

Whole-School Restorative Approach Resource Guide

REPORT

December 8,
2017

An orientation to a whole-school restorative approach and guide toward more in-depth resources and current research

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About This Publication

During the 2016 Vermont legislative session, the legislature passed H.95, which asked the Agency of Education (AOE) to explore the use of restorative “practices regarding school climate and culture, truancy, bullying and harassment, and school discipline.” The AOE responded by contracting with Marc Wennberg to plan and facilitate a one-day meeting of Vermonters with expertise in the use of restorative practices to help the AOE learn about current training opportunities and use of them in Vermont schools. The October 2016 meeting produced a set of recommendations for how to improve and increase the use of restorative practices in schools. This resource guide is a product of the October meeting recommendations. The AOE contracted with Jon Kidde, Green Omega, L3C, to produce a resource guide for the implementation of restorative practices in Vermont schools.

As part of this work, Vermont educators and others involved in the implementation of restorative practices in schools were convened in May and June 2017 to provide input and consultation on the resource guide and its proposed content. A list of meeting participants is included in Appendix C. The meetings identified resources that participants found useful, facilitated sharing of experiences, and allowed those invested in implementing restorative practices to meet each other.

This publication provides readers with an orientation to a whole-school restorative approach and points readers toward more in-depth resources and current research. This guide does not replace comprehensive training. Readers are encouraged to use this document to locate relevant resources and to seek out training that provides opportunities for practical application.

Whole-School Restorative Approach

The concepts, practices, and processes described in this publication are not new; they have been part of indigenous cultures the world over. Nor are they new to educators, though many educators who have utilized them might be unfamiliar with the various terms used to describe them—restorative justice, restorative practices, or restorative approaches.

What is new, valuable, and important is the development of a reasonably well-connected field of study and practice that allows educators, researchers, and other stakeholders to expand and enhance knowledge and skills around common principles and practices. Indeed, there is a growing body of literature and field-based experience that clarifies why schools need restorative principles and practices, the outcomes they produce, and, most important, how to best use these concepts in schools. This publication intends to connect educators to useful resources.

A Working Definition

There is no singular universally agreed-upon definition for whole-school restorative approaches (Fronius et al., 2016). In the simplest terms, whole-school restorative approaches build healthy school climates by creating space for people to understand one another and develop relationships; when things go wrong, restorative approaches create space to address needs, repair relationships, and heal.

Restorative practices provide meaningful opportunities for social engagement that foster empathy and mutual responsibility for the well-being of individuals and the community. Proactive practices intentionally build trust and understanding within the community to ensure a healthy supportive climate and environment. When things go wrong, restorative practices engage those affected and create space so that individuals and communities can effectively identify, understand, and address harms and needs—this facilitates healing.

Restorative Justice promotes values and principles that use inclusive, collaborative approaches for being in community. These approaches validate the experiences and needs of everyone within the community, particularly those who have been marginalized, oppressed or harmed. These approaches allow us to act and respond in ways that are healing rather than alienating or coercive.

~Lorraine Stutzman Amstutz and Judy H. Mullet, *The Little Book of Restorative Discipline*

A Note on Different Terms

The whole-school restorative approach is rooted in contemporary restorative justice philosophy and practice. The first use of the term "restorative justice" is credited to Albert Eglash, a psychologist working with youth and adults caught up in the criminal justice system, who in the 1950s proposed the term "creative restitution." Howard Zehr, often called the grandfather of contemporary restorative justice, discusses *restorative justice* in contrast to the retributive criminal justice system in his classic text, *Changing Lenses*. Schools have successfully adapted the principles and practices to their setting—teachers have applied many of the principles to varied degrees before the term restorative justice was coined. Understandably, many schools do not want to equate their efforts to criminal justice. While some think of justice as a positive state of being, others have adopted "restorative practices" to describe their own practices.

The term 'restorative practices' has taken on somewhat of a double meaning depending on the circles one runs in. For some, restorative practices are the things we do and the processes we use to apply restorative justice theory and principles. The International Institute for Restorative Practices considers restorative practices a social science and restorative justice a subset of restorative practices (Wachtel, 2016).

None of the terms—restorative justice, restorative practices, or restorative approaches—are used in the same way throughout the field. Confusion abounds. For the purposes of this publication, restorative approaches will be used to refer broadly to the theory and principles, as well as to the processes and practices used in application. Processes and practices are the methods used to put restorative principles into action.

Restorative Justice is a compass, not a map.

~Howard Zehr, *The Little Book of Restorative Justice*

Restorative Principles

Restorative approaches are guided by principles. These principles show us how to intentionally align with restorative approaches. They provide a lens to look through when reflecting on policies, procedures, and behavior. Core principles are highlighted below, followed by a brief discussion of each. These core principles are interrelated.

- voluntary participation
- exploring relationships
- meaningful engagement
- participatory decision-making (co-creating rather than doing “to” or “for”, or use of exclusion)
- identification of and addressing harms and needs (rather than focus on rule violation or punishment)
- active responsibility (rather than passive and/or punitive accountability)
- restoration and repairing the harm

Tier I (UNIVERSAL): to create a healthy school climate

Voluntary Participation

Restorative practices, when fully aligned, are voluntary. People choose to participate in restorative practices and people choose how they participate in them, so as long as their choices do not infringe on someone else’s safety or ability to participate. A person may choose to listen and not speak in a restorative process or practice.

Exploring Relationships

Intentionally creating space and time for people in a community to get to know one another is a first step of understanding one another and building trust. This helps to build, deepen, and support healthy relationships and community; it develops the capacity for empathy and social-emotional learning; it helps foster a *desire* for empathy.

Meaningful Engagement

Intentionally creating opportunities for meaningful engagement is an ongoing critical component of restorative practices. Trust and respect are elements that facilitate meaningful engagement and opportunities for dialogue. Without trust and respect, people do not feel safe enough to engage authentically. Trust is built as people get to know one another and develop an understanding of their relationship; trust builds trust. Respect is treating other people how *they* want to be treated. To respect others, you need to get to know them and listen to them. This creates emotional and physical safety that allows people to be vulnerable enough to engage in restorative practices.

Participatory Decision-Making

When all members have a meaningful role in a decision-making community, culture is co-created. Participatory decision-making promotes and strengthens a sense of belonging and mutual responsibility for the well-being of all. The phrase “nothing about us without us” sums up this principle. This is challenging; it requires those with decision-making authority to use that authority differently.

Tier II (TARGETTED): when people and relationships are harmed

Identification and Addressing Harms and Needs

To address harms and needs, they must be identified by those who have been affected. When addressing the needs that drove the behavior, one must understand the situation that led to it.

Active Responsibility

Typically, imposed “consequences” are used to promote accountability; active responsibility is different. Consequences are often punitive and passive—detentions and suspensions, for example, do not expect any active effort. Active responsibility requires an understanding of the harms and needs, deciding how to address them, and following through with the agreement. Restorative practices foster internal motivation to take responsibility rather than rely on external coercion and exclusion. Taking responsibility for one’s actions is a requirement for the restorative response; when that is not an option, due process procedures to determine responsibility should be used.

Restoration and Repairing the Harm

Restorative practices do not attempt to restore things to how they were before harm took place—it is not possible to erase the past. Through collaborative identification of harms and needs and active responsibility to address them, damage is repaired to the degree possible. Addressing harms and needs and promoting active accountability demonstrates that people in the community are cared for. This enhances one’s sense of safety and helps allow all those affected to move forward without the incident having significant controls over their lives. This is healing.

Multi-Tiered Restorative Approach

Successful Restorative Practices implementation begins with a shift in our hearts and minds. It is not a magic bullet approach but something that requires mindful awareness of our beliefs about students, ourselves, and our community. It asks us to examine biases, assumptions and habits that inform how we unconsciously operate as educators and our relationship to discipline. Mindfulness is a powerful tool in this process and creates the conditions for Restorative Practices to be less about something we do and more about something we are.

*~Annie O’Shaughnessy, from a chapter in Beyond the Basics (forthcoming)
by Nancy Riestenberg, Gilleen McCluskey, and Marg Thorsborne*

A whole-school restorative approach is not just about doing processes or practices. It is a philosophy, a way of being. It changes how people relate to one another. Importantly, it applies throughout a Multi-Tiered System of Supports framework.

- Tier I (Universal): At the foundation of a whole-school restorative approach are practices and processes designed to build community, create a healthy school climate, and develop social and emotional skills.
- Tier II (Targeted): When things go wrong, the restorative approach is to focus on repairing relationships—rather than the rule that was broken.
- Tier III (Intensive): When individuals are disengaged and excluded from the community, a restorative approach intentionally seeks to welcome and facilitate belonging and engagement.

A whole-school restorative approach applies to all tiers—not just when things go wrong—and to the entire school, not just a few classrooms or a few students.

Tier I (Universal) Community Building

Tier I efforts focus on building and improving relationships and developing community where all have a sense of belonging.

At this level, students and adults are exposed to processes and practices that develop social and emotional competencies and—through engagement—foster a sense of belonging. This skill development builds the foundation for students and adults to be able to resolve their differences in constructive, respectful ways. This is the starting point for school transformation and the foundation for success at Tier II. It is about building capacity for things to go right.

Restorative practices offer the opportunity for my students to continue learning that what they do has an impact on others and others have an impact on them. They are learning to notice their behaviors and actions in relationship to others. They are learning to care enough to either increase doing and saying the things that makes themselves and others happier, kinder, and more compassionate individuals and decrease those behaviors that don't. They are learning to look at their behaviors to learn from them, be kind to themselves while learning ... rather than beating themselves up.

~Gigi Weisman, autism program consultant, Chittenden East Supervisory Union

Processes and Practices: Circles

Learning to become a circle keeper and facilitating circles with students, RJ has opened up opportunities for me to forge connections and learn about the world of middle school students in ways that have been transformative for all participating in circles, including myself. I feel that my contributions and impact on students as an educator has taken a giant step beyond the classroom into the overall culture of our school. RJ has simultaneously humbled, energized, and enlightened me as to what our students deal with as they navigate their world as middle schoolers. I believe the RJ process is the most powerful change agent for students and staff that I have practiced in my 30+ years as an educator.

~Laurie LaPlant, literacy teacher at EMS and a Tier II reading interventionist

Schools, teachers, and staff build community in many informal ways. Restorative principles validate what many already do. This guide focuses on circles. Circles are often seen as a defining feature of restorative approaches in action. *Circle Forward* and the other resources in the appendix offer comprehensive information about circle process, design, and facilitation. Circles are used in schools to bring people together in a way that everyone is respected; participants get an opportunity to speak without interruption while others listen. Participants literally sit in a circle so everyone can see everyone else. There is no hierarchy in the seating arrangement.

Those in the field—through practice and experience—have found several key elements in a circle to create space that facilitates safety, equity, and inclusion. In addition to intentionally applying restorative principles, circles include the following elements (Boyes-Watson and Prannis, 2015):

- **Ceremony Opening/Closing:** A brief ceremony marks the opening and indicates that this is different space. Openings might include a mindfulness moment and an inspirational,

grounding, and relevant quote. The circle closes similarly, with a short reflection.

Participants honor the time and contributions participants have made.

- Centerpiece: This is a focal point to promote speaking and listening.
- Identify Values/Guidelines: Values and guidelines are defined by the group. They serve as a reminder of collective expectations.
- Talking Piece: An object that ideally has relevance and meaning for the group is passed sequentially around the circle to regulate dialogue and limit interruption. The person who holds the talking piece is invited to speak. Those without the talking piece have a perhaps more important role—to listen. One can always pass the talking piece.
- Facilitation or Keeping: The facilitator—or keeper—is a participant. The keeper assists the group in creating and maintaining the space.

