



[RESTORATIVE JUSTICE IN OAKLAND SCHOOLS IMPLEMENTATION AND IMPACTS]

AN EFFECTIVE STRATEGY TO REDUCE RACIALLY DISPROPORTIONATE
DISCIPLINE, SUSPENSIONS AND IMPROVE ACADEMIC OUTCOMES

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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

September 2014



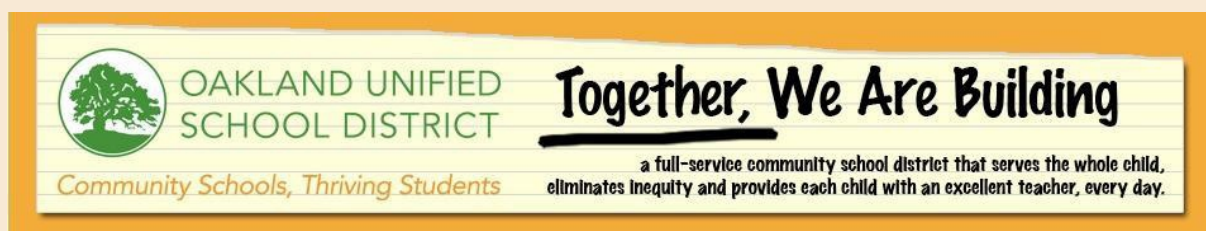
**OAKLAND UNIFIED
SCHOOL DISTRICT**
Community Schools, Thriving Students

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This report is dedicated to the many students, teachers, principals, coordinators, other school staff and partners who have been deeply committed to and engaged in restorative practices at OUSD over the years.



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Design by:  Oms Creation, omscreation.com

"The Oakland Unified School District (OUSD) is building Full-Service Community Schools, one where "Every Student Thrives!" In OUSD's "*Community Schools, Thriving Students*" vision, each school site offers high levels of learning along with physical health, mental health, dental and eye care; nutrition, physical education, recreation, before-school and afterschool programs; housing, employment, parenting and language acquisition courses and a range of other programs. Social and human services are not seen as extra or add-ons. Instead, collaboration in service of children and families is how they consistently behave. To learn more about OUSD and its work to ensure that schools are safe places where students are engaged, challenged to meet college and career standards, and encouraged to have fun and build productive and sustaining relationships, visit: www.ousd.k12.ca.us."

Data In Action, LLC¹ (www.datainaction.org) is an emerging minority woman-owned global research, evaluation and development hub for nonprofit organizations, systems and communities to achieve justice, equity and health.

LETTER FROM THE TEAM

Dear Colleagues,

October 15, 2014

We are excited to share with you a comprehensive report about the implementation and potential impacts of restorative practices in Oakland Unified School District to date. After nearly a decade of implementation, we now have sufficient data to indicate how effective restorative practices are in reducing suspensions in a large urban school district, as well as show the challenges we have faced and our strategies to overcome them. This report articulates the positive difference restorative practices are making for our students, teachers/staff, and schools, to build strong community schools and reduce racial disparities in discipline and academic achievement. We hope the information provided is useful to district officials, principals, teachers, school staff, students and parents who wish to lift up restorative practices within their schools, drawing upon practices and procedures that are field tested.

In Oakland and across the country, we need viable alternatives to exclusionary discipline - zero-tolerance policies and practices have not worked and pose harm to students of color of all ages. The findings in our report confirm that restorative practices, implemented through our Whole School Restorative Justice and Peer Restorative Justice models, offer a promising alternative to suspension. Our multi-tiered restorative framework is taking root, fostering community in our schools, building and repairing caring relationships, and creating positive school-wide culture. If we are to ensure thriving students and healthy schools, we need to invest broadly in non-reactive, reparative approaches that address the root causes of our conflicts, violence, and misbehavior.

We would like to thank all our teachers, students, school staff and partners who have worked tirelessly over the years at OUSD to make RJ a success. We share this report with the hope that it will promote awareness, collaboration, allocation of resources, and ultimately the institutionalization and sustainability of restorative approaches in schools. We look forward to continuing to work together to achieve our shared goal – seeing that all our students graduate high school, prepared to succeed in college, career, and as leaders in their communities.

Sincerely,

David Yusem

Program Manager

Restorative Justice Program

Oakland Unified School District

Barbara McClung

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We are grateful for the assistance of several individuals without whom, this report would not have been possible. First of all, we are grateful to Barbara McClung, Director of Behavioral Health Initiatives at Oakland Unified School District (OUSD), for supporting and integrating data and evaluation to the extent possible in all she does. Her unwavering vision, dynamic leadership, and commitment to collectively supporting the learning and achievement of the most vulnerable youth by building safe, supportive, equitable school conditions with positive school climates is commendable. We are thankful to David Yusem, Restorative Justice Program Manager at OUSD, for his ongoing support and coordination of various data collection activities, reviews of tools as well as his deep commitment and expertise in restorative practices. We are thankful to the OUSD Research, Assessment and Data Unit, in particular Rinat Fried for providing access to multiple datasets, matching participant data with Aeries, and answering numerous nuanced questions about data quality. We thank Jean Wing, Director of the unit for supporting this evaluation through approval of the research application, and Caroline Landau whose strategic inquiry about various RJ data collection activities in the district was helpful. Their commitment to tracking key data elements for the restorative justice program will be immensely helpful for the program. We appreciated the cooperation from the City of Oakland, Department of Human Services staff Dyanna Christie and Restorative Justice for Oakland Youth's (RJOY) Director Fania Davis and RJ Coordinator Eric Butler, for being forthcoming with the data requested last minute, and who continue to share a successful partnership with OUSD. We also thank Oakland Fund for Children and Youth (OFCY) for funding the Peer RJ program at OUSD. A special thanks to Emilio Ortega, Komoia Johnson, Yari Sandel, Denise Curtis, and Eric Butler who participated in our interviews and answered numerous questions. We are grateful to all the RJ coordinators, teachers, and support staff who despite their busy schedules, took the time to participate in our focus group and were forthcoming with their experiences and perspectives. Their heart-felt dedication to the students and restorative practices is exemplary. A special thanks to all the Peer RJ and Whole School RJ middle schoolers and high schoolers who participated in the focus groups, and OUSD for providing the space, time and incentives to conduct the focus groups. We would like to acknowledge Henrissa Bassey in conducting some of the qualitative data analysis; Dorothy Holinger in translation of interviews and focus group recordings; Rochelle Collins who assisted with co-facilitation of the focus groups and interviews; Martha Brown and Preety Kalra for stepping up as needed to support the production of this report in a short timeline; and Kevin Hwang for his consultation on methodological issues for the advanced statistical analysis. Finally, we would like to thank several staff at WestEd, where the primary author worked during the design of this evaluation, specifically Anthony Petrosino, Ph.D., Alison K. Cohen, M.P.H., and Tom Hanson, Ph.D. for their review of the original evaluation design.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Significance

Schools around the country continue to unfairly use zero-tolerance disciplinary policies and practices to suspend or expel students for minor behavioral infractions, such as verbal disrespect, fighting, or truancy, many common during adolescent years. Compelling evidence suggests that zero tolerance disciplinary policies and teacher/principal practices used for decades do not work to improve student behavior, school safety or academic achievement. In fact, they limit meaningful opportunity for students to learn and engage, instead increasing unstructured out-of-school time and likelihood of isolation, dropping out and being arrested. Students of color, particularly African American students, have been most disproportionately impacted by these practices, with highest rates of suspensions, expulsions and subsequent delinquent pathways via school-to-prison pipeline. Fair, just and effective alternatives to suspensions and expulsions are needed to support students of color to learn, achieve and grow to their fullest potential.

School-based Restorative Practices at Oakland USD

School-based restorative justice programs, which are based on indigenous means of community building in schools, are increasingly being recognized as a promising alternative to suspensions that are effective in repairing harm or conflict, reducing student risk behaviors, violence and building community. Oakland Unified School District (OUSD) in partnership with the county juvenile justice system, health care, city of Oakland, and RJOY, have long recognized the need to address disproportionate minority contact and plug the school-to-prison pipeline, by employing several innovative strategies. OUSD, one of the largest district in the state of California serving over 45,000 students, one third African American and high percentage of low-income students, voluntarily went into agreement with Office of Civil Rights in 2012 to reduce disproportionality for African American students, and close the discipline gap between Black and White students.

In 2005, OUSD started the Whole School Restorative Justice (WSRJ) program, and more recently, the Peer RJ program, aimed to reduce harm, build community, and ensure successful re-integration of marginalized students coming from the juvenile justice system. WSRJ uses multi-level strategies to change school climate across the schools using classroom circles (tier 1), repair harm/conflict and build relationships using tier 2 circles, mediation and family group conferencing, and do welcome/ reentry circles to initiate successful re-integration post JJC (tier 3). This report, primarily prepared for the Office of Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Education, as part of the ongoing larger RJ evaluation, focused on better understanding implementation across schools, and effectiveness of tiers 1 and 2 restorative practices on suspensions and academic outcomes for those schools with vs without RJ. We tested whether the association between RJ intervention or not and suspensions over time was significant even after controlling for student, and school-level confounders; and whether the effect of RJ interacted with race, i.e., whether the protective effect was more beneficial for African American students in RJ schools compared to those in non-RJ schools. Multiple sources of existing data were tapped to answer these evaluation questions, including a matched participant and school-level data with district's student information system (AERIES) and California Department of Education suspension and expulsion data files. Additionally, mixed methods were used to capture new data.

Key Findings

01

RJ Implementation at OUSD

- There has been substantial growth in number of schools practicing RJ in the past 10 years, most significantly in the past 3 years, growing from 1 in 2005 to 24 in 2013-14 school year. Of these, almost half had high implementation, 2/2 elementary schools, 6/11 middle and 3/9 high schools.
- Per implementation survey, over 90% of staff reported practicing RJ at OUSD for less than 3 years (38% less than 1 year, and 52% 1-3 years). Over 78% said they are successfully implementing what they learned in RJ training entirely or a lot and 21% said some.

- In only one year, over 6,000 students participated in conflict/harm circles, and 3000 students in community building circles, and 3,000 conflict/harm mediations.
- In the past 3 years, there has been substantial number of staff and students trained in RJ and capacity built, exceeding set training objectives. Of the total survey respondents, 57% were currently trained, 43% not. Almost 40% reported they have not had adequate training or coaching to meet their needs –indicating greater need for coaching.
- The trainings/capacity built varied by staff type and schools. Over 90% of Principals and RJ coordinators are trained in restorative practices and over 60% of teachers and school staff are trained in the past year.
- Parents were the least likely to have been trained (10%), and were the least familiar with restorative practices: 47% said they were somewhat familiar and 35% knew little or nothing about RJ. Next, more than 60% of the teachers reported being trained, and 44% were very familiar, and 48% somewhat familiar or knowledgeable about restorative practices.
- The greatest percent of staff trained in RJ are at Skyline High School, Glenview Elementary, Met West High School, and Barack Obama Academy.

02

Experience of students, staff and parents using growing number of RJ school sites at OUSD.

- Over half of the staff said that it is very easy or easy to conduct restorative practices.
- About 80% of the staff surveyed that their school should continue using RJ practices.
- Major challenges for school-wide RJ implementation included: limited time, trainings, buy-in, information sharing, unclear discipline policies for serious offenses, student attitudes or misuse of RJ, and inconsistency in application.

03

Impact of RJ Participation

There has been a considerable reduction in suspensions among RJ schools compared to a sample of non-RJ school sites, and preliminary analysis shows significant interaction with race/ethnicity, suggesting that the impact of RJ participation is greater for African American students (vs. their counterparts). The difference remains even after controlling for select individual student-level socio- demographics, such as race, gender, SES, suspension rate at baseline, and school level factors such as school type.

Reduced referrals for disruptive behaviors

- More than 88% of the teachers reported that restorative practices were very or somewhat helpful in managing difficult student behaviors in classroom.
- More than 47% reported that RJ helped reduce office referrals, and 53% said it helped reduce disciplinary referrals for African American students.

Repaired harm/conflict

- Over 63% of staff surveyed believed that RJ has improved the way students resolved conflicts with adults and with other students.
- Almost 76% of the students in harm circles successfully repaired harm/resolved conflict.

Built developmental assets

- Students in restorative justice circles report enhanced ability to understand peers, manage emotions, greater empathy, resolve conflict with parents, improve home environment, and maintain positive relationships with peers. They are learning life skills, and sustainable conflict management skills.

