New Strategies for Keeping Schools Safe: Evidence-based Approaches to Prevent Youth Violence

Evidence-Based Practice, Measurement, and Accountability

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We Have Evidence-Based Practices Ready for Use in Schools

“there is strong evidence that universal, school-based programs decrease rates of violence…”

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We Have Evidence-Based Practices Ready for Use in Schools

- Anger management
- Bullying prevention
- Conflict resolution
- Family therapy
- Parenting skills
- Problem-solving
- Social competence
- Substance abuse resistance
- Etc.

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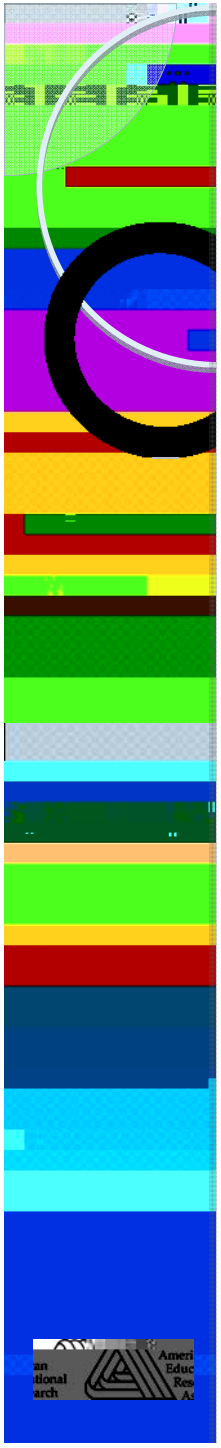

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School Discipline

- As we have seen, schools typically respond to disruptive students with external discipline which include office referrals and corporal punishment as well as suspensions, and expulsions.

- Scant evidence for punitive and exclusionary approaches

  may be harmful for individuals and schools (Mayer, 1995; Skiba, Peterson, & Williams, 1997)

  segregation of anti-social students with other anti-social students as well as suspension can make students more anti-social (Dishion & Dodge, 2005; Hemphill, Toumbourou, Herrenkohl, McMorris, & Catalano, 2006)

  punishment can increase vandalism and student disengagement (Mayer, Butterworth, Nafpaktitis, & Suzer-Azaroff, 1983)