The circle process can be used in countless ways. Below are some examples:

Values Circle

These circles promote thought about personal values and putting them into action. This process lays the foundation for relationship building and agreement about what is important to everyone in the circle.

Guidelines/Expectations Circle

Building on common values, this circle continues to build understanding and trust among participants with the aim to create guidelines and expectation around how participants will be with one another. This is a cornerstone in the foundation of ensuring things go right. Guidelines or expectations should be revisited and groups should reflect on how well they are doing. They can be revised if needed.

Morning Check-in Circle

This circle creates space to reflect on how each person is feeling at that moment, assess readiness to learn, and share something new, important, or challenging. This circle helps transition students into a learning environment. Once established, this circle can take place very quickly.

Checkout Circles

These circles encourage self-reflection and a communal sharing of an experience. They can be quick and simple, with students completing one of the following sentences: “One thing I enjoyed in class today was...”; “One challenges for me was...”; or “One word that describes how I am feeling...”

Celebration Circles

Celebration is an important form of community building. It helps recognize important positive moments in the community and brings attention to the health of the community.

Community-Building Circles

All of these circles help to build community; each encourages the development of empathy and self-reflection. Circles specifically focused on community building allow participants to get to know each other through sharing stories and active listening. This creates a sense of belonging, builds and strengthens relationships, and fosters connections

Learning/Curriculum Circles

Circles can be used to reflect on academic content, share ways in which academic content was useful in life, demonstrate new knowledge or skills, bring less dominant voices into discussion, and much more. Learning circles promote an environment where learning comes from different places—not just the teacher at the head of the classroom.

Talking/Issues Circles

Circles that explore a topic or a recurring issue create opportunities to hear different perspectives and voices, often without any need to reach agreement. Students can identify topics that are important to them. When exploring recurring issues, such as a class struggling to align with guidelines, these circles can begin to identify needs and address challenges between people.

Restorative justice has allowed me to spend more time teaching and less time managing behaviors. I feel that RJ has caused a positive shift in our school culture and helps students stay accountable for their actions.

~Kendra Pillsbury, 5th-8th social studies teacher, Bakersfield Elementary/Middle School

It is advised that schools initially focus on Tier I. One indicator that this is being done well is that students will begin to ask for circles when things go wrong.

Tier II (Targeted): Repair Relationships

I have often felt like discipline has the effect of taking me out of the classroom. With restorative practices, my focus stays on the dynamics and relationships in the classroom. In that way, I can still meet the needs of the class while strengthening relationships and modeling solid conflict-management and communication skills.

~James Moore, Milton Middle School

Tier II focuses on repairing relationships. Processes and practices engage those affected—individuals harmed as well as the individuals responsible for the harm. Together they talk about what happened, say what they need, and decide how to make things right.

It is essential that Tier I (Universal) principles are practiced and in place; the application of Tier I principles also apply to Tier II. It is advised that schools initially focus on Tier I. An indicator that this is being done well is students will begin to ask for circles when things go wrong. A school that has built a solid foundation will have a climate conducive to the application of Tier II principles:

- Identify and address harm and needs (rather than focus on rule violation or punishment).

- Active responsibility (rather than passive and/or punitive accountability)
- Restoration and repairing harm

By applying these principles, schools move away from punitive exclusionary responses and facilitate the development of transferable skills. Students and adults develop social-emotional capacity and build empathy for others. Perhaps more importantly, a greater desire for empathy emerges.

Restorative Questions

Restorative questions can help to facilitate a more restorative response. For example:

- What happened? What's going on?
- What led up to this?
- What did you think/feel at the time? What have you thought about since?
- Who was affected? How?
- What has been the hardest part for you?
- What needs to happen to make things better right now?
- What should be done differently in the future?

Processes and Practices

Below is an overview of several common restorative processes and practices used in schools. Many practitioners combine aspects of different practices to create a practice that they and their school are most comfortable with.

These methods can provide a constructive alternative to referring a student out of class, detention, suspension, expulsion, and other disciplinary practices. Initially, these restorative processes often sit side by side with the school's standard disciplinary practices and are engaged when deemed to be a safe, constructive alternative. As the school community comes to understand and practices being restorative, these processes are seen as useful and productive methods that can replace punitive disciplinary practices.

Circles

Circles, described above, are introduced as a universal community-building process. The same process can be used when things go wrong. Lorraine Stutzman-Amstutz and Judy Mullet (2005) highlight objectives of circles.

- to understand the harm and develop empathy for both the harmed and the harmer
- to listen and respond to the needs of the person harmed and the person who harmed
- to encourage accountability and responsibility through personal reflection within a collaborative planning process
- to reintegrate the harmer into the community as a valuable, contributing member
- to create caring climates to support healthy communities
- to strengthen community bonds that can assist the young people
- to change the system when it contributes to the harm
- to celebrate success

Circles create opportunities for students and adult community members to deepen their relationships as a community. They strengthen the school culture. They increase feelings of safety in the school and in the community.

Restorative Conferencing

Restorative conferencing is a broad term that encompasses a range of practices with some subtle and some significant differences. All conferencing models involve face-to-face encounters between those directly affected by the event and individuals who support each of them.* Some conferences involve others who have been indirectly affected by the incident. Led by a trained facilitator, the conference seeks to identify, repair, and prevent harm. Family group conferencing (FGC) typically sets aside “private family time” during the conference where the youth and his or her immediate caregivers create a first draft of the plan to make things right. Other conferencing models include the person harmed in the entire conference. Some conferencing models are heavily scripted while others allow for a more organic facilitation style.

Peer Mediation

Peer mediation involves a trained neutral third party or parties (known as mediators) whose role is to support those in conflict to come to a mutually acceptable resolution or to find a way of moving forward. Peer mediators may be elementary, middle, or high school students trained in the skills and processes of conflict resolution, mediation, and restorative dialogue. The role of the peer mediator is to help students resolve or manage conflict before it becomes harmful. Some peer mediation programs operate under restorative principles while others do not.

Restorative practices are helping me to reconsider the ways in which I interact with my students. My years of behavioral plans and logical consequences to address problematic behaviors have not yielded the outcomes that I would have liked. I am now in the frame of mind of being a problem solver with my students. I am having human-to-human conversations with students to help them repair the harm that they caused so that everyone can feel better. It is not my role to dole out punishment but to help students build and maintain connections with others. Once you let go of the punitive mindset, you are free to figure out what your students really need.

~Beth Thayer, teacher Essex Elementary School

Tier III (Intensive): Re-entry and Reintegration

Tier III works to provide students who need more intensive support to feel a sense of belonging in the school community. Restorative processes and practices here focus on students returning to the school after being out of the classroom—for any reason. Often, Tier III practices are used for students returning to the school after being suspended or expelled, but they could also be used to support a new student, a student returning after medical leave, or a student who has become significantly disengaged.

At this level, a wider circle of individuals (administration, family members, social workers, etc.) come together to welcome the student back into the community to ensure the transition is

* Some conferencing programs use surrogate victims or offenders. Modern technology such as video conferencing is also a possible consideration.

smooth, the student feels welcomed and supported, and there are opportunities to build relationships.

Alignment with PBIS and Other Initiatives

A restorative approach does not, nor should it, replace current effective initiatives in the school. Promising and evidence-based programs such as Positive Behavior Intervention and Support (PBIS), Responsive Classroom, Second Step, and other initiatives can assist in building a healthy foundation and culture of caring. Restorative approaches complement and enhance these kinds of programs and initiatives, and vice versa.

Schoolwide Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports (SWPBIS)—also simply known as Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports (PBIS)—is a well-established philosophy and set of practices that aligns with a whole-school restorative approach. Both utilize a Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) framework. While many leaders familiar with both PBIS and whole-school restorative approaches see alignment, the field is still exploring the integration of the two approaches. There currently is no well-documented model that combines the approaches. However, there is practice-based experience emerging that is just now making its way into the literature.

Below is an illustration of the continuum of restorative justice practices (RJP) and SWPBIS practice (Swain-Bradway, Eber, Sprague, and Nelson, 2016):

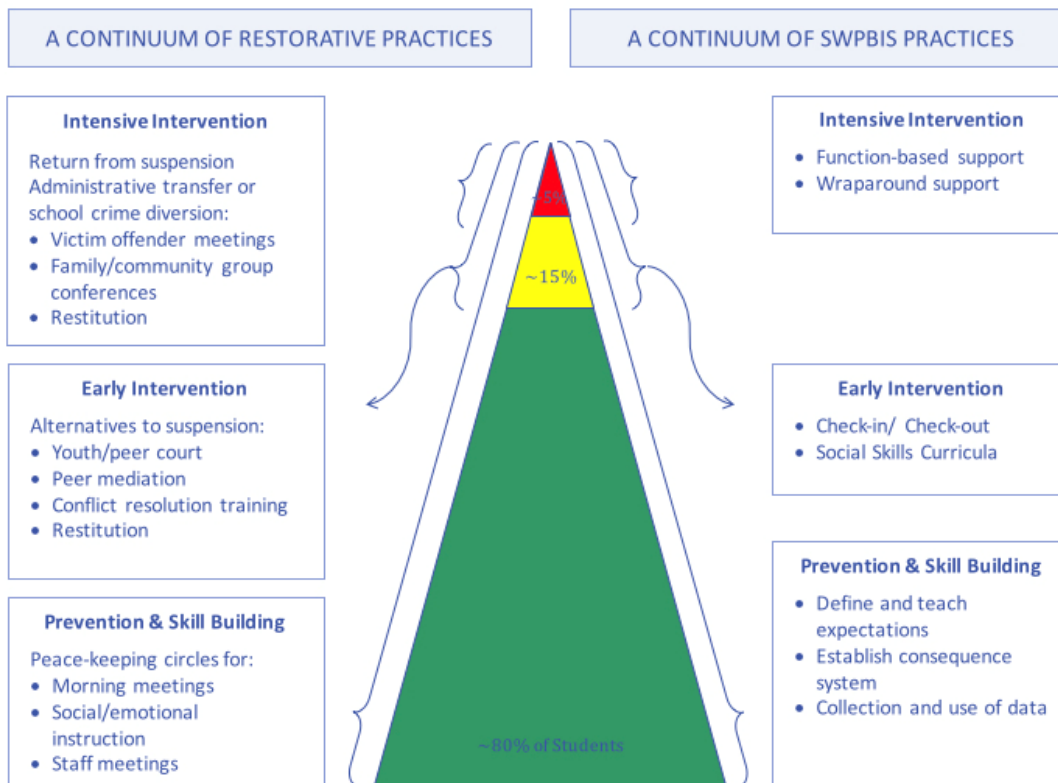


Figure 1. A continuum of RJP and SWPBIS Practice (Swain-Bradway, Eber, Sprague, and Nelson, 2016)

Why Restorative Classrooms and Schools?

Implementing restorative practices in our schools teaches our students how to build better and healthier relationships in their communities so they can feel a sense of belonging. It builds their abilities to problem solve creatively and to tolerate frustration and to manage emotions.