Reduced Suspensions and discipline gap

- Over 60% of the staff believe that implementation of restorative practices in their school have helped to reduce suspensions at the school.
- Suspensions have declined significantly in OUSD in the past 3 years. The most significant decline has been for African American students suspended for disruption/willful defiance, down from 1,050 to 630, a decrease of 40% or 420 fewer suspensions in only one year. The African American suspension rate for disruption/willful defiance also declined significantly by 37% from 7.4 to 4.7 within that year.
- The Black/White discipline gap went down from 25 in 2011-12 to 19 in 2012-13. Significant progress has been made to close the discipline gap in the past 3 years, suggesting that OUSD is on the right track – yet there is still a long ways to go to close the discipline gap between African American and White students.
- The percent of WSRJ student participants who were suspended over time dropped by half, from 34% in 2011-12 to 14% in years 2 and 3. The rate of change is more significant ($p < 0.05$) than district-wide or for non-RJ students. For the RJ participants, the Black/white discipline gap is less than for non-RJ participants in the past 3 years.

Improved academic outcomes

- The greatest cumulative change in chronic absenteeism is for middle schools with a RJ program, a drop by 24%, compared to a staggering increase in non-RJ middle schools of 62.3%.
- Reading levels as measured by SRI in grade 9 doubled in RJ high schools from an average of 14% to 33%, an increase of 128%, compared to 11% in non-RJ high schools.
- From 2010-2013, RJ high schools experienced a 56% decline in high school dropout rates in comparison to 17% for non-RJ high schools.
- Four-year graduation rates in RJ schools increased significantly more than Non-RJ schools (public schools only) in the past 3 years post-RJ intervention-- a cumulative increase of 60% for RJ schools, compared to 7% for Non-RJ schools.

Building school climate/ community

- Restorative practices have positively influenced students to build caring relationships with adults, and with other peers.
- Almost 70% of staff reported that restorative practices are helping to improve school climate at their school.

Conclusion

OUSD has done a remarkable job of implementing restorative practices in the past 10 years, as an alternative strategy to suspending students for minor behavioral infractions. Particularly in the last 3 years, there has been substantial growth in number of schools implementing RJ, staffing, capacity, and subsequent effect over time on reducing suspensions particularly for African American students, closing the discipline gap, and improving academic outcomes (reading levels, dropout rates, graduation rates) for schools and students participating in RJ vs not. This report highlights select outcomes and differential effect by race for schools with high RJ implementation compared to district-wide averages and a sample of schools with no-RJ.

Although, implementation of school-wide RJ takes time, i.e., 3-5 years, in line with theories of change, and may differ across schools based on numerous student, school and staff-level factors, Based on our understanding of the RJ processes and outcomes observed to date, we share the following recommendations for practice/program improvement geared towards key stakeholders at the district and schools implementing RJ, and separately a set of research recommendations to build on this preliminary outcome analyses. We hope the following recommendations are helpful to enhance integrity of implementation to RJ principles and practices and support expansion district-wide.

Practice Recommendations

- 1 Build a greater infrastructure at the district and school levels that would support learning and networking opportunities where teachers can share best practices, outcomes, and resources across and within schools, including the following Effective change efforts ensure that staff/faculty have opportunities to reflect and collaborate, build shared capacity, learn in context, and communicate the availability of resources.⁷⁷
 - Develop more structure, protocols and documentation of best practices.
 - Develop and monitor use of a clear discipline policy and protocols at the schools.
 - Develop school-level implementation plans that include communication and information sharing procedures, roles and responsibilities and greater teacher buy-in and ownership of RJ.
 - Secure needed resources to ensure sustainability of RJ.
- 2 Invest to expand trainings and coaching to include additional teachers, younger students, and parents., particularly for Tier 1 community building in the classroom. Leverage the existing RJ capacity by empowering a core team of expert staff/students to train the trainers, their peers. Continue to ensure that staff are trained on pragmatic aspects of implementation and that they possess the skills and ability to track and use data, manage difficult and diverse situations, and other system level processes.⁷⁶
- 3 Invest in efforts to involve more parents; at the very least, familiarize them with the RJ program and tell them how they can participate in or support the program. Hold informational meetings in community centers and churches to increase community support for the students, schools, and the program overall. RJ Coordinators could train a parent group in the process and support them in using it to discuss topics important to them and the school community including sensitive topics such as race.
- 4 Capitalize on the enormous potential the students have for change. Their overwhelming support and capacity for RJ shows how much they want to create a school, system, and a community that is better than what they are currently experiencing. Invest in youth; continue to train them as leaders; systematically allow their voices to be heard so that they may influence policy and programmatic decisions.
- 5 Given positive results of RJ in 2 elementary schools, start Peer RJ and WSRJ programs early on – expand into additional elementary schools, reaching students earlier developmentally to build caring relationships and positive behaviors.
- 6 Change reputation of RJ program from getting out of classroom or as an alternative to suspension to a more meaningful opportunity for engagement and achievement.
- 7 Situate RJ in Schools in the larger context of social justice and equity by showing how restorative processes, such as community-building circles, can be used to address other issues of inequity, including violence, poverty, housing, economic development, environmental protection, and access to healthy and affordable food. Build on the district's commitment to community schools by integrating restorative practices across all schools, particularly lower-income minority-majority schools that disproportionately serve students of color.
- 8 Emphasize RJ as a philosophy and set of values that underlies and complements all behavioral programs and practices, in addition to being a disciplinary alternative, it supports positive youth development and school climate.

Research Recommendations

- 1 Capitalize on the existing matched student- and school-level data to further conduct advanced impact analyses using longitudinal multi-level regression models and propensity score matching, to explore impact of RJ intervention on a number of academic and school climate outcomes, differentially for African American students, and controlling for select confounders. This would provide us with unbiased estimates of impact of RJ.

- 2 Further explore the impact of RJ participation on select school climate outcomes as well as developmental assets (e.g., empathy), guided by theoretical, practical and empirical evidence to date, using CHKS and CSCS datasets.
- 3 Use more rigorous evaluation design, such as quasi-experimental study to examine impact of restorative justice tiered program and specific practices on specific student outcomes, using a comparison group and repeat measurements.
- 4 Streamline the data tracking system to include both WSRJ and Peer RJ that measures student-level participation at tiered levels, particularly being cognizant of parents' involvement, intermediate outcomes such as empathy, leadership skills, and classroom observations.
- 5 In this report, we did not yet explore the nuances of RJ implementation specifically for African American students, or by school type, gender etc., accounting for cultural differences and perhaps equity as an underlying framework; case studies are needed to further examine what's working or not in specific schools and situations, e.g., how teacher and principal disciplinary attitudes and practices may vary or be racially biased for African American students vs. White students; as well as special needs, or Native American or Latino students, and how restorative practices serve as an alternative in specific situations.
- 6 In light of the school-to-prison pipeline, it is critical to have more evidence of how well RJ tier 3 practices are working to ensure safe and successful re-integration of JJC offenders. Inquire, obtain and analyze data from Alameda County's Juvenile Justice System/Probation, and match with existing educational data on student participants.

Though evidence in the report is preliminary and not conclusive, it suggests that restorative practices in Oakland schools, if implemented with integrity, have positively impacted student behavior and developmental outcomes for African American students, at risk for being suspended for minor misbehaviors, as well as improve school suspensions, academic outcomes and possibly school climate. Whether these differences hold after adjusting for confounders needs to be further explored, within the context of other programs and confounds of disciplinary practices. The results are promising that restorative justice is serving as a fair and effective alternative to suspensions for minor behavioral infractions. It is imperative that the district and feds continue to support, strategically expand and sustain a tiered restorative practices as an alternative to suspensions. It would be one of the most upstream effective way to curb the school-to-prison-pipeline, and ensure lasting success for all students.



INTRODUCTION

Zero Tolerance Discipline Policies

Zero tolerance discipline policies were originally set to eliminate weapons and drugs from schools throughout the U.S., yet they have been increasingly used as the de facto means to punish students for minor misbehaviors, many of which could be considered typical adolescent behaviors in some cultures^{3,4,5}. The ever-widening range of student behaviors that 95% of students are unfairly suspended or expelled for, tardiness, profanity include dress code violations, defiance of authority, use of obscenity or vulgarity, disruptive behavior in the classroom, school yard fights. For example, zero tolerance has been used to suspend kindergarteners bringing nail clippers to school. An African American 10th grader at Castlemont High School was suspended for 2 days for bringing a kick scooter that the principal approved as long as she didn't ride it. Nationally, since 1976, the number of students suspended annually has more than doubled to 3.3 million in 2009, and additional 100,000 students are expelled from school, creating an epidemic of missed opportunities with lifelong impacts and preventable costs⁶.

Civil rights advocates, school administrators, teachers, students, and researchers have long recognized that the zero-tolerance policies are not working to are not working to improve student behavior, engagement or achievement. In fact, these punitive methods of dealing with inappropriate behavior isolate, stigmatize, and abandon an already vulnerable population of youth. When compared to their counterparts, students who are suspended or expelled even once are far more likely to drop or be pushed out of school, have lower academic achievement, have lower feelings of competence, and continue to break the law⁸.



"It has been consistently documented that punitive school discipline policies not only deprive students of educational opportunities, but fail to make schools safer places."

—Gonzalez, 2012, Keeping Kids in School, Page 2²².

Disproportionate Minority Contact (DMC) and Discipline Gap Persists

African American students in particular have faced the brunt of unfair disciplinary policies and staff practices that have led to criminalization of African American youth across the education and justice systems, a trend referred to as disproportionate minority contact (DMC)^{7,9,10}. African American males are the most disproportionately affected group under the long-standing zero-tolerance policies and practices that tend to be discriminated against, intentionally or not^{11,12,13}. Numerous studies have documented the high suspensions rates among African American students. According to US Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights, in 2009-10, 46% of African American students were suspended more than once, compared to 29% of white students, whereas African American represent only 18% of public school population and white represent 51%, respectively¹⁴. Office of Civil Rights and dozens of researchers have cited many examples of students throughout the country where the discipline gap between Black and White students persists and is in some districts widening. Some have concluded that race plays a major role in the disproportionate disciplining of African American males, even when other factors such as socio-economic status are taken into account^{15,16}. "Defiance" is the most common reason cited for students of color referred for suspension, and while defiance is a non-violent offense, it represents a larger problem of authority conflicts between teachers and students of color.

School-to-Prison Pipeline

Instead of dealing with the root causes of misbehavior or violence, in-school or out-of-school suspensions further exacerbate the problem, and compromise learning time, school connectedness, and meaningful opportunities for growth¹⁷. In addition, suspension increases the likelihood of youth being on the streets or dropping out with lack of structured supervised activities, many times leading to an arrest or being detained by the juvenile justice system¹⁸ – a phenomenon called the 'school-to-prison pipeline'. African-Americans and Latino youth account for two-thirds of the youth arrested and detained in juvenile justice systems¹⁹. Although African-American youth aged 12 - 24 make up 16% of the population, they account for 28% of arrests, and nearly 60% of all juveniles admitted to adult prisons¹⁹. Furthermore, once placed in juvenile detention centers, youth are more likely to attain low levels of education, suffer from chronic illness, unemployment and reentry into the criminal justice system as a result of harsher more criminal behavior^{20,21}.

Hence, the same students of color for engaging in preventable minor risk behaviors end up in multiple failing punitive systems, resulting in discipline gap, achievement gap and reentry gap that resemble each other²². The long-term human and financial costs of suspension for the youth, community and systems are tremendous.

”We are trying to change the concept of discipline..discipline means to educate..we can't hit students, but we are hitting them a lot harder where it hurts more with words, and labels, and suspensions..” - RJ Coordinator

Need for Alternatives to Suspensions

The school system needs to foster school climates that are positive and safe that are conducive to learning for all students, especially in low-income schools. The 'traditional' school discipline and juvenile justice policies and practices inevitably fail to address root causes of misbehavior. If we are to ensure that every student has equal opportunity to succeed, then less punitive and more positive preventative alternative approaches must be utilized. To plug the school-to-prison pipeline, these methods must be successfully implemented first in schools with the highest number of suspensions and disciplinary gaps by race. A collaborative and integrated response that embraces practices aligned with the principals of positive youth development are desperately needed to break the vicious cycle of DMC and to reach our collective vision of developing healthy school communities and thriving students.

