Baltimore City Schools Restorative Practices Plan

Prepared by:

OPEN SOCIETY INSTITUTE-BALTIMORE

For

BALTIMORE CITY
PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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Section I: Background, History and Goals

Section 1a: Executive Summary

Restorative Practices

Many schools around the world, and right here in Baltimore City, are using restorative practices (RP) to build positive relationships within school communities, enhance instructional practices, and resolve conflicts. Fundamentally, restorative practices require participants to shift their mindsets from one that may be punitive and blame-focused to one that builds community and provides effective responses to harm. Given the premise that open and respectful communication helps reduce conflict, when conflict does occur, the restorative process encourages individuals to focus on ways to repair relationships rather than punishment. Restorative practices involve a set of concepts and techniques that, when applied consistently, improve the climate of a school community, leading to improved student outcomes. These practices are not a new method of resolving conflict and building community. In fact, they have been used for centuries by the indigenous peoples of New Zealand and West Africa as well as First Nation Peoples in North America. The most commonly known aspect of the practice involves the use of restorative circles. (To learn more about restorative practices please see Appendix I.)

District-Wide Implementation

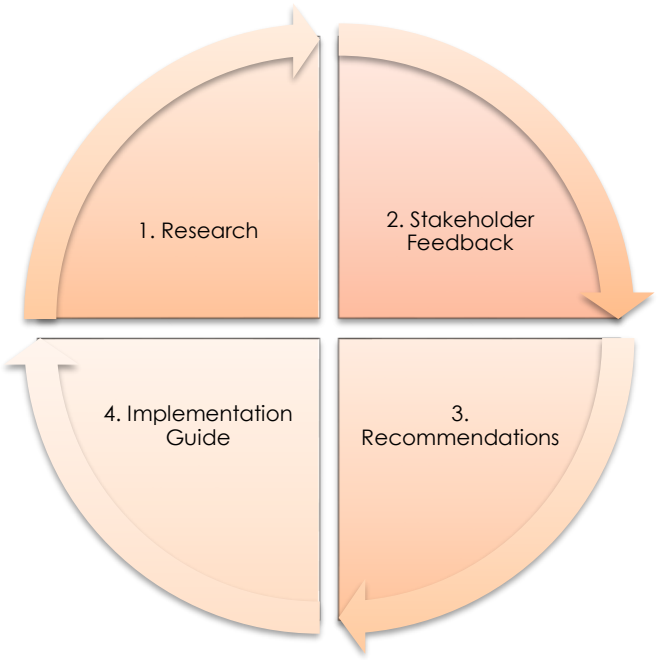
The Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners and the Chief Executive Officer of Baltimore City Schools, Dr. Sonja Santelises, have pledged to make Baltimore City Schools (City Schools) a restorative practices district. Open Society Institute-Baltimore entered into a partnership with City Schools to craft a strategic restorative practices implementation plan with an ambitious goal: the creation of a restorative school district over a three to five year period in which all offices, schools and programs are trained in and use restorative practices in their daily work. As per the Student Wholeness Blueprint created by City Schools, principles of restorative practices will be adopted across the district and 15 schools will receive intensive training in the approach from the International Institute for Restorative Practices, the Community Conferencing Center, and other trained practitioners. In addition, schools will establish supervised safe spaces where students can receive social, emotional, and academic support and interventions. Research has shown that restorative practices lead to drops in suspension, more positive school and work climates and increased levels of trust, empathy and respect among stakeholders. To help achieve these results, the Institute for Education Policy at the Johns Hopkins University School of Education, the Baltimore City School Climate Collaborative, the Family League of Baltimore, the Positive Schools Center of the University of Maryland, Safe and Sound Baltimore, Community Mediation Program, and several other partners also contributed to this initiative.

City Schools' relationship with restorative practices dates back to the 1990s, when the Baltimore-based Community Conferencing Center first introduced a non-punitive way of resolving large-scale conflict, known as community conferencing. Early adopters of whole-school restorative practices in City Schools, supported by training and coaching from the International Institute of Restorative Practices (IIRP) and a grant from OSI-Baltimore in 2006, include City Springs and

Hampstead Hill elementary/middle schools. Both schools still utilize RP as a schoolwide practice and serve as models for effective and sustained implementation.

Other schools in the district have also successfully adopted whole school restorative practices. They have seen reductions in suspensions and chronic absence, greater teacher retention, improved academic outcomes, and often dramatic enrollment increases as they become the schools in which everyone wants to be. Despite the challenges of adopting this transformative practice in all City Schools, the possibilities for changing the climate of our schools, and thereby the trajectories of our students' lives, makes implementation efforts entirely worthwhile.

Introduction: The Restorative Practices Plan



The Restorative Practices Plan (plan) incorporates both restorative practices theory and practical application by aggregating research, stakeholder feedback and actionable implementation tools into a single body of materials. The plan comprises a research overview prepared by Johns Hopkins Institute of Education Policy, feedback from nearly 400 stakeholders, a robust set of recommendations derived from the research and stakeholder feedback, and an Implementation and Resources Guide (guide), newly developed by City Schools Office of Social Emotional Learning, Climate and Wellness. The guide provides practitioners, school leaders, and educators with relevant materials to support trained personnel in implementing restorative practices as a daily practice in their schools. An assessment tool developed by City Schools is also included in the guide to provide transparent information on the manner in which RP implementation will be evaluated in schools. The tools and materials that informed the public about restorative practices and elicited stakeholder feedback during the planning period are included in Appendix II to assist interested practitioners, researchers and school districts in replicating relevant aspects of the process.

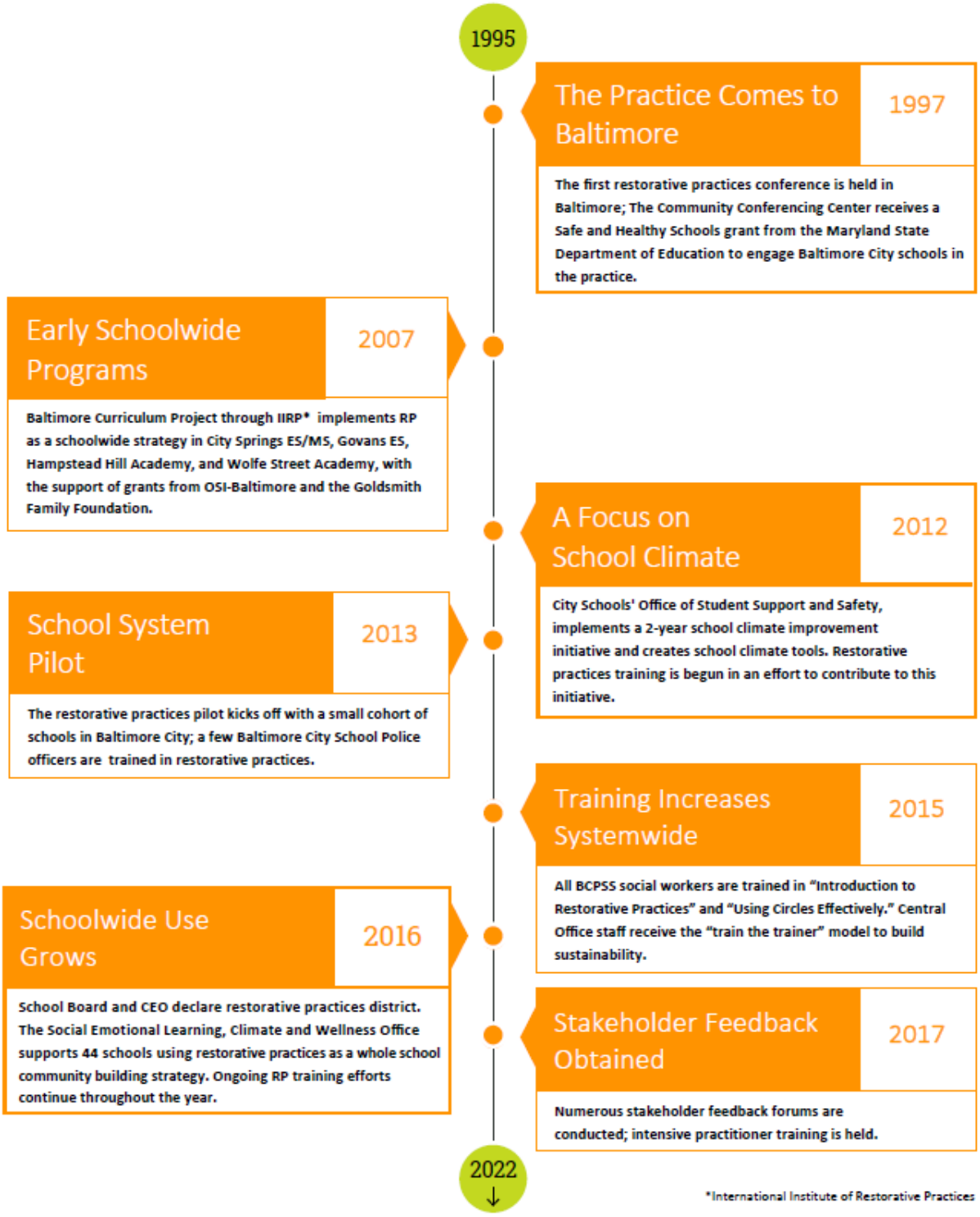
The adoption of a restorative practices plan in a school district is a long-term strategy. Research indicates that even whole-school adoption requires three to five years of training and support for all participants to become truly restorative. Given the long-term nature of RP implementation, the plan should be revisited and revised frequently (at least annually) as milestones are met and new circumstances arise.

Preparing for Implementation

In preparation for district-wide adoption of restorative practices, City Schools has made great strides in creating a strong foundation upon which this transformative practices may grow. As mentioned, several Baltimore City schools have already adopted RP as a whole-school approach and are meeting with great success. These schools provide accessible models from which staff, parents and students can learn the successes of the practice and debunk commonly held opinions that this approach to education cannot work in Baltimore City.

Beginning in the 2013-14 school year, additional schools adopted whole-school restorative practices initiatives which have created a sizeable core of teachers and principals trained in, and using, restorative practices to varying degrees. A growing body of central office staff have received RP training as well, including: school social workers, the office of 21st Century Schools, Student Support Liaisons, many Family and Community Engagement Liaisons, Coordinated Early Intervening Services and the entire Baltimore City School Police force. Open Society Institute-Baltimore also sponsored a comprehensive restorative practices training for area community partners and practitioners in June 2017 to ensure that an adequate cadre of providers exists to meet the increasing RP training and coaching needs of City Schools. These are but a few of the efforts underway that will enable City Schools to bring restorative practices to all schools, offices and programs over the next few years.

Section 1b: A History of Restorative Practices in Baltimore



Section Ic: Restorative Practices Research Base

Prepared by the Johns Hopkins Institute for Education Policy
for the Open Society Institute-Baltimore

School discipline is at a crossroad. Most researchers have concluded that years of punitive discipline measures have produced harmful consequences for students. Suspended students are more likely to fail courses and become chronically absent (Hammond, Linton, Smink, & Drew, 2007). Increased disengagement and subsequent drop-out imposes significant social and economic costs (Rumberger & Losen, 2016). Receiving just one out-of-school suspension can potentially alter a student's educational trajectory (Balfanz, Byrnes, & Fox, 2013). Minority students often bear the brunt of this harm, as they are suspended at significantly higher rates than their white peers (Noltemeyer, Marie, Mcloughlin, & Vanderwood, 2015).

To address these imbalances, districts nationwide have explored the use of preventive, early response disciplinary models. Restorative practices are one such model. Restorative practices represent an attempt to reform school discipline and improve relationships among stakeholders while minimizing punitive disciplinary measures (Vaandeering, 2010). Morrison and Vaandeering (2012) posit that restorative practices address "power and status imbalances" by promoting the "soft" power of relationship building and understanding, rather than "hard" power of the institution to sanctions as a motivator."

Defining restorative practices in schools, however, is no easy task; there is no consensus around what constitutes a restorative practice[1] (Fronius, Persson, Guckenburg, Hurley, & Petrosino, 2016) and the research base on the impact of a wide variety of measures that might be included under the term is still emerging. However, most restorative practices programs include ongoing communication across the school and reparative opportunities designed to produce the following outcomes:

- Accountability, community safety, and competency development (Ashley & Burke, 2009);
- A reduction in racial and ethnic disparities in school discipline (Rumberger & Losen, 2016);
- A reversal of the negative academic effects of zero tolerance school discipline policies (Rumberger & Losen, 2016); and
- A reduction in contact between police and students on school discipline issues (Petrosino, Guckenburg, & Fronius, 2012).