~Carol Cushing, behavioral interventionist, Milton High School

People are attracted to restorative approaches in schools because they see it benefiting students, families, teachers, and staff by creating a safe and engaging learning community. While the specific reasons people are attracted to restorative approaches are numerous and varied, many hope these approaches will achieve the following objectives:[†]

- improve relationships among students, teachers, and staff
- strengthen the sense of belonging for all.
- provide opportunities for greater ownership
- promote people feeling like valuable members of the community
- operate in alignment with personal values
- reduce exclusionary discipline
- create more equity in discipline practices
- create a more culturally sensitive school

My main objective as an administrator is to support the social-emotional learning of our students, staff, and families. Restorative practices help me ensure that each member of our community can feel connected and empowered. Restorative practices help develop a system that allows members to listen deeply, share authentically, and relate genuinely to others. This leads to more empathy, caring and kindness, and skills to solve problems when these vital components to wellbeing break down.

~Bobby Riley, principal, Integrated Arts Academy

Trying to achieve safe school environments that promote learning through compliance and exclusion have been ineffective and such efforts have disproportionately negatively affected specific populations that are typically marginalized. Though Vermont has a relatively low rate of exclusionary discipline—4.7% in 2016—“the Agency of Education finds that students who are non-Caucasian, participate in the free and reduced lunch program, have Section 504 or IEP plans, male, or are English Learners are over-represented in terms of the number who experience exclusion and the number of incidents resulting in exclusion.” (Holcombe, 2017).

Restorative approaches promote social engagement and connection (1) proactively to build community and connection (Tier I), (2) when things go wrong and relationship need repair (Tier II), and (3) when an individual needs more intensive support to feel a sense of belonging (Tier III). Research shows a clear connection between outcomes and students’ sense of connection, belonging, and being part of the school community (CDC, 2009). School connectedness was found to be the strongest protective factor for both boys and girls to decrease substance use, school absenteeism, early sexual initiation, violence, and risk of unintentional injury, emotional distress, disordered eating, and suicidal ideation and attempts (Sacks et al., 2014).

[†] This list combines reasons from conversations with focus groups held to inform this publication and from interviews held as part of a roundtable (Swain-Bradway et al., 2015).

Outcomes Linked to Restorative Approaches

Restorative practices have given my students and I hope and peace amidst all of the craziness going on in the world.

~Danielle Petralia, teacher, Albert D. Lawton Intermediate School

Below is a selected summary of outcomes associated with implementing restorative approaches in schools, as reported by schools, districts, and other academic institutions. In 2016, WestEd published a comprehensive review of the literature and summarized research results from studies conducted between 1999 and mid-2014: *Restorative Justice in U.S. School: A Research Review* (Fronius et al., 2016). The field is producing a growing body of literature with promising evidence-based outcomes. In order to more fully understand the outcomes reported and research limitations, read the original source. All of the publications referenced are cited in Appendix B and most are easily accessed online.

Reported Outcomes: School Climate, Culture, and Academics

- A pilot study of a restorative conferencing program in Minnesota reported increased school connectedness and improved problem-solving among students (McMorris et al., 2013).
- In Oakland, CA, 70% of staff reported that RJ improved overall school climate during the first year of implementation (Jain et al., 2014).
- Oakland students said that the use of restorative justice circles enhanced their ability to understand peers, manage emotions, develop greater empathy, resolve conflict with parents, improve home environment, and maintain positive relationships with peers (Jain et al., 2014).
- Oakland middle schools that implemented RJ had a 24% reduction in chronic absence (OUSD, 2015b); high schools that implemented RJ experienced a 56% decline in high school dropout rates compared to 17% for non-RJ high schools during the same period (Jain et al., 2014).
- Denver Public Schools reported that students who participated in an RJ program experienced a 50% reduction in absenteeism and a decrease in tardiness of about 64% (Baker, 2009).
- Oakland Unified School District (OUSD) Scholastic Reading Inventory (SRI) levels in grade 9 doubled in RJ high schools from an average of 14% to 33% (Jain et al., 2014).
- After implementation of restorative justice, Cole Middle School's California State Test (CST) scores went up by 74 points from school year 2007–08 to 2008–09 (Kidde and Alfred, 2011).
- In Ed White Middle School (TX), the number of students who passed the standardized reading and math components increased substantially after restorative approaches were implemented (Armour, 2014).
- RJ high schools within OUSD had a 59.9% increase in four-year graduation rates from 2010 to 2013 compared to schools that had not implemented RJ (OUSD, 2015a).

Reported Outcomes: Discipline Policies and Practices

- Two Minneapolis Public Schools used circles in the classroom and office repair harm. One school reduced behavioral referrals by 45% and another school by 63% (Minnesota DOE, 2003, 2011).
- When Family Group Conferences were used as a restorative intervention strategy for responding to serious behavioral incidents (recommendations for expulsion or administrative transfer) in Minneapolis Public Schools, 97% of parents said they would recommend the program to a friend, and high levels of satisfaction were reported by both students and parents/guardians (McMorris et al., 2013).
- The use of restorative justice has been shown to narrow the racial discipline gap (Jain et al., 2014; Gregory et al., 2014; Stewart Klein, 2016).
- In Denver, CO, district-level impact has been noted in cumulative reductions in out-of-school suspensions of over 40% compared with baseline” (Advancement Project, 2010).
- At Cole Middle School in Oakland, CA, suspensions declined dramatically, by 87%, and expulsions declined to zero during the implementation of whole-school restorative justice (Sumner et al., 2010).
- In San Antonio, TX, Ed White Middle School implemented RJ in 2012. In-school suspensions for conduct violations dropped by 65% for 6th grade and 47% for 7th grade in the 2013–14 school year. Out-of-school suspensions dropped from 57% for 6th grade and 35% for 7th grade (Armour, 2014).

Research

Research in this area is young but, due to demand, is growing rapidly. Limitations of current research are discussed in *Restorative Justice in U.S. School: A Research Review* (2016) and summarized below:

- There is still not enough research—especially research that uses rigorous methods.
- Research to date has not involved a randomized control group, which is required to meet the demands of most evidence-based registries.
- Most of the studies had relatively small sample size.
- There are challenges with documenting implementation and practice fidelity—the field is just beginning to ensure practices are implemented and practiced as planned.

Due to these limitations, restorative approaches and restorative practices are considered “promising” or “under evaluation” rather than “evidence-based” according to the [*Evidence Provisions of the Every Student Succeeds Act \(ESSA\)*](#). The evidence is still building. Good news: There is a groundswell of research focused on restorative approaches in schools. There several large-scale randomized controlled trials that are underway in the United States that are examining restorative practices in schools in ways that deliberately address the limitations listed above. Results of some of these studies are expected to be released in the later part of 2018. Included below are descriptions of the research awards, directly from the funding source:

RAND Corporation was awarded funding by the National Institutes of Health to conduct a randomized controlled trial study involving 14 middle schools in Maine to

assess how implementation of restorative practices influences school connectedness, peer relationships, developmental outcomes, and problem behaviors and whether the effects transfer from middle to high school. Final data collections are scheduled for May 2018, with results tentatively due in August 2018. ([RCT of the Restorative Practices Intervention \(RPI\)](#))

The school district of Pittsburgh in partnership with RAND Corporation and the International Institute for Restorative Practices was awarded funding from the National Institute of Justice (NIJ) to conduct an evaluation of the SaferSanerSchools whole-school reform model using a randomized control design in Pittsburgh Schools for the 2015–2016 and 2016–2017 classes. No timetable established for results release.

The Central Falls School District in Rhode Island, in partnership with three local educational agencies (LEAs), was awarded NIJ funding to conduct a pilot implementation of restorative justice conferencing. The Justice Policy Center at the Urban Institute will lead the evaluation. Researchers will conduct a rigorous impact evaluation using a quasi-experimental design that will compare the outcomes of students who participate in restorative conferencing to students who have been disciplined for similar offenses. No timetable for results has been announced.

Columbus County Schools LEA in North Carolina was awarded NIJ funding to evaluate a restorative justice school safety initiative that 1) reduces bullying perpetration and victimization, aggression, and violence, 2) enhances school safety and mental health in middle and high school students, and 3) reduces the school-to-prison pipeline by diverting first offenders from the juvenile justice system into school-based Teen Courts. The North Carolina Academic Center for Excellence in Youth Violence Prevention will complete the research evaluation.

American Institutes for Research was awarded NIJ funding to examine the effectiveness of the Circle Forward (CF) whole-school restorative practices intervention on school safety and student outcomes in high-risk, high-need communities in Boston. The intervention will be delivered over three years in 30 middle and high schools. These schools serve low-income families, are located in high-crime neighborhoods, have high rates of suspension, are under-performing, and have persistently low rates of graduation. The study would use a cluster randomized controlled trial. The study will also include a process evaluation and an estimate of program implementation costs. [This project contains a research and/or development component, as defined in the applicable law, and complies with Part 200 Uniform Requirements – 2 CFR 200.210\(a\) \(14\).](#)

The field is also addressing the lack of implementation and practice fidelity tools. Oakland Unified School District is currently developing and testing a tiered fidelity instrument. There are two adaptations to the SWPBIS Tiered Fidelity Instrument (TFI) that are focused on restorative practices. The TFI was designed to be a valid, reliable, and efficient method to measure application of core PBIS features (Algozzine et al., 2014). Portland Public Schools and Resolutions Northwest developed a Restorative Justice Practices Tiered Fidelity Inventory in 2016.

Federal Support for Restorative Approaches

Due to the strong evidence emerging on the effectiveness of a restorative approach, there is now federal support and guidance for schools to implement restorative approaches. A joint “Dear Colleague letter” from the U.S. Department of Education and the U.S. Department of Justice on the Nondiscriminatory Administration of School Discipline states: “Successful programs may incorporate a wide range of strategies to reduce misbehavior and maintain a safe learning environment, including conflict resolution, restorative practices, counseling, and structured systems of positive interventions.” See Government Publications Supporting of Restorative Practices in Schools in the resources and references section below for additional information.

A good school—a place that ultimately prepares all of its students for success in the next steps of their lives—is, first, a safe school. A good school is also a supportive school, where students and staff are empowered to demonstrate positive, caring, and restorative approaches to improving school climate and discipline.

~U.S. Dept. of Education, July 2015 Rethink School Discipline: School District Leader Summit on Improving School Climate and Discipline Resource Guide for Superintendent Action

Implementation

There tends to be a desire for an off-the-shelf “how-to” manual that is linear and easy. People, groups, and communities are dynamic. Each school is unique and has its own culture, and implementing a whole-school restorative approach means changing the culture—it’s not a program. While there is no singular path schools must take to implement whole-school restorative practices, the field of implementation science offers a framework that can aid efforts and increase sustainability.

Stages of Implementation

Below is a table adapted from the Minnesota Department of Education’s *Trainer’s Guide for Working with Schools to Implement Restorative Practices* (Beckman and Riestenberg, 2016). It summarizes the stages of implementation presented in *Implementation Research: A Synthesis of the Literature* (Fixsen et al., 2005) and then revised in *Implementation: The Missing Link Between Research and Practice* (Fixsen et al., 2007). While science and research can inform the implementation process in ways that facilitate success, the process on the ground is generally an organic iterative one and not quite as delineated and linear and the chart below makes it appear.

| Stage | Description |
|-------------------------------|---|
| Exploration | Decision to commit to adopting and enacting the processes and procedures required to support implementation of restorative practices with fidelity. |
| Installation | Training staff and setting up infrastructure required to successfully implement restorative practices. Involvement of students, staff, and families. Development of a core group or team to plan, implement, and collect data. |
| Initial Implementation | Adoption of restorative practices into all systems within the school. Staff members are actively engaged in the practices. Students and families are knowledgeable about practices and active participants. Clear evidence of restorative practices is visible. Data collection is ongoing. |
| Full Implementation | Data has been collected and reviewed with all stakeholders. Ongoing professional development for all staff. Benefits are present. Adjustments are made as needed. |

Exploration

Exploration is about getting clear on the needs within the school and determining if restorative approaches will address those needs and produce better outcomes. The previous section, *Why Restorative Classrooms and Schools?*, highlights needs that have led classrooms and schools to implement a restorative approach as well as outcomes schools across the country have reported as a result of implementation.