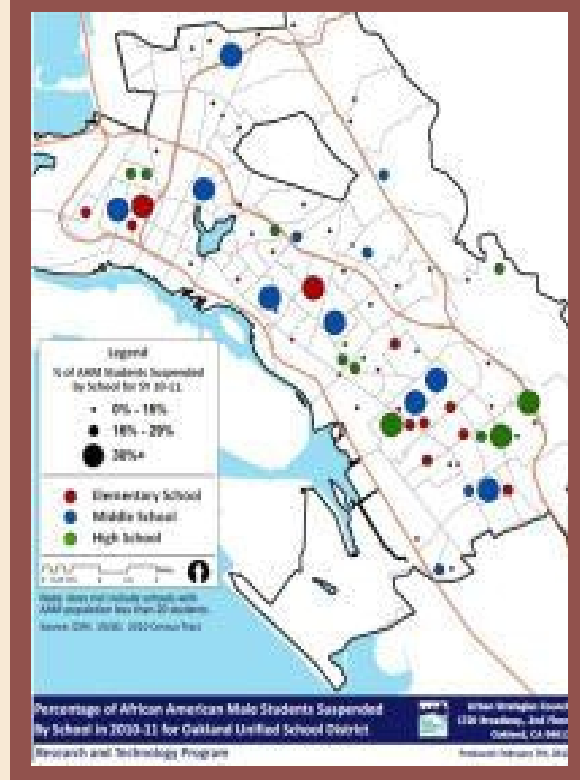
”If students of color learn, we all benefit” - unknown

Oakland Unified School District (OUSD): Using Innovative Evidence-based Disciplinary Strategies

Oakland unified is no different than many urban districts struggling with the repercussions of zero-tolerance policies and related teacher and staff practices that for decades have failed our students of color. The complex web of policies, practices and systems that exist have a major influence on creating enduring racial disparities in school discipline rates period OUSD has long recognized that it needs to employ innovative evidence-based multi-level strategies²³. OUSD has been instrumental in employing several cutting edge innovative strategies to collectively combat disciplinary referrals and related racial/ethnic disproportionality. These include: the African American Male Initiative (AAMI), District Response to Intervention (RTI), Positive Behavioral Intervention and Support (PBIS), Social Emotional Learning (CASEL), Common definition of Defiance group, and Restorative Justice (RJ) among others²⁴.

OUSD has persistently suffered from high rates of suspensions and disciplinary referrals for students of color including African American students, special education students, and foster kids, compared to their counterparts and special education students when compared to White students. In 2010-11, African American males accounted for 17% of the OUSD students and 42% of those suspended²², much higher than the 5% target.

Figure 1: Percent of African American students suspended in school 2010-11 by school type



There has been significant variation in suspensions by schools, ranging from 0% to 60% for African American males. This map highlights the place-based disparities in suspension rates by school types, that are worse in middle schools (30% or higher) in low-income areas. In 2010-11, African American males in middle schools had the highest rate of those suspended once or more by school type (33% vs. 22% of African American males in high schools and 9% elementary schools)²². Over 75% of suspensions to African American males were due to minor behavioral infractions: 38% for

disruption/defy authority, 28% for caused/attempted injury, and 9% for obscene acts/profanity/vulgarity. These are consistent with national data for the use of zero tolerance and punitive policies and teacher/principal practices for suspensions for minor behavioral infractions²³.

Racially disproportionate discipline of African American students has been a very real concern for OUSD²⁵. The district voluntarily entered into an agreement with the Federal Office of Civil Rights in 2012 under the Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964², called the Voluntary Resolution Plan²⁶, which lists restorative justice as a key strategy to eliminate disparities in discipline for African American youth.

Restorative Justice in Schools: A Viable Solution


Restorative justice (RJ) is one of the key strategies OUSD is employing to reduce disproportionate disciplining and subsequent achievement gaps at various schools and district-wide. RJ is an alternative framework for handling student misbehaviors, conflicts or victim-offender incidents in schools. We conceptualize restorative justice as taking a community building approach that addresses root causes of student disruptive/conflict behavior through listening, accountability, and healing²⁷. Restorative Justice offers a less punitive, more positive alternative to zero tolerance policies, conflict resolution and violence than traditional the retributive justice model. The RJ model holds that criminal acts harm the victim, the school/ community, and the person responsible. It is based on the premise that hurt people hurt people, and true justice demands that the offenders "make right" the harm they have caused by accepting responsibility for their actions and making restitution for the losses incurred by the victims and the community. The RJ Model promotes restoration by involving all three parties – the person(s) harmed, the responsible person, and school community members.

USA | EDUCATION

Cover Story
School suspensions: Does racial bias feed the school-to-prison pipeline?

Rocking school suspensions may feed the school-to-prison pipeline - and even violate civil rights.

By Stacy Teicher Khadaroo, Staff writer | MARCH 31, 2013



Ann Harnau/The Christian Science Monitor | View Caption

Two students set off fire alarms in the same school district. One of them, an African-American kindergartner, is suspended for five days; the other, a white ninth-grader, is suspended for one day.

•An African-American high-schooler is suspended for a day for using a cellphone and an iPod in class. In the same school, a white student with a similar disciplinary history gets detention for using headphones.



² Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, U.S.C. 2000d et seq., and its implementing regulation at 34 C.F.R. pt. 100 provide, in relevant part, that no program or activity receiving federal assistance under Title VI from U.S. Department of Education may discriminate on the basis of race or national origin. See the full Agreement for more details. The US DOE, OCE is investigating several districts nationally whether the district has subjected African American students to discrimination on the basis of race by disciplining them more frequently or more harshly than similarly situated White students¹.

Although roots of RJ can be traced back thousands of years, it has become more popular in the last 30 years. Currently, over 45 states provide RJ services, primarily through criminal justice institutions, but school-based RJ initiatives are increasing²⁸.



"Restorative justice is a process and a set of values to involve, to the extent possible, those who have a stake in a specific offense and to collectively identify and address harms, needs, and obligations, in order to heal and put things as right as possible."

- Howard Zehr, 1990²⁹

Restorative justice in schools is about (a) meeting student needs, (b) providing accountability and support, (c) making things right, (d) viewing conflict as a learning opportunity, (e) building healthy learning communities, (f) restoring relationships, and (g) addressing power imbalances³⁰. At OUSD, when there is a serious incident that cannot be handled in classroom, we have a process that brings the affected parties together to discuss what happened, how they feel about it, and consensually develop a plan to repair the harm. Rather than focusing on the offender – as in the traditional, retributive discipline system – the restorative process is oriented toward the person(s) harmed and involves all stakeholders. At OUSD, these processes empower students to become leaders by facilitating circles.



"Sitting in a circle, passing a talking piece, is a simple process used by indigenous people for centuries, and it is the beginning of eliminating racially-disproportionate discipline."

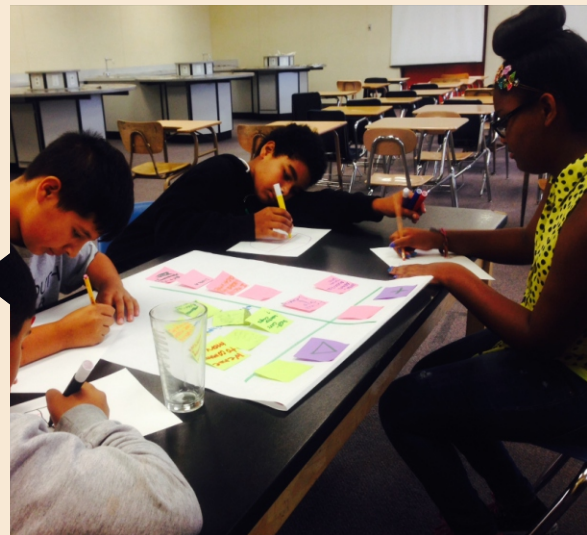
-Program Manager²⁷

School-based restorative justice initiatives focus on applying restorative justice principles, values, theory and practices in the school setting³¹ to repair harm/conflict, build community, and re-integrate marginalized students. Usually a tiered approach is employed school-wide, where there is a focus on building strong, supportive, and healthy relationships between all members of the school community. When implemented school-wide, restorative processes facilitate active listening and mindful speaking; restorative language is used throughout the building; and restorative and relational pedagogies, such as circles, are used in classrooms to build community, deliver content, and solve problems^{32,33,34}. Restorative justice processes intentionally include all stakeholders: students, teachers, administrators, parents, community members, and policy makers.

Interaction of RJ with Social Emotional Learning (SEL) and Potential Benefits to Students of Color

Mounting evidence suggests that RJ can decrease student misbehavior, improve school culture and increase achievement^{35,36}. Schools that emphasize the establishment of caring relationships of students with peers and adults in school have shown to improve achievement, behavior, and attachment to schools, teachers and peers^{22,34,37}. Researchers have suggested that positive student-teacher relationships benefit students of color even more so than White students³⁸ partly by meeting their developmental needs. In 1995, Goleman concluded that school reform efforts that do not build in social emotional learning and relational trust will not succeed in improving student achievement³⁹.

Restorative processes and SEL complement each other, as RJ supports SEL by providing a tangible vehicle for teaching and practicing SEL and for addressing anti-social behavior. RJ may enhance the effects of other strategies such as Positive Behavioral Interventions Support (PBIS), or other such school climate efforts being employed by the OUSD. How these programs interact, and collectively work to minimize disciplinary problems and racial disparities needs to be further examined.



Need for Evidence of What Works and Effectiveness of School-based RJ

Many of the evaluations of RJ programs nationally have focused on participant satisfaction and perceptions, reporting that about 80-95% of both persons harmed or those inflicting harm are satisfied with the restorative process. Also, consistent with participant satisfaction, a majority of the participants across the country feel that the outcome of the process is fair. RJ has shown to reduce victims' fear of crime; in particular, Umbreit (1991) showed a 50% reduction in fear of re-victimization by those harmed after completing the restorative process. In terms of reoffending, there have been low to moderate reductions in reoffending (3-7%) by RJ programs in various states.^{41,19} Using restorative justice alternatives to discipline students has shown to yield positive results for students, schools and the larger community involved. A 2007 University of Wisconsin study that evaluated the success of a restorative justice program in a local high school found significant declines in youth violence, arrests, crime, and recidivism⁴². Five years after the program began, violent juvenile offenses decreased by nearly 49% and juvenile arrests decreased by over 40%. Similarly, when implemented in a West Oakland Middle School, violence and expulsions were eliminated and the rate of suspension was reduced by over 75%. More recently, evidence documenting select outcomes of RJ programs is expanding, such as increased caring relationships with adults, building communities and reducing violence; though studies examining disproportionately using matched samples and longitudinal outcome analyses are limited. Given that RJ has been implemented successfully in several schools in the OUSD and nationally, it is timely to conduct a rigorous evaluation and advanced statistical impact analysis that elucidates and/or controls for confounding factors in evaluation of RJ programs success, partly those explored in this report.

Prior Evidence of Restorative Practices in OUSD

To date, limited evaluations of restorative practices have been conducted in Oakland - though impact evaluations of school-based restorative practices have been scarce. Through the Measure Y initiative in the City of Oakland, RJOY, in partnership with OUSD, measured descriptives of participants served, services received and select outcomes⁴³. In 2008, Day-Vines and Terriquez documented how well the student-initiated program "Youth Together," was working using qualitative data. In this program, students met with administration to specifically address DMC and referrals written for defiance of authority⁴⁴. They found the immense power of building caring relationships between students and adults and related developmental assets in promoting school climate. A more recent case study in a West Oakland middle school was the first to openly address issues of race and cultural relevance within the context of restorative justice⁴⁵.



They mentioned several situations where circles were used to deal with violence or issues created by racial, ethnic, and religious diversity. They found that 83% of the students believed that RJ helped reduce fighting at the school; 91% said they believed it helped with their relationships with other students; 70% said it helped with their relationships with teachers, and 39% said it helped with their relationships with the principal.

However, to our knowledge, few studies have conducted a comprehensive evaluation of the RJ program, using more rigorous research designs, such as using matched comparison groups or the random assignment of experimental and control groups.^{3,46} The University of Maryland researchers reviewed 500 evaluations to complete their Report to Congress on Crime Prevention, finding reasonable evidence to claim that only 15 programs "worked"^{47,48}. Sherman et al (1997) noted, most prevention and youth development programs are not evaluated, and when they are, the studies are often not rigorous enough to rule out whether confounding influences were responsible for any observed effects. In addition, longitudinal studies are needed to assess the longer-term developmental impact of an intervention, as research has shown that disciplinary suspensions at ages 6-11 has shown to be strong predictors of serious or violent offending during ages 15-25⁴⁹. This report used longitudinal multi-level modeling to control for confounding, and examine change over time at the school-levels, though more extensive analyses of matched data is needed. In particular, quasi or experimental designs would be ideal if implemented with good integrity, to produce statistically unbiased estimates of program impact.⁵⁰

With RJ, Oakland USD has an excellent opportunity to provide evidence of a promising model of practices to serve our community's most vulnerable and troubled youth. It is indeed a challenge, and an opportunity, to transition an entire school system from an inequitable, punitive model based on zero tolerance policies to an alternative preventative and restorative model that aligns with youth development principles and transforms school culture and climate.