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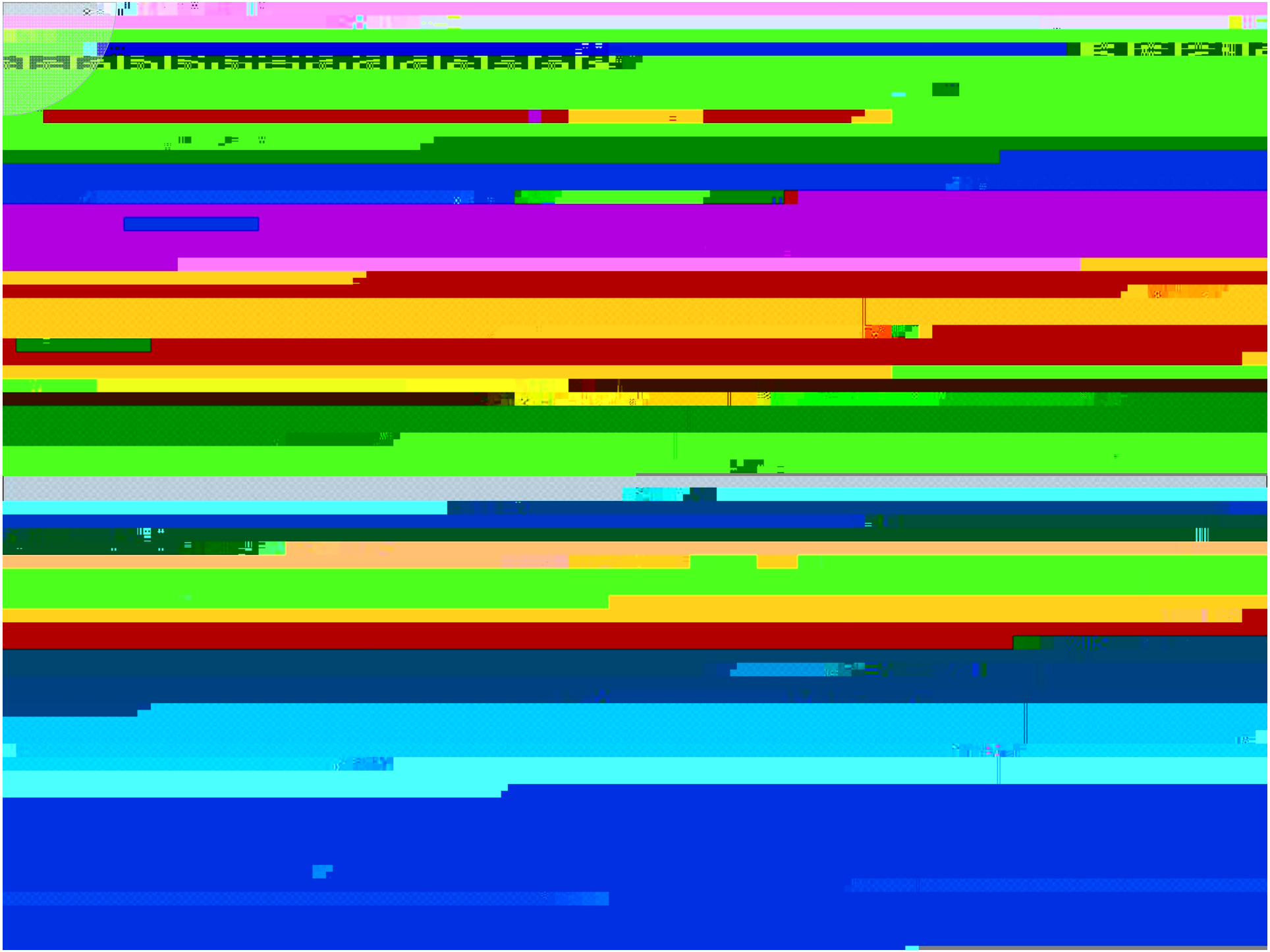
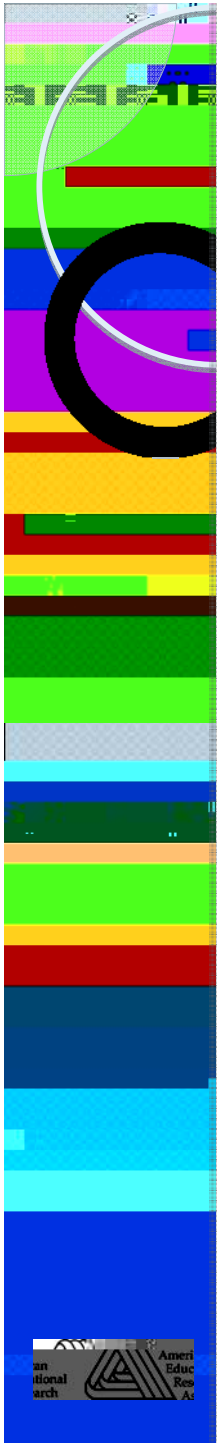
Teaching and Teacher-Student Connection Matters

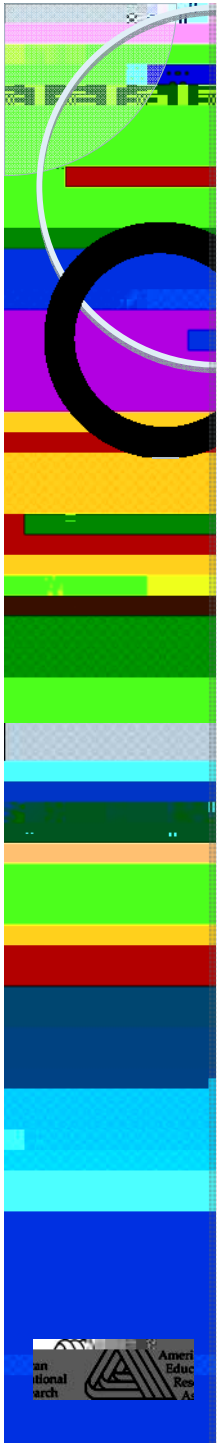
- Engagement, motivation, and self-discipline are more effective (Osher et al., 2008)d self-discipline are





We Have Evidence-Based Practices Ready for Use in Schools

- Non-experimental studies of the Virginia threat assessment model suggest that:
  - Most student threats resolved with counseling
  - Most threats not carried out
  - Almost all students can remain in school
  - Bullying reduced and school climate improves