Each school needs to clarify its current situation and the changes desired. Key stakeholders need to be involved in creating the narrative. There does not need to be just one narrative. In fact, it is likely that there are a wide variety of reasons various individuals are attracted to a whole-school restorative approach. For one person, the buy-in comes from the promise of developing healthy positive relationships; for another, it is reducing exclusionary discipline practices or developing more equitable discipline practices that eliminate disparities based on income and race. For many, it is all the above and more.

Initial exploration is often initiated by one person or a small group that learns about restorative approaches and sees promise for their school. Individuals and small groups excited about restorative practices often make a common error by not engaging stakeholders to collectively explore *why*: *Why* should the school should invest time and resources to implement a restorative approach? It is not uncommon for a small group to attend an effective professional development session on restorative justice or restorative practices, return inspired to make changes, and then begin to move forward without letting others experience the same journey of identifying the need and the promise of a restorative approach to effectively address that need.

Establish a School Leadership and Implementation Team

Implementation science tells us that creating an implementation team fosters a more efficient and higher quality implementation (AI Hub, 2017) when these teams focus on the following:

- increasing “buy-in” and readiness
- installing and sustaining the implementation infrastructure
- assessing and reporting on fidelity and outcomes
- building linkages with external systems
- problem-solving and promoting a sustainable initiative

At this stage, the focus is on increasing buy-in and readiness. The school needs to engage both the internal and external community—especially families—to assess: Where are we now? The more comprehensive the assessment, the greater the likelihood of gaining more buy-in later. The assessment should gather quantitative and qualitative school data: current climate (students and adults), discipline practices, and disparities within discipline practices. It should identify needs and assets. National literature can be used to provide context and to showcase why the data highlights a need; that is, why do we want to make a change?

The leadership team also takes the lead on initial and recurring planning efforts:

1. Assess readiness: There are several tools to assess readiness for change. One is included in the appendix. A comprehensive Readiness for Change Checklist appears in the appendix of *Implementing Restorative Practices in Schools* (Thorsborne and Blood, 2013).
2. Consider barriers.
3. Identify Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations, and Results (See SOAR Worksheet in the Appendix A).
4. Schedule professional development to introduce restorative approaches to specific populations and school-wide.
5. Synthesize school-wide enhancement efforts; members should serve on other school task teams/work groups.

Tips for leadership teams:

- Find the right time and the right amount of time to meet.
- Develop a clear purpose for the team and each meeting.
- Develop guidelines and process agreements for how the team will operate.
- Maintain focus on student and staff outcomes (how will people be better off).
- Build agendas to focus on what will be accomplished in the meeting.
- Develop a communication system to get information out and build in accountability for communication and follow-up.
- Build credibility by focusing on visible changes.
- Model restorative practices.

Even when a school is at the exploration stage, it is likely that some people are beginning to experiment with restorative approaches in their classrooms. Perhaps staff meetings are using circle processes, or some teachers responsible for advisory are facilitating a circle once a week with students. Create space during staff meetings and in school professional development for those exploring the use of restorative approaches to share stories about their experiences and what they are learning about themselves, students, and the school in the process. This can enhance buy-in.

Below is an example that showcases how Randolph Union High School engaged students in the exploration stage.

During the 2016–17 school year, Randolph Union High School students of four different grade levels enrolled in a project-based learning elective focused on restorative justice and the essential question

“Do our schools and courts treat people fairly?” As part of their inquiry, and as part of their journey to develop more restorative justice structures at the school, students studied how the discipline system currently worked at the school. They created a focus group of students who had experience with the traditional discipline system, and they reviewed six years of their own school’s discipline data, sorted by grade level, type of infraction, consequence, and other categories. Their first step in this data review was to invite the school’s administrative assistant to the class, to hear from her about the data she compiles each year for state and federal census reports. After hearing about what information might be available, they requested to review several years of data. Upon studying the data, students noticed some trends that helped them decide where they might like to focus their own work. They noticed physical conflicts seemed most prevalent in the middle school years and then showed a steady decline as students got older. They also noticed that incidents involving tension between student behavior and adult expectations or authority seemed to decrease after ninth and tenth grade. With this data to guide their work, students eventually developed restorative justice peer mediation protocols, which they used to address challenges that arose between students and challenges that arose between teachers and students in grades 7–10. At the end of this year-long elective, students again turned to data gathering in the form of a survey to inform their reflections on the effectiveness of their efforts. The sample size for the survey was small, but the feedback served the class well in their own reflections. The survey included the following questions:

- *What was your role in your restorative justice experience?*
- *Did your intervention satisfy your need; why or why not?*
- *Was the format of the process comfortable; why or why not; what would you change?*
- *Please describe how you felt having students as the primary mediators.*
- *Do you think your mediation/circle helped to resolve your conflict and/or will prevent future conflicts?*

At the end of the year, students shared the results of this survey and their reflections on their year-long efforts with a panel of school faculty and external evaluators and allies who had worked with the class over the course of the year.

~Elijah Hawks, co-principal, Randolph Union High School

Installation

Communication

At this stage, the leadership team is working to increase capacity of staff and mobilizing resources to move toward implementation. Effective communication around why the school or district is investing resources and creating opportunities to further explore reasons for the change is critical. Engage all stakeholders: school district administration, schools administrators, teachers, support staff, student, parents, and even the greater community.

Training

Building capacity of the school involves initial training. The leadership team is responsible for working with those who are designing and facilitating the training to consider who needs to be involved, to articulate the situation and anticipated change, and to decide where and when the training is held. This information helps determine critical training content.

Well-designed and facilitated training in restorative approaches in schools should model restorative principles. The typical teaching-centered didactic model of professional development will not be effective. Training should respect the knowledge and experience of everyone in the session. It should engage participants, include their voices in both the development of the session and the actual training session, and facilitate relationship building to foster trust and safety so that participants explore core concepts fully. Participants should be able to apply learning from the training session and develop a plan to put what was learned into practice with some immediacy.

Implementation Plan

Engaging a broad base of stakeholders to develop an implementation plan will result in a more comprehensive plan. Relying on a small group of like-minded people may be more efficient, but including different and opposing perspectives will allow the team to identify potential challenges more readily. The plan needs to ensure infrastructure is in place to support the effort, which might mean identifying funding sources to support training time. Remember that this is likely a substantial shift to school culture. The plan might involve restructuring the school calendar or day-to-day schedule to allow for Tier I relationship building. Some schools established the practice of deliberately building relationship and community for the first week before addressing academic content at the beginning of the year. Other schools installed or lengthened advisory or morning meeting time to accommodate implementation. New and modified job descriptions may best support the implementation of restorative approaches. Supporting teachers to use their planning time for planning or facilitating restorative processes may require a shift in responsibilities.

School should deliberately choose a restorative approach because of the needs identified and documented research that indicates it will produce desired outcomes. Schools should plan to verify that the change produced the desired outcomes at the local level. This means collecting baseline data.

In Vermont schools that use federal funds must complete a comprehensive needs assessment (CNA), identify two to three priority areas, and develop a Continuous Improvement Plan (CIP). If federal funds are to be requested to support restorative approaches, there needs to be a logical and rational correlation between the priority areas identified in the CNA and the CIP.

Initial Implementation

Initial implementation of school-wide restorative approaches is putting the implementation plan into practice. It is about getting started, trying it out, and leveraging the individual and collective learning that takes place to enhance and improve the way restorative approach is carried out. The aim is not to perform perfectly but to make mistakes and learn from them. It is important to recognize and communicate this message so individuals give themselves permission to do things differently and feel supported in doing so. Everyone is exploring new skills.

The school is beginning the process of changing culture and the ways in which things are normally done. This can be challenging. Change is an emotional process. Teachers and staff

need to be supported not just in learning new approaches and processes but also around the emotional shifts taking place. Support teachers and staff in ongoing professional development. During initial implementation, schools discover additional changes that need to be made to support restorative approaches, such as shifting schedules, job responsibilities, and infrastructure and physical spaces in the school and even furniture (see *Designing Justice and Designing Spaces, 2016*).

Just as unforeseen challenges will arise, unforeseen gains will be made. Teachers who appeared confident and enthusiastic in training will be uncomfortable and hesitant to start their first community-building circle; teachers who appeared hesitant, even resistant, will try out circles and experience growth and see their relationships with students deepen. Continue to gather short-term wins and maintain gains. Coaching and collaboration with other schools implementing restorative approaches can be very helpful.

In Chittenden, Rutland, and Washington counties, educators and others have formed professional learning communities that meet regularly to talk about their respective efforts to implement a whole-school restorative approach and to learn from each other. This reflective space allows educators to study their efforts with the added benefit of hearing from others on a similar journey. The learning community enhances each step of the Plan-Do-Study-Act cycle.

When classrooms and schools successfully implement restorative approaches for community building, students and adults feel safe and comfortable with the approach and specific practices. In turn, people begin to ask for circles to address challenging situations and harm.

Burlington School District: A case example

During last school year, 2016–17, the Burlington School District (BSD) conducted a comprehensive needs assessment/strategic planning process that involved 11 teams of teachers and administrators, 10 community conversations, and two student forums, with thorough data collected from each session. Concurrently, the Diversity and Equity Team (administrative) and the Equity Council (teacher leaders and volunteer principles) developed and four-year Diversity and Equity Plan for the District. Every teacher in the district had input into the plan and the priorities.

Both processes came to the same conclusion. The achievement gap cannot be addressed until BSD creates a culture of restorative practices, district wide. Through an extensive data review, the district realized that a disproportionate number of suspensions and absences involved students with special needs and students of color and/or in poverty. Those same students have the lowest levels of achievement. These students must be engaged and in class to narrow the achievement gap.

BSD has developed a comprehensive implementation plan that integrates restorative practices with PBIS. BSD created leadership teams to support implementation, hold community conversations, and evaluate both process and outcomes. An assets inventory was completed to identify practices and experiences that are aligned with restorative practices. This allows BSD to build upon what is already working.

The district created a monthly four-hour professional development day to help representatives who have been focused on equity initiatives from each school to:

1. *Ensure systemic alignment with the two priorities of the district—closing the achievement gap and implementing restorative practices district-wide.*
2. *Plan monthly 90-minute professional development sessions on restorative practices in each school district-wide and reflect on the previous month's development in restorative practices.*

Currently, restorative circles are occurring at the monthly systems leaders meeting (district administrators), faculty meetings, and in classrooms throughout the district. The group of restorative practitioners is growing daily!

The district wanted to be assured that this work is founded and supported by data collection and usage; therefore, the district has entered a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the University of Vermont, College of Education and Social Services, to support this effort.

Full Implementation

Full implementation generally does not occur until years two and three. At this stage, the school has integrated restorative principles, processes, and practices into the school infrastructure to support a whole-school restorative approach. “Full implementation of an innovation is reached when at least 50% of the currently employed practitioners simultaneously perform their new functions acceptably” (Fixsen et al., 2005). Upon reaching full implementation, the school community is focused on continuous quality improvement of processes and practices. Further, it is experiencing and documenting changes and outcomes.