OUSD Restorative Justice Strategy



"Based on values, principles and practices that indigenous communities have utilized for hundreds of years, restorative justice in OUSD represents a shift in the way our schools respond to behavior and promote discipline. RJ offers an alternative to zero tolerance policies that have proven to be ineffective and in fact have increased push out of students into the school to prison pipeline."

—OUSD RJ Program Manager

In Oakland schools, a Whole School Restorative Justice (WSRJ) and Peer RJ programs are part of a three-tiered strategy to respond to discipline in a way that is restorative⁵¹. The Whole School Restorative Justice (WSRJ) program was first implemented in 2005, and based on initial promising evidence, in 2010, the OUSD Board of Directors passed a resolution adopting restorative justice as a system-wide alternative to zero tolerance disciplinary practices and as an approach to creating healthier schools⁵². Through training, coaching, and circles of healing and dialogue between victims, offenders and the school community, it offered a promising framework and a set of values, principles



and practices. OUSD has Whole School Restorative Justice (WSRJ) program with school-wide, group- and individual-level interventions, and more recently expanded the peer conflict resolution program into a Peer Restorative Justice (Peer RJ) program which primarily works on group-level interventions, that is tiers 2 and 3⁴.

³The latter can be difficult to implement given the district-wide Oakland VRP, perhaps randomization would need to be at classroom-level.

⁴As the report is primarily focused on examining disciplinary disparities in relation to RJ, and not program evaluation, we do not detail out specific components of each program and their specific impacts in this report; rather examine collective association of OUSD-RJ (generally referred to as both WSRJ and Peer RJ) with select outcomes.

Mission and Core Values of OUSD RJ

The mission of the Whole School Restorative Justice (WSRJ) has been "to institutionalize evidence-based restorative justice practices in Alameda County's juvenile justice and dependency systems, schools, and community-based youth-serving organizations, in order to more effectively address youthful wrongdoing and the mental health and behavioral issues associated with the wrongdoing."

*The mission of Peer RJ is to increase attendance, attitudes, academics, and equity in discipline through the development of restorative leaders and a restorative school culture.*⁵³

”

"It (Restorative Justice) is not a program, it's a paradigm shift...It's a massive philosophical and cultural shift." -RJ Coordinator



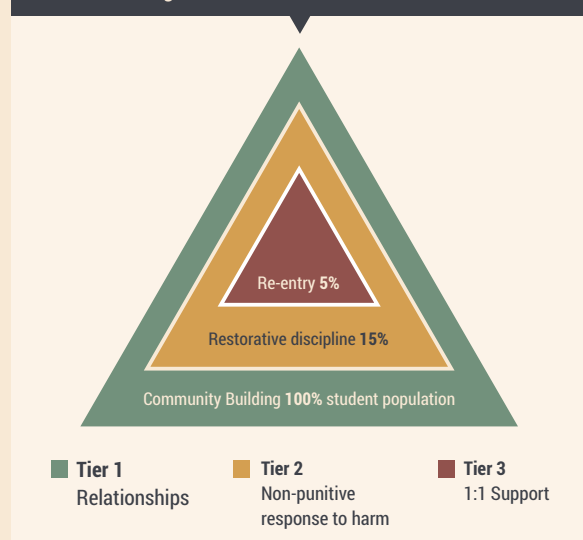
Core Values of the Whole School Restorative Justice Initiative include:

- **Accountability**
- **Attend to victims' needs and concerns**
- **Repair harm to the degree possible to victims and community**
- **Address youth needs and the root causes of wrongdoing**
- **Engage broad-based stakeholder and community involvement**
- **Employ participatory dialogue and decision-making**
- **Treat all parties with respect and dignity**

The Oakland Unified School District's Whole School Restorative Justice Model to date has been guided by five specific goals

- 1 To build district-wide capacity and buy-in for restorative justice approach and practices.
- 2 To influence positive behavioral change among staff, students, and parents. (Tier 1)
- 3 To ensure safe and reintegration system for juvenile justice students. (Tier 3).
- 4 To build school community and a positive school climate. (Tier 1)
- 5 To repair individual and relational harms resulting from fights, disruptions and other hurtful exchanges in a manner that respects all parties (Tier 2)

Figure 2. 3 Tiers of School Based RJ



In order to achieve these goals, OUSD RJ uses practices embedded within a 3-tiered approach that aim to build community (tier 1), repair harm (tier 2), and re-integrate students (tier 3). The main RJ processes being implemented at OUSD are: (1) Circles, (2) Mediation, (3) Restorative Conversations, and (4) Family Group or Community Conferences. Tier 1 begins in the classrooms; Tier 2 includes de family group conferencing, circles, and conflict resolution; Tier 3 is for intensive interventions that focus on the highest-risk individuals and their successful re-integration into the school or classroom after a serious incident of harm. Each tier addresses a specific need of the school community.

Tier 01

Community/Relationship Building: Immerse the whole (100%) school community in community building and skill building activities that focus on relationships and creating shared values, through restorative conversations restorative conversations and classroom circles following behavioral disruption. The overall goal is to build a caring, intentional, and equitable community with conditions conducive to learning.

Tier 02

Restorative Discipline: aims to effect 15% of the students, and is characterized by the use of restorative processes such as harm circles, mediation, or family-group conferencing to respond to disciplinary issues such as conflict and harm in a restorative manner. This process addresses the root causes of the harm, supports accountability for the offender, and promotes healing for the victim (s), the offender, and the school community.

Tier 03

Re-entry or reintegration: supports successful reintegration of youth following sustained absence such as incarceration, involuntary transfer, or suspension, through 1:1 conversations or reentry/welcome circles. The goal is to welcome youth to the school community in a manner that provides wraparound support and promotes student accountability and achievement.

In Oakland schools, a WSRJ program was first implemented in 2005 at Cole Middle School, then piloted at Street Academy and Excel High Schools in 2009-2010, serving over 386 youth. Key program activities included: 9 hours of group service on average per student (3,272 hours total), 430 peacemaking circles, and 82 trainings or community events. The program cost \$420 per client compared to \$2,168 for youth comprehensive services overall. Suspension rates among 75% of participants dropped. In 2010, the OUSD Board of Directors passed a resolution adopting restorative justice as a system-wide alternative to zero tolerance disciplinary practices and as an approach to creating healthier schools climates. In 2011-12, four schools at the Castlemont High School Campus were providing full school restorative justice which included 3 days of training to 75% of staff from school and partnering organizations, 40 hours of coaching, and monthly Learning Community. From 2012-2014, the RJ implementation plan aimed to have 6 more schools doing the trainings, coaching, Learning Community and case specific facilitation of at least 5 cases each. These started with 4 middle schools (Brewer, CCPA, United for Success Academy and West Oakland) and 2 high schools (Bunche and Mandela).

RJ provides a framework that encourages an equitable school environment by allowing the students to bring their cultural values into the classroom. Through the creation of shared values and guidelines in the classroom, youth feel a sense of belonging and empowerment and are less likely to be disruptive. A caring community and a positive school culture create the foundation for young people and adults to make lasting positive change.

Purposes, Organization and Uses of this Report

This evaluation report was produced as part of the larger OUSD RJ evaluation underway, and to support requirements for the Office of Civil Rights Agreement with OUSD. The primary purposes of this report are to:

- 1) To describe who's participating in restorative practices at OUSD, and students/teachers experiences.
- 2) To share evidence of what's working well or not, lessons learned to date from perspectives of key stakeholders, and fidelity to implementation, in schools.

- 3) To provide evidence to date on effectiveness of OUSD RJ programs on improving student- and school-level outcomes such as reducing suspensions and improving academic outcomes, using both unadjusted and adjusted models.
 - a To show comparisons in suspensions and select academic outcomes of RJ vs. non-RJ schools overall and across subgroups of students
 - b To show trends over time
 - c To share preliminary results from adjusted multi-level longitudinal models, that uses matched data and controls for confounders, to demonstrate unbiased impact of RJ on suspensions, above and beyond relevant individual and school-level confounders.

Note, we stratified some analyses by race/ethnicity and examine any differences or perspectives for African American students; though it is limited and not a comprehensive evaluation that unpacks disproportionate impact of disciplinary policies on African American students, largely due to limitation of time. Nonetheless, this report is a first collective look at disparities in discipline and its relation to RJ program at Oakland Unified School District.

Organization of the Report

The report is organized to first provide some national and local context regarding zero tolerance policies and their disproportionate impact on students in the district, particularly African American students. We then highlight aspects of the Whole School and Peer RJ programs at OUSD. Key findings are organized first for the implementation and then regarding outcomes for suspensions, academic, and some on school climate. We end with results of Multi-level adjusted models that signify the effect of RJ on select student outcomes, above and beyond other covariates. Finally, we synthesize and conclude, and share key recommendations that we hope are useful for the district, schools, and the program. More information about the data sources and methodology is provided at the end.

Uses of the Report

We hope the information this report is used for:

- Program improvement, specifically for example, to improve fidelity to implementation by specific school sites, to expand targeted trainings, and develop alternative clear disciplinary policies to suspension.
- Develop a long-term strategic plan for RJ at OUSD, building on what's working well and address gaps.
- To meet the Office of Civil Rights Agreement requirements around testing RJ efficacy and effectiveness.
- To get buy-in and participation from more teachers, students and parents to assist with scaling up, developing shared best practices, shared outcomes, and shared resources.
- To support further tracking, analyses and more rigorous evaluation and research efforts.
- For advocacy and expansion of the program locally and nationally, as a promising alternative to zero-tolerance disciplinary policies and practices.

KEY FINDINGS

RESTORATIVE JUSTICE IMPLEMENTATION

Primary Evaluation Questions

- *How well are restorative practices being implemented at schools?*
- *Who is participating in RJ, and what have been their experiences?*
- *How are the students referred? What is the referral process?*
- *Has there been a change in capacity in restorative practices over time?*
- *What is working well or not?*

Key Indicators of Interest

- Percent change in emerging and developing schools over time
- Number and types of referrals to RJ
- Number and types of Restorative Practices being implemented
- Youth perceptions of how they got involved in RJ program
- Percent trained by restorative practice
- Major barriers and facilitators to implementation

Data Sources

- Focus Groups with Middle and high school students, separately
- Focus Group with RJ Coordinators and other adults
- OUSD Restorative Practices Implementation Survey, June 2014
- Success Story Templates
- Documents from program including media stories
- Claremont Data Report
- Cityspan data



Development of Restorative Practices at OUSD

- In 2013-14, Oakland USD had over 37,000 students in 86 public schools, including 50 elementary schools, 13 Middle schools, 4 K-8 schools, 7 high schools and 3 6-12 grade schools. In addition, there were 32 charter and 9 continuation schools, totaling over 46,000 total students served per year.. In this report, we combined K-8 schools as either elementary or middle schools depending on analysis and dataset, and 6-12 grade school as high schools.
- OUSD is a minority-majority district, with almost 88% of the student population being non-White, 31% African American, 16% Asian/ Pacific Islander, 38% Latino, and other. There were over 1,900 teachers (53% White) and almost 1,400 other school staff.
- Since 2005, Oakland Unified School District has Whole School RJ (WSRJ) and Peer RJ programs that have been implemented in varying degrees at multiple schools. WSRJ started in Cole Middle School (about 75 total students) in 2005-06, and six years later 2010-11, six more schools were practicing RJ, which grew to 8 schools in 2012-2013, and 24 schools on board in 2013-14.
- There has been considerable growth in adoption and implementation of RJ practices throughout OUSD in the past 10 years, with additional growth since the RJ Resolution was passed in 2009-10 by the Board of Education.

- In 2011, a new RJ Program Manager, two RJ specialists, and several RJ coordinators since then have been hired, which have helped in ensuring successful implementation by an increasing number of schools practicing RJ.
- There is no set criteria for selection of schools to implement RJ, schools have been generally selected to participate based on 1) strong interest, 2) low academic performance, 3) high suspensions and expulsions, and 4) high number of students reentering from the juvenile justice system.