Researchers have examined a range of models and frameworks in schools, and some offer potentially promising evidence. Currently, the empirical research base is in the preliminary stages (Fronius et al., 2016). There are several large-scale studies underway that will subject restorative practices to the more rigorous evaluations needed to determine correlational and causal impact.

[1]Braithwaite (1999) defines restorative practices as those that promote healing rather than hurting, community participation and community caring, respectful dialogue, forgiveness, and making amends. On the other hand, Hopkins' (2003) definition is focused on practices that manage behavior and shift away from punitive measures.
Sellman, Cremlin and McCluskey (as cited in Fronius, Persson, Guckenburg, Hurley, & Petrosino, 2016) argue that restorative justice is a contested concept and may never have an agreed upon definition. Given this judgment, Fronius et. al (2016) suggest that restorative justice practices be broadly described as non-punitive approaches to handling conflict. This can include practices using a variety of terms such as "restorative practices," "restorative approaches," and similar language.

Restorative practices as a whole-school model

While there are schools that implement, or seek to implement, individual components of the restorative practices protocols, the research that exists generally considers a whole-school approach most promising (Guckenburg, Hurley, Persson, Fronius, & Petrosino, 2015). 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 (Kidde & Alfred, 2011). Behavioral and inter-personal issues are dealt with quickly and deeply, reducing the need for punitive discipline measures (Kidde & Alfred, 2011; Tyler, 2006). The goal of these various practices is that fewer students will need targeted interventions and even fewer, intensive ones.

Morrison, Thorsborne, and Blood (2005) illustrate the application of restorative practices—from prevention to intense intervention—using a hierarchical, whole-school approach. The framework begins with establishing foundational, school-wide prevention practices, upon which subsequent interventions rest. Each step narrows the population and focus, from proactive to reactive responses (Kidde & Alfred, 2011):[2]

- *School-wide Prevention Practices- (Tier I)*
  Reaffirming relationships through developing social and emotional skills
  - Identify common values and guidelines.
  - Promote and strengthen sense of belonging and ownership.
  - Develop social-emotional understanding and skills; build healthy relationships.
- *Managing Targeted Difficulties- (Tier II)*
  Repairing relationships
  - Prevent harm.
  - Resolve differences with restorative intention.
  - Build social-emotional capacity.
- *Intense Interventions- (Tier III)*
  Rebuilding Relationships
  - Focus on accountability.
  - Organize resources to address behavioral and academic concern.
  - 1:1 support and successful reintegration for youth in crisis.

The premise for these tiers of strategies is that together they can create school-wide cultural norms of the kind that research has previously found effective (Bryk, 2010).

These Three Components in Practice

1. School-wide Prevention Practices

Whole-school implementation seeks to prevent problems by cultivating, in students and teachers, the skills to deal with behavioral and inter-personal issues before they escalate. Kidde & Alfred (2011) note that building a school-wide culture of common values and meaningful support makes restorative practices much more likely to succeed. Creating norms around the principles and

[2] Restorative practices can be used at all three interventions levels. Morrison et al., (2005) describe the use of restorative circles as a critical function in intensive interventions, hence their placement as a Tier III example.

application of restorative practices develops students' social-emotional learning, builds community within the school, and strengthens social and human capital. This leads to greater levels of trust, empathy and respect within the school among students, staff, and teachers (Morrison & Vaandering, 2012). As the authors note, "creating the space to explore and understand shared values in the classroom foster[s] a [school culture] more conducive to establishing deepening relationships among members of the school community" (2012, p.146). An additional research finding: students' buy-in and participation in restorative practices influences their trust and relationship with those implementing the practice (Anyon, 2016a).

Programs such as Community Conferencing Center's "Daily Rap," which Baltimore City Public Schools employs, offer opportunities to develop these skills and create understanding and connectivity. Daily Rap provides students, and more recently teachers, an opportunity to "circle" daily on a topic to identify solutions and support one another. While no studies have determined causal linkages to specific outcomes, Kidde and Alfred (2011) report anecdotal survey evidence that suggests Community Conferencing builds trust and deepens the relationship between participants.[3]

Stinchcomb, Bazemore, and Reistenburg (2006) evaluated a three-year, school-wide restorative practices pilot conducted by The Minnesota Dept. of Children, Families and Learning (DCFL). They focused on three St. Paul, Minnesota schools[4]—two elementary and one junior high school. Facilitators conducted circles to repair harm, cultivate empathy skills, and promote "Make the Peace"—a statewide campaign to encourage alternatives to violence.

Their study found reductions in out-of-school suspensions in all three schools. The impact on in-school suspensions and behavioral referrals were ambiguous; however, one elementary school saw reductions in both while the other saw increases. Stinchcomb et al., (2006) surmise that the disparity was due to teachers in the first school receiving additional professional development and working with a restorative practice planner to develop alternative disciplinary plans. Thus, schools that are considering implementing restorative practices may want to build on-going coaching and support for teachers.

Denver Public Schools (DPS) has taken the concepts of Morrison et al.'s (2005) approach and applied it districtwide. Starting with a school-based pilot program in 2006 and expanding district-wide in 2008, DPS adopted a disciplinary code that includes restorative practices. DPS also committed to substantial professional development in how to interpret discipline policies and protocols, restorative practices, and allied relationship-building approaches (Anyon, 2016a).

A pre-post exposure analysis[5] of the DPS restorative practices model found a five-percentage point reduction in the overall suspension rate in five years (10.5% in 2006 to 5.8% in 2013) (Baker, 2008). Additionally, a case study analysis of the practice reported a four-percentage point narrowing of the Black/White suspension gap between 2008 and 2013 (Gonzalez, 2015).

As noted, school wide prevention practices form the foundation upon which targeted and intense interventions are based.

[3]As a responsive intervention, Daily Rap offers promising evidence. Gonzalez (2012) reported that "of the 450 documented Community Conferences [in her study], 97% resulted in a written agreement, and there was a 95% rate of compliance with the agreements."

[4] The three schools were Lincoln Center Elementary, Kaposia Elementary, and South St. Paul Junior High School.

[5] Pre- and post-test analysis is a quasi-experimental evaluation method. Participants are studied before and after the exposure to a treatment, or in this case, to restorative practices. There can be no causal evidence, as there is no random assignment or treatment group with which to compare. The above analysis included only one group who were exposed to restorative practices.

2. Managing targeted difficulties

The premise of the next level of intervention is that most disruptions should not require intense or punitive intervention. Rather, they should become teachable moments for students to understand a harm or potential harm and identify solutions to avoid or repair that harm (Morrison & Vaandering, 2012).

An example of this is managing "power and status" conflicts such as bullying. Recent research calls into question the use of punitive measures to address bullying. Davis and Nixon (2010) found such measures often create additional behavioral issues and cause offenders to seek retribution. On the other hand, restorative practices promote repairing and rebuilding relationships, a feature missing from punitive discipline measures. Because of this, research views interventions featuring face-to-face contact between bully and victim as a potentially useful means to involve everyone in the peacemaking and healing process (Molnair-Mane et al., 2014; Morrison, 2002). Practices can range from a subtle or "light-touch" talk to more formalized conferencing between aggrieved parities to quell the issue and reduce discipline referrals (Kidde & Alfred, 2011).

Research by Anyon et al., (2016b) analyzed the discipline records of DPS students who received one or more discipline reports (9,921 students) over the course of a school year (2012-2013). The study sought to demonstrate the effectiveness of restorative practices at reducing multiple disciplinary incidents within a school year.

Anyon et al. found that students who received a restorative practice intervention had lower odds of receiving discipline referrals and suspensions in the following semester.[6] However, Anyon and colleagues note that gaps in discipline persisted between students of color and poor students, and their white and wealthier peers. Anyon et al. suggest that additional interventions and professional developments, such as those focusing on cultural sensitives, could reduce racial and ethnic disparities.

3. Intense Interventions

The third and final level of intervention aims to repair and rebuild relationships. This category of intervention arises when direct physical or emotional harm has occurred. Such harm may include the school community as well as neighbors and family members (Morrison et al., 2005). This level of intervention is specifically designed for those students facing the most serious discipline issues or crises (Kidde & Alfred, 2011)

Oakland Unified School District (OUSD) uses Tier III to reintegrate the highest-risk youth. Following a sustained absence, such as incarceration or suspension, OUSD convenes "Welcome Circles" to reengage the student. This is done to provide wraparound support and promote accountability and achievement (Jain, Bassey, Brown, & Kalra, 2014).

Circle participants include the student, family members, appropriate school staff (i.e. school mental health coordinators) and facilitator. Other adults, such as a coach or probation officer, may also be encouraged to participate.[7] Facilitators begin by guiding participants through a series of positively-framed questions on how to develop a successful transition plan.[8] Throughout the planning, participants identify their roles and responsibilities in order to build trust and show support. The facilitator tasks participants with specific activities to ensure active participation in the student's transition. Conversely, the student's task is to communicate with participants when

[6] In DPS terminology, semester is synonymous with marking period.
[7] See Re-entry Welcome Circle protocols
[8] See "Tier 3" video tutorial on the Oakland Unified School Districts "Restorative Justice" website: http://www.ousd.org/restorativejustice

they are struggling and additional support is needed. Circles continue throughout the school year to monitor progress.

The effectiveness of this level of intervention at OUSD has not been evaluated in isolation. However, student and staff survey results on the effectiveness of the OUSD model have been largely positive (Jain et al., 2014):

- Seventy percent of staff report the practice has helped to create a positive climate in schools and 60% believe the practice has contributed to the decrease in the use of suspensions;
- Eighty-eight percent of teachers have found the practice "very or somewhat" helpful in reducing classroom behavioral disruptions; and over three-quarters of students who participated in a restorative session report the practice resolved conflict and repaired harm.

Recommendations for Implementation

Restorative practices work best in the context of a strong school culture that has created norms around respecting the values of individual students and consistency with disciplinary issues (Morrison & Vaandering, 2012). This takes time. Shifting the attitudes and sensibilities of school personnel may take one to three years (Karp & Breslin, 2001), and the deep shift to a restorative-oriented school climate may require three to five years (Anfara, Evans, & Lester, 2013). Guckenburg et al., (2015, p. 12) notes that "principals can feel protective of their school and resist having others (e.g. consultants and technical assistance providers) coming in to change how the school operates, especially concerning their discipline policies."

Strong vision and commitment to restorative practices by school leadership is essential for building restorative practices school-wide (Anyon et al., (b) 2016). Implementation requires staff time, buy-in, and training, resources that traditional sanctions such as suspension do not require of schools. Fronius et al., (2016) suggests administrators and educators conduct readiness assessments to develop a theory of change and timeline for implementation. Doing so eases fears, builds interest and engages stakeholders in the process (Kidde & Alfred, 2011). Having a full-time restorative practices coordinator is also recommended, with one study noting "it is simply not feasible, or sustainable, to train existing administrators or mental health staff and ask them to take on restorative practices in addition to their existing responsibilities" (Anyon, 2016a, p. 4). Additionally, providing support through trainings and professional development and leveraging community resources (e.g. local non-profits focused on community building and youth engagement) can help to ease the burdens of implementation (Advancement Project, 2014).

Research Review Limitations

As this brief underscores, there are several studies that focus on specific practices (Anyon et al.,(b) 2016; Baker, 2008; Stinchcomb et al., 2006), participant satisfaction (Jain et al., 2014; Kidde & Alfred, 2011), and qualitative accounts by victim's, offender's parents, and other stakeholders (Gonzalez, 2012; Jain et al., 2014). That said, the empirical research base supporting restorative practices in schools still emerging. Currently, there are three-large scale randomized controlled trials (RCT) underway with the earliest findings available by late 2018 (Fronius et al., 2016).[9] Once completed, these studies will make the research record more robust. Until that time, the majority of studies evaluate program exposure with no control comparison.

[9] See Appendix A for a full description and expected completion dates.

Section Id: Goals and Theory of Change

Overall Goal: Improving School Climate and Student Outcomes

To implement restorative practices in all schools, programs and offices within Baltimore City Schools in order to promote positive school and work climates which create the optimal conditions for teaching and learning. We define school climate as those elements in a school that create an environment where everyone feels safe, supported, and respected; attends regularly; and participates in the learning process. By creating a restorative practices district we will support effective leadership, positive relationships, engaging teaching and learning, and welcoming and safe environments which will improve outcomes for all students.

GOAL: Become a Restorative District

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

ACTIVITIES

District Wide Training

Provide intensive practice based training for school and district staff.

Tools and Coaching

Offer tools and resources to guide restorative practices 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 to use restorative questions.