Continuous Quality Improvement

Leadership teams intentionally create space for reflection to explore what is working, what is not working, and, most importantly, why. Using a cyclical process such as Plan-Do-Study-Act provides some basic structure and facilitates effective reflection and intentional change. At this stage, it is important to review policy and procedures to ensure they are aligned with restorative principles. Practice should inform policy. Policy can then be adapted to promote effective practice.

Here is a description of the Plan-Do-Study-Act cycle, followed by an image illustrating the cyclical process.

- **Plan:** Capture the situation. Plan what you will change. Predict the impact and change. How will you measure the impact or change?
- **Do:** Try out the change on a small scale. Observe and collect information.
- **Study:** Analyze the observations and information collected and compare to the plan.
- **Act:** Decide whether to make further change. Next cycle. Plan how to improve the change.

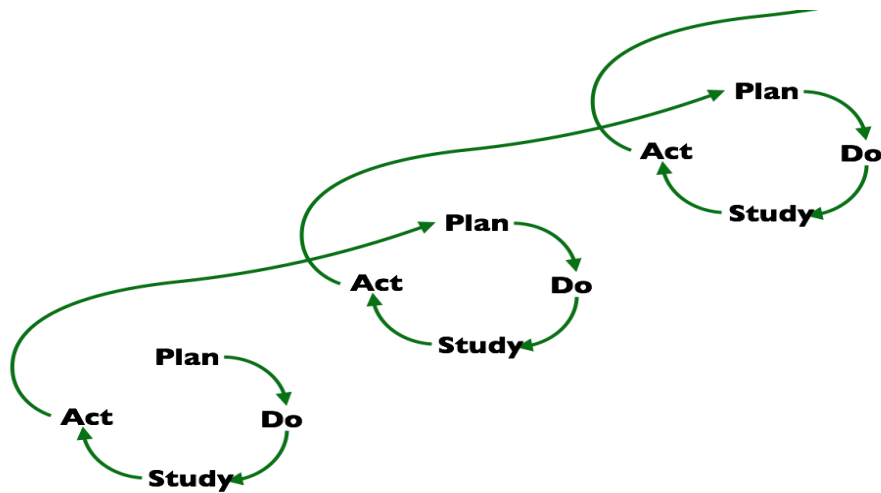


Figure 2. Plan, Do, Study, Act Cycle

Conclusion

Teachers, school staff, schools, and school districts across Vermont are implementing restorative approaches to varying degrees. Most appear to be adopting a whole-school restorative approach aligned with MTSS. This guide was developed to be a resource regardless of where a person, school or district is on the journey—from curious to having years of experience implementing and practicing a whole-school restorative approach. In addition to providing an overview, the document guides readers to additional resources. The pages that follow provide more in-depth reading about restorative approaches in schools, restorative processes and practices, research and outcomes, implementation, and tools and resources to support the entire journey.

Appendices

Appendix A: Restorative Approach Tools

(Modified from Stutzman-Amstutz, L., & Mullet, J. (2005). *The little book of restorative discipline*. Intercourse, PA: Good Books 28-32.)

Restorative Justice: A Yardstick for Schools

Restorative principles are relatively simple; application is as nuanced as how people relate to each other.

1. Focuses on relationships.

- Does the response go beyond focusing on rule and policy violations?
- Is there equal concern given to harms experienced by individuals and the community?

2. Give voice to the person(s) harmed.

- Does the response address the needs of the person harmed, both the immediate victim as well as others who may be affected?
- Does it allow an opportunity for those harmed to be part of the resolution?

3. Give voice to person(s) who caused the harm.

- Has the person who harmed been asked what s/he needs?
- Does it allow an opportunity for those who harmed to be part of the resolution?

4. Engage in collaborative problem-solving.

- Are the solutions being arrived at collaboratively, meaning that all those affected (or representatives of those affected) by the harm/incident are fully involved?
- Given the imbalances that often exist between persons and institutions, have these been recognized, acknowledged, discussed, and addressed?

5. Enhance responsibility.

- Does the response help the person take responsibility for the harm caused, or does it focus primarily on punishment?
- Does the person who caused the harm understand how his/her actions have affected other people? If not, is there a plan in place to assist the person in a process of understanding

6. Empower change and growth.

- Does the response allow the person who harmed to be involved in the process of repair with a concern toward that individual's growth and competency?
Has the individual acknowledged responsibility for the harm of his/her actions? If not, what steps should be taken to address ways of supporting that person's need for growth and competency?

7. Plan for restoration.

- Does the response allow for the person who harmed, as well as the person harmed, to be supported and reintegrated back into the community?

- Has the issue of accountability been appropriately addressed to the satisfaction of the person harmed?

Readiness Assessment

Included below is a readiness assessment tool, an instrument to highlight qualities that allow a school to move forward. It was adapted from a worksheet in Strategic Planning for Nonprofit Organizations (Allison and Kaye, 2004) by Rita Renjitham Alfred and Jon Kidde. It was re-designed to help gauge school readiness to begin to explore restorative justice as a way to shift the culture of the school. It is meant as a starting point and to provide a list of things to think about. Each school will have unique strengths and hurdles that may prove more important than the items in the assessment tool. If some school stakeholders do not seem ready, do not abandon the effort; consider what steps can be taken to encourage greater understanding and engagement.

| Assessing Readiness for School-Wide Restorative Practices | | Yes | No | Unsure or N/A |
|---|---|-----|----|---------------|
| 1) | Is there a committed person or persons prepared to act as the cheerleader, information gatherer, teacher, and facilitator as the school community learns, understands, and uses restorative approaches? | | | |
| 2) | Are stakeholders willing to question the status quo, to look at new ways of doing things, ask the hard questions, face difficult choices, and make decisions that are best for the whole school? | | | |
| 3) | Can those initially involved envision a planning and implementation effort that is inclusive and encourages broad participation, so that the school community feels ownership? | | | |
| 4) | Are key stakeholders able to re-prioritize school resources to plan and implement restorative approaches? <i>Primary needs are administrator, teacher, and staff time for training and discussion, but might also include money for training, professional development, and consultants.</i> | | | |
| 5) | Does the school have access to training and modeling of restorative processes to ensure adequate understanding of the range of restorative responses and best practices? | | | |
| 6) | Is there the understanding and commitment that this cultural shift will take time? <i>Many schools see some immediate results but truly shifting the culture at the school is likely to take three or more years.</i> | | | |
| 7) | Is there understanding that efforts to change culture create tensions with emotional responses that need space to be heard? | | | |
| 8) | Will school stakeholders be made aware of constraints and non-negotiable items up front? | | | |
| 9) | Is there an absence of serious conflict between key stakeholders within the school that would prevent collaboration? <i>Healthy skepticism and heated discussions are to be expected.</i> | | | |
| 10) | Are there no major decisions affecting the school to be made by an external entity within the next six months? <i>Example: The principal or other key leadership in the school is changing.</i> | | | |
| 11) | Does the school have the resources and desire to gather qualitative and quantitative data and discuss it to support the motivation needed to initially support the effort and sustain it? <i>Teachers may already be aware of costs and unintended consequences of current practices without the need for hard data. Schools should also have resources to evaluate outcomes after implementing changes.</i> | | | |

Circle Template

| |
|--|
| Purpose State general purpose or reason for the circle. |
| Materials List any materials needed. Examples: Centerpiece, talking piece, materials for activities |
| Preparation |
| Welcome to the space of the circle |
| Mindfulness moment and/or opening Describe the opening. <i>Circle Forward</i> , Appendix II, contains sample openings and closings: readings (p. 329); movement exercises (p. 389); music and songs (p. 391). Feel free to use other sources. |
| Introduction to elements of the process Decide what introduction to the process is needed. This depends on past experience in circle. For a new group this may mean explaining the function of the talking piece and rounds. For a more experienced group it may be a reminder about values and guidelines. |
| Introduction/check-in round How will you invite participants to talk about how they are feeling on physical, mental, or emotional levels in the moment? Examples: Name one word describing how you are feeling, or if you could be a weather pattern, what pattern would describe how you are feeling right now (today)? |
| Main activity Explain the purpose of the circle. |
| Round |

| |
|---|
| Round |
| Check-out round How will you invite participants to express how they are feeling at this moment as the circle is about to end? Examples: Share one word about how you are feeling or what you most appreciated about the process. |
| Closing How will you close the circle with intention and allow participants to re-enter the world and acknowledge the work done in circle? Examples: poems, quotes, do a guided meditation or breathing exercise, or songs. |

SOAR Worksheet

This worksheet is informed by O'Neil, C. (2007). *SOAR don't SWOT: Asset Strategic Planning*. Santa Margarita, CA: Nonprofit Boards and Governance Review.)

| | |
|--|---|
| Strengths What's already happening in your school or classroom that is aligned with this approach? | Opportunities What practice opportunities exist now to advance restorative approaches at your school? |
| Aspirations What is your preferred future or vision for your school? | Results What outcomes do you want to see? |

Action Step

Look at the Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations, and Results you identified above. Craft a SMART action step: Small, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Time-bound.

Sample Action Plan Template

Directions:

Modify the form as needed to fit your unique context.

1. Collaboratively identify action steps that are SMART: Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Time-bound.
2. Distribute copies of each work plan to the members of the collaboration team.

3. Keep copies handy and bring them to meetings to review and update regularly. You may decide to develop new work plans for new phases of your reform effort.

What is the situation that calls for this work?

What desired changes will result from it?

SMART Action Steps

| What Will Be Done? | Who Will Do It? | By When? | Resources Available/ Needed | Potential Barriers |
|---------------------------|------------------------|-----------------|------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Step 1: | | | | |
| Step 2: | | | | |

Evidence of Success (How will you know you are making progress? What are your benchmarks?)

Evaluation Process (How will you determine that your goal has been reached? What are your measures?)

A Sample Implementation Plan

Below is a process one school used to implement a restorative approach, adapted from an example developed by Rita Renjitham Alfred.

Year One (Exploration)

- Select staff members attend professional development on restorative approaches.
- Informal conversations are held with administrators about restorative approaches.
- Some teachers implement community-building circles in the classroom.
- Minimal restorative practices are used with students.

Year Two (Installation and Initial Implementation)

- Professional development held with all staff on restorative approaches prior to the school year.*
- Monthly learning community and relationship-building meetings are initiated. Meetings are two to three hours, use a restorative process, and take place throughout the year.*
- Additional professional development opportunities on restorative approaches are offered.
- Informal conversations with students about restorative approaches begin.
- Restorative processes and practices are used to build community, celebrate, and heal.
- Some staff begin to use restorative practices to resolve conflicts with students.
- Administrators begin to use restorative practices for disciplinary infractions.
- An elective restorative justice class is offered to students.*
- Parents are informally introduced to restorative approaches at parent events at the school.