Figure 3: Growth of Number of RJ School Sites in the Past 10 Years, OUSD, 2005-2014

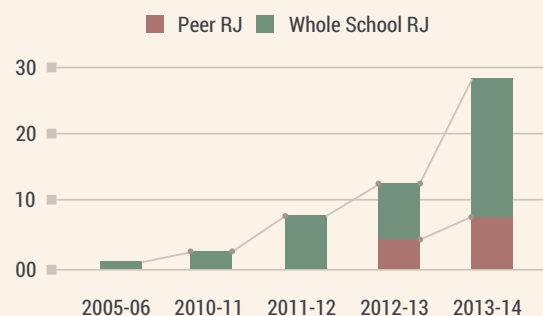


Table 1: Variation in RJ Implementation level by School Site, as of 7/2014 OUSD

	School Site	Type of School	Whole School RJ	Peer RJ	Year Started	Perceived level of Implementation*
01	Glenview	Elementary	x		2011	Developing
02	Melrose Leadership	Elementary	x		2011	Developing
03	Roots	Middle	x		2011	Developing
04	United for Success	Middle	x		2011	Developing
05	Montera	Middle	x	x	2012	Developing
06	Edna Brewer	Middle	x	x	2013	Developing
07	Barack Obama	Middle	x		2013	Emerging
08	Bret Harte*	Middle		x	2013	Emerging
09	Claremont*	Middle		x	2013	Emerging
10	Roosevelt	Middle	x		2013	Emerging
11	Westlake	Middle		x	2013	Emerging
12	West Oakland	Middle	x		2012	Developing
13	Elmhurst Community	Middle		x	2013	Developing
14	Frick*	Middle		x	2013	Emerging
15	Alliance Academy	Middle	x		2012	Emerging
16	Bunche	High	x		2012	Developing
17	Community Day	High	x		2013	Emerging
18	Dewey Academy	High	x		2013	Emerging
19	Madison Park (Upper)	High	x	x	2013	Emerging
20	Coliseum College Prep	High	x		2010	Developing
21	McClymonds	High	x		2013	Emerging
22	Skyline	High	x		2013	Emerging
23	MetWest	High	x		2013	Developing
24	Castlemont	High	x		2011	Emerging

Source: Program Manager Tracking tool. *Peer-RJ sites only. Schools are classified as emerging, developing or thriving based on program manager's criteria as stated below⁵. Melrose Leadership Academy (K-8), CCPA and Madison Park are 6-12. Barack Obama closed. Cole MS closed in 2009.

⁵*Emerging: Beginning implementation in restorative practices, or has had a break in implementation and started again

Developing: Restorative practices in place for Tier 1. May have RJ coordinator in place. Culture and climate team created and meeting regularly. Teachers using circles in class and in staff meetings. Opportunities for staff professional learning in RJ. Discipline in trending toward restorative May have Peer RJ program in place.

Thriving: Whole school restorative systems in place. Circles facilitated in class by at least 80% of teachers. All staff trained in restorative practices. Restorative discipline matrix in place. RJ info is routinely disseminated to students, parents, staff and community partners. Qualitative data shows that school climate feels safe and inclusive.

- Currently, 2 elementary schools, 13 middle schools, and 9 high schools are implementing RJ, either Peer RJ program or the Whole School RJ program.
- Of the total 24 schools implementing RJ as of June 2014, 11 (48%) are developing (that is, further along and with a sufficient level of school-wide implementation). Short of being able to comprehensively measure implementation fidelity, we used this district-defined classification to categorize level of implementation for the purposes of this report. This data is supported by the RJ implementation survey in which respondents were asked to rate their level of agreement with level of implementation for the purposes of this report. There are 2 elementary schools, 6 middle schools, and 3 high schools that meet this "developing" classification.
- According to the Program Manager, 11 of 24 schools, in terms of school-wide level of implementation could be classified as 'developing', and 5 schools are emerging. The rest of 8 schools,

mostly middle schools, are peer-led RJ sites, with most activities focused on tier 2 with peer-led conflict mediation. See the table above for current list of schools and their specific level of implementation

Table 2: Characteristics of OUSD Peer Restorative Justice Program Participants, 2013-14 (N=1,354)

	Indicator	Number	Percent
Race/ Ethnicity	African American	888	65.6%
	Latino	274	20.2%
	Asian/ Pac Islander	55	4.1%
	Native American	19	1.4%
	White	87	6.4%
	Multiracial	4	0.3%
	Other	27	2.0%
Age	11-15 years	1,347	99.5%
	16-20 years	5	0.4%
Gender	Female	729	53.8%
	Male	625	46.2%
Zip codes	94602	296	21.9%
	94604	190	14.0%
	94621	115	8.5%
	94601	122	9.0%
	94606-94611	387	28.6%

Source: Cityspan database 2013-14 Peer RJ Program data.

Peer RJ Participant Characteristics

- In the past year, 1,354 students, ages 11-15, participated in the Peer RJ program across 8 middle school sites.
- The majority (66%) of Peer RJ participants this year were African American, 20% Latino, 4% Asian/Pacific Islander, 1% Native American, and 6% White.

Table 3: Number of Students Participating in RJ Processes to, 2013-14

# students in Harm/Conflict circle	1,978
# students in community circles	3,631
# students in welcome/re-entry circle	13
# students in Peer RJ Leaders training	96
# Restorative conversations	677

Source: Cityspan 08/1/2013-06/30/2014



A SUCCESS STORY #1

A seventh grade Latina switched schools in 7th grade. She was known as the 'bad girl' at her previous school and felt the need to uphold that image. She would get into many fights and would be very leery of trusting teachers and staff because she felt her voice was often silenced. She participated in RJ Circles with her homeroom teacher, the RJ coordinator along with the students she would often have trouble with. Our RJ coordinator was very intuitive to the needs of each student she worked with and provided different levels of conversations to help victim and offender settle disputes indefinitely. This was a practice that helped the Latina student let go of all the "beef" and move forward and focus on her education. RJ has been the reason that most issues (student2student, student2faculty and faculty2faculty) have been solved."

Source: RJ Coordinator

- There were more females served than males (54% compared to 46%).
- Participants were primarily from 94602 area zip code (22%), 94604 (14%), 94621 (9%), and 94606-95611 (29%).
- In the past year, 3,631 students participated in community circles, 1,978 participated in harm/conflict circles⁶, and only 13 in welcome/ reentry circles. This may include duplicated students.
- Over 677 restorative conversations took place, and 96 students were trained in Peer RJ.

Participation in Peer RJ Practices

- In the past school year 2013-14, Peer RJ program more than exceeded its set targets in terms of number of students to serve.
- In terms of community building circles, there was a tremendous surplus of students that were interested and conducted community building circles. With the goal of serving 400 students in community building circles in 2013-14 in 8 middle schools, over 6,321 students actually participated in community building circles, a surplus of 5,921. Almost 3 times the number of average students participated per circle, than projected. The number of circles held were 5 times greater than projected (348, compared to the original goal of 80; data not shown).
- Similarly, for harm/conflict mediations, the objective was to serve 1,060 students whereas twice as many students (n=2100) actually participated in harm/conflict mediations, a surplus of almost 1,050.

Table 4: Projected vs. Actual Number of Units (Students) Served through Restorative Practices 2013-14, 8 Peer RJ Sites

	Projected Units of Service	Actual Units Served	Difference
Community Building Circles	400	6,321	+5,921
Harm/Conflict Mediations	1,060	2,109	+1,049
Restorative Conversations and Counseling	320	526	+206

Source: Cityspan, 2013-14.

Note, these are individual students participating in many unique circles throughout the year, compared to the unduplicated numbers of students in Peer RJ practices shared earlier.

% Harm/Conflicts Resolved

- In the past year, 472 harm and conflict circles took place at 8 middle schools in OUSD.
- Of these, 76% of the conflicts were successfully resolved or harms healed.
- About 22% are in progress, and only 2% remain unresolved or referred to admin.

⁶ Note, this number is higher than the number of active participants in Peer RJ of 1,354; as it includes other students from the school and peer groups who may have participated in the circles.

Figure 4: Percent of Peer RJ Conflict Circles Resolved in past year, 2013-14



Source: Cityspan 2013-14 data.

Referrals to and Fair Use of Restorative Circles

Based on focus groups conducted with middle and high school students, and staff focus group and implementation survey, we learned more about the referral process and how well it's working for various schools and students; though data on disciplinary referrals is not available to substantiate our findings yet.



- Many of the students first became involved with restorative justice after being involved in a conflict or confrontation with another student. Other students were referred into the restorative justice program by teachers. Based on Claremont middle school 2013-14 report, the majority of referrals for conflict mediations are made by teachers, more from 7th and 8th graders, than 6th graders.

” *“I got into a very bad confrontation with somebody, and that's how I got [involved].” –MS Student*

- The majority of students felt that RJ was used fairly at their school. Although no student thought RJ circles were unfair, many students felt that the process by which they were referred into RJ programs was unfair. Many students felt that, at times, administrators utilized the concept of RJ circles as a means to continue to punish students. Other students noted that there are still students in need of RJ circles who are slipping through the cracks.

” *“[T]he process of how you get sent to this program isn't as fair yet. Some of our conflict comes from...talk[ing] about it with adults, but the majority of them come from administrators who see it kind of as a way to discipline students and tell them not to behave badly. And then after that, if the student still behaves badly, even if they don't have the conflict anymore, then they get it trouble. So I feel like it's misused.”*

– HS Student

“Some people who don't get the chance to be in the Restorative Justice program still get suspended, still get referrals, and still get expelled or whatever. I feel we need to change that.”

– HS Student

- According to the staff, including teachers, coordinators, principals, counselors, nurses, a couple of schools had a more structured referral process, particularly those part of RJOY as well, though it varied significantly from school to school.
- One staff described the referral process as follows: “We developed a referral process at our school..for example, at certain point, if they get referrals, they get sent to the 'reflection', seen by some as another punitive disciplinary process. But it (the referral process) is not consistent and clear.” Several staff mentioned what they liked about the program most, was there was a place to refer the students for minor behavioral infractions, versus sending them to the office where they could be sent home or suspended. One school used the in-school suspension time as an opportunity to conduct the restorative circles, to repair the harm and conflict, and come up with agreements with the students.

” *“I appreciate the fact that students have an alternative to an office referral and/or harsh punishment.”*

– Teacher

” *“[What I like about RJ is] Having a place where I can send students who are in conflict rather than sending them to the office where they would be sent home.”*

– Teacher

Claremont Middle School, Peer RJ: A Case Study

Source: Claremont Data Report 2014

Claremont MS is a peer-led RJ school site which expanded the peer conflict resolution program to include peer led restorative practices in 2012-14, whereby students are trained to support mediating conflicts amongst their peers, and with adults. As a result, students are able to repair relationships and to resolve conflicts.

RJ Conflict Mediation data from 140 students who participated in RJ mediations was analyzed from August 2013-January 2014, along with Coordination of Services Team (COST) data by Omi.

Key Findings

- **Why conflicts started:** Most (53%) of the conflicts started because of verbal interactions (name calling, talking about someone's appearance, or their parents); followed by physically touching one another (17%), such as simple poke, bump or stepping on shoes.
- **Where conflicts are happening:** Most conflicts reported are happening in class, or off-campus (at home or before school). This could be because students "interact with one another more intimately in a classroom setting for longer periods, and with students they might not otherwise hangout, or perhaps teachers are reporting conflicts more often".
- Referrals - The majority of referrals were by teachers.
- One fifth of all students are referred to COST, 57% males, and mostly 7-8th graders. Due to limited resources, interventions are targeted only for high needs students. More tier 1 interventions are needed.
- Primary reason for referral to COST is for mental health concerns, followed by poor attendance.
- There were no differences in number of conflict mediations by grade level (1/3 each among 6th, 7th and 8th graders); though 7th and 8th graders were twice as likely to be referred compared to 6th graders.
- Some students (frequent flyers) are spending as much as 25% or up to 114 days of their school time in the past year in conflict mediation.
- A high number of new enrollees throughout the school year, disrupt school culture and affects school climate; especially as limited resources are provided to support an on-boarding process and transition for late enroller.

What's Working Well

- Responding to harm and conflict in a timely manner.
- Teachers texting and emailing helped to respond immediately.
- A lot of support for high need students.

What Needs to Change

- More adults need to be trained to support mediating conflicts.
- More outlets to share program updates.
- Increase tier 1 interventions to support more students.
- More positive school-wide activities are needed.

Shared Vision and Commitment to Social Justice, and Student Success

- Most of the staff were clear about why they were there..they had shared sense of goals. They spoke highly of the students..and that the adults are there to support the students. All had a very positive energy, deep commitment to RJ..shared values and sense of possibilities.

”

"[What I love about RJ is] the sense of hope..I'm open to possibilities..I love the energy that kids bring despite all the struggles they have."

- RJ Coordinator



”

"[I'm here] because it [RJ] allows students and adults to build capacity to repair relationships and take those tools in the real world.. I believe so strongly in it..but the need is so strong."