OUTCOMES

School Safety Increases, Attendance Improves

Misbehavior and bullying decrease as student self-awareness about the impact of their behavior on others increases. Schools begin to become places where everyone wants to be.

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 improves.

4

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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

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Section II: Community Driven Feedback and Stakeholder Perspectives

Section IIa: Methodology

OSI-Baltimore, Baltimore City Schools (City Schools), The Family League of Baltimore, Community Mediation Program, Johns Hopkins University School of Education, and the Safe and Sound Campaign and other partners reached out to multiple stakeholder groups and conducted a series of feedback sessions. These sessions provided a forum to educate a broad range of participants about restorative practices while providing an opportunity to obtain community feedback on the potential benefits and challenges of RP implementation in City Schools. Groups involved in the process included: teachers, students, families, principals, instructional leadership executive directors (ILEDs), other school staff, external stakeholders/restorative practices providers, funders, district personnel, and school police. Feedback was solicited through three distinct methods:

1. Focus Group
2. Presentation with Structured, Recorded Discussion
3. Online Survey

Overall, nearly 400 stakeholder voices are represented in our findings consisting of approximately 321 in-person participants and 70 online respondents. A note taker was present at all sessions.

Focus Groups

Various stakeholder groups were invited to participate in focus groups. Participants had different exposure to and levels of understanding of restorative practices. After brief introductions, participants received a handout explaining the basics of restorative practices (see Appendix IIa) and watched a brief video clip as a group (the clip used can be found here from 2:27-6:27 or Appendix IV). Focus group sessions lasted for 90 minutes, on average. Facilitators engaged participants through a series of questions that were used to guide discussion, as listed below:

1. Does anyone have questions or comments about the video that was shown?
2. Have you ever heard of restorative practices before today?
    a. If so – what have you heard and what do you think?
    b. If not – what are your thoughts about what you've heard about restorative practices today?
3. What are the positives of bringing restorative practices to Baltimore City schools?
4. What are the challenges of bringing restorative practices to Baltimore City schools?
5. What other advice do you have for us as we develop this program for the district?

Presentations

In the presentation-style format, facilitators discussed City Schools' demographics; the effects of poverty and punitive measures of discipline on students and the need for adults to shift to more restorative approaches (see Appendix IIe). Participants were shown the same video used in the focus group (see above) and/or a video created by Wide Angle Youth Media specifically for this initiative (Wide Angle's video can be found here or Appendix IV). The same or similar questions were used to guide the discussion in the presentations as were used in the focus groups. The presentation and discussion averaged 60-90 minutes per session.

Online Feedback Form

To gain feedback from additional voices, an online survey was circulated to reach community members that were unable to attend an in-person session or felt that their comments were not fully captured during presentation discussions. The anonymous survey was created and distributed using the Survey Monkey online platform. A brief description of restorative practices and link to video were provided as an opening page and questions were the same as those asked in the focus group format (a PDF copy of the survey can be found in Appendix IIg). Outreach for the survey was done through presentations, multiple listservs, word of mouth, and social media.

Trend Analysis

An external partner reviewed focus group, presentation, and online feedback notes and transcripts to identify common themes and trends. OSI staff conducted an extensive second review and identified additional themes and comments. Responses were tagged and sorted into key categories including:

- Reflections on Benefits of Restorative Practices
- Reflections on Challenges of Restorative Practices
- Other Comments and Quotes

Common themes emerged when responses were aggregated by category and these themes directly informed the plan's recommendations.

Recommendations

Recommendations were sorted into three categories: recommendations gleaned from the literature review conducted by the Johns Hopkins Institute for Education Policy; universal stakeholder recommendations, and, stakeholder specific recommendations.

Collaboration

The project's comprehensive level of community outreach and engagement is a direct result of strong collaboration among a diverse set of project partners who leveraged their strong relationships among different stakeholder groups to invite input and give voice to young people, families, youth development and education professionals, and interested community members. The partners fully committed to a shared mission; contributed their time, reputation, and relationships; and communicated with one another directly, honestly, and often. The majority of focus groups and presentations where presented in seamless partnership between OSI-Baltimore and City Schools.

Section IIb: Stakeholder Perspectives

As a system-wide initiative, restorative practices will affect multiple stakeholders. Every individual and group with an interest in Baltimore's schools and young people – including teachers, students, families, principals, Instructional Leader Executive Directors (ILEDs), school police, practitioners, funders, and others – have important perspectives to share on how restorative practices is implemented and sustained in schools throughout the city.

Common Themes Among Stakeholders

To capture these perspectives, multiple focus groups and presentations were held over the course of several months with key stakeholders. All the statements below were taken directly from the dialogue in stakeholder focus groups and presentations. Common themes throughout stakeholder groups include:

- If implemented properly, restorative practices can influence profound changes in teaching, learning, and the larger school community.
- Restorative practices improve learning and can be used as a powerful pedagogical tool.
- Teacher, principal, district, and parent buy-in are essential to proper implementation of restorative practices.
- The amount of time needed for full implementation, the effect of budget cuts, and lack of school resources were major concerns among all stakeholders.
- School staff and leaders will be more likely to utilize restorative practices if they see and experience authentic support from the City Schools, and various stakeholders identified that the City Schools' culture begins at central office.
- Restorative practices are more than just a conflict resolution tool; and should be primarily used as a relationship and school community building approach.
- Shifting mindsets can be a long and difficult process and the appropriate amount of time must be allocated for restorative practices to take hold.
- The dichotomy between a restorative practices culture at school and what many students experience at home or in the community can create restorative practices implementation challenges.
- Adults in the school community also need to be restored.
- Restorative practices can enhance teacher empathy by better understanding the challenges their students face.
- Restorative practices create an avenue for students to be heard - and student voice is vitally important to teaching and learning.
- Restorative practices need to be made a priority; learning and test scores will follow.

STUDENTS

"We don't know what other kids are going through in life, so it helps other students understand this." (5th grade student)

High School Students

High School Student Reflections on Benefits of Restorative Practices

- Starting restorative practices in the early grades could help build positive student culture, listening, and empathy skills before youth reach high school.

High School Student Reflections on Challenges of Restorative Practices

- High school students interviewed had not heard of the practice before and many initially saw it as childish and didn't think it would work in high schools but some students warmed up to the practice after discussion.
- Restorative practices seems to encourage "snitching," an unspoken policy in which students don't tell adults about wrongdoings. If restorative practices encouraged students to snitch, they would be ostracized or put at risk of violence.
- Some students thought failing courses or having problems at home could cause students to disengage from circles and resort to fighting. Because of these challenges, schools would need additional supports for restorative practices to happen on a district-wide basis.
- Some high school students stated that schools are too "out of control" for this to work.

Additional High School Student Comments

- "We are too old and set in our ways. We have a certain way of taking care of our issues and problems. Try it with little kids – elementary school. We have already learned how to take care of ourselves and our issues."
- "You can't change anything. Students are the problem – not the school. [Behavior] comes into the school from the streets. Everyone wants to be a tough guy. It also comes from the home."
- In one of the student focus groups, the facilitator noted that everyone knew someone who had been violently murdered and almost all had served at least one suspension from school.
- A student assisted Safe and Sound in facilitating high school student focus groups. He learned about the practice while conducting the focus groups and was highly skeptical about the effectiveness of the approach with high school-aged students in Baltimore until he attempted to use elements of RP to de-escalate an altercation at his high school. (See Appendix III for his letter that details what occurred).

Middle School Students

Middle School Student Reflections on the Benefits of Restorative Practices

- At one middle school that has undertaken a whole school restorative practices approach, students agreed that restorative practices had reduced the amount of fighting in the school and generally believed that circles help solve misunderstandings between students.
- Circles give students voice and make them feel like they matter. Students valued circles as an opportunity to get to know other students and staff and cited that they don't often get a chance to sit down, talk, and learn about one another. The practice helps develop stronger relationships between people in the school.
- Restorative practices give students a place to express themselves beyond just reporting "who did what to whom" and gives everyone a chance to present his or her side.

Middle School Student Reflections on Challenges of Restorative Practices

- Persistence and patience are needed with using restorative practices in schools. They saw potential barriers to student buy-in, but said that with consistent use, these barriers could be broken.
- There is a lack of trust between students and teachers and a perception that teachers don't truly care about students, that educators view students as inferior, and that they don't take action to help students solve their problems.
- Students were also concerned that teacher favoritism and personality differences would negatively affect restorative practices implementation.

Additional Middle School Student Comments

- While circles help students resolve conflict among themselves – similar methods are not being used to help students and teachers resolve conflict.
- Students are not involved in collaborative conversations with adults in the school regarding school rules, lunch, cell phone use and other concerns.
- "Teachers have to change their perception of students. They think they are better than we are – but without students, teachers wouldn't have jobs."
- Students who had experience with the practice noted that at first students think that circles are boring but over time realize they are cool.
- One student noted that circles are also useful for kids that don't talk in them.

TEACHERS

"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)

Teacher Reflections on Benefits of Restorative Practices

- Restorative practices improve communication at multiple levels: student to student; teacher to student; teacher to teacher; and teacher to administrator.
- Building strong student-teacher relationships and trust creates environments where students are listening to teachers and teachers are listening to students. This in turn makes small challenges in the classroom less frequent and helps prevent the larger behavioral issues.
- Restorative practices can also be used as a pedagogical tool for more interactive lessons.
- Restorative practices "humanize students," particularly if teachers are unfamiliar the demographics of our students and the environments that many of our students come from.
- The practice helps teachers understand their students better, but also helps students understand their teachers better.
- Being able to see everybody you are talking to becomes an extremely powerful experience.
- Using restorative practices can help create an intimate and welcoming classroom environment.

Teacher Reflections on Challenges of Restorative Practices

- In addition to concerns about limited resources, teachers indicated that staggering teacher workloads and the absence of support personnel would create additional implementation challenges.
- It will be difficult for many teachers to make the mindset shift and to take the long-term view that is required to implement RP. Certain teachers will quit use of the practice before experiencing results, which can in turn create a culture where restorative practices are seen as ineffective.
- One teacher didn't feel that restorative practices were efficient and stated that there isn't time in the workday to "talk about feelings."
- The absence of a strong vision for restorative practices coming from administration is a huge barrier to successful implementation.
- Administrators will need to monitor and insist that teachers continuously use the practice; otherwise it will slip away or only be present in pockets.
- Doubt that principals and administrators would value restorative practices over test scores.
- One teacher said restorative practices doesn't work for every situation and there has to be some discernment as to when the penalties need to be stiffened – otherwise the behavior persists and the school climate becomes worse than ever.
- One teacher stated that restorative practices doesn't work as a pull out model – and described a process in which students go to a restorative practices room, get a slap on the wrist and come right back to class without truly restoring any of the harm that has been done.
- In some schools restorative practices are implemented with no fidelity and little consistency (schools are simply restorative practices in name) and insufficient training and follow up contribute to this problem.

Additional Teacher Comments

- Teachers expressed a need for context when implementing restorative practices, "We have circles mandated in the morning but never understand why".
- Teachers stated that they are more receptive to PD sessions that were conducted by internal staff members, rather than those from external organizations.
- Seeing the practice with students who look like ours (in Baltimore) and who are the same age group helps with buy-in.
- "Negative energy can be contagious."

Families

"Fighting was all we knew about growing up."
(Parent)

Family Reflections on Benefits of Restorative Practices

- Circles would provide opportunities for teachers to better understand the challenges and issues many students face outside of school, from poverty and hunger to abuse or difficult home lives. By addressing these issues, restorative practices will enable teachers and school leaders to help students meet their needs academically and emotionally, as well as express their care and concern.
- Restorative practices as the "change our schools need."
- Several parents had positive experiences with circles while incarcerated or in drug rehabilitation and would like to see restorative practices used in a school setting, particularly with their children. One father stated, "Circles are real."
- Circles can help teach students and staff to communicate so that feelings aren't bottled up inside. It helps give students a place to safely share what's going on (which many agreed children don't often get a chance to do) and allows them to release stress and anger.
- Circles can help build the self-esteem and confidence needed to speak out about what's going on in students' lives and can equip them with communication skills that can be used at home.
- Circles foster a "family" feeling in the school which can lead students to open up about problems they are facing, and help students relate better to one another.
- Hearing stories in circles can often be sad, but it makes you realize you don't fully know what people have gone through.
- Parents also stated that people who don't share in a circle also benefit. They might hear someone say something that relates to them, which can help students who are going through similar struggles.