Year Three (Full Implementation)

- School site team oversees the rollout of restorative approaches.
- Parents are formally introduced to restorative approaches through letters home, school events, and participation in processes.
- An all-day restorative justice training is held in the spring.*
- Students are formally taught about restorative philosophy and practices.*
- Students begin to use restorative justice practices for student conflicts.*
- Restorative practices are used regularly for all conflicts and discipline issues.*

Year Four (Continued Implementation, Continuous Quality Improvement)

- School site team oversees maintenance and enhancement of restorative efforts.*
- Parents are reminded and informed of the school's use of restorative approaches.*
- Parent group attends two-hour, eight-week sessions of restorative approaches training.*
- Students lead restorative approaches for community building and repairing harm.*
- Students use restorative practices for student and student-school staff conflicts.*
- Students and other school staff present and lead sessions in the community about restorative approaches.*
- Volunteers participate in using restorative approaches for community building and conflicts in the school.*

In addition to the training above, an alliance was developed with community partners and conversations were taking place with the district administrators. Within the schools, an student advisory period was created where teachers used restorative practices to build community.

* Ongoing activities once initiated.

Appendix B: Resources and References

Selected Books and Articles

References are followed by an excerpt from the publication or the publisher.

Evans, K., and Vaandering, D. (2016). *The little book of restorative justice in education*. Intercourse, PA: Good Books.

Much more than a response to harm, restorative justice nurtures relational, interconnected school cultures. The wisdom embedded within its principles and practices is being welcomed at a time when exclusionary discipline and zero tolerance policies are recognized as perpetuating student apathy, disproportionality, and the school-to-prison pipeline... *The Little Book of Restorative Justice in Education* is a reference that practitioners can turn to repeatedly for clarity and consistency as they implement restorative justice in educational settings.

Kelly, V., and Thorsborne, M. (2014). *The psychology of emotion in restorative practice*. Philadelphia, PA: Jessica Kingsley.

How and why does restorative practice (RP) work? This book presents the biological theory, affect script psychology (ASP), behind RP, and shows how it works in practice in different settings.

Morrison, B. (2007). *Restoring safe school communities: A whole school response to bullying, violence and alienation*. Annandale, Australia: Federation Press.

Brenda Morrison introduces a three-tiered, whole-school approach to addressing bullying and violence in schools. Each tier involves a widening of the circle of care from students to school community members to parents, faculty, and staff as cases of bullying and violence grow in impact and more people are affected. Examples of restorative responses at each tier are provided.

Riestenberg, N. (2012). *Circle in the square: Building communities and repairing harm in school*. St. Paul, MN: [Living Justice Press](#).

Nancy Riestenberg uses story to illustrate the many challenges faced by students, faculty, staff, and administration in the school setting, including bullying, violence, suspensions, and conflict among staff, and the power of circle and restorative practices to create safe and supportive spaces for all.

Stutzman-Amstutz, L., and Mullet, J. H. (2005). *The little book of restorative discipline for schools: Teaching responsibility; creating communities*. Intercourse, PA: Good Books.

In this book, the authors present a restorative approach applied to the school context. Whereas punishment does little to promote responsibility, restorative discipline addresses the aim of teaching children to develop personal self-discipline. The movement in schools has roots in the peaceable schools concept, as well as movements in conflict resolution education (CRE), character education (CE), and emotional literacy (Daniel Goleman). The authors provide a number of illustrative stories. Practical applied models are also described, including whole-school training, class meetings, various types of circles, and conferencing, plus sections covering truancy mediation and bullying.

Thorsborne, M., Vinegrad, D., and Hailstone, P. (2009). *Restorative justice pocketbook*. Alresford, UK: [Teachers' Pocketbooks](#).

Using visual illustration and case scenarios, the *Restorative Justice Pocketbook* provides an overview of restorative practices in schools as well as scripted guides for conducting restorative conferencing to address and repair harm across a wide range of incidents varying in severity.

Wachtel, T. (2016). *Defining restorative*. Bethlehem, PA: International Institute for Restorative Practices.

The International Institute for Restorative Practices (IIRP) has a particular way of defining restorative and related terms that is consistent throughout our courses, events, videos, and publications.

Wennberg, M. (2016). *Implementing restorative principles and practices in Vermont schools*. Vermont Agency of Education.

A meeting Report on the Future Visions, Current Initiatives and Strategic Recommendations of Restorative Practice Trainers and Vested Stakeholders.

Zehr, H. (2015). *The little book of restorative justice, revised and updated*. New York: Good Books.

Zehr provides an overview of restorative justice, restorative principles, and restorative practices. Because Zehr's presentation is so clear, concise, and accessible, this book is appropriate for academic classes, workshops, and trainings.

Restorative Process and Practice Resources

Boyes-Watson, C., and Pranis, K. (2014). *Circle forward: Building a restorative school community*. St. Paul, MN: Living Justice Press.

Circle Forward is a resource guide designed to help teachers, administrators, students and parents incorporate the practice of circles into the everyday life of the school community. This resource guide offers comprehensive step-by-step instructions for how to plan, facilitate and implement the circle for a variety of purposes within the school environment. It describes the basic process, essential elements and a step-by-step guide for how to organize, plan, and lead circles.

Claassen, R., and Claassen, R. (2008). *Discipline that restores: strategies to create respect, cooperation, and responsibility in the classroom*. South Carolina: Booksurge Publishing.

Discipline That Restores is a restorative discipline system for schools, classrooms, and homes that parallels, contributes to, and draws from emerging international conflict resolution education, peace education and restorative justice movements with emphasis on the last.

Clifford, A. (2013). *Teaching restorative practices with classroom circles*. Retrieved September 20, 2017 from [Restorative Practices Resources](#).

This manual supports the teaching of restorative practices and skills in your classroom. Restorative practices are a framework for building community and for responding to challenging behavior through authentic dialogue, coming to understanding, and making things right.

Living Justice Press. (n.d.). Circle Process Graphics and Handouts. Living Justice Press. Retrieved May 10, 2017 from [Living Justice Press](#).

Living Justice Press offers graphics and documents, free of charge, to anyone wanting them for personal, educational, or training purposes. They can be used as posters, hand-outs, overheads, or parts of a circle centerpiece.

Oakland Unified School District (n.d.). Circle templates and other info. Retrieved September 20, 2017 from [Oakland Unified School District](#).

This guide contains a link to additional resources (circle tools, templates, reflections, questions, presentations and more.

MacRae, A., and Zehr, H. (2004). *The little book of family group conferences: New Zealand style*. Intercourse, PA: Good Books.

Family Group Conferences (FGCs) are the primary forum in New Zealand for dealing with juvenile crime as well as child welfare issues... FGCs have been adopted and adapted in many places throughout the world. They have been applied in many arenas including child welfare, school discipline, and criminal justice, both juvenile and adult.

Pranis, K. (2005). *The little book of circle processes: A new/old approach to peacemaking*. Intercourse, PA: Good Books.

Pranis provides an overview of circle processes, the values and teachings that form their foundation, and key elements of the process. Interspersed with stories to illustrate the application, Pranis walks the reader through the process in a concise style that makes the book appropriate for academic classes, workshops, and trainings.

PBIS Resources

Lynass, L., and, Berkowitz, K. (2015). *Santa Rosa City Schools multi-tiered systems of support BEST Plus handbook*. Santa Rosa City Schools.

BEST Plus is the intentional blending of school wide three-tiered Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) PBIS framework and Restorative Justice Practices (RJP) and is based a proactive prevention based framework, which allows schools to highlight and reinforce the importance of establishing a positive environment for all members of the school community, and more systematically deliver needed supports to those students who need it.

Swain-Bradway, J., Eber, L., Sprague, J., and Nelson, M. (2016). *Restorative justice practices in School-wide Positive Behavior Interventions and Support: A model for alignment and evaluation*.

Manuscript submitted for publication.

Swain-Bradway, J., Maggin, D., and Buren, M. (2015). *PBIS forum in brief: Integration of RJP within PBIS*. Midwest PBIS Network, University of Illinois at Chicago. Retrieved from [PBIS](#).

To begin building the model for alignment and evaluation, the purpose of the *Restorative Justice Practices* (RJP) within SWPBIS roundtable was to investigate issues surrounding the adoption and implementation of RJP for schools already implementing SWPBIS.

Websites

PBISApps:

[PBISApps](#) is a not-for-profit group, developed and operated by faculty and staff at Educational and Community Supports (ECS), a research unit within the College of Education at the University of Oregon. ECS's mission is to implement practices resulting in positive, durable, scientifically validated change in the lives of individuals with disabilities and their families.

Technical Assistance Center on PBIS:

Funded by the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP), the [Technical Assistance Center on PBIS](#) supports schools, districts, and states to build systems capacity for implementing a multi-tiered approach to social, emotional, and behavior support.

Vermont Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports:

[Vermont Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports \(VTPBIS\)](#) is a state-wide effort designed to help school teams form a proactive, school-wide, systems approach to improving social and academic competence for all students. Schools in Vermont are engaged in using a formal system of positive behavioral supports in their schools.

Understanding the Need

Advancement Project. (May 2003). *Derailed: The schoolhouse to jailhouse track*. Retrieved July 29, 2009 from [Advancement Project](#).

Advancement Project. (March 2005). *Education on lockdown: The schoolhouse to jailhouse track*. Retrieved July 29, 2009 from [Advancement Project](#).

Advancement Project. (March 2010). *Test, punish, and push out: How "zero tolerance" and high-stakes testing funnel youth into the school-to-prison pipeline*. Washington, D.C.

American Psychological Association Zero Tolerance Task Force. (Dec 2008). Are zero tolerance policies effective in the schools? An evidentiary review and recommendations. *American Psychologist*, 63(9), 852–862. Retrieved October 31, 2014 from [American Psychological Association](#).

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). (2009). *School connectedness: Strategies for increasing protective factors among youth*. Atlanta, GA: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Diaz, J. (2015). *KICKED OUT! Unfair and unequal student discipline in Vermont's public schools*. Vermont Legal Aid.

Freeman, J., and Farbman, M. D. (2011). *Failed policies, broken futures: The true cost of zero tolerance in Chicago*. Voices of Youth in Chicago Education: Chicago, IL.

Goldberg, M., and Moskowitz, D. (2016). *Education matters: The impacts of systemic inequality in Vermont*. Voices for Vermont's Children.

Holcombe, R. January, 2017. *Exclusionary Discipline Response: Response to written request of February 26, 2015 related to S.67*. Vermont Agency of Education.

Sacks, V., Moore, K., Terzian, M., and Constance, N. (2014). *School policies, school connection, and adolescents: What predicts young adult substance use?* Research Brief. [Child Trends](#).

Wadhwa, A. (2010). There has never been a glory day in education for non-whites: Critical race theory and discipline reform in Denver. *International Journal on School Disaffection*, 7(2), 21–28.

Outcomes Related to Restorative Approaches

Acosta, J. (Forthcoming). *RCT of the Restorative Practices Intervention (RPI)*. RAND.

Armour, M. (2014). *Ed White Middle School restorative discipline evaluation: Implementation and impact, 2013/2014*. The Institute for Restorative Justice and Restorative Dialogue, The University of Texas at Austin.

Baker, M. (2009). *DPS restorative justice project: Year three*. Denver, CO: Denver Public Schools.

Encarnacao, J. (Sept., 3, 2013). "Sharp drop in suspensions as Boston schools try 'restorative' approach. *Boston Herald*. Retrieved December 8, 2017 from [Boston Herald](#).

Fronius, T., Persson, H., Guckenburg, S., Hurley, N., and Petrsino, A. (2016). *Restorative justice in U.S. schools: A research review*. [WestEd](#).

Gregory A., Clawson, K., Davis, A., and Gerewitz, J. (2014). The promise of restorative practices to transform teacher-student relationships and achieve equity in school discipline. *Journal of Educational and Psychological Consultation*.