- RJ Coordinator

- Though there seemed to be differences in how RJ is implemented at different schools, across teachers, there was a strong commitment and shared vision. All staff seemed to appreciate the building community and relationships aspect of RJ.
- Though there was variation in staff and teachers buy-in, knowledge and level of implementation of different restorative practices, the underlying vision of supporting youth to be successful was consistent. It came across as a fundamental value that all staff including teachers, coordinators seem to strongly believe in.
- Many staff recognized the complex set of issues and struggles that students have to deal with daily, that RJ provides a viable solution for.

- Deep commitment to social justice and racial equity:** Many staff recognized the violence on streets, at home, poverty, immigration and related complex underlying issues that students of color in particular have had to deal with historically, placing them at disadvantages at multiple levels. Many RJ coordinators and some teachers were deeply grounded in the values of equity and justice for all.

”

"At the neighborhood level, there is a lot of black on black, some brown on brown violence..i work with immigrant, refugee kids.those involve values, community, vision..that's what I try to anchor..the goal is to build permanent, indestructable relationships, that's the only thing that will save us."

- RJ Coordinator

Shared Definition of Restorative justice

- We asked different stakeholders including staff and students' perspective about how they defined restorative justice, the overall approach and philosophy. It partly confirms what they have learned so far from practicing RJ, their knowledge and values.

”

"Restorative Justice is peace and recovery." -MS Student

- Many of the students defined restorative justice as a peaceful alternative to conflict and punishment. When asked to define restorative justice a majority of the students used the word "peace" in their definitions. Harkening to the transformative change that can take place when utilizing Restorative Justice Programs, other students used the word "recovery" and the phrase "solve the problem."

” *“Restorative Justice is kind of like looking at other ways of working differences, rather than handing people detention every time they get in trouble, like you're actually trying to solve the problem. Because if you just hand people detention...they'll still be mad at that person. It's not actually solving anything.”*

– HS Student

- Many students felt that restorative justice was not merely an alternative punishment, but a long-term solution to the conflicts that students face with one another.
- The potential of restorative justice programs to “make sure people feel safe” indicates that restorative justice is more than an alternative to suspension and detention, but a mechanism by which to improve peer relationships, build community, student safety and school climate.

” *“Restorative Justice is an alternative way to solve conflicts besides just straight discipline, which is the conventional way of trying to solve something when somebody did something wrong.”*

–HS Student

- In alignment with how restorative practices have been described in the literature, Oakland students described and defined restorative justice very similarly, as a peaceful means to solve problems; to ensure everyone is safe.
- The Restorative Justice Circles have served as an important means to open the lines of communication between students experiencing a conflict with one another. Furthermore, unlike other means of addressing student conflict i.e. detentions, it allows the people directly affected by the conflict i.e. students to compromise and actively participate in a sustainable solution to the conflict.

” *“You and the person you're having a conflict (with) sit in a circle and tell your different sides of the story, then figure out how you can resolve the problem”. -MS Student*

” *“the people in the conflict, they inform each other on what they need, what they are harmed by, and what they want to change (in order to) not feel harmed.” -HS Student*

” *“Usually a group of people who are involved in a conflict, they sit with [the facilitator] and she states the rules of the circle...she'll ask if you feel comfortable speaking with each other, and if you say yes, she will talk and she'll take both sides of the story and then come to a conclusion.” -MS Student*

How students have applied RJ to their personal lives

- Restorative Justice also has the potential to improve relationships between young people and adults in their lives. While some students shared instances of using the conflict resolution methods taught to them in RJ circles, other students realized that adults could play a more positive role in helping them to solve conflict.
- Students recall helping their peers and parents to peacefully resolve conflict using RJ methods. For example, some students noted incidents in which they asked the people in conflict to “write down the things that they appreciated of each other before it all went bad.”
- Other students remembered to ask questions geared towards empathy between the two individuals in conflict.

” *“What I like is the one-on-one thing. It is easier for me to talk about what happened to me than trying to like all at once go into the talking about why she did it, etc.”*

– MS Student

- Many of the students during the focus groups focused on specific roles adults played to support them; how some individuals continued to participate in various RJ circles as facilitators.

”

"People who are trained actually get to help people solve their conflicts, and they get to kind of guide people in the conversation, and not really ... control it, but ...more lead them into places where they can solve their conflict."

– MS Student

- With so many new staff and students on-board with RJ in recent years, supports and systems are needed to facilitate successful transition and continued scaling up of RJ, an area of further exploration of what roles adults play in which practices, and how their influence is different based on adult and school characteristics.

”

"I always remember...that (you) just can't do all conflicts. Some things you just need adult help."

– HS Student



Input from Key Stakeholders about Disciplinary Practices and School Climate

Safety and School Climate Focus Groups with Students – the need for restorative justice practices to tackle discipline and racism

Source: Da Town Researchers Focus Groups

In Summer of 2013, several focus groups were conducted by Da Town researchers that documented the following key findings.

Key Findings

- 1 Students in OUSD face overwhelming stress and pressures, inside and outside of school, for instance, at home, job, sports in addition to school work.
- 2 OUSD students are affected in their school because of racism." Students want equity and fairness for all students; but feel that teachers who are gatekeepers of their future, sometimes practice 'favoratism' and sometimes treat students differently.

”Everyone gets treated differently and it’s so unfair.”

“Same discipline may not work for everyone.”

“I feel as if the students and teachers should be trained, not to discipline, but on how to sit down and resolve.”

“Teachers are all different in handling discipline policies; they take it into their own hands...there’s no accountability for teachers.”

- 3 Discipline policies and practices across schools in OUSD are inconsistent. Student experience with discipline varies greatly depending on race, gender, history at the school, behavior 'profile' and relationship with school staff and teachers.

”On campus suspension is not even a punishment. It is basically a chill out room.”

“If they were more kind about what they need us to do, and the consequences, I think most kids would listen.”

“OCS just makes people not want to learn.”

“I have literally witnessed people asking if they can go to OCS.”

- 4 Students want encouragement, one-on-one time with teachers and support outside of school.
- 5 Students need someone positive they can fall back on. Oakland students feel that they need someone besides family or school staff, ideally someone from the community, to check-in with beyond academics.
- 6 Outside factors such as violence, family issues and drugs are all distractions from school that also motivate and drive young African American men to continue their education and succeed in life (Edna Brewer MS). Some data suggests that "an emotional disconnect" that students have with the school.
- 7 Teachers who care and are helpful (vs. act as authority figures) improved their motivation for school, learning and academic success.

In sum, there seems to be variation in teacher practices, especially towards code of conduct, or disciplining certain students more than others, and racism.

Vision:

”the goal is that later on the conflicts do not escalate to street problems, and that adults who relate are around school so that they are able to have someone who understands them and motivates them to not drop out of school.”



A SUCCESS STORY #2

"This was a circle with four African American girls in 8th and 10th grades. Two are students with a processing disability. three of the girls are known as fighters in the past. The conflict involved rumors and gossip about one another which lead to one of the girls befriending the 10th grader...because one girl created drama. The girl who is known for creating drama between students realized, in circle, that she needs to change her ways before she gets to high school and asked the circle for help. Her exact words were, "I know that I do that and I want to change these childish ways before I get into high school." Although the other two students were not ready to assist her in the change, this story is considered to be a success because a student realized that her actions were not appropriate. Additionally, she realized that change is not going to be easy and she will need support."

Source: Student Focus Groups

Restorative Practices Staff Characteristics

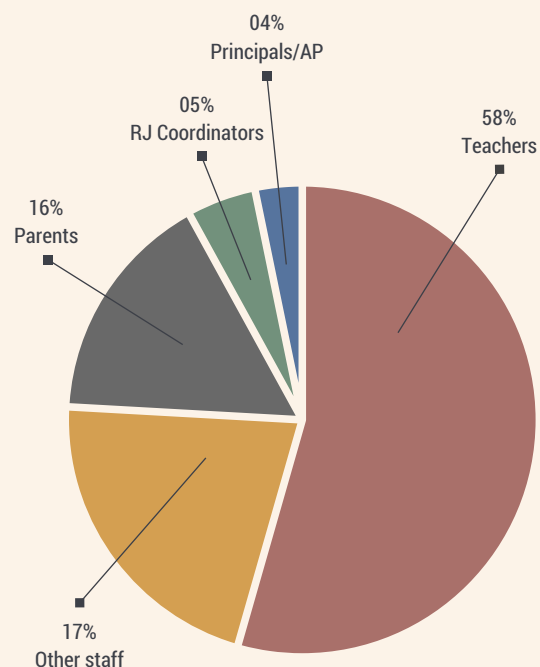
- In June 2014, 355 staff from 23 schools (absent Westlake) completed the Restorative practices school-level implementation survey. Most of the respondents (58%, n=184) were teachers, 18% (n=56) were school staff (e.g., admin, Nurse, Main office team, counselor, cafeteria staff, community partner), 16% (n=51) parents, 4% (n=12) principals or assistant principals (though half of the principals from 24 schools responded, n=12), and 5% (or 15) were RJ coordinators. This survey was sent to almost all staff implementing RJ, and the response rate was fair to good (estimated to be 70% or higher); so responses are representative of all staff.

Actionable Steps Students Took to Resolve Conflict

Source: Student Focus Groups

- 1 *Make a list of what they needed to do to ensure the conflict didn't happen again.*
- 2 *Spend time with the person the student was in conflict with*
- 3 *Apologize to people.*
- 4 *Inform friends of the new changed positive relationship.*
- 5 *Attempt to understand the other student's motivation for their behavior.*
- 6 *Become friends or just be neutral.*

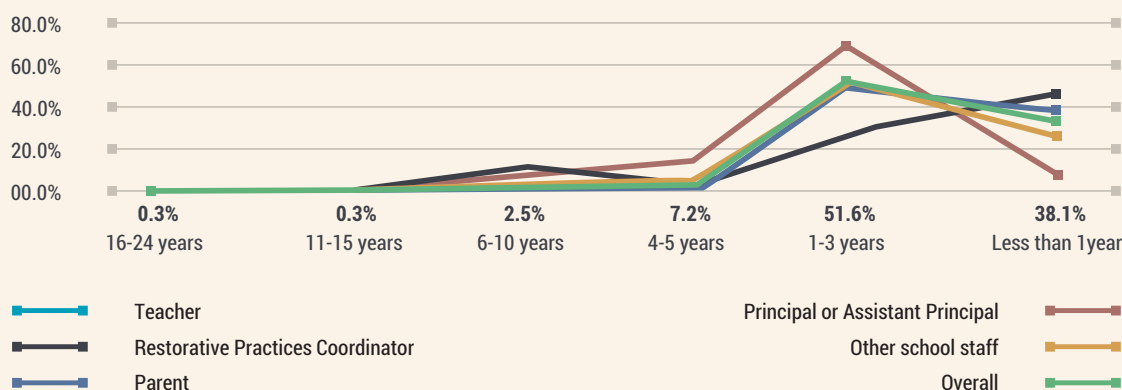
Figure 5: Percent Staff Type, Survey Participants N=355



Source: RJ Implementation Survey, 2014

- Many of the students during the focus groups focused on specific roles adults played to support them; how some individuals continued to participate in various RJ circles as facilitators.
- About 90% of the staff have been practicing RJ at OUSD for less than 3 years; 38% less than one year, and 52% 1-3 years. Seven percent for 4-5 years, and 3% for 6 years or longer; indicating consideration growth in staffing, training and resources allocated at the district-level towards RJ.

Figure 6: Duration of Staff Practicing RJ at OUSD, by Staff Type (reflects growth in New RJ staff over time)

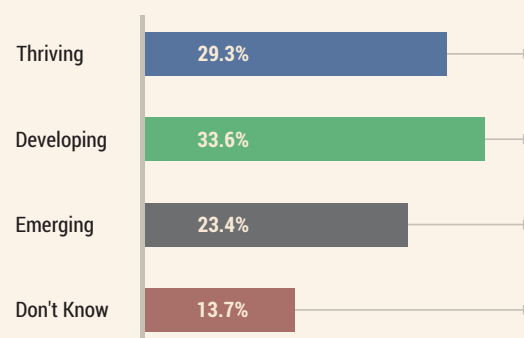


Source: RJ Implementation Survey, 2014

Extent of Implementation by School Site and Staff Type

- RJ practices are very well established and heavily used in one third of the schools (29.3%), somewhat established and used in 33.6%, and just getting started (developing) in 23.4% of the schools. About 14% of the staff stated they didn't know how much RJ practices are used at their school.
- Perceived level of implementation varied by staff type. Teachers who mainly implement classroom-level circles, rated schools as just starting, almost 30% compared to 20% RJ coordinators, or other staff, or 10% parents.
- We also asked whether staff are successfully implementing RJ practices.

