

Program Overview:

When students in Henrico County Public Schools, Virginia (48,000+ students) are recommended for expulsion by a school due to disciplinary infractions, they are entitled to a formal school board level appeal hearing. Previously, these hearings were numerous and consumed many hours of school board and staff members' time. Additionally, the process often left students and parents feeling disenfranchised. In 2008-09, there were 29 separate hearings. A less formal pre-appeal process was implemented in 2009-10 as a precursor to the formal school board hearing. The pre-appeal process provides students/families an opportunity to meet with staff members to discuss their individual situations, the pending expulsion, and potential options. The pre-appeal hearings are structured to be less intimidating for participants and more customer friendly. During the 2009-10 school year, after the implementation of the pre-appeal step, formal appeal hearings before the school board were reduced from 29 to one appeal hearing. In 2010-11 there were no formal appeal hearings and in 2011-12 there were three. The pre-appeal process has substantially improved satisfaction among students/families and has enhanced the efficiency and shortened the length of school board meetings.