Jain, S., Bassey, H. Brown, M., and Kalra, P. (2014). *Restorative justice in Oakland schools: Implementation and impacts*. Retrieved June 8, 2015 from [Restorative justice in Oakland schools: Implementation and impacts](#).

Kidde, J., and Alfred, R. (2011). *Restorative justice: A working guide for our schools*. Alameda County Health Care Services.

Lewis, S. (2009). *Improving school climate: Findings from schools implementing restorative practices*. Retrieved October 31, 2014 from [International Institute for Restorative Practices](#).

McMorris, B. J., Beckman, K. J., Shea, G., Baumgartner, J., and Eggert, R. C. (2013). *Applying restorative justice practices to Minneapolis Public School students recommended for possible expulsion: A pilot program evaluation of the Family and Youth Restorative Conference Program*. School of Nursing and the Healthy Youth Development. Prevention Research Center, Department of Pediatrics, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, MN.

Minnesota Department of Education. (2003). *Restorative school grant executive summary*. Minnesota: Minnesota Department of Education.

Minnesota Department of Education. (2011). *Restorative measures in schools survey, 2011 executive summary*. Minnesota: Minnesota Department of Education.

Oakland Unified School District. (2015a). OUSD Aeries Scorecard Data File. Oakland, CA: Oakland Unified School District. Retrieved February 2, 2016 from [Oakland Unified School District](#).

Oakland Unified School District. (2015b). OUSD Aeries Data 2011–2014 Scoreboard Data File. Oakland, CA: Oakland Unified School District. Retrieved February 2, 2016 from [Oakland Unified School District](#).

Schiff, M. (2013). Dignity, disparity and desistance: Effective restorative justice strategies to plug the “school-to-prison-pipeline.” In Center for Civil Rights Remedies National Conference. *Closing the School to Research Gap: Research to Remedies Conference*. Washington, DC.

Stewart Klein, S. D. M. (2016). *Can restorative practices help to reduce disparities in school discipline data? A review of the literature*. National Association for Multicultural Education.

Sumner, M., Silverman, C., and Frampton, M. (2011). *School-based restorative justice as an alternative to zero-tolerance policies: Lessons from West Oakland*. Thelton E. Henderson Center for Social Justice, University of California, Berkeley, School of Law.

Government Publications Supporting of Restorative Practices in Schools

U.S. Department of Education and the U.S. Department of Justice. (January 2014). *Dear colleague letter on the nondiscriminatory administration of school discipline*. Retrieved May 10, 2017 from [Office for Civil Rights](#).

Dear Colleague guidance letter, prepared with our partners at the U.S. Department of Justice, describing how schools can meet their obligations under federal law to administer student discipline without discriminating on the basis of race, color, or national origin.

U.S. Dept. of Education. (July 2015). *Rethink school discipline: school district leader summit on improving school climate and discipline resource guide for superintendent action*. Retrieved May 10, 2017 from [U.S. Dept. of Education](#).

U.S. Dept. of Education. (n.d.). *Restorative justice practices and bullying prevention*. Retrieved May 10, 2017 from [The Official Blog of the U.S. Department of Education](#).

States and districts are increasingly in support of policies and practices that shift school discipline away from zero tolerance, such as suspension and expulsion, and toward discipline that is focused on teaching and engagement. To this effort, districts and states are rethinking discipline and adopting both restorative justice practices (RJP) and bullying prevention (BP) as school-wide efforts to provide school staff with a set of preventative and responsive strategies to supporting positive student behaviors.

U.S. Dept. of Education. (2014). *Guiding principles: A resource guide for improving school climate and discipline*. Retrieved May 10, 2017 from [U.S. Department of Education](#).

Developing positive school climates and improving school discipline policies and practices are critical steps to raising academic achievement and supporting student success. However, there is no single formula for doing so. Rather, the growing body of research and best practices in the field should inform locally developed approaches to improving school climate and discipline policies and practices.

Implementation Resources

Alison M., and Kaye, J. (2005). *Strategic planning for nonprofit organizations: a practical guide and workbook*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley and Sons, Inc.

Strategic Planning for Nonprofit Organizations: A Practical Guide and Workbook, Second Edition, offers a conceptual framework and detailed process suggestions for strategic planning in nonprofit organizations.

Ashley, J., and Burke, K. (2009). *Implementing restorative justice: A guide for schools*. Chicago: Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority.

This guide is specifically designed to provide Illinois school personnel with practical strategies to apply restorative justice methods. A variety of juvenile justice practitioners and school personnel provided guidance during the development of this guide to make it applicable for those working in elementary and secondary schools. Many school districts in Illinois already incorporate the restorative justice philosophy in their discipline codes. The goals of this guide are to:

- introduce school personnel to the concepts of restorative justice and restorative discipline
- offer new tools that can reduce the need for school exclusion and juvenile justice system involvement in school misconduct
- offer ways to enhance the school environment to prevent conflict and restore relationships after conflict arises

Beckman, K., McMorris, B., and Gower, A. (2012). *Restorative interventions implementation toolkit*. Minnesota Department of Education. Retrieved May 10, 2017 from [Restorative Interventions Facilitator's Toolkit](#).

This toolkit offers tools and resources for school staff and other adults trained to facilitate conferences and circles to repair harm in educational settings and designed to assess readiness, implementation, and outcomes for school-based restorative discipline models.

Beckman, K., and Riestenberg, N. (2016). *Trainer's guide for working with schools to implement restorative practices*. Retrieved September 20, 2017 from [Minnesota Department of Education](#).

As more educators and school leaders begin to use restorative practices as a comprehensive whole-school approach to improving school climate, community-based restorative practices

trainers are a valuable asset to schools. This guide provides ideas, experiences, and resources to trainers as they help schools implement restorative practices.

Berkowitz, K. (2012). *Restorative practices whole-school implementation guide*. San Francisco Unified School District. Retrieved December 8, 2017 from [San Francisco Unified School District](#).

This *Whole-School Implementation Guide* is designed to offer a step-by-step evidence-based approach that ensures an inclusive, comprehensive, successful, and sustainable change effort through the implementation of restorative practices.

Blood, P., and Thorsborne, M. (2013). *Implementing restorative practices in schools: A practical guide to transforming school communities*. London: Jessica Kingsley Pub.

Restorative practice is a proven approach to discipline in schools that favors relationships over retribution and has been shown to improve behavior and enhance teaching and learning outcomes. However, in order for it to work, restorative practice needs a relational school culture. *Implementing Restorative Practice in Schools* explains what has to happen in a school in order for it to become truly restorative.

Denver School-Based Restorative Practices Partnership. (2017). *School-wide restorative practices: Step by step*. Retrieved September 20, 2017 from [Denver School-Based Restorative Practices Partnership](#).

This guide is written for educators, families, and community members who understand that traditional, punitive discipline policies and practices are ineffective, do not support students, and have a disproportionate impact on students of color. This guide hopes to build the capacity of educators and community members to implement a positive approach to discipline in the form of restorative practices.

Designing Justice and Designing Spaces. (2016). *Creating restorative justice spaces in schools*. Retrieved September 20, 2017 from [Designing Justice and Designing Spaces](#).

It is shown that restorative justice programs in schools are more effective when embedded within the school culture (Fronius et al. 2016). In the agency of this goal we can look to another powerful tool that until recently has not been utilized in shifting school culture from a punitive to restorative one—design and the built environment.

Dignity in Schools. (n.d.). *The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) FAQ on school climate and discipline reform*. Retrieved September 29, 2017 from [Dignity in Schools](#).

Fixsen, D., Naoom, S., Blase, K., Friedman, R., and Wallace, F. (2005). *Implementation research: A synthesis of the literature*. Tampa: University of South Florida. The original monograph can be downloaded from nirn.fmhi.usf.edu/resources/publications/Monograph.

Fixsen, D., Naoom, S., Blase, K., and Wallace, F. (2007). *Implementation: The missing link between research and practice*. Tampa: University of South Florida.

Kidde, J., and Alfred, R. (2011). *Restorative justice: A working guide for our schools*. Alameda County Health Care Services Agency. Retrieved October 22, 2016 from [Alameda County Health Care Services Agency](#).

The publication is a resource for anyone who seeks to implement restorative justice in the school setting. The 43-page PDF covers the following:

- introduction to restorative justice and its application to schools
- use of the approach on three levels: (1) as a school-wide prevention practice, (2) to manage difficulties, and (3) for intense intervention
- benefits, outcomes, and impacts from current evaluative reports
- guidance on initiating restorative justice at the school or district level
- abstracts of publications and websites for additional information and support.

Minnesota Department of Education. (2016). *Restorative practices implementation, trainers and training: An administrator's checklist*. Minnesota Department of Education. Retrieved September 20, 2017 from [Minnesota Department of Education](#).

This checklist is designed for school administrators interested in school-wide implementation of restorative practices (RP) and provides guidelines for working with RP trainers. Creating a sustainable, school-wide, best practices restorative practices program for your school will take sustained and intentional effort to assess, create a plan, and implement the different aspects of RP with fidelity.

Minnesota Department of Education. (2015). *Restorative interventions implementation toolkit*. Retrieved September 20, 2017 from [Minnesota Department of Education](#).

This packet of tools and resources was developed as a resource to school staff and other adults trained to facilitate conferences and circles to repair harm in educational settings. The tools and resources offered here are designed to assess readiness, implementation, and outcomes as defined by the curriculum, but can also be used as guidance for implementing any other school-based restorative model.

Morrison, B., Thorsborne, M. and Blood, P. (2005). Practicing restorative justice in school communities: The challenge of culture change. *Public Organization Review: A Global Journal*, 5: 335–357.

The practice of restorative justice in schools has the capacity to build social and human capital through challenging students in the context of social and emotional learning. While restorative justice was originally introduced in schools to address serious incidents of misconduct and harmful behavior, the potential this philosophy offers is much greater. The conviction is that the key challenge for schools is addressing the culture change required to make the shift from traditional discipline, driven by punitive (or rewards-based) external motivators, to restorative

discipline, driven by relational motivators that seek to empower individuals and their communities. (Author's abstract.) [Learn more about this article online.](#)

National Education Association, American Federation of Teacher, National Opportunity to Learn Campaign, and Advancement Project. (2014). *Restorative practices: Fostering healthy relationships and promoting positive discipline in schools, A guide for educators*. Retrieved January 11, 2016 from [National Education Association, American Federation of Teacher, National Opportunity to Learn Campaign, and Advancement Project.](#)

This toolkit is intended for all educators who support the growth and health of students in schools. It is an introduction for those new to the concepts and will help support and enhance the work of teachers already implementing these practices in their classrooms. The toolkit includes digestible models, frameworks, and action steps for school-wide implementation, accompanied by guiding questions to support reflection for practitioners looking to make restorative methods part of the fabric of daily life in schools.

New Zealand Ministry of Education. (2014). *Restorative practice kete*. Retrieved September 20, 2017 from [New Zealand Ministry of Education.](#)

(A kete is a basket of materials or manual.) This kete supports schools to implement a restorative practice model that builds inclusive networks of positive, respectful relationships across the school community. In particular, it provides information and support for restorative practice coaches, principals, and other leaders in schools. The PB4L RP kete is made up of five books.

Oakland Unified School District. (2017). *Restorative Justice Implementation Guide: A Whole School Approach*. Retrieved September 20, 2017 from [Oakland Unified School District.](#)

This guide is designed for a Restorative Practices Facilitator to support their school to create an implementation plan to introduce restorative practices to a school, school wide.

