessary. These practices include crisis intervention programs, de-escalation training, and evidence-based practices shown to proactively reduce physical restraint and eliminate isolation.

Improve Data Collection and Reporting

The workgroup recommends changes to the current data collection and reporting system regarding restraint, including requiring all public schools, comprehensive educational programs serving public school students, and nonpublic agencies in the state to collect and report restraint data to OPSI. Additional data collection changes include increased monitoring and oversight of schools that do not report data in a timely manner.



Crisis Response Workgroup

[House Bill 1479](#), a bill that would ban the use of isolation, chemical and mechanical restraint for all students in Washington's K12 system, was lifted by OSPI and introduced on 1/20/23.

It is scheduled for a public hearing in the House Committee on Education on Monday, January 30th at 1:30 p.m.





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