Family Reflections on Challenges of Restorative Practices

- So much of the trouble experienced in school comes from the trouble students experience at home – such as abuse, hunger, and other issues. These issues must be addressed before

the child will benefit from a circle. Furthermore, many professionals, who are supposed to be supporting children, can't relate to them.

- It will be hard to bring these practices to some schools because the environments are too negative. Many people feel unsafe in schools especially when having to break up serious fights.
- There was concern about the quality of the training teachers would get. Getting teachers to actually implement restorative practices will be difficult.
- Budget cuts to schools and large class sizes were also seen as major barriers to implementation. Large groups in circles (due to large class sizes) will not be as effective as small groups in circles.
- One parent noted that suspensions should still be used for serious incidents and stated that restorative practices might prevent students from being removed from class or suspended when they should be.
- Getting parents to participate in restorative practices will be a challenge – especially for those parents who see school as "day care."

Additional Family Comments

- To further illuminate the importance of building relationships with students, one parent who worked as a staff member at a school, stated that a student suddenly started coming to very late to school. After the parent spoke to student and developed a relationship with her, the student disclosed that she was being severely bullied and chased outside of school causing her to be scared to travel to and from school. The parent was able to connect the student to school staff who remedied the problem.
- Many students are ashamed to talk about their feelings and challenges because they are seen as signs of weakness.
- One parent knew of restorative practices and thought of it as a good alternative to serving jail time for minor offenses.
- Several parents felt like teachers were afraid of them and didn't care about them when they were in the school.
- School personnel should stop calling police at the first sign of trouble and stop calling Child Protective Services before talking with the parents.

Principals

"Restorative Practices has the potential to change an entire generation of children."
(Elementary/Middle School Principal)

Principal Reflections on Benefits of Restorative Practices

- With the budget cuts, restorative practices in a school can help provide mental health support to students.

- Restorative practices help students communicate their pain and struggles in a constructive manner and give students an equal voice.
- From a teaching and learning perspective, communicating in circles builds vocabulary and makes students stronger writers.
- One principal who uses restorative practices in her school noted that as each cohort of high schoolers has more experience with the practice, they start to listen more to their peers.
- It is hard to build relationships with parents, but restorative practices can help. Furthermore, once restorative practices become a school's culture, students bring the practices home.
- One principal noted, "When kids bring in their street rules to address issues in class like someone looked at me wrong; I need to address them,' restorative practices helps students communicate their differences."

Principal Reflections on Challenges of Restorative Practices

- Principals need to be restorative with staff before this can work as a whole school model. School staff will also need to be open to being in circles themselves to address issues.
- Principals need to be well trained for the implementation to be done with fidelity.
- There is often uneven adoption of the practice based on grade level. One principal had more trouble with circles in the middle school than the elementary school.
- One principal noted that it can be difficult to synthesize restorative practices with other practices already being used in the school.
- Some principals may perceive restorative practices as a "soft" solution to discipline.
- Because restorative practices are a long-term solution, many people give up on it before they see the benefit.
- It can be a huge challenge to retain restorative practices momentum when you have transient adult populations (teacher turnover).
- There is an inherent conflict between restorative practices and what is taught at home.

Additional Principal Comments

- One principal noted that PTO meetings are done in circles at her school.
- Restorative practices require "Believing the kids are worth it."

School Police

"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)

School Police Reflections on Benefits of Restorative Practices

- Restorative practices training helps officers that aren't relationship-oriented think about why building relationships is so important and pushes them to be more proactive about talking with students. Using restorative practices allows for relationships to be built on trust and true respect. One officer noted that students feel safe with him because he has taken the time to build trusting relationships. He noted that he's had students say, "I hated police officers until I met you."
- Restorative practices help develop a culture where school police are only used when absolutely needed (in the worst cases) because teachers have the tools to deal with conflict in their own classrooms. Having these tools reduces stress and anxiety on the part of the teacher.
- In a circle that was held between youth in a juvenile detention center and the school police, the circle helped create dialogue and understanding between the two groups that was extremely powerful. Using restorative practices allows young people and adults not to see officers as bullies or enforcers but as big brothers and sisters.
- Restorative practices help officers cut down arrests and provide solutions to repair harm in the school and community.
- "We have kids coming up to us outside on the sidewalks requesting circles… yes 17, 18, 19 years during a beef asking for us to help them work it out. It is powerful, and it works."
- Restorative practices deal with the root cause of an issue, rather than just the surface level manifestation.

School Police Reflections on Challenges of Restorative Practices

- There are challenges with students returning to non-restorative environments after the school day ends. The school cannot be the only place that is responsible for using this practice (i.e., homes and communities). Furthermore, social media is also a major driver of conflict beyond the classroom.
- While all school police officers have been trained in the practice, most teachers and administrators have not. Teachers must have a sincere interest in building relationships with students and a shift from a punitive to restorative mindset must occur for this to fully work.
- Students aren't always ready to participate in a circle. They often want to fight and cannot be dissuaded. In these instances reactive circles can still be used. It is also important to be conscious that sometimes circles do not work or have a different outcome than intended.
- Connecting with families so that they understand the practice is a major barrier. Parents and staff often don't think school police are doing anything when they don't see an actual consequence.
- It is hard to put another initiative on employees right now. Morale is at an all-time low because people are afraid of losing their jobs.
- Students who could most benefit from restorative practices are often the ones who don't regularly attend school.

Additional School Police Comments

- "We have seen a mindset shift, when you build relationships it helps crime go down."

- Officers expressed interest in developing a restorative practices video from the school police perspective.
- Restorative practices provide a way to diffuse situations as a community.
- "Restorative practices must be part of the teaching and learning culture. It must be embedded in the school day."
- "We must wrap the students and staff in a culture that cares."

Other School-Based Staff

"This allows us to step back from being the expert and gives space to build relationships."
(Community Schools Coordinator)

Other School Based Staff Reflections on Benefits of Restorative Practices

- The use of restorative practices helps students learn to express and communicate their feelings from the earliest grades. The practice gives students the tools to understand how to use their voice and creates a platform for dialogue to occur.
- Restorative practices can set guidelines for desired behavioral interaction as a community and help change mindsets regarding conflicts.
- Restorative practices let staff members take a step back from being the "expert" on everything. One staff member described this as "healthy discomfort."
- Restorative practices can help influence positive school climates, which in turn can help to increase school attendance.

Other School Based Staff Reflections on Challenges of Restorative Practices

- As a result of the district-wide initiative, schools might implement restorative practices just to "check a box" and not do so with fidelity. This could be a result of principals being told they will be a restorative school instead of requesting or wanting a vision change.
- Changing teacher practices for veteran teachers will be a huge barrier, and staff may have difficulty leading by example when they have a hard day.
- The amount of time training will take up and how it would be funded is a major concern. One staff member stated, "This is a difficult time to be rolling this out with teachers and support staff getting cut."

Instructional Leadership Executive Directors (ILEDs)

"If we want to restore children we have to also restore the adults". (ILED)

ILED Reflections on Benefits of Restorative Practices

- In order to get a bump in academics, climate issues need to be addressed. One ILED stated that he has seen implement restorative practices well and have subsequent school climate improvements.
- Restorative practices help establish policies and practices that that set a precedent on how everyone is being treated within a school (including the teachers and principal).
- "Restorative practices really rub up against the equity work that is being done" and helps place the practice within a framework.

ILED Reflections on Challenges of Restorative Practices

- There needs to be stronger, more direct, and more regular communication from City Schools about restorative practices. Many ILEDs shared that they had not heard about the initiative and were certain that their principals – those who would be leading implementation on the ground – were not aware of it either.
- Consistent communication to frame restorative practices as a district priority and to keep all stakeholders aware of and involved in the implementation process is critical. Part of this should also clearly outline the alignment between the restorative practices strategy and the CEO's vision for the initiative. This will help ILEDs in grounding the work and allow them to find ways to support fidelity in implementation at the school level.
- If principals are not feeling restored, they won't understand how they can be expected to be restorative with others.
- Other initiatives may compete with restorative practices.
- One ILED stated repeatedly that they had not seen the benefits or the purpose of restorative circles. She also stated that it actually made behaviors worse but did not elaborate on the details.
- There is limited availability and capacity of principals and teachers to engage in training. While summer provides ample time for school leaders to receive in-depth training and coaching, limited vacation and free time should be respected. Additionally, funding for training is also a major concern.

Additional ILED Comments

- All ILEDs asked to visit a Baltimore City school or schools with similar demographics to Baltimore City, that are using restorative practices so that they could see it in action. They also asked to see restorative practices utilized with children across the grade levels – especially in high schools.

External Stakeholders, Restorative Practices Providers, and Funders

"School climate is not a kid question – kids are just showing the chaos the adults are modeling." (External Stakeholder)

External Stakeholder, restorative practices Provider and Funder Reflections on Benefits of Restorative Practices

- Restorative practices are more than just conflict resolution tool, but rather a way for students, teachers, leaders, and families to build trust and positive relationships. This established trust creates an environment where students come and tell you when things are going to happen before they do.
- Restorative practices are an essential component of an equity framework. First, restorative practices serve as a pathway to equity by allowing everyone to be a participant. Circles engage not only the individuals who are resolving a conflict, but also their peers and school community as listeners and engaged participants in the resolution process. Second, it has a positive impact on school climate and culture, enabling all members of the school community – students, teachers, and leaders alike – to feel safe, comfortable, valued, and willing to express themselves in a constructive way
- Youth voice is critically important, and youth engagement is powerful. Restorative practices gives both of these things an avenue to exist. Furthermore, often teachers also don't feel heard, and restorative practices offers a vehicle for their voice to be heard as well.
- Restorative practices increases learning because there will be fewer disruptions and greater dialogue. If you put in the time to build a "preventative relationship", you have fewer incidents down the road. One stakeholder stated, "You no longer need to focus on the crisis of the week and can spend time on the deeper issues."
- "You are treating people like people!"

External Stakeholder, restorative practices Provider and Funder Reflections on Challenges of Restorative Practices

- Without implementation and buy-in from North Avenue, the district-wide implementation could fail.
- Money, time, and resources to support effective implementation are major barriers.
- Teachers and administrators are stressed so their capacity for empathy and connection are diminished. This stress will even further increase next school year given the budget cuts which will create an even greater challenge. With these added barriers, how do we change teacher practices?
- The dichotomy between home life and school life will be a challenge.
- Adults may feel like the implementation is punitive and that they are "being forced to change."
- There is potential for schools that are not truly implementing the practice to say they are restorative practices schools.

Additional External Stakeholder, restorative practices Provider and Funder Comments

- Stakeholders questioned whether City Schools was approaching this work with an equity lens, and stated that it could begin to address some of the issues around racism in our schools.
- "Restorative practices are not a consequence – it's a way to build community."

- Restorative practices are not a silver bullet but a culture and mindset shift. We have to think of it as *not* just another program.
- "Restorative practices reshape kids' ideas of violence – these are life skills."
- "Restorative practices are about best practices in education."

Cross-Sector Survey

"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."

In addition to the stakeholder-specific focus groups, an online survey was shared with a cross-section of audiences to garner additional feedback. Nearly all survey respondents were familiar with restorative practices and the concept of school climate.

Cross Sector Survey Participant Reflections on Benefits of Restorative Practices

- Restorative practices are a way to create a sense of community and a more nuanced understanding of issues between conflicting parties. One respondent stated, "When students and teachers see conflict in black and white, we fight each other, but when we see all aspects of a situation we are more likely to work together." Others stated that using restorative practices as a conflict resolution technique would allow students to be more aware of their behaviors and the impacts on others and themselves, describing this as "empathy restoration."
- Restorative practices will move teachers away from harsh discipline approaches, push back against the negative impact of zero tolerance policies, and decrease school suspensions.
- One teacher stated, "In my classroom, restorative practices lends itself to covering the Speaking and Listening standards of the MDCCSS. It also mimics accountable talk, which is a Kindergarten activity used to teach children to be members of a community."
- Added instructional time can also come from proactively building relationships with students, which in turn limits the number of disruptions during class periods.
- Another teacher stated, "In other schools where I have taught, the climate was chaotic. Something like this might help reduce the stress within the school and help students settle in to learn."
- Restorative practices align well with the CEO's priorities, particularly with student wholeness.
- Student voice is critically important. Restorative practices has the ability to help create positive and safe places for students to voice concerns and problems.
- When done well, restorative practices, "promotes exploration of privilege, oppression, inclusion, and diversity. It creates space for innovation." It demonstrates commitment to models rooted in cultural competency.

- Restorative practices improve teacher and student relationships and create pathways for teachers to model how to problem solve.
- One respondent stated that by bringing teachers closer to students, restorative practices could lessen the need for social worker and counselor interventions if executed properly.

