

BECOMING A RESTORATIVE DISTRICT
BALTIMORE CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS



BECOMING A RESTORATIVE PRACTICES DISTRICT

- Last year City Schools' CEO Sonja Santelises and the Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners pledged to create a restorative practices district over the next five years
- Several partners, including many in the room today, joined with City Schools and the Open Society Institute to create a restorative practices implementation plan

WHY RESTORATIVE PRACTICES: SEEING OUR STUDENTS AS A THREAT

Why?

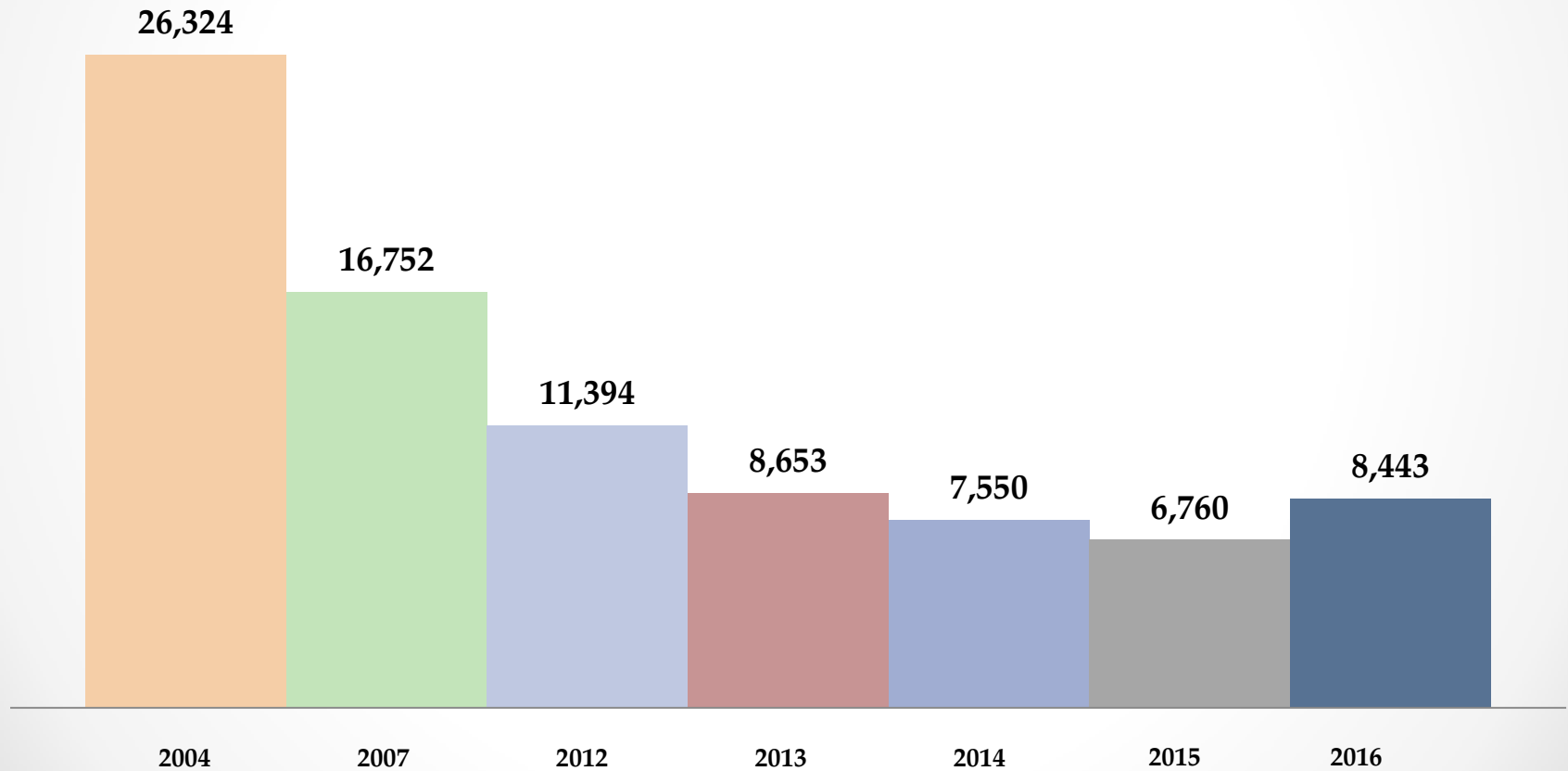
- Direct correlation between racial composition and severity of discipline
- Majority Black Schools = Harsh Discipline

How does it look?

- Police
- Metal detectors
- Walkie-talkies
- Zero tolerance
- Suspension
- Expulsion

The racial threat theory posits that when a large number of African Americans are present in a space (school, community, etc.) social control and public punishment are intensified because of a perceived threat to safety or economic and political control. *Payne and Welch*

CITY SCHOOLS - HISTORICAL SUSPENSION DATA



Three Part Strategic Plan



PLAN COMPONENTS

- Executive Summary
- Research/Literature Review *
- Theory of Action
- Methodology
- Stakeholder Feedback
- BCPSS Implementation and Resource Guide*
- Recommendations:
 - Research-based
 - Universal
 - Stakeholder specific



Research

- Research considers a whole-school approach most effective
- School Wide Prevention Practices:
 - Increased levels of trust, empathy and respect within schools
 - More positive school climates
- Managing Targeted Difficulties:
 - Reduction in of out of school suspension, larger decreases occur when continuous training exists
 - Narrowing of the black/white suspension gap
 - Decreased classroom behavioral disruptions
- Intense Interventions:
 - Increased connection to wrap around services
 - Increased progress monitoring