Need Regular Measurement/Monitoring of School Safety and Order

- **What To Measure?**

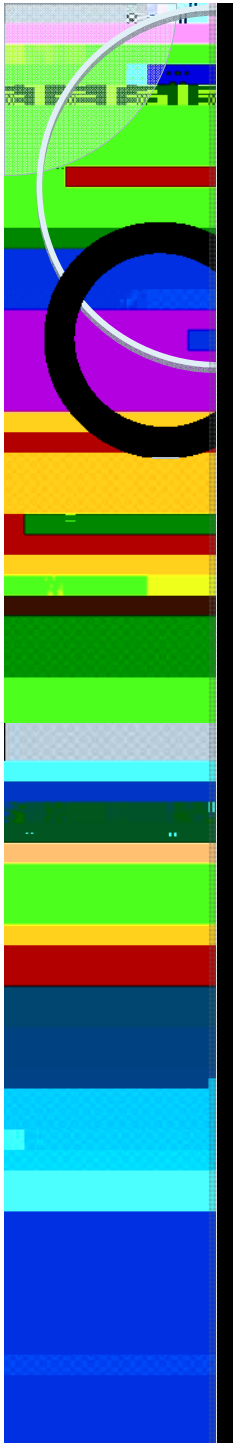
  Overall school climate

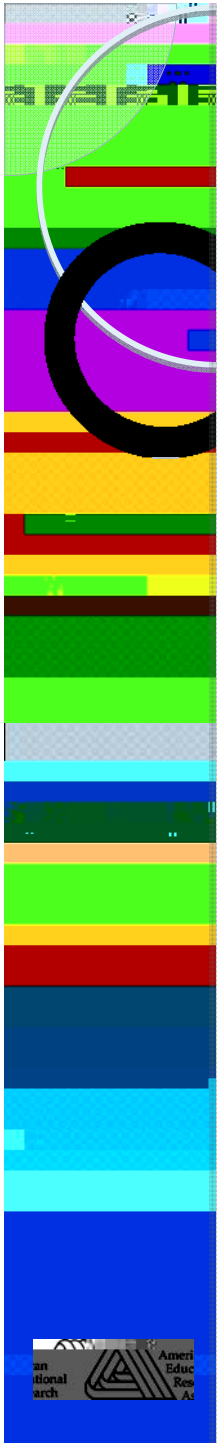
  Student engagement

  Student psychological well-being including their social and emotional capacities

  Student and faculty perceptions of the school environment

  Schools' capacity to efficiently provide academic and socio-emotional supports to meet the needs of all their students





Planning to Address Multiple Needs

School safety and order is a key ingredient in school improvement plans

Specialized support programs are essential for students who are academically at-risk

Likewise, related behavioral, social, and emotional support programs are essential to academic achievement and social development

(Osher, Bear, Sprague, & Doyle, 2010)

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Need Comprehensive Long-Term National Planning

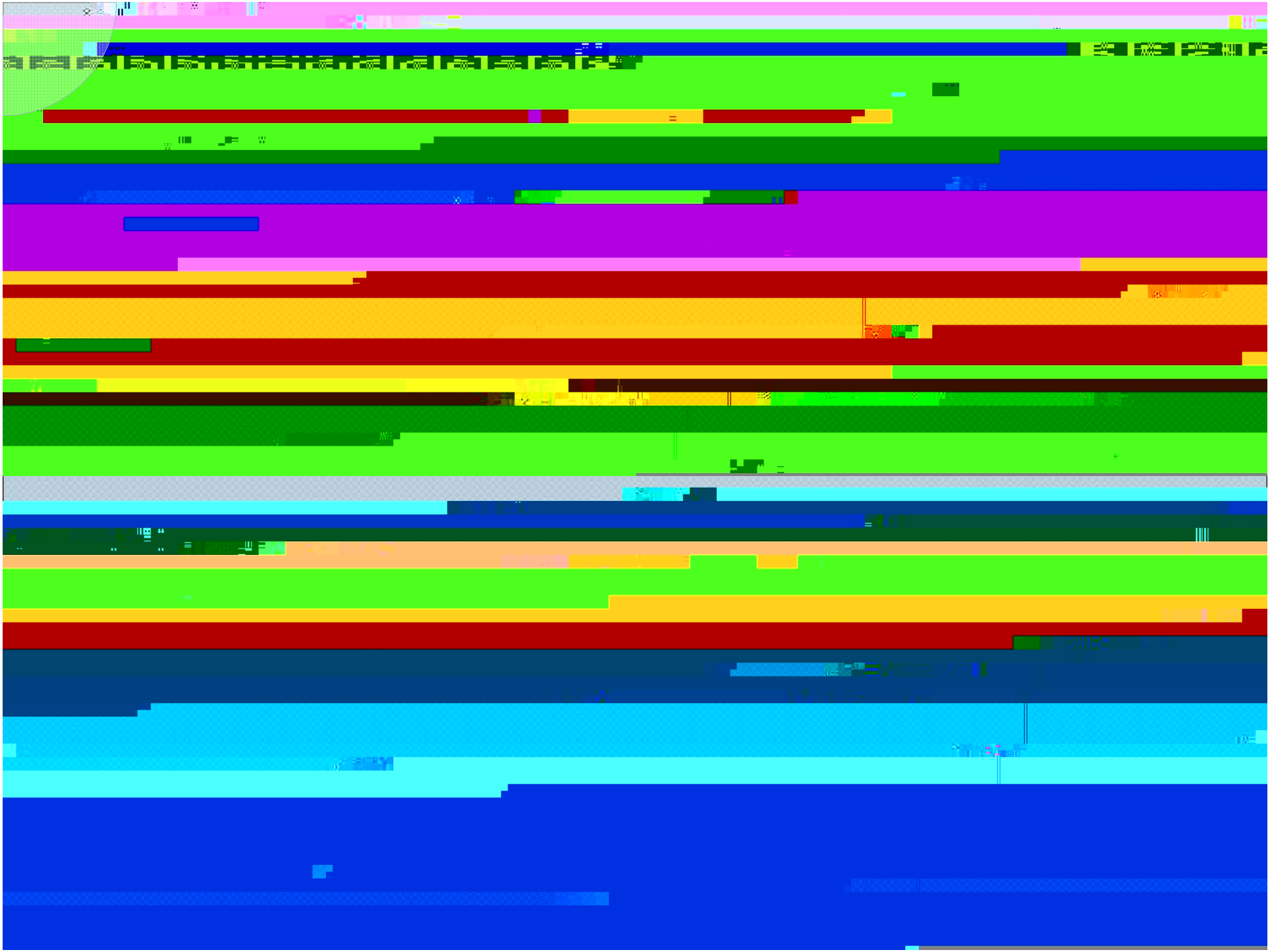
- Trans-disciplinary research is required to benefit from what is being learned across allied fields of study