Cross Sector Survey Participant Reflections on Challenges of Restorative Practices

- Most concerns involved adequate time, person-power, and funding. Many referenced the time it takes to develop the needed professional capacity to implement the program successfully.
- If the district does not commit the 5+ years it takes to fully implement the practice, respondents worried that it would result in restorative practices "lite."
- One respondent cautioned that, "we need to go slow to go fast, rather than go fast to go slow. It is very important to take the time to make this transition happen the right way rather than rushing it."
- Others worried that budget cuts would reduce the support that staff need to troubleshoot during the school day.
- Respondents thought that teacher buy-in due to the perception that no consequences are put in place with restorative practices would be a major barrier. Teachers not fully on board might present restorative practices to students in a negative light.
- Other respondents referenced the need for a major teacher mindset shift that would be hard to create, as exemplified by one respondent who stated, "Some staff continue to push the 'you will respect me' narrative without respecting their students or their parents."
- One teacher noted, "Not all classrooms at my school use the practice. Therefore, the practices cannot be used as a whole school intervention as it was intended. For example, it is not used during recess or resource time, as problems arise. Those problems usually get reported back for the classroom teacher to handle. And if it is not handled by the classroom teacher, the problem will re-arise and morph into something very different."
- One respondent cautioned that teachers are not psychologists or social workers and that the practice can be dangerous mentally in an uncontrolled situation if staff aren't trained and supported correctly.
- There were concerns about administrators and providers not recognizing that restorative practices will not be effective for all behaviors and that alternative consequences need to exist if students refuse to participate.
- Many saw lack of clear and sustained engagement from North Avenue to be a significant challenge. One respondent stated, "BCPSS has an awful track record of poor rollouts and implementation of programs without all the resources needed."
- Others referenced the distrust by students and families who have seen many programs come and go in very short periods of time. "As with many City Schools rollouts, there will be a big idea and potentially some training in advance, then no training ever again, and it will be forgotten."
- "Give people time to learn, take something else off of the plate of staff, show this is truly a priority, and make a commitment so this doesn't fall by the wayside in the near future as many things do."

Additional Cross Sector Survey Participant Comments

- Many respondents agreed that whatever students carry with them into the classroom – trauma, hunger, loss, helplessness – affects their ability to learn. Because trauma affects how learning is processed, creating a safe, productive and positive school climate is essential to student success. If the school is contributing to that sense of trauma, then learning cannot happen.
- Students in an environment that does not feel safe and calm are more likely to avoid school or class, be distracted at school, and suffer from stress that can make learning and retention more difficult.
- "Don't give up. Parents and children are frustrated with the status quo. Make sure leadership stays committed."

Section III: Recommendations

Section IIIa: Research Based 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. City Schools should also commit to substantial professional development in how to interpret discipline policies and protocols, restorative practices, and related relationship-building approaches.
5. Circles should be used following sustained absence, such as incarceration or suspensions to welcome students back to school.
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.

Section IIIb: Universal Stakeholder Recommendations

Whole School Mindset Shifts and Expectations

1. Position restorative practices as a whole-school culture change and mindset shift rather than a silver bullet.
2. It should be clearly communicated to all stakeholders that restorative practices cannot change a school's climate and culture overnight, as it is a gradual process that requires a change in behavior and mindset of all stakeholders in order to be successful.
3. Principals and other administrators must be supportive of restorative practices and make it an expectation for *all* staff for it to be effective in schools.
4. Restorative practices should also be used among adults (for example, at PTO meetings, staff meetings, district meetings, and the like).

Messaging and Modeling

5. City Schools should clearly express its vision and underlying reasons for implementing restorative practices district-wide. Strong messaging and communication from district leadership, particularly the CEO, is a critical component in successful restorative practices implementation.
6. Restorative practices should be clearly aligned with the CEO's whole child strategy.
7. District leaders should model restorative practices and help connect it to a citywide strategy.
8. Explicit support for restorative practices must be expressed by principals and school administrators for successful implementation of the practice in schools.
9. Guidance should be given about how to integrate restorative practices with models already being utilized in schools (e.g., PBIS, mindfulness, Peer Group Connection).

Training

10. All adults in a school community should be trained in restorative practices, including: principals, teachers, students, parents, cafeteria workers, front office staff, janitors, school police, and crossing guards. All must mean all.
11. There should be high-quality, ongoing, and relevant professional development opportunities and training for everyone in the district, which must begin *before* the start of the school year.
12. Lesson plan guidance for the first 30 days of restorative practices in the classroom should be created for teachers and restorative practices facilitators to assist in the implementation process.
13. The 21st Century Schools office should be trained in and utilize restorative practices in the school redesign, close out, merger, and new school enrollment processes.

Restorative practices and Discipline

14. Restorative practices should not be framed as solely a conflict resolution tool, as 80% of the restorative practices whole-school model focuses on proactive community building practices.
15. Restorative practices do not fix all issues that arise in a school community. Schools must discern which disciplinary route of action to use based on the circumstances.
16. School staff should create a written step-by-step process for restorative practices implementation that aligns with the student code of conduct.

Engagement

17. Circles should be used to engage students and adults in two-way collaborative conversations at schools.
18. Students must be fully engaged as thought partners in the restorative practices implementation process which would include being trained to lead circles.
19. Parents should be engaged in every step of the restorative practices implementation process including training and using restorative practices in parent conferences.
20. To ensure that all stakeholders are engaged in the implementation process, City Schools, as well as individual school communities, must effectively communicate about restorative practices with families – and the earlier, the better.

Section IIIc: Stakeholder Group Specific Recommendations

Students

1. Having older students lead circles will increase student engagement and buy-in and help alleviate the students' "no snitching" policy. Student circle leaders should be older students who would receive community service hours for their participation.
2. Restorative practices should be started with the youngest students so the practice is a habit by the time they are in high school.
3. Students should not be forced to speak in circles and should be allowed to take their time to warm up to the practice
4. Restorative practices needs to be communicated clearly to students so that they understand what it is, why it is being used, and have time to become accustomed to it.

Teachers

1. Teachers must be given context as to why the practice is important and why they are being asked to implement it.
2. On-going support and training should provide experiential elements. Teachers should be provided with opportunities to visit and observe model classrooms in schools and with children that are similar to their own to better understand the successful implementation of the practice in action.
3. Teachers should be trained to embed restorative practices into their pedagogy.
4. It would be helpful to train teachers and staff in each school as trainers to help sustain the practice.
5. Schools that are eager to adopt this culture shift should be prioritized. Implementing whole-school restorative practices in schools that are resistant to the practice is a waste of limited resources.

Families

1. Restorative practices should be discussed at all relevant parent and community meetings with an effort to get families excited about this practice.
2. Opportunities should be provided for family members to receive restorative practices training.
3. Teachers should be given a chance to observe circles before taking it on themselves and have the opportunity for regular meeting times where they can discuss themes that are coming out of the circles.
4. It would be helpful to start school days with a restorative circle – to begin the day on a peaceful note.
5. Teachers should become more involved with their students, potentially even knocking on doors as Thread volunteers do.
6. Families should be contacted, and family circles should be used prior to calling Child Protective Services.
7. Instruction should be delivered in a circle so that all students get a chance to participate in lessons.

8. Schools need more full-time counselors who should also be trained in restorative practices.
9. Agreements that are drafted in restorative circles must be adhered to in order to establish restorative practices' credibility among parents.

Principals

1. Regular check-ins with practitioners and continued professional development opportunities need to occur at all restorative practices schools. The trainings should be reflective of the demographics of Baltimore City students and demonstrate difficult situations and common errors that are made.
2. Principals need to be immersed in high quality training to lead their schools to successful implementation.
3. Restorative practices do not have to replace what a school is already using (one principal spoke of blending mindfulness with restorative circles).
4. Restorative practices should be adapted to the developmental level of students (one principal uses feeling faces with her pre-k students to introduce them to the practice).
5. Principals should communicate about restorative practices with parents to encourage their support and also provide parents with resources so that they can use circles at home.

Instructional Leader Executive Directors (ILEDs)

1. Intensive supports and coaching should be provided for principals throughout their first year of implementation.
2. Training should be differentiated given the understanding that every school is not at the same level of restorative practices implementation.
3. Restorative practices need to be aligned and blended with existing City Schools instructional frameworks. The cycles of professional learning could be used as a vehicle for implementation.
4. There should be a focus group with City Schools' Chiefs to help align this practice. The primacy of the practice needs to be communicated from the top at the CAO institute and other city-wide forums.
5. ILEDs need time on their calendars to work together to align this practice with the CEO's vision.

School Police

1. Schools are the priority, but in order for this to fully work and have children excel, restorative practices should also be conducted with communities and parents.
2. A restorative practices home curriculum and training should be developed to support parents/caregivers to shift their own practices with children.
3. Everyone in the school (including administrators, teachers, and students) should go through a quarterly training to reinforce restorative practices processes and concepts.
4. At both the school and district levels, making restorative practices mandatory will ensure that it is utilized well and practiced with fidelity; otherwise, it will not be adopted as a long-term practice.

5. Officers expressed that alternative schools should be prioritized for restorative practices implementation.

Other School Based Staff

1. Restorative practices should be differentiated based on the needs of the student group (which might include age, disability, and/or language proficiency).
2. Restorative practices should be woven into everything that is done in school, from classroom instruction and resolving in-school conflict, to interactions with district leaders and conversations with the community.
3. New teachers and leaders going into restorative practices schools should be trained *before* they get there.

External Stakeholders

1. Training should be provided for all organizations and agencies that do youth development work so that they are on the same page and are using common language.
2. Funders asked that City Schools provide the cost/funding gap of district wide implementation of restorative practices so that they can better understand what assistance is needed.
3. All stakeholders need to understand that restorative practices implementation takes a minimum commitment of 3-5 years.
4. The practice should live in the instructional framework and the leadership framework so that the practice continues regardless of leadership transitions.
5. Schools must have explicit restorative practices implementation plans to follow.

Multi-Group Survey Responses

1. Restorative practices training should be embedded in school-based and city-wide professional development calendars.
2. Student support team (SST) members should be trained in restorative practices, and SST protocols should be written to reflect the use of restorative practices in those meetings.
3. City Schools should develop materials that highlight restorative practices success stories (written, website, etc.).
4. The impact of trauma on all school stakeholders, including teachers and staff, should accompany discussion and trainings on restorative practices.
5. Schools in need should have a dedicated, full-time employee focused solely on restorative practices implementation.

Section IV: Concluding Remarks

"We must wrap the students and staff in a culture that cares." (School Police Officer)

In order to create a restorative practices school district, all adults in a school community must be trained and supported in uniform practices aimed at shifting interactions from those that may be punitive and controlling to behaviors that are relational and restorative. RP schools and districts place emphasis on the proactive use of circles and restorative statements to aid in developing positive relationships among adults and students. When the relationships and norms of a school community or office are not sufficient to address misbehaviors or concerns, reactive practices are implemented to repair harm, make whole harmed community members, and hold wrongdoers accountable. Several Baltimore City Schools have implemented RP with fidelity which has produced dramatic results including: substantial increases in enrollment and attendance; reductions in suspensions and expulsions; greater retention of teachers and staff; and importantly, improved student academic outcomes.

During stakeholder outreach efforts for this plan, every respondent group voiced concerns about not having sufficient resources, and buy in from persons in positions of authority for RP implementation in City Schools. School and district leaders are in the unique position to set priorities, schedule sufficient time on professional development calendars, and monitor and support the implementation of the practice. Both research and stakeholder comments reflected the critical importance of district leaders learning about, modeling and monitoring the implementation of restorative practices in schools and central offices, if the practice is to be successfully embedded into daily school and district-level interactions. Baltimore City is bravely embarking on a process that as one principal stated "*. . . has the potential to change an entire generation of children*." As momentum builds for implementation of this potentially transformational practice, City Schools can become the district in which all stakeholder voices are heard, relationships and strong connections are valued, and conflicts that arise are resolved through fair and transparent processes.

Section V: Appendix

Appendix I: What is Restorative Practices?

Many schools around the world and right here in Baltimore City are using restorative practices to build positive relationships within school communities, to enhance instructional practices and to resolve conflicts among stakeholders. It's important to note that restorative practices are not a new method of community building and conflict resolution. These practices have been used by the indigenous peoples of New Zealand, West Africa, as well as by First Nation Peoples in North America. One of the key hypotheses in RP involves the notion that staff and students are more likely to be happier, more cooperative, more productive and more likely to make positive changes when those in positions of authority do things *with* them rather than *to* them or *for* them. The most commonly known aspect of the practice involves the use of restorative circles. Fundamentally, restorative practices require participants to make a mindset shift from one that is punitive and blaming to one that is more reflective and inclusive, and which separates the "deed from the doer."

