Restorative Practices: Fostering Healthy Relationships & Promoting Positive Discipline in Schools

Family & Community Engagement Conference 2016

Schools are not buildings, curriculum timetables and meetings. Schools are relationships and interactions among people.

Johnson & Johnson, 1994
Agenda

✓ Welcome & Introductions (10)
✓ Context & Implications for Student Outcomes (10)
✓ Overview of Restorative Practices (15)
✓ Restorative Practices Observed (15)
✓ Q&A (5)
✓ Closing Circle (15)
✓ Taking Action & Evals (5)
Exclusionary discipline is practiced widely

Vast majority for minor infractions such as disrupting class, tardiness, and dress code violations

2,000,000 suspended*

5th highest out-of-school suspension rate in PA**

*UCLA Civil Rights Project  **ACLU (2015). Beyond Zero Tolerance
The problem: exclusionary discipline disproportionately affects black students.

- **Multiracial, 6%**
- **Hispanic, 1%**
- **Asian, 1%**
- **White, 15%**
- **Black, 76%**

PPS suspensions (2014-15)

- **9 in 33 black students**
- **1 in 33 white students**

Others affected: brown students, black females*, students with disabilities, LGBTQ students, other marginalized communities

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) maintains that out-of-school suspensions and expulsions are counterproductive to the intended goals necessary, and should not be considered as appropriate discipline in any but the most extreme and dangerous circumstances, as determined on an individual basis rather than as a blanket policy.*

*AAP, 2013
Exclusionary discipline has negative long-term consequences

Just one suspension in 9th grade doubles the chance of a student dropping out (from 16% to 32%)*

Students in criminal justice system more likely to have been suspended

Pushed out of class → less engagement → lowered grades, attendance, and learning → less prepared for postsecondary training, education, or career

*Balfanz, Byrnes, & Fox, 2012
High school students spoke up about challenges related to discipline in PPS

Schools with more black & brown students:
- higher suspension rates & absenteesim
- more group punishments
- more long-term subs
- more principal and teacher turnover

2 of 10 students feel they can discuss concerns with adults who will listen
2 of 10 students feel that most teachers care about their lives outside of school
Restorative Practices - What is it?

Restorative Practices emphasize the importance of positive relationships as central to building community and provide opportunities to restore relationships when harm has occurred.

Source: The Education Policy Improvement Center
Goals of Restorative Practices

- Restore Relationships
- Repair Harm
- Develop Community
- Manage Conflict and Tension
Values & Principles of Restorative Practices

1. Relationships are central to building community
2. Addresses harm in a way that strengthens relationships
3. Focuses on harm done rather than on rule-breaking
4. Ensures equity of voice among all members of the community
5. Engages in collaborative problem-solving
6. Encourages accountability and responsibility
7. Empowers change and growth

Restorative Practices Continuum

Source: International Institute of Restorative Practices
Community Building Circle

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RdKhcQrLD1w
Re-Entry Circle

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HiLtFVHR8Q0
Questions?
Closing Circle
What YOU Can Do

If you are a concerned citizen, PPS parent or student, and want to improve school climate:

Join A+ Schools’ Parent Nation or TeenBloc

- Visit us at www.aplusschools.org
- Call (412) 697-1298
Thank you!
# PERC Schools
(Pursuing Equitable Restorative Communities)

Pittsburgh Public Schools implementing restorative practices with training from International Institute of Restorative Practices through a Department of Justice grant (2014-17):

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A+ Schools. (2014) *Report to the Community on Public School Progress*

A+ Schools. (2013) *School Works Findings Report*

A+ Schools. (2014) *Students Have Spoken: Will You Listen? School Works Project at A+ Schools Pittsburgh Alliance for Public Education*


International Institute of Restorative Practices, http://www.iirp.edu/


UCLA Civil Rights Project http://civilrightsproject.ucla.edu/research/k-12-education/school-discipline