- Create a national school safety planning panel:

  1-year mission to develop 10-year plan

  Membership from federal and state agencies, allied academic disciplines, and practitioners

(Mayer & Furlong, 2010)



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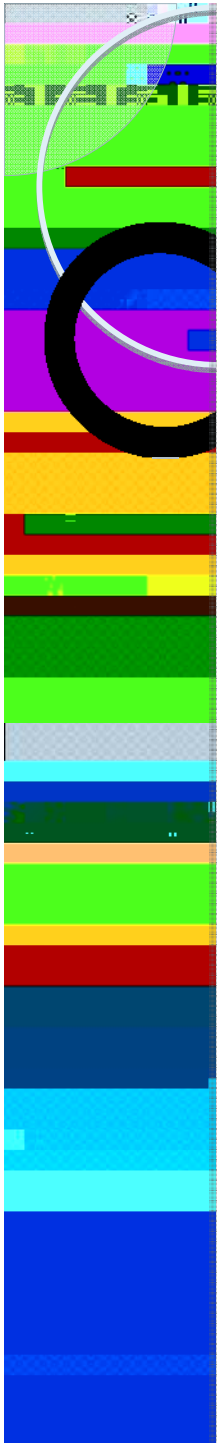

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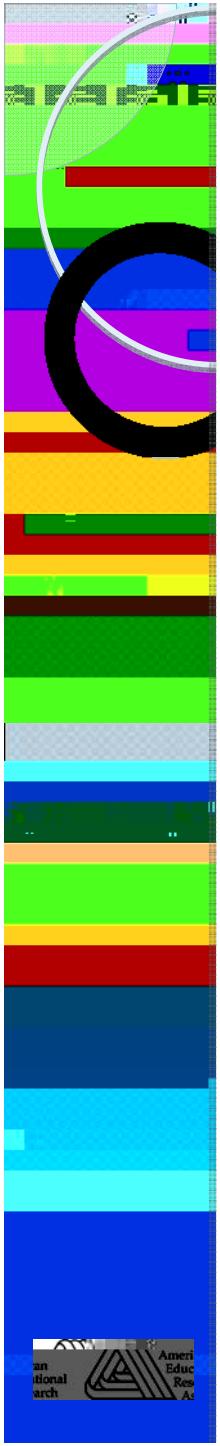