Proactive Restorative Circles – Building Community/Relationships

Proactive circles are used to enhance relationships and feelings of belonging and wellbeing in classrooms and the school at large. In proactive circles, students sit in a circle with a trained teacher/facilitator and address an open-ended question or matter of interest. Younger participants may respond to a simple question such as, "*What is your favorite food?*" While a circle starter for older students might be, "*Who do you most admire in your life*?" Generally, a talking stick or other object is used as each person in the circle speaks. Schools that employ whole-school restorative practices conduct pro-active circles among all adults and students at regular intervals, making these practices an integral part of the school day and providing a channel for all voices in the school to be heard. Proactive circles provide opportunities for students to voice their thoughts, beliefs and concerns and to get to know one another and the teacher. As teachers learn more about their students through these circles, they can better plan engaging lessons and utilize circles for instruction. Discussions and analyses of readings, current events, or other educational content can occur within a proactive circle as well. Proactive circles also equip teachers to identify and provide resources for students who are struggling academically, socially and/or emotionally. When used regularly, restorative practices help create classrooms, schools, offices and community where all stakeholders want to be.

Responsive Restorative Circles - Conflict Resolution

In a restorative circle involving a behavioral matter, or whole group concern, all of the effected parties sit in a circle with a trained facilitator to address the problem. It is important for the facilitator to speak to the central parties to the conflict *before* the circle is held to conduct a basic assessment of the facts, and to determine whether the parties are comfortable resolving the matter in a restorative circle. At times both parties to a conflict are the wrongdoers. Similarly, more than one party in the conflict may be victims. During the restorative circle, all participants are given an opportunity to tell their side of the story and each person is asked a series of neutral questions that are designed to: encourage the parties to reflect upon the harm that his/her

actions caused; enable the victim of the behavior to express the harm caused; have all parties agree upon a restorative plan that will make the victim whole and restore the entire community, upon completion of the restorative plan. It is important that all parties meet again soon after the initial restorative circle to ensure that the agreed upon tenets of the plan have been adhered to.

Informal Restorative Practices – Affective Statements and Questions

As educators become familiar with restorative practices, they will realize that there are many opportunities to use the practices regularly and informally throughout the school day. Affective statements and questions are powerful tools for building restorative classrooms and schools. Minor classroom disruptions, students disengaging from lessons or arguing with one another, and even students talking back to the teacher, will not usually require the use of a circle for resolution. In these instances educators can use affective statements to address the behavior. With an affective statement the teacher (adult) conveys how a student's actions affected her/him. For example, in the instance in which a student talks back to the teacher, the teacher would approach the student calmly and without an audience and state "I feel disrespected by the way you spoke to me earlier." These statements can also be used to provide encouragement and reinforce positive behavior as well. For example, rather than a simple "good job," a teacher might say "I was so happy when I graded your paper, your hard work has clearly paid off!" Initially, adults might feel uncomfortable or vulnerable using affective statements, but after repeated, successful results, the process will seem natural and the response from the students will be surprisingly positive.

Similarly, minor student conflicts can be addressed and de-escalated without moving a group into a circle for resolution. In a circumstance in which students get into a minor altercation or heated discussion or argument, trained staff can use affective questioning to address the matter expeditiously – before it escalates into a major conflict. One restorative practices organization (IIRP) uses the applicable affective questions below to address challenging behavior:

1. What happened?
2. What were you thinking at the time?
3. What have you thought about since?
4. Who has been affected by what you have done? In what way?
5. What do you think you need to do to make things right?

The same organization uses the questions below to help those who have been harmed by others' actions:

1. What did you think when you realized what had happened?
2. What impact has this incident had on you and others?
3. What has been the hardest thing for you?
4. What do you think needs to happen to make things right?

Additional information for implementing restorative practices in schools is provided in Baltimore City Schools' restorative practices guidance manual. Please also visit https://www.osibaltimore.org/restorativepractices/ for additional tools and information.

Appendix II: Focus Group, Presentation, and Survey Materials

Appendix IIa: Focus Group Overview and Agenda

RESTORATIVE PRACTICES OVERVIEW

Restorative Circles

Many schools around the world and right here in Baltimore use *restorative practices* to improve their school communities. The most commonly known restorative practices involve the use of *restorative circles* – or *circles*. Baltimore City Schools, the Open Society Institute and the Family League of Baltimore are working to make Baltimore City a restorative practices school district. Our goal is to have all schools in Baltimore utilizing restorative circles within the next five years.

Circling Process

The process is simple. Participants sit in a circle with a trained facilitator – who in a school setting it is most often a trained teacher. Together, participants discuss open-ended questions or topics of interest. Some facilitators use a talking stick or other object to pass around as each person in the circle speaks.

Circles Build Communities

Circles build school communities by providing opportunities for students to voice their thoughts and get to know one another. Circles also provide an opportunity for teachers and students to build positive relationships; and for teachers to identify students who may require additional support.

Circles Resolve Conflict

Circles can also be used to resolve conflict by allowing all parties to tell their side of the story. Participants often discover that the conflict stemmed from a misunderstanding. In instances where parties are intentionally mistreated, those harmed have an opportunity to express the personal impact of the mistreatment, which is a powerful way to hold peers accountable for their behavior. Generally, a plan of action for redressing the harm caused is agreed upon by all parties.

Circles Enhance Instruction

As students and teachers become comfortable with the use of restorative circles, this practice can also be used as an engaging instructional practice. Circles can enhance discussions of readings, current events, and other education content. Topics that arise in circles can also serve as the basis of future lessons.

FOCUS GROUP AGENDA

PURPOSE

Thank you for participating in today's focus group. The purpose of the focus group is to tell you a bit more about restorative practices and to get your feedback about implementing restorative practices in Baltimore City Public Schools.

Before we get started, please make sure that you have signed the sign in sheet.

BACKGROUND

CEO Sonja Santelises and the Board of School Commissioners for Baltimore City Public Schools has determined that City Schools will become a restorative practices district over the next five years. The Open Society Institute and the Family League of Baltimore are partnering with City Schools to develop a strategic plan to, at a minimum, implement restorative circles in all Baltimore City schools.

Today we will listen to you and obtain feedback on your thoughts, ideas and possible concerns about implementing restorative practices district-wide. We will record this session but no names will be used to identify individual participants.

AGENDA

1. Introductions – please provide name, organization and one sentence about why you came to today's focus group
2. Brief clip about restorative practices – please feel free to take notes or jot down questions as you watch the clip
3. Facilitator will ask you questions about the implementation of restorative practices in Baltimore City Schools and take notes on your feedback
4. Reflections and closing comments

Please feel free to take refreshments any time during the focus group

Appendix IIb: Focus Group Questions

Core Questions:

1. Does anyone have questions or comments about the video that was shown?

2. Have you ever heard of restorative practices before today?
    a. If so – what have you heard and what do you think?
    b. If not- what are your thoughts about what you've heard about restorative practices today?

3. What are the positives of bringing restorative practices to Baltimore City Schools?

4. What are the challenges of bringing restorative practices to Baltimore City Schools?

5. What other advice do you have for us as we develop this program for the district?

Appendix IIc: Note Taking Template

Focus Group:	Date:
Location:	Number of Participants:
Demographics:	Moderator(s):
Note taker:	

Question (# or key words)	Responses	Observations
1. Does anyone have questions or comments about the video that was shown?		
2. Have you ever heard of restorative practices before today? c. If so – what have you heard and what do you think? d. If not- what are your thoughts about what you've heard about restorative practices today?		

3. What are the positives of bringing restorative practices to Baltimore City Schools?		
4. What are the challenges of bringing restorative practices to Baltimore City Schools?		
5. What other advice do you have for us as we develop this program for the district?		

Appendix IId: Focus Group Debrief Questionnaire

Date:
Moderator(s):
Note taker:
Focus group:
Location:

1. What are the main themes that emerged in this focus group?

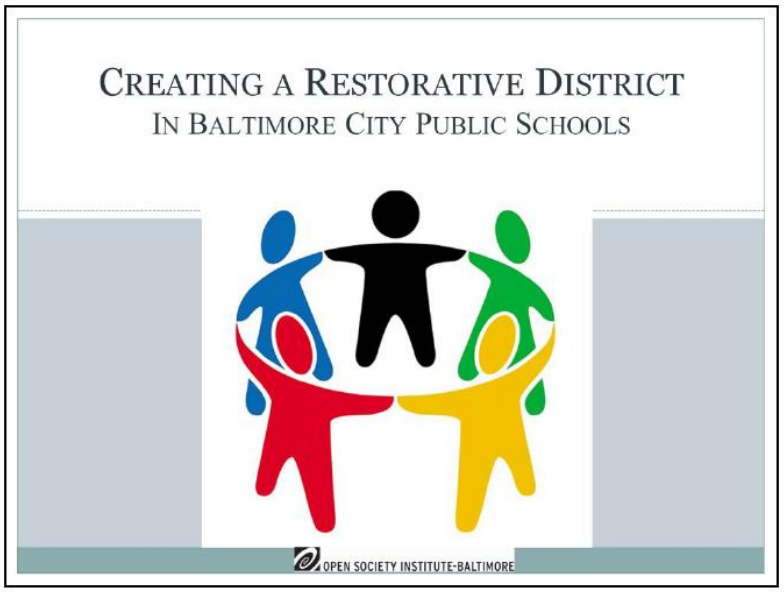
2. What did participants say that was unclear or confusing to you?

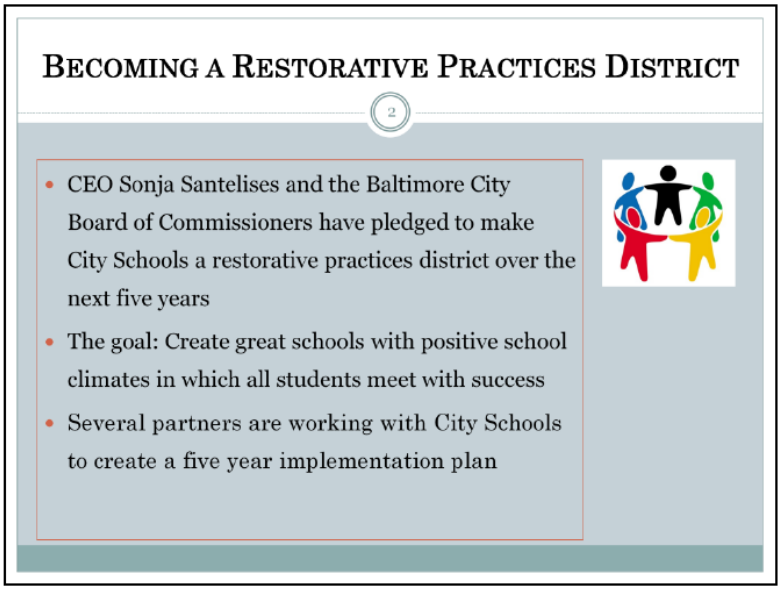
3. What did you observe that would not be evident from reading a transcript of the discussion (e.g. group dynamic, individual behaviors, etc.)

