

News

Schools Across US Find Alternatives to Suspension

JAMIE STENGLE, Associated Press

DALLAS — The recent arrest of a 14-year-old Muslim boy whose teacher mistook his homemade clock for a possible bomb led to widespread ridicule of school officials and accusations that Islamophobia may have played a part.

It earned Ahmed Mohamed an invitation to the White House, where the Irving teen will attend an astronomy night Monday. But it also got him a three-day suspension, which he says the district insisted he serve even after it was clear it was just a clock.

Ahmed's suspension — his parents have since withdrawn him from the school — reflects the rigid disciplinary policies that many U.S. schools adopted in the 1990s. But many districts, including some of the nation's largest, have been softening their approach, foregoing automatic suspensions, expulsions and calls to the police for one-on-one counseling and less severe forms of punishment.

"When we can't tell the difference between a serious problem and a non-serious problem with a kid in school, the problem is not the kid: It is us," said Michael Gilbert, who heads the San Antonio-based National Association of Community and Restorative Justice, which advocates a focus on dialogue instead of punishments.

The school districts in New York, Los Angeles and Denver are just some of those that have moved away from discipline policies that relied heavily on suspensions. State governments have also been taking action: This year, Connecticut limited out-of-school suspensions and expulsions for students up through the second grade, Texas decriminalized truancy and Oregon limited when suspensions and expulsions can be applied to students up through the fifth grade.

Last year, the Obama administration asked schools to abandon policies that send kids to court, issuing guidelines encouraging training school personnel in conflict resolution.

"We're seeing a lot of change at the federal, state



and local level that I think is moving us in a new direction," said Russell Skiba, director of The Equity Project at Indiana University. But, he added, "There are still a lot of schools that don't have the resources or are afraid to move to something else."

Denver Public Schools started implementing a so-called restorative discipline program in 2008. District leaders were concerned about the high number of suspensions and expulsions, which the grassroots group Padres & Jovenes Unidos pointed out were being disproportionately used to punish minority students.

Daniel Kim, director of youth organizing for Padres & Jovenes Unidos, said that while the change in school discipline policies is benefiting all students, there are still disparities in the punishment rates for minorities when compared to Whites — especially for Blacks.

Assistant principal Sarah Tompkins, left, listens as seventh grader Jayden Witter, right, discusses a recent conflict with another student solved through restorative justice, which included teachers and students gathering in circles for discussions, at Ed White Middle School, Friday, Oct. 16, 2015, in San Antonio. Philip Carney said that three years after starting a restorative discipline program as principal of Ed White Middle School in San Antonio, out-of-school suspensions have dropped by 72 percent. (AP Photo/Eric Gay)

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REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

FFD-40 HILLSBORO COMMUNITY/SENIOR CENTER IMPROVEMENTS - DESIGN SERVICES

The City of Hillsboro ("City") seeks qualified organizations able to provide Architectural and Engineering ("A/E") services for the design and construction of interior improvements at the Hillsboro Community/Senior Center.

A Pre-Proposal meeting will be held at 2:30 PM, Pacific Time, November 2, 2015 at the Hillsboro Community/Senior Center - 750 SE 8th Av., Hillsboro, OR 97123

Proposals are due no later than 2:00 PM, PST on November 19, 2015. Proposals must be delivered to:

City of Hillsboro
PW-Facilities & Fleet Division
Toni Plunkett
150 East Main Street, 5th Floor
Hillsboro, OR 97123

Proposals will be received by: Toni Plunkett/Facilities & Fleet Div. Late proposals shall not be accepted.

This project is funded, in whole or in part, by Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds. In addition, specific federally required contractual provisions will apply.

Minority, Women, and Emerging Small Businesses ("MWESB") are strongly encouraged to respond and proposers are encouraged to subcontract with MWESB businesses in the performance of this work.

Businesses or individuals will not be discriminated against on the grounds of race, color or national origin, in the awarding of a contract or contracts resulting from this RFP.

This RFP document may be obtained electronically at: State of Oregon ORPIN website at: <http://orpin.oregon.gov/open.dll/welcome>; from 10/20/15 until 11/19/15, at minimum, the date and time Proposals are due. The RFP and contract terms and conditions may be reviewed at 150 E. Main Street, 5th Floor Hillsboro OR 97123. Proposal opening will occur shortly after the date and time proposals are due and the RFP has closed.

For additional information contact:
Karl Dinger
Email: Karl.Dinger@Hillsboro-Oregon.gov
Phone: 503-681-5371

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