Restorative
Whole School Approach & Assessment

The Restorative DC Whole School Implementation Guide can be found at http://www.restorativedc.org/resources/

Whole School Restorative Approach Focus Area

Leadership

Your role on the restorative school team is to help coordinate, delegate, and support your school in making the shift to a restorative mindset. It is important to remember you cannot do this alone or just with your restorative school team. This is a whole school effort and requires school leaders to be the catalysts and models of a restorative culture change. This does not mean you will model this perfectly at all times, but being able to be transparent and use the F.A.I.L's (First Attempts In Learning) lens. Leadership activities include:

- Communicate vision to the school community
- Build a strong Implementation Team
- Build restorative infrastructure – discipline and HR polices; vision and mission statements; orientation and outreach materials; school handbooks, codes, and other resources; professional development

Refer to the following section in the Whole School Implementation Guide for guidance: Whole School Restorative Approach Focus Areas

Staff Engagement

Meaningful staff engagement along with leadership provides the foundation necessary for the whole school to make a shift. To foster meaningful staff engagement builds on these three areas:

- Self-care
- Engagement and connection
- Targeted skill-building

It is important to note that these are interconnected. Staff must be well with themselves (self-care) before being well with others (engagement and connection) in order to build skills to use restorative processes (skill-building).
Refer to the following sections in the Whole School Implementation Guide for guidance: Whole School Restorative Approach Focus Areas, Step 5: Build Capacity and Competency

Positive School Culture and Climate

When creating a restorative school it is important to let the 80/20 model guide you. 80% of your efforts and resources are focused on building school culture and climate and 20% of your efforts and resources allocated to responsive/disciplinary processes. In year one you want to identify ways you can integrate Restorative Justice philosophy and practices in day-to-day classroom interactions and school wide initiatives.

- Sample activities for individuals and classrooms: restorative language, check-in/check-out circles, restorative games
- Sample activities for school-wide initiatives: field trips; cook outs; school plays, shows, and assemblies

Refer to the following sections in the Whole School Implementation Guide for guidance: Whole School Restorative Approach Focus Areas, Step 4: Assess Current Data and Begin Implementation Plan, Step 10: Sustainability

Restorative Discipline, Policies, & Practices

Transforming discipline policies and practices to be restorative will take time and thoughtful effort. Revise your school's current policies to ensure the focus is around repairing harm and not punishing the wrongdoer. Policy is difficult to change in a short period of time. Identify areas where you could use restorative alternatives to conflict or disruptive behaviors. Identify small thoughtful changes that would help set the foundation to eventually use Restorative Justice philosophies as the reasoning behind your policies and practices related to discipline.

- Sample practices: restorative conversations, peace rooms, responsive circles/conferences, reintegration circles, restorative alternatives to ISS
- Integrate with other frameworks (PBIS, RTI, positive discipline, etc.)

Refer to the following pages in the Whole School Implementation Guide for guidance: Whole School Restorative Approach Focus Areas Step 7: Responsive Practices

Youth Engagement

The most successful restorative schools across the country, pre-k all the way to high school, have one thing in common: a strong youth voice. Establishing meaningful youth leadership not only requires providing opportunities for youth leadership, but training adults in the school on how to let youth genuinely lead. A strong youth component will develop gradually. It is important not to rush in with too many ideas. Start by strengthening what is already in place or creating manageable initiatives.

Family and Community Engagement

To have a truly sustainable restorative school the entire community needs to have ownership in this culture change, not just educators or school administrators. In the first years, your focus should be on spreading awareness of the shift your school is making and building relationships with families and community members around your school. Sample activities: parent nights, home visits, parent circles, community circles, and Outreach materials.