4. What problems did you encounter (logistical, individual behaviors, questions that were confusing, etc.)

5. Do you have any suggestions for future note takers and moderators?

Appendix IIe: Restorative Practices for Baltimore City Presentation





Partners include the Open Society Institute; the Family League of Baltimore; and the Baltimore School Climate Collaborative

Background and Research

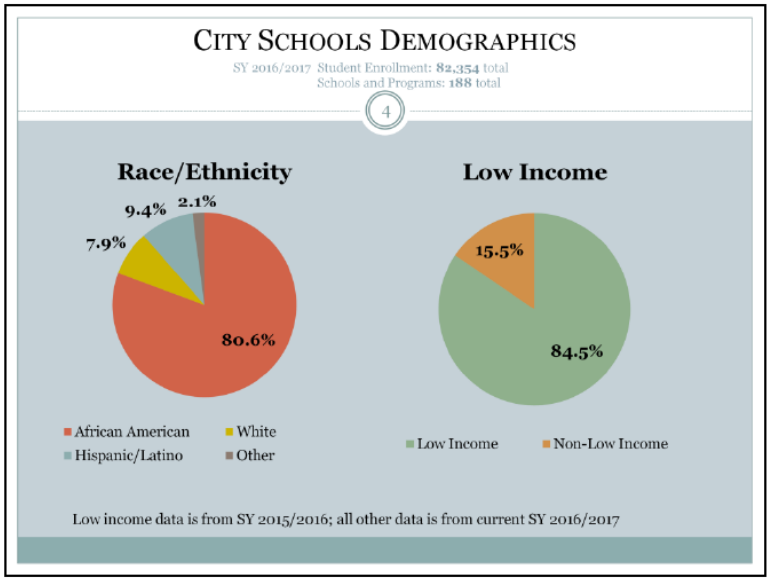
Includes: Research and literature review by Johns Hopkins Institute for Education Policy

City Schools' Implementation Plan

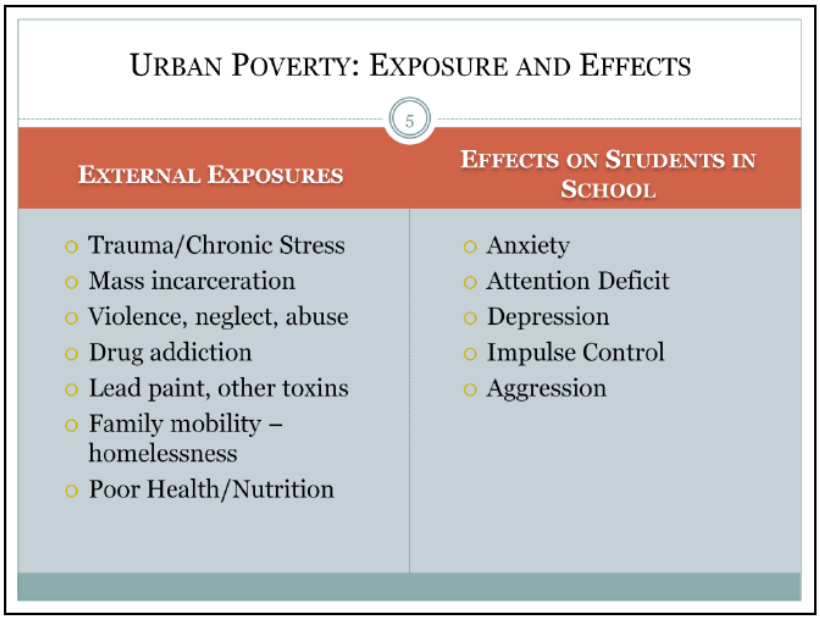
Includes: Detailed strategic whole school implementation guide; and restorative practices measurement and assessment tools

Community/Stakeholder Feedback Analysis and Recommendations

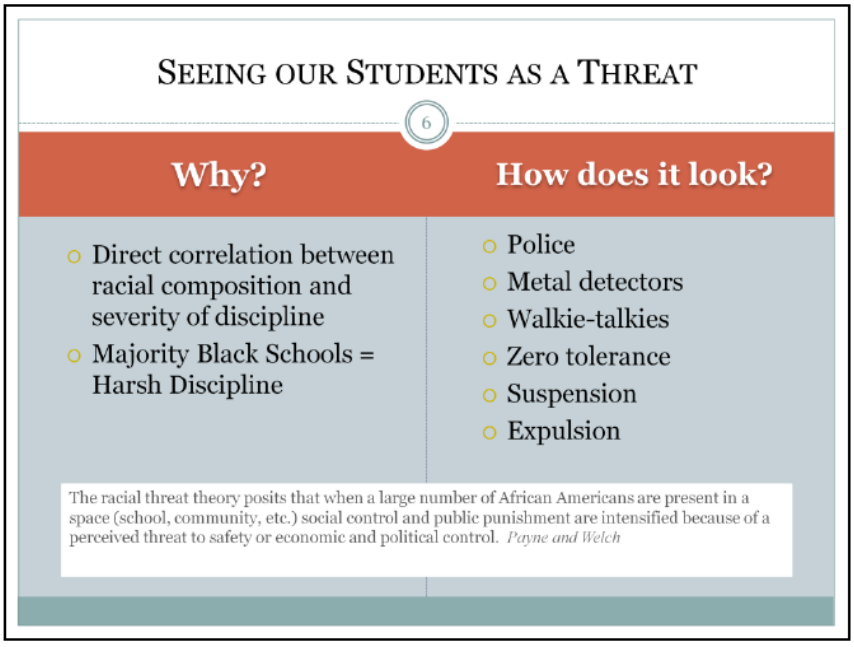
Includes: Focus group methodology; survey and focus group analysis; stakeholder, research-based, and City Schools recommendations



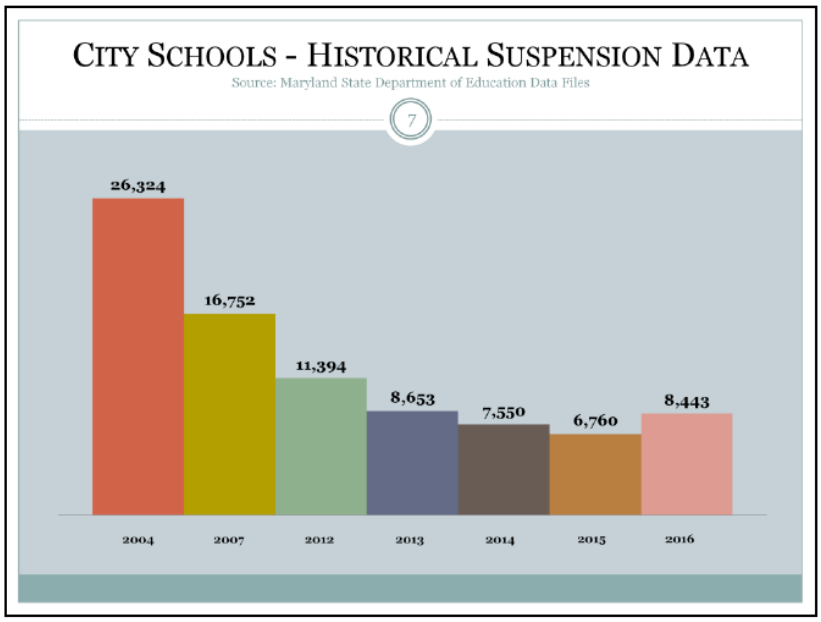
- Poverty remains a growing problem in public schools across the U.S., with 51% of all public school students living in poverty.
- Baltimore City shows an even larger poverty rate, with nearly 85% of all students being classified as poor.
- At this point the presenter states that this level of poverty impacts communities and schools



Presenter indicates that these are some of the more common behavioral effects that poverty has on students while in school. Research citations in the final slide support these findings.

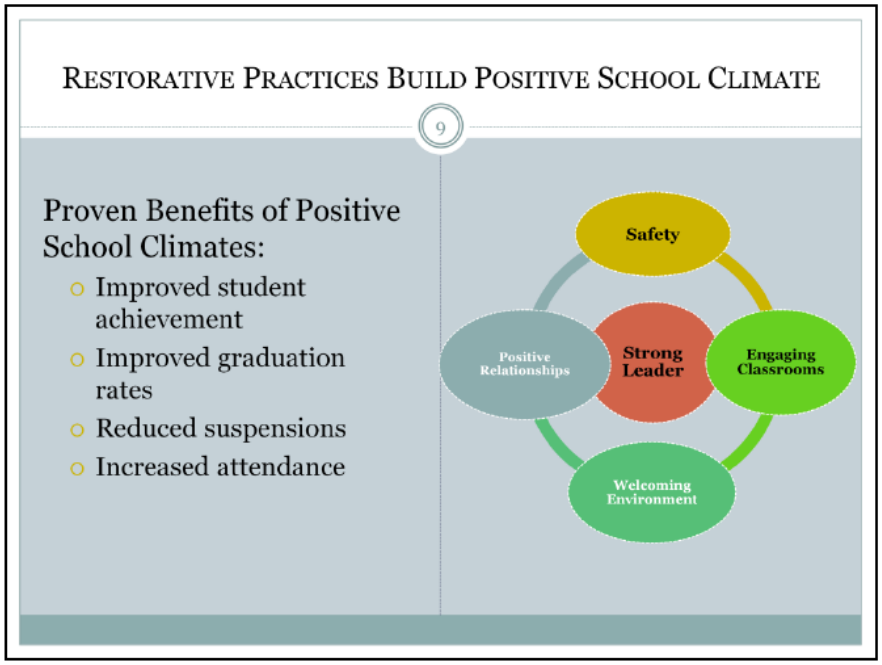


Is racial threat a factor in the use of discipline in Baltimore City Schools? Research citations in the final slide contain additional information regarding the racial threat theory and its application in a school context.



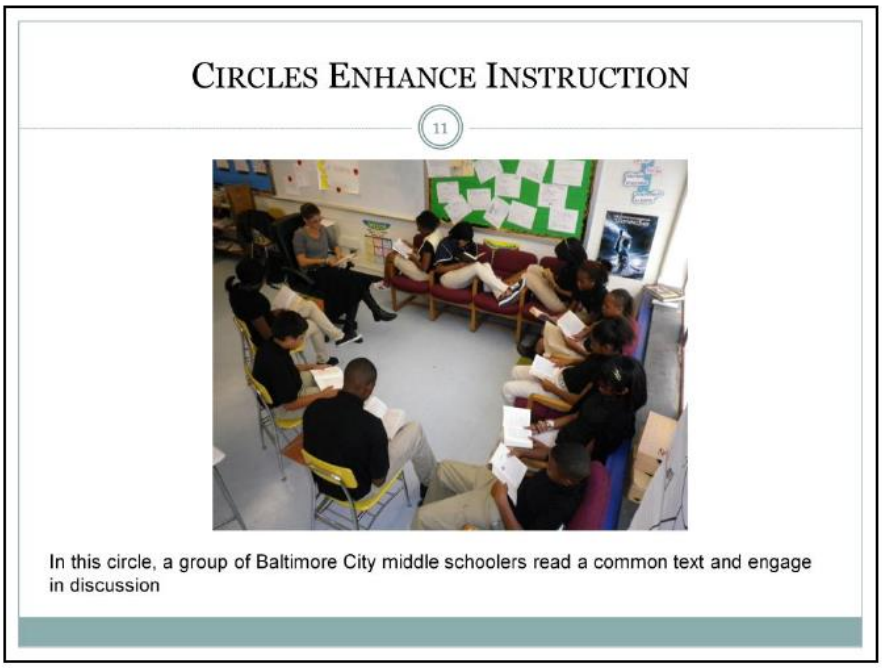
Baltimore City has passed progressive discipline policies and has conducted pockets of robust training in school climate improvement and restorative practices which has assisted in dramatic decreases in out-of-school suspensions over time. However, without a shift in attitudes regarding student discipline and "punishment" as well as interventions designed to improve adult/student relationships, City Schools will be unable to sustain progress in reducing suspensions and improving school climate.

A major challenge in implementing restorative practices will be to move from a mindset in which we see all students' mistakes and misbehaviors as punishable offenses – to a mindset in which we see most student behaviors as being developmentally consistent, teachable occurrences.

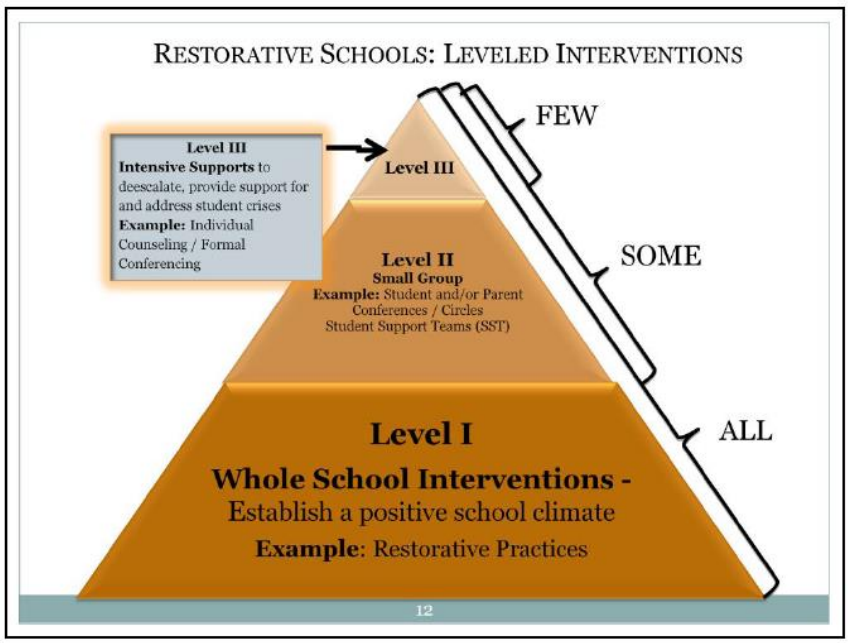


These are the proven benefits to improving school climate. By building positive relationships across the school community, restorative practices improve all of the pillars of school climate.