Figure 7: Staff perceptions of the extent of implementation of Restorative Practices at their school as of 7/2014, N=321



*Thriving: Restorative practices are very well established and heavily used at this school; Developing: Established but only somewhat used; Emerging: just getting started.

Source: RJ Implementation Survey 2014

The majority (78%) of staff said that they are successfully implementing what they learned in RJ training entirely or a lot, 21% said some, and 0 said not at all.

- RJ coordinators reported that they mostly conduct the following restorative practices in this order
 - Restorative conversations with students,
 - Impromptu conferences with students,
 - Harm/conflict circles
 - One-on-one coaching
 - Classroom circles, and
 - Community conferences, or family group conferences as an alternative to suspension.

How RJ started in various schools?

- Though there are a set of common RJ practices being used at Oakland schools, which ones are more commonly used varies by school-site. Though there are goals set, there seems to be a some flexibility given to each site and coordinator/staff as to how best to implement restorative practices; thus practices, buy-in for RJ etc varied by school-site, given the different contexts, cultures and barriers/opportunities, such as leadership support, available at each school.

”

"I love the freedom I've been given, it's first year..so I can design what I can..says a lot about admin trusting me..we have a lot of support from counselors, mental health staff, next year..I'm excited to collaborate throughout the school."

-RJ Coordinator

”

"It's first year, so it's about getting everyone aware..everyone has their own discipline process, harm..we started having several professional development sessions, restorative conversations..it's about getting the community on one page."

- RJ Coordinator

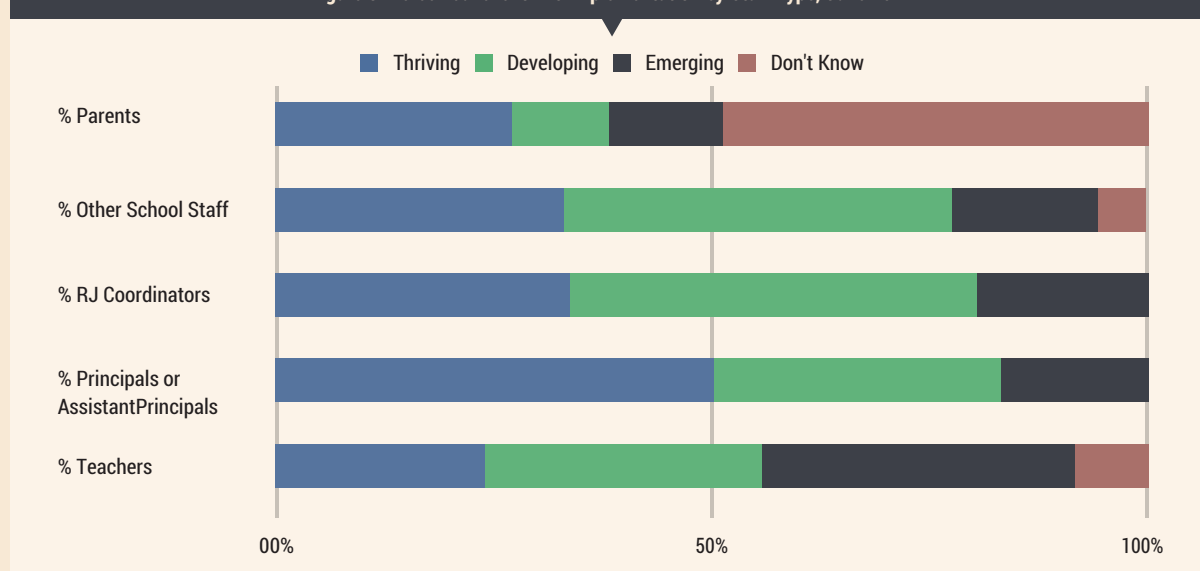
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"With the admin a go..pull kids out one class one day a week, so it won't influence their academics..who were eligible and willing (voluntary)..so most of the girls (10-15) came..we had that for whole semester..separate for boys vs. girls and one group for African American specifically..over time we are looking for culture shift."

- Principal

- About 50% of RJ coordinators reported that it's somewhat or very easy to conduct restorative practices whereas half did say that it's somewhat or very difficult. Though the sample size is small here, it is worth further understanding what kind of challenges RJ coordinators face.

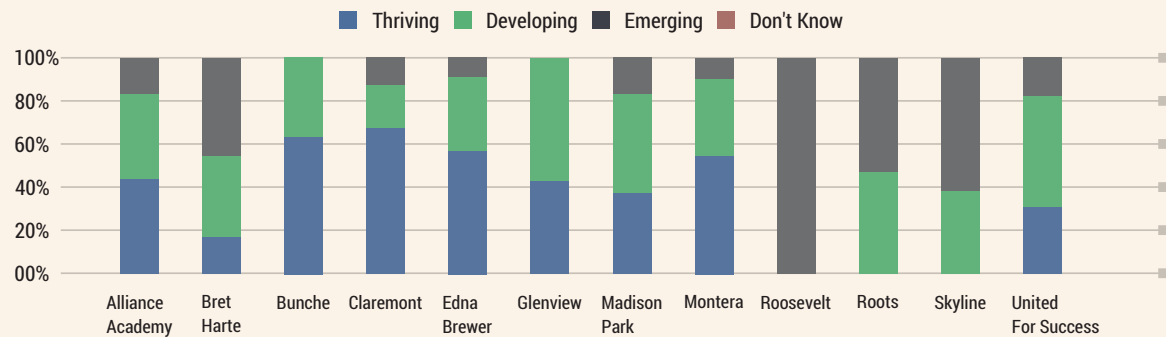
Figure 8: Perceived level of RJ implementation by Staff Type, June 2014



Source: RJ Implementation Survey 2014

- In the past 3 years, some schools are much further along in implementing Tier 1 or Tier 2 RJ practices. This is inclusive of both WSRJ and Peer RJ programs.

Figure 9: Variation in the level of RJ implementation by school site* as of 7/2014 As reported by staff surveyed, N=321



*Schools with less than 10 respondents are not included, due to unreliable data from small sample size. Source: RJ Implementation Survey 2014



District-Wide Capacity Building – Restorative Justice Trainings

Source: Cityspan data, RJ Implementation Survey

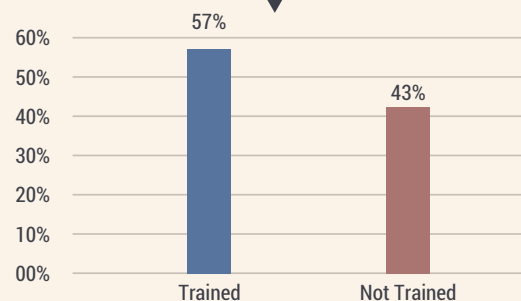
- In the last 3 years, since the hiring of the new Program Manager, two RJ specialists, and several consultant RJ Coordinators, a substantial amount of effort has gone into developing and providing trainings. A structured program curricula has been developed for the Peer RJ program, i.e., a binder full of all materials, forms, model framework and how and when each activity should be conducted. There are structured curricula and tools for the Tier 1 and Tier 2 trainings. The Program Manager has invested a lot of time into developing and conducting district-wide trainings specific to each tier.
- Teachers, and RJ coordinator at a school site, interested parents and youth, and when possible, community members, undergo 1-2 consecutive days of restorative justice training in the form of professional development workshops, supplemented by 20-40 hours per year of coaching to equip all stakeholders with the skills and information needed to effectively implement WSRJ (see WSRJ implementation plan, training materials and peer RJ Program Guide for detailed training/curricula information).
- As a result, there has been considerable growth in knowledge and skills acquired through trainings and coaching of staff and youth.
- Several RJ trainings are offered throughout the school year, focused on tier 1, tier 2 or tier 3 practices. Usually 1-2 trainings are offered per month. One training per quarter for each school site was offered for the 8 Peer RJ sites this year. Support for onsite professional learning and coaching is offered. There is an RJ Coordinator Professional Learning Community that meets monthly to provide support and community for those holding the RJ work in the schools. Often there are additional RJ-related trainings and workshops offered for advanced practitioners to hone their skills. Workshops and trainings for outside service providers have also been done to introduce them to the RJ work in the district.

Fifty-seven percent had been trained on restorative practice: of these, 20.4% in past 6 months, 17% 6 months-1 years, 11.5% 1-2 years, and 8.05% more than 2 years.

“I have learned new techniques and approaches in dealing and speaking with students that support and enhance my own classroom practices.”

-Teacher

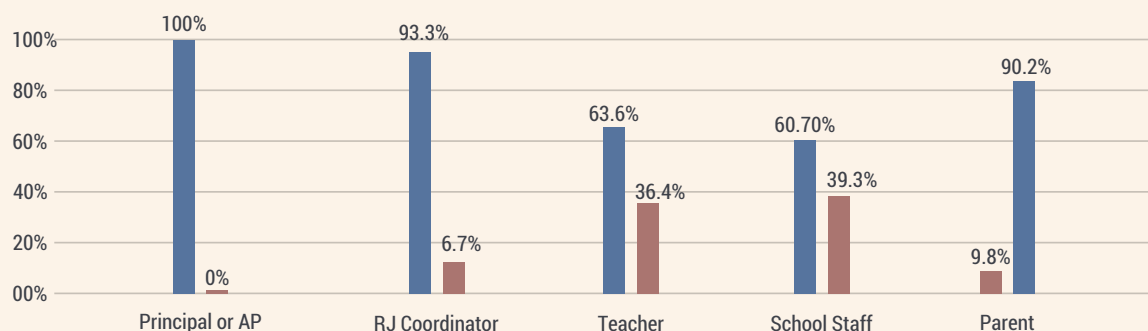
Figure 10: Percent Staff Trained Overall, N=323; 7/2014



Source: RJ Implementation Survey, 2014

- Forty seven percent of survey respondents had not yet been trained in restorative practice, and 17% noted that they would like to be trained. All of the principals/assistant principals (100%), and 93% of the RJ Coordinators had been trained; through 63% of teachers, 61% of other school staff, and only 10% of the parents had been trained.

Figure 11: Percent Staff and Students Trained by Staff Type, N=318, 7/2014



Source: RJ Implementation Survey, 2014

Number Trained by School Site

Source: Cityspan data, Implementation Survey

- A significantly higher numbers of students and staff were trained on various RJ practices than originally projected or were set as objectives.
- More than 424 additional students were trained in Peer RJ conflict mediation in the last school year, than originally projected.
- The biggest gains in number of students trained were in Edna Brewer (+456), Frick (+168), and Montera (+232) middle schools. Madison and Westlake were not able to train as many as originally projected.
- Staff and students trained spoke highly of the trainings (see participant quotes below), the content material taught and how it was presented.

Table 5: Projected vs. Actual Total Number of Students Trained in Peer RJ Program by School Site, 2013-14, OUSD

Peer RJ School Site	Projected	Actual	Difference
Bret Harte	360	272	-88
Claremont	360	456	+96
Edna Brewer	360	816	+456
Elmhurst	360	312	-48
Frick	360	528	+168
Madison	360	136	-224
Montera	360	592	+232
Westlake	360	192	-168
Total	2,880	3,304	+424

Source: Cityspan Peer RJ program database 2013-14

”

"Great gratitude for what you do in the world, and what you have shared with me"

”

"Leaving this symposium, I feel much more prepared, optimistic, the resources can definitely be used with our staff"

”

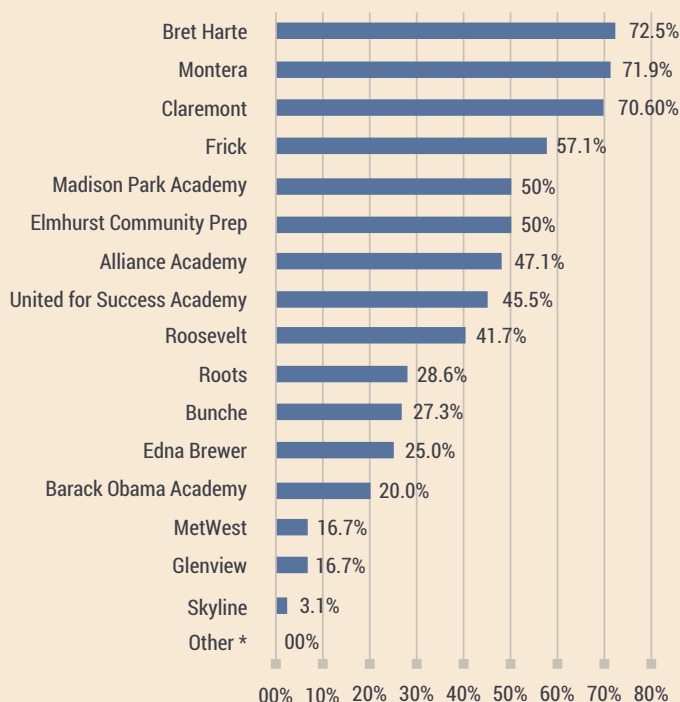
"Thank you for embodying the RJ principles"

”

"Stimulated a lot of thought and ideas. Feeling motivated and validated"
(Source: RJ Training evaluation forms)

- Though there is no systematic follow-up of the capacity built over time, there is some indication from the RJ implementation survey conducted recently that trained RJ coordinators and Peer RJ youth are continuing to use to large degrees practices learned during the trainings.
- Only one out of three (36%) respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they have had adequate training and coaching to implement restorative justice practices successfully at their school, 25% were neutral, and 39% disagreed or strongly disagreed. A substantive percentage suggested that training or coaching thereafter has not been sufficient to meet their needs.
- Many stated that they need more tier 2 and tier 3 trainings, in conflict resolution and mediation specifically, and for teachers and admin.