Assessment

The transition of a traditional school to a restorative school is a process that takes three to six years. It is essential to keep track of quantitative data like attendance, student and staff retention rates, grades, discipline data (suspensions, referrals, etc.), as well as qualitative data (student, parent, and staff testimonials) and climate surveys. It is important to have baseline data on your school's performance and behavior trends, to help you assess your impact on school culture and discipline. Disaggregate data by race, disability, sexual orientation, etc. so that you can also assess impact on issues of equity. This data communicates the missing pieces and unmet needs at your school. It can provide evidence that the policies and practices currently in place can be amended to facilitate more positive changes in behavior and culture at your school.

Restorative DC School Readiness Assessment Tool

The following is readiness assessment to prepare for your team and your for a whole school implementation process. If you are interested in applying for technical assistance from Restorative DC please contact us at rdc@schooltalkdc.org.

Current Needs:

What of the following school climate issues takes up most of the school staff's time and energy?

- ☐ Physical/emotional safety of students
- ☐ Physical/emotional safety of staff
- ☐ Bullying
- ☐ Tardiness
- ☐ Drop-out rates
- ☐ Staff morale
- ☐ Student-student relationships
- ☐ Student-teacher relationships
- ☐ Teacher-administration relationships
- ☐ Parental engagement
- ☐ Suspensions/expulsions
- ☐ On-site arrests
- ☐ In-class misconduct/disruption
- ☐ Out-of-class misconduct/disruption
- ☐ Racial/ethnic tensions
- ☐ Mistreatment/discrimination on the basis of disability or sexuality
- ☐ Poor social-emotional development
- ☐ Manifestations of trauma
- ☐ Lack of youth leadership/voice
- ☐ Gang/crew fighting
- ☐ Physical violence
- ☐ Verbal altercations
- ☐ Property damage/theft
- ☐ Other:

Please elaborate on each of the issues you indicated above.

Background: Briefly describe how you came to be interested in Restorative Justice/ Practices at your school. How were you first introduced?

Prior Exposure: Has your school's staff already received professional development in Restorative Practices?

- [ ] Yes
- [ ] No

If yes:

1. When were these provided, and by whom?

2. How many hours was each?

3. How many and which staff attended each?

4. Was follow up support provided? What did that look like?

5. Describe any evidence of implementation based on this professional development.

Professional Development Needs: In addition to the above professional development, which of the following training or practices are you familiar with AND interested in? Pick your top three.

- [ ] Classroom circles
- [ ] Staff circles
- [ ] Family-student-staff circles
- [ ] Adult mediation
- [ ] Peer mediation
- [ ] Peer juries/panels
- [ ] Responsive circles/conferences (in lieu of suspension/expulsion)
- [ ] Restorative conversations/Collaborative Communication
- [ ] Trauma awareness and resilience
- [ ] Mindfulness
- [ ] Need more information to make a choice
- [ ] Other:

Other Frameworks: Which of the following models has your school been trained in AND significantly implemented at your school?

- ☐ Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS)
- ☐ Response to Intervention (RTI)
- ☐ Responsive Classrooms
- ☐ Positive Discipline
- ☐ Classroom Management
- ☐ De-escalation Techniques
- ☐ Other:

Current Partnerships: What partnerships does your school currently have that relate to discipline, behavior management, youth development, social emotional learning, or school culture?

Current Efforts: What does your school currently do to improve relationships amongst students and staff, to build positive school culture and social emotional skills, and/or to respond constructively to harm or misbehavior?

Inclusivity: What opportunities are there for staff, students, and parents to have input and take leadership in these efforts?

Leadership and Teamwork Style: How would you describe your school's approach to making decisions that affect others, addressing conflict, and solving problems? Is it collaborative? Top-down? Bureaucratic? Innovative?

School Stability: Describe any major changes in leadership, policy, operations, or infrastructure that have recently taken place or are anticipated to occur in the next three years?

Current Climate and Culture: What five words would you use to describe your school's current climate and culture?

Desired Climate and Culture: How would you describe the climate and culture you most ideally envision for your school?

Restorative Justice Coordinator(s): Does the school have the willingness and capacity to designate one or more RJ Coordinators?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Unsure

Restorative School Implementation Team: Does the school have the willingness and capacity to assemble an RS Team?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Unsure