Restorative practices help to resolve conflict by allowing all parties to tell their side of the story and holding students accountable for their actions. Circles build understanding and compassion among all participants.



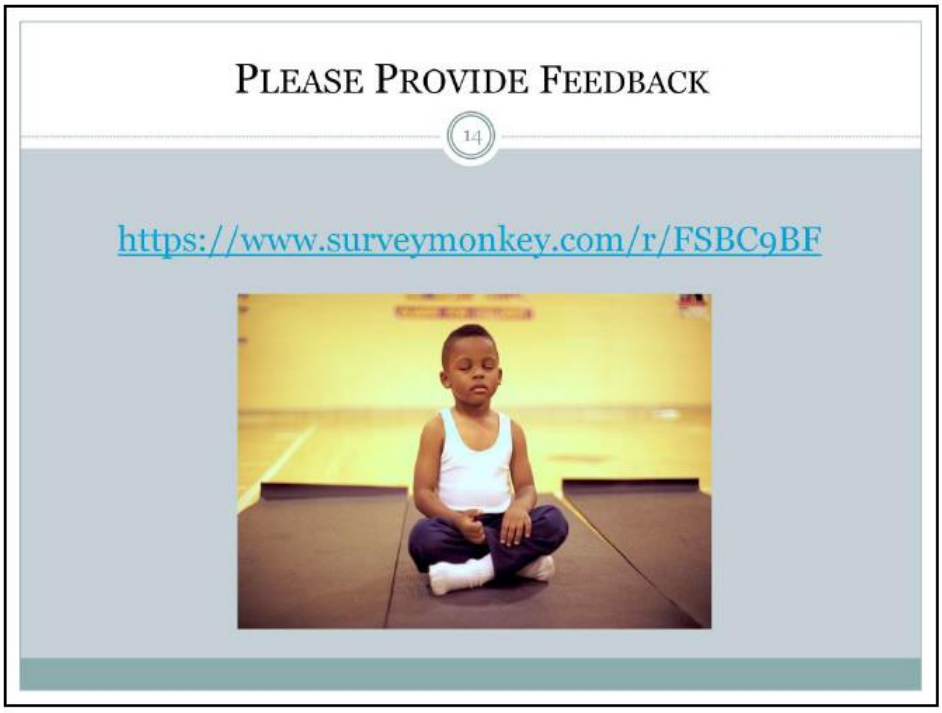
Circles can be used to enhance instruction through discussions that enhance understanding of new concepts, readings, current events and other education content. Topics that arise in circles can also serve as the basis of future lessons.



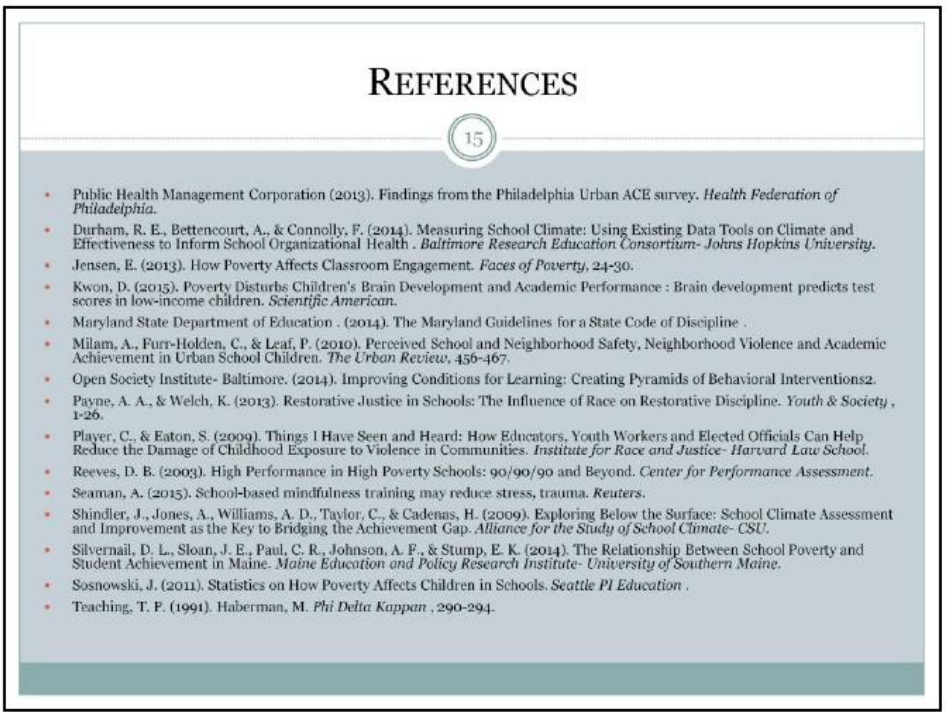
Restorative practices compliment many existing practices such as mindfulness, Student Support Teams, PBIS, peer mediation, and parent, student and/or teacher conferences and more.

Restorative practices provide a mechanism for creating positive school climates and for identifying students who require additional support.

Play video from 2:29-6:26. The video can also be found at this link:
https://www.youtube.com/v/HatSl1lu_PM&sns=em?start=149&end=386



Presentation participants should be asked to fill out the online survey to provide feedback.



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The factual information in this presentation was drawn from the references on this slide.

Appendix IIf: Focus Group and Presentation Log

Stakeholder Group	Date	Facilitator
School Climate Collaborative Members	12/16/2016	Open Society Institute
Students	2/1/2017	Safe and Sound Campaign and Student
Community School Coordinators	2/21/2017	Family League
Students	2/24/2017	Safe and Sound Campaign and Student
PCAB	3/2/2017	Open Society Institute/BCPSS
Funders/SCC Members	3/9/2017	Johns Hopkins University
Teachers	3/21/2017	Open Society Institute/BCPSS
Parents	3/21/2017	Safe and Sound Campaign
Families	3/22/2017	Open Society Institute/BCPSS
Students	3/25/2017	Safe and Sound Campaign and Student
Lakeland Elementary/Middle School	3/27/2017	Community Mediation
ACY Board	3/31/2017	Open Society Institute
Funders/ABAG	4/19/2017	Open Society Institute/BCPSS/City Springs Elementary Middle School
School Police	4/20/2017	Open Society Institute
School Police	4/21/2017	Family League
ILEDs	4/25/2017	Open Society Institute
Teachers	4/25/2017	BCPSS
Parents	4/25/2017	Community Mediation
Students	4/26/2017	Community Mediation
Teachers/Administrators/Parents	5/3/2017	Open Society Institute
Principals	5/4/2017	Open Society Institute

Appendix IIg: Restorative Practices Online Survey (blank)

Baltimore City Schools Restorative Practices Rollout Feedback Form

Purpose

CEO Sonja Santelises, and the Board of School Commissioners for Baltimore City Public Schools has determined that City Schools will become a restorative practices district over the next five years. The Open Society Institute and the Family League of Baltimore are partnering with City Schools to develop a strategic plan to, at a minimum, implement restorative circles in all Baltimore City schools. The purpose of this survey, and the information provided within it, is to tell you a bit more about restorative practices and to get your feedback about implementing restorative practices in Baltimore City Public Schools.

_____

Restorative Circles

Many schools around the world and right here in Baltimore use restorative practices to improve their school communities. The most commonly known restorative practices involve the use of restorative circles – or circles.

Circling Process

The process is simple. Participants sit in a circle with a trained facilitator – who in a school setting it is most often a trained teacher. Together, participants discuss open-ended questions or topics of interest. Some facilitators use a talking stick or other object to pass around as each person in the circle speaks.

Circles Build Communities

Circles build school communities by providing opportunities for students to voice their thoughts and get to know one another. Circles also provide an opportunity for teachers and students to build positive relationships; and for teachers to identify students who may require additional support.

Circles Resolve Conflict

Circles can also be used to resolve conflict by allowing all parties to tell their side of the story. Participants often discover that the conflict stemmed from a misunderstanding. In instances where parties are intentionally mistreated, those harmed have an opportunity to express the personal impact of the mistreatment, which is a powerful way to hold peers accountable for their behavior. Generally, a plan of action for redressing the harm caused is agreed upon by all parties.

Circles Enhance Instruction

As students and teachers become comfortable with the use of restorative circles, this practice can also be used as an engaging instructional practice. Circles can enhance discussions of readings, current events, and other education content. Topics that arise in circles can also serve as the basis of future lessons.

Video

Before you begin the question portion of the survey, please also watch this short clip about restorative practices implementation in West Philadelphia High School:
https://www.youtube.com/v/HatSl1lu_PM&sns=em?start=149&end=386

Baltimore City Schools Restorative Practices Rollout Feedback Form

Questions

1. Have you ever heard or discussed the school climate concept before?

- ◯ yes
- ◯ no

2. How important do you think positive school climates are to student success?

Not Important At All	Of Little Importance	Of Average Importance	Very Important	Absolutely Essential	N/A
◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

Why?

3. Have you ever heard of restorative practices before today?

- ◯ yes
- ◯ no

4. If...

yes: what have you heard and what do you think?

no: what are your thoughts about what you've read and watched today?

5. Please list some positives of bringing restorative practices to Baltimore City Schools

6. Please list some challenges of bringing restorative practices to Baltimore City Schools

7. What other advice do you have for us as we develop this program for the district?

Appendix III: High School Student Report on Incident at School

Yesterday I had a conflict with another student at school. My girlfriend told me another student was bothering her so I took it upon myself to approach him the next time I see him. A day or two went by and I finally seen him. My words to him was "Why are you messing with Trinity". Trinity is my girlfriend. He claimed he didn't know what I was talking about so I started to get aggressive. I'm in his face taunting him. When the teachers came out to break it up he started to taunt back. One of the teachers grabbed me by the hand and took me upstairs to his office. He didn't take the other student because I was the one who was really being the aggressor. While we were walking to the office I was heated. We finally got into his office and he calmed me down. He asked me what can we do to resolve this problem and I responded "We should do a circle". At first he didn't know what I was talking about so I had to explain to him what restorative practice was. He was shocked that someone like me would want to do a circle. He agreed and brought up the other student. I took initiative to start it and asked him how would he feel if his girlfriend told him that someone was bothering her. He gave me an intelligent answer basically saying he would feel the same way I felt. After talking for about 5 mins everything was resolved and he turned out to be a good guy. We was allowed to go back to class and go on with the rest of our day.

Appendix IV: Video Library

Restorative Circles: https://vimeo.com/205263529

Second Chances: School Profiles: https://vimeo.com/125481122

Principal on eight years of restorative practices:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bqyqNZq4gas

The Transformation of West Philadelphia High School: a story of hope:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HatSl1lu_PM

Restorative Welcome and Re-entry Circle: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uSJ2GPiptvc

Appendix V: Current Restorative Practices Randomized Control Trials Underway

Below is a description and timeline for the RCT studies currently underway:

- RAND study Reducing Problem Behaviors Through PYD: An RCT of Restorative School Practices
    - The study seeks to: assess the mechanisms of how restorative practice interventions (RPI) implementation influences the school environment; assess the effects of RPI on school staff perceptions of school climate and adolescents' reports of school connectedness, peer relationships, developmental outcomes (academic achievement and social competency), and problem behaviors (alcohol use, bullying, disciplinary referrals); and assess the extent to which the positive effects of RPI on adolescents persist over time during the transition between middle and high school.

      The study is in the recruiting phase. Final data collections are scheduled for May 2018 with results tentatively due in August 2018. (https://clinicaltrials.gov/ct2/show/NCT02155296)

- National Institute of Justice (NIJ)/RAND/Institute of Restorative Practices study: Pursuing Equitable Restorative Communities:
    - Researchers will 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 (http://nij.gov/funding/awards/pages/award-detail.aspx?award=2014-CK-BX-0020).

- NIJ/Urban Institute (Justice Policy Center) study Using a Restorative Justice Approach to Enrich School Climate and Improve School Safety:
    - The Central Falls School District in Rhode Island will partner with three local educational agencies (LEAs) in the state to conduct a pilot implementation of restorative justice conferencing. Researchers will conduct a rigorous impact evaluation using a quasi-experimental design that will compare the outcomes of students who participate in conferencing (treatment) to students from non-treatment LEAs who have been disciplined for similar offenses (comparison). No timetable for results has been announced. (http://nij.gov/funding/awards/pages/award-detail.aspx?award=2014-CK-BX-0025

Appendix VI: Bibliography

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