Russell, L. (2012). *Restorative justice 4 schools Ltd implementation pack*. Restorative Justice 4 Schools.

The *Implementation Pack* provides an overview of ways in which restorative practices can be applied in schools; examples and templates of documents to support restorative processes, including scripts, evaluation forms, and action plans; and training resources free for use.

Wachtel, T., Costello, B., and Wachtel, J. (2009). *The restorative practices handbook for teachers, disciplinarians and administrators*. Bethlehem, PA: International Institute of Restorative Practices. The *Restorative Practices Handbook* is a practical guide for educators interested in implementing restorative practices, an approach that proactively builds positive school communities while dramatically reducing discipline referrals, suspensions, and expulsions. The handbook discusses the spectrum of restorative techniques, offers implementation guidelines, explains how and why the processes work, and relates real-world stories of restorative practices in action.

Websites

[The National Implementation Research Network's Active Implementation Hub \(AI Hub\)](#)

The AI Hub is developed and maintained by the State Implementation and Scaling-up of Evidence-based Practices Center (SISEP) and the National Implementation Research Network (NIRN) at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill's FPG Child Development Institute. Content is added and updated regularly.

Assessing and Evaluating Implementation and Outcomes

Tools and Indicators to Assess Restorative Approach in Schools

Included below are tools to assess knowledge, skills, and attitudes that support restorative approaches.

Minnesota Department of Education. (2016). [Restorative practices implementation, trainers and training: An administrator's checklist](#).

This checklist is designed for school administrators interested in school-wide implementation of restorative practices (RP) and provides guidelines for working with RP trainers and includes Key Indicators for Restorative Practices in Schools, Restorative Practices Values and Principles: Key Knowledge and Practices.

Thorsborne, M. (2009). *How restorative am I?* Margaret Thorsborne and Associates.

An adapted version of this tool is included in Restorative Practice Kete Book Two-Module-1. Retrieved on September 28, 2017 from [Te Kete Ipurangi](#).

Tools to Evaluate School Climate

[The National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments \(NCSSLE\)](#)—Maintains a growing list of school climate scales, surveys, and assessment tools schools can use in their efforts to measure and improve school climate.

[National School Climate Center](#)—Provides a series of scales, surveys, and assessment tools that can be used in systematically planning for school climate improvement.

PBIS Apps, PBIS Assessment Surveys—For a survey to be included in PBIS Assessment, it must be reliable and evidence-based; be consistent across all states; and meet the needs not duplicated by another survey currently in use. Two tools are especially relevant to measure school climate:

- *The School Climate Survey* is a set of multidimensional surveys to measure student perceptions of school climate.
- [The School Safety Survey](#) is a survey to help teams determine risk and protective factors for the school. Teams use the SSS summary to determine what training and support may be needed related to school safety and violence prevention in the school.

[School Health Index](#)—An online self-assessment and planning tool that schools can use to improve their health and safety policies and programs to create safe and supportive schools.

Fidelity Resources

Algozzine, B., Barrett, S., Eber, L., George, H., Horner, R., Lewis, T., Putnam, B., Swain-Bradway, J., McIntosh, K., and Sugai, G. (2014). *School-wide PBIS tiered fidelity inventory*. OSEP Technical Assistance Center on [Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports](#).

Oakland Unified School District and DNS Global, LLC. (Forthcoming). *RJ fidelity to implementation checklist*.

Portland Public Schools, Department of Climate and Discipline, Resolutions Northwest. (2016). *Restorative justice practices TFI companion Guide (v1.4)*. Retrieved September 28, 2017 from [Portland Public Schools](#).

Sprague, J., and Tobin, T. (2017). *Aligning positive behavioral interventions and supports and restorative practices: An implementation fidelity manual*. Draft. University of Oregon, Institute on Violence and Destructive Behavior, Eugene. Retrieved September 29 from [University of Oregon](#).

Sprague, J., and Tobin, T. (2017). *Tiered fidelity inventory—restorative practices (TFI-RP): a tool for using restorative practices (RP) with positive behavioral interventions and supports (PBIS)*. Draft. University of Oregon, Institute on Violence and Destructive Behavior, Eugene. Retrieved on September 29, 2017 from [University of Oregon](#).

Selected School Districts

Baltimore City Schools:

Restorative practices are one way that [City Schools](#) builds healthy school communities. This set of tools and strategies draws on the belief that open, respectful communication helps reduce conflict. And, when conflict does occur, restorative practices encourage students to focus on the harm caused and on ways to repair relationships.

Minnesota Department of Education:

The [Minnesota Department of Education](#) helps schools develop programming, curricula, and intervention practices to create safe schools by teaching social skills, building positive school climate, and repairing harm when it happens. Restorative practices can be used to hold students accountable for harm and address the needs of students or staff harmed and the school community.

Oakland Unified School District:

Restorative justice (RJ) is a set of principles and practices employed in the [Oakland Unified School District](#) to build community and respond to student misconduct, with the goals of repairing harm and restoring relationships between those impacted. The RJ program in OUSD pilots a three-tiered model of prevention/ intervention/supported re-entry in response to conflict/harm. The RJ program works to lower our rate of suspension and expulsion and to foster positive school climates with the goal of eliminating racially disproportionate discipline practices and the resulting pushout of students into the prison pipeline.

San Francisco Unified School District:

In recognition of the need for an accelerated “culture shift” in the way [San Francisco Unified School District \(SFUSD\)](#) approaches solutions to disruptive student behavior and growing rates of suspensions, the Board of Education adopted Resolution No. 96-23A1. This resolution aims to take a restorative approach to student discipline and preventative measures in our school communities. Demonstration of this support was evidenced by the passage of Resolution 96-23A1–In Support of a Comprehensive School Climate, Restorative Practices and Alternatives to Suspension/Expulsion. [Board Resolution 96-23A1](#).

Additional School Districts Implementing a Restorative Approach and Reporting Results:

- [Chicago Public Schools, Illinois](#)
- [Cleveland Metropolitan School District, Ohio](#)
- [Denver Public Schools, Colorado](#)
- [Madison Public Schools, Wisconsin](#)
- [New York City Public Schools, New York](#)
- [Santa Rosa City Schools, California](#)

Websites

The [Dignity in Schools Campaign \(DSC\)](#) challenges the systemic problem of pushout in our nation's schools and works to dismantle the school-to-prison pipeline. DSC provides tools for effective advocacy, supports local campaigns, develops model school policies, and shares information.

[Eastern Mennonite University](#)—**The Center for Justice and Peacebuilding (CJP)** was established in 1994 at Eastern Mennonite University (EMU) and supports the personal and professional development of individuals as peacebuilders and strengthens the peacebuilding capacities of the institutions they serve. Long a pioneer in the field of restorative justice, Eastern Mennonite University is now the first in the country to offer restorative justice programs within a graduate teacher education program.

[International Institute of Restorative Practices \(IIRP\)](#) is a nonprofit organization that provides education and research in support of the development of restorative practices and helps educators improve classroom management, school discipline and school climate through restorative practices.

[Living Justice Press](#) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization whose purpose is to publish and promote alternative works about social justice and community healing.

[Restorative Justice for Oakland Youth \(RJOY\)](#) posts website videos and resources that provide an overview of restorative justice theory and practices as well as resources for schools and community restorative organizations.

[Restorative Justice Online](#) provides a thorough introduction to restorative justice as well as access to an extensive online library of resources, research, and media coverage from all around the world. The More Rooms/Class Room section posts links to school-related resources.

[Restorative Solutions](#) is a Colorado-based organization that provides training and consultation for individuals, organizations, and communities interested in incorporating restorative justice into their practice. Visit the [Schools section](#) for training opportunities and the [Resources tab](#) for lists of books, research, and national and international restorative justice programs.

[The Skidmore College Project on Restorative Justice](#) conducts research, teaching, training, and technical assistance for restorative justice projects in schools, universities, communities, and the criminal justice system.

[University of Texas–Austin—The Institute for Restorative Justice and Restorative Dialogue](#) provides training, evaluation, and research on restorative practices in the criminal justice system, in the community, and in schools.

Videos

Brave New Films. (2014, April 16). [*How the school-to-prison pipeline ruins lives before they start.*](#)

When a kid gets in trouble at school, we used to send them to the principal's office. Now, we're suspending, expelling, or even arresting kids for the smallest misbehaviors. This trend is called the school-to-prison pipeline.

Chicago Public Schools. (2014, July 18). [*A restorative approach to discipline.*](#)

Friedman, C. (2012, Oct. 9). [*Restorative justice in Oakland schools: Tier one. Community building circle.*](#)

A pair of students at MetWest High School, an Oakland public school in Oakland, Calif., facilitate a community-building circle in their classroom.

Friedman, C. (2013, April 22). [*Restorative welcome and re-entry circle.*](#)

Filmed at Bunche High School, this video is a collaboration between Oakland Unified School District and Restorative Justice for Oakland Youth. The video combines footage from the circle with interviews of the re-entering student and the circle.

International Institute of Restorative Practices. (2014). [*Bullying: Should people meet face to face?*](#)

Bullying is an area of great concern, especially in schools. In this video, International Institute of Restorative Practices' instructor Lee Rush talks about the way restorative practices dovetails with bullying prevention and how to assess, case by case, whether a restorative process is appropriate.

San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD). (n.d.). Multiple videos: *Introduction to restorative practices; Flynn Elementary kinder circle; Feinstein 5th grade circle; Wallenberg High School circle* June 2014 symposium—panels on restorative practices at SFUSD; *Student voices*. Retrieved from [San Francisco Unified School District \(SFUSD\)](#). SFUSD-produced videos about restorative practices in their schools.

Appendix C: Meeting Participants

Angela Bauer (5/18), Teacher, Randolph Union

Jody Emerson (5/18), Assistant Principal, U-32

Scott Harris (5/18), School Counselor, U-32 Middle/High School

Concepcion Cruz*, Intern, Randolph Restorative Justice

Ethan Farmer (5/18), Student Facilitator, Randolph Union High School

Lisa Bedinger, Coordinator, South Burlington CJC

Ben Johnson, Assistant Principal, Essex High School

Marian Ackerman, Support Counselor, Proctor Jr./Sr. High School

Carol Plante, Director, Hardwick Area Community Justice Center

Ann O'Shaughnessy, English Teacher and Consultant/Teacher Trainer, CTE Essex and True Nature Teaching

Carol Cushing, Behavior Interventionist, Milton School District

John Grimm, Clinical Director, Centerpoint School

Angela King, Service Learning/Internship Coordinator and Designated Employee for HHB, Milton High School

Martha Lee Shorey*, Resource Interventionist, Vergennes Union High School

Hunter Stark, Planning Room Interventionist, Colchester School District

Dovid Yagoda, Assistant Principal, Colchester Middle School

Susan Cherry, Executive Director, The Community Restorative Justice Center in St. Johnsbury

Heather Fitzgibbons, Assistant Principal, Bellows Free Academy Saint

Patrick Walters, Principal, Orwell Village School

Karen Dolan, Restorative Justice Specialist, Essex CJC

Suzy King, EL Teacher, Connections (EL Dropout Prevention) Coordinator, Burlington High School

Josh Martin, K Teacher, Orwell Village School

Lance Smith*, School Counseling Coordinator/Associate Professor, University of Vermont

Nadine Paffett Lugassy, Planning Room Specialist, Williston Central School

Mitch Barron, Executive Director, Centerpoint

Jennifer Guarino, Mediator