What Was Done

- **1990's** Community Conferencing comes to Baltimore (Lauren Abramson ,OSI Fellow)
- **Mid-2000's** Baltimore Curriculum Project began RP in several schools (City Springs, Hampstead Hill)
- **2011** Office of Student Support and Safety begins initiative on school climate
- School climate trainings commence **2012/2013**; Community Conferencing Center and IIRP are presenters, school climate tools develop

What Was Done

- **2013** Office of Intervention and Prevention pilot RP in several schools and the initiative continues to date
- **2014** City Springs pilots RP and mindfulness
- **2015** OSI and school partners form school climate collaborative and begin strong advocacy for BCPSS to become a restorative practices district
- **2016** City Schools School Board and CEO declare restorative practices district

Stakeholder Feedback Groups

- 400 Stakeholder Voices:
 - teachers,
 - students,
 - families,
 - principals,
 - instructional leadership executive directors (ILEDs),
 - other school staff,
 - external stakeholders/restorative practices providers,
 - funders,
 - district personnel,
 - and school police.

Stakeholder Perspectives Select Quotes

- *“Fighting was all we knew about growing up.”
(Parent)*
- *“We don’t know what other kids are going through in life, so it helps other students understand this.” (5th grade student)*
- *“One of the people that can have harm done to them is a teacher and that has to be taken seriously too – the mindset shift also has to be restoring a teacher to wanting to come back to work every day.”
(High School Teacher)*

Stakeholder Perspectives Select Quotes Cont.

- *“School climate is not a kid question – kids are just showing the chaos the adults are modeling.” (External Stakeholder)*
- *“Students and even adults need an outlet to be able to decompress from what they have experienced over the weekend or even on the journey to and from school. Having a morning circle gives them that space and lets everyone see each other as humans, not teacher and student, not student and officer, just real people.” (Baltimore City Schools Police Officer)*
- *“If we want to restore children we have to also restore the adults”. (ILED)*
- *“I believe that building positive relationships is the single most impactful thing an urban teacher can do. Positive school climates let students know that the adults are there to help them and push them to be their best.” (Cross Cutting Survey Response)*

OSIBaltimore.org/RestorativePractices

- Teaching Restorative Practices with Classroom Circles, San Francisco Unified School District
- Research/Literature Review, Johns Hopkins School of Education, Institute for Education Policy
- Rubrics and tools used to conduct presentations and collect feedback
- Restorative Practices Video Clips
- OSI's ***Restorative Practices Implementation Plan*** will be uploaded when finalized

Appendix

Research Recommendations

1. Implement whole school approaches. A whole school approach establishes common values and norms, promotes a sense of belonging to the school community and builds trusting relationships, leaving fewer students in crisis.
2. Take necessary measures to achieve students' buy in and participation in restorative practices. This influences their trust and relationship with those implementing the practice.
3. Schools implementing restorative practices should build in on-going coaching and support for teachers. Additional interventions and professional developments such as those focusing on cultural sensitivities should be incorporated into trainings to reduce racial and ethnic disparities.
4. Baltimore City Schools should continue to adopt a disciplinary code that includes restorative practices. The district should also commit to substantial professional development in how to interpret discipline policies and protocols, restorative practices, and related relationship-building approaches.

Research Recommendations Cont.

5. “Welcome Circles” should be used following sustained absence, such as incarceration or suspensions (Oakland Unified School District’s approach).
6. Shifting the attitudes and sensibilities of school personnel may take one to three years and the deep shift to a restorative oriented school climate may require three to five years. Baltimore City Schools should operate under this timeline.
7. School and district leaders need to communicate a strong vision and commitment to restorative practices.
8. Administrators and educators should conduct readiness assessments to develop a theory of change and timeline for implementation.
9. Schools should have at least one trained staff member to act as a restorative practices coordinator and trainer to offer ongoing training and support.
10. Schools should leverage community resources (e.g. local non-profits focused on community building and youth engagement) to ease the burdens of implementation.

Theory of Action

GOAL: Become a Restorative District

Offer training, tools and resources, and continuing coaching support to Baltimore City teachers, school leaders, and education stakeholders.

ACTIVITIES

Teacher Training

Give teachers opportunities to learn more about restorative practices by attending a training or observing a circle.



Tools and Coaching

Offer tools and resources to guide classroom implementation and opportunities to discuss and reflect upon practice.



Expand the Dialogue

Take restorative practices into the community. Invite community members to participate in circles and learn the process.



OUTCOMES

School Safety Increases

Misbehavior and bullying decrease as student self-awareness about the impact of their behavior on others increases.

1

Adult-Child Relationships Improve

The level of trust and empathy among teachers and students increases. Attitudes toward school become more positive.

2

Students Gain Social-Emotional Skills

Students are able to better communicate with one another, and with adults. Their problem-solving skills increase.

3

Suspensions and Expulsions Decrease

Students learn new ways to address conflict. Racial equity in school discipline increases.

4

Restorative Practices in Baltimore City Schools

Building Better Relationships and Improving School Climate

Restorative practices require a new way of thinking about teaching, learning, and relationships in schools that involves an interest in the whole child, as well as restorative and responsive educators and school communities.



Baltimore City Public Schools
Restorative Practices



OPEN SOCIETY INSTITUTE-BALTIMORE