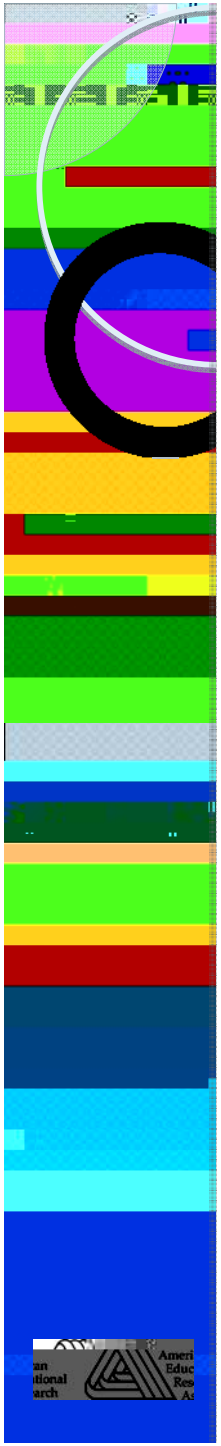

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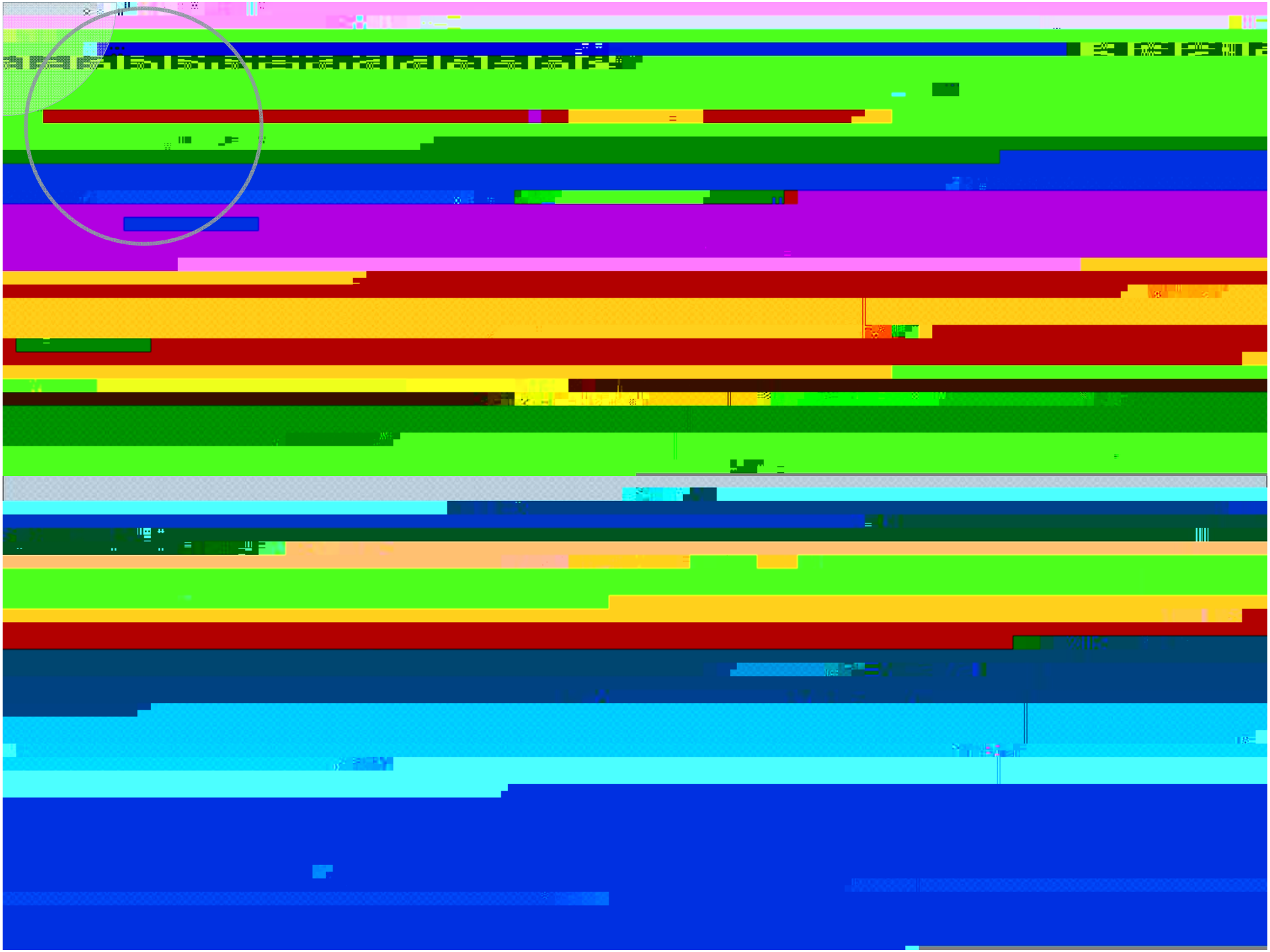
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