Figure 11: Percent Staff currently not trained by School Site, N=323, 7/2014



- ” *“Training should begin in elementary school so the culture among the students can be changed BEFORE they get to middle school.”*
- ” *“We had sent folks to district training, but limited time for onsite PD (professional Development).”*
- ” *“We still need more for newer teachers and constant reminders of how to implement RJ practices in our classroom.”*
- ” *“The district must work in collaboration to pay teachers for training; we have RJ; Race Matters; Equity in Schools; Core Standards; Arts in Learning all with great importance. Teachers as students need time to digest the information, put it into practice and re-evaluate it as an ongoing method.”*
- ” *“Our site person has been amazing in implementation, but teachers are asking for lesson plans and district provided trainings as well. Our teachers are really in support of the student level work, and classroom circles. But how do we move them from being participants in the process to leading RJ circles.”*

—RJ Implementation Surveyed Staff

- The schools with the highest percentage of staff who reported not being trained included: Bret Harte (73%), Montera (72%), Claremont (71%), Elmhurst Community Prep and Madison Park Academy (50% each), Frick (57%), Met West (47%), and United for Success Academy (45%). Future training opportunities should be extended and prioritized to these schools.
- RJ Coordinators (93%) and Principals and Assistant Principals (92%) were the most familiar with the RJ practices; followed by other school staff (59%), teachers (44%), and parents (18%).
- Highest percentage of parents (36%), followed by teachers (8%) were least familiar or knew little or nothing about the RJ practices.

Table 6: Knowledge and Familiarity with RJ Practices, by Staff Type, June 2014

Staff Type	Very familiar	Somewhat familiar	Know little or nothing
% Teachers	44.0%	47.8%	-88
Principals or Assistant Principals	91.7%	8.3%	+96
% RJ Coordinators	93.3%	6.7%	-48
% Other School Staff	58.9%	39.3%	+168
% Parents	17.7%	47.1%	-224

Source: RJ Implementation Survey 2014



Major Challenges in Successful RJ Implementation at School-level

Source: RJ Implementation Survey, Student and Staff Focus Groups.

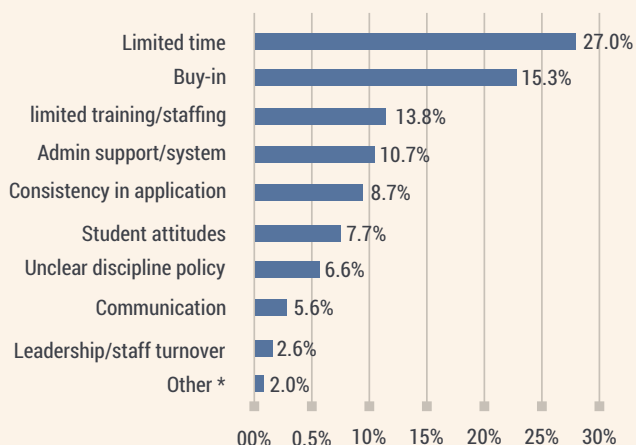
Over 200 staff respondents to this question on the RJ implementation survey in June 2014 and discussed at length during the focus groups, the following major challenges were perceived by multiple key stakeholders including teachers, RJ coordinators, principals, support staff and students, that hindered successful implementation of RJ at their school. Note, these are presented in the order of priority and frequency mentioned. So for instance, limited time was mentioned by about 30% of the staff.

1. Limited time.

The most common major challenge mentioned by the teachers and staff was mainly not having enough time to do circles or specific RJ practices in different situations. They mentioned that lack of time impacts the restorative work and follow-up, and uneven commitment to restorative practices implemented during different school times. The perception was that the time it would take to engage parents and families and follow-up would be a lot. Several noted, they are overwhelmed with all the different priorities, including teachers and RJ coordinators, and could use additional help.

Though, many coordinators and teachers with at least couple of years of RJ experience, also noted that RJ is a major cultural shift, and it will take time to reach school-wide implementation.

Figure 12: Major Challenges to successful RJ implementation at school-level, N=196



Source: RJ Implementation Survey 2014

” *“We still have punitive measure to deal with behavior problems. Where do we draw the line? There is not enough time in the day to make meaningful restorative conversations happen with students.”*

- Teacher

” *“Carving out time for staff training, practice with students; prioritizing this effort high enough to give it a chance to be successful.”*

- School Staff

” *“Supporting core teachers and their classroom management skills so they can find the time to be restorative.”*

- Teacher

” *“Really involving families - finding the time to set up those kinds of meetings.”*

- Teacher

2. Buy-in from all teachers and school staff is needed to ensure school-wide cultural shift.

Several staff noted that there needs to be greater buy-in from all teachers and staff at their school, particularly to ensure school-wide cultural shift. Several coordinators, school staff and others implied a power struggle between adults and youth, in terms of adults who are traditionally used to holding power in relationships, having to give up control and be open to trusting and engaging the students in a more open dialogue.

” *“Getting the buy-in from ALL staff (is the major challenge) so that the process is actually practiced in the classrooms by teachers to help create a more restorative culture on campus.”*

- Teacher

” *“Getting all parties on board” ... “Getting the buy-in from all staff...”*

- Teachers

” *“Appealing to teacher beliefs [is needed] to engage them in the work of bringing Tier 1 RJ practices into their classes.”*

- RJ Coordinator

” *“The major challenge is not having everyone on the same page. Everyone in a lot of ways is just doing their own thing and that doesn't work well when some are implementing these practices and others are not, it creates much division and frustration for the school community, most importantly the students.”*

- RJ Coordinator

3. Limited training and capacity.

In the survey and focus groups, several staff noted that although there were multiple training opportunities, they needed additional training and ongoing coaching, for which there was again limited time to attend. They also wanted additional trainings for all interested staff and students at their school. Several alluded to the RJ coordinator playing multiple hats, being spread too thin.

” *“I think a training would be useful, as well as some best practices recommendations.”*

- School Staff

” *“Teacher training and more information dissemination/promotion needed.”*

- Teacher

” *“Our RJ coordinator is spread too thin. We need more community members to have the training (and I include myself in this).”*

- Teacher

4. Inconsistency in application of RJ within schools.

Several staff noted there needs to be greater consistency in application of various RJ practices, follow through etc.

” *“Restorative practices have not been used consistently and faithfully. I do not consider having a student sit around the office or the staff room instead of being suspended restorative. My understanding of restorative practices is that they require a lot more focus, time, and individual attention than my school has had the resources (both staffing and space) to do well.”*

- Teacher

” *“No consistent staff, not being implemented site wide, needs to be the core of discipline in classrooms, as well as the core of discipline with kids are sent out of class because they are choosing to disrupt learning.”*

- RJ Coordinator

” *“As for the community building aspects, we just really need to jump on board with both feet next year. Also, our population is very transient, so it can be hard to build community when there are constantly students coming and going.”*

- Teacher

5. Student attitudes and misuse of RJ.

Though most of the staff appreciated the accountability and enhanced responsibility the students are taking as a result of participating in RJ, several teachers mentioned the highly disruptive students who are constantly acting out, using foul language etc.. How a few are misusing RJ to get out of class, who see it as a joke, and are playing the system. They mentioned that the consequences are not harsh enough.

” *“Some students do not seem to understand their responsibility for acts they have done.”*
- School staff

” *“Students taking advantage of the opportunity to get out of class.”*
- Teacher

” *“Students taking advantage of restorative practices as methods of not receiving consequences and “playing the system”.”*
- Teacher

6. Unclear discipline policy for serious offenses.

Several teachers and school staff discussed that it was unclear to them which student offenses or misbehaviors were serious enough to send to the office for suspensions versus minor enough to send to the RJ Coordinator for a circle or conversation. Though several teachers are making referrals to the RJ program obviously, it is not consistently so across all teachers within a school, or across all schools. Many needed more clear disciplinary policies and detailed practices laid out, for example, strict policies with consequences for serious student behaviors, and restorative policies for minor misbehaviors. Even if these policies exist, which we did not explore in this report, this implies that there needs to be greater awareness and use of these practices at each of the school sites.

” *“Admin’s lack of clarity around their discipline approach.”*
- Teacher

” *“[The major challenge is] the distinction between what situations/behaviors fall under restorative practices versus traditional discipline.”*
- Teacher

” *“[What I need more of is] How to handle tier 2 and 3 students within the system.”*
- Teacher

7. More information sharing and communication within a school, specifically with teachers and parents.

Several staff alluded to the RJ coordinator and teachers not having consistent communication and follow-up regarding each student. Though this varied across schools, with some schools have a great process and repertoire between the coordinator and teachers, a few did mention that more consistent communication and follow-up is needed by RJ coordinator with teachers. Parents were also quite unaware of nuances of the RJ program at their school, including its process, how well it's working, and its impact.

” *“As a parent I have no idea about the implementation.”*
- Parent

” *“Communication of when student is in RJ and going to be missing class.”*
- Teacher

” *“Limitations include follow through and accountability, on behalf of all parties involved.”*
- Teacher

” *“There has been no training or communication in any way with teachers in what restorative practices encompass, how to utilize them, and the potential benefits for students and staff.”*
- Teacher

” *"After a referral has been written, there is often no follow-up between teacher and student. Referrals are written and often the student returns to class without the teacher knowing what steps have happened. We were told that there would be paperwork, and follow-up but it doesn't really happen. The RJ staff is overwhelmed."*

- Teacher

What Teachers/Coordinators liked Most about Restorative Practices?

1. RJ provides a meaningful opportunity /alternative to suspension

Many teachers liked having an alternative to send students to, and not to the office for minor misbehaviors.

” *"I admire the goal of turning discipline issues into an opportunity to teach (and model) correct behavior and respect for others."*

- Teacher

” *"Having a place where I can send students who are in conflict rather than sending them to the office where they would be sent home."*

- Teacher

” *"It provides students with a different way of dealing with issues."*

- RJ Coordinator

” *"Students have a chance to talk out the issue before it gets out of hand."*

- School Staff

2. Building caring relationships

Many teachers and school staff most valued the building caring relationships with their students, and being able to connect with the larger community. They felt it provided them with concrete tools to build relationships, especially to handle difficult students.

” *"I believe in the process and having the focus be on relationships. I appreciate the process of asking questions before jumping to conclusions and thinking about how to heal the harm that's been done."*

- Teacher

” *"I think it's opened up more dialogue among teachers, students, and administration."*

- RJ Coordinator

” *"Restorative practices help you build true relationships with your students that are caring and authentic. This is the only way a teacher can really start to reach a troubled student to begin the process of engaging them academically."*

- Teacher

” *"Restorative practices have opened up the opportunity to build a strong space to nurture healthy relationships and give youth the chance to develop real long lasting connections."*

- Teacher

Many students liked the communication/ dialogue aspect of RJ. They felt effort was made to actively engage them, and make sure both sides of the story are told.

” *"I like how Restorative Justice is at my school because ... you all get to tell both sides of the story and get your point across, so you don't have to like verbally be rude, you can talk it out with anybody."*

- HS Student

3) Students taking ownership and leadership.

- ” *“The way restorative practices trusts the capacity of students to step up and show their best selves.”*
– Teacher
- ” *“The way students take ownership of their behavior and experience. The way students have a language to dialogue about issues and conflicts. The way RJ practices become part of a students' lexicon of self-management and self-discovery.”*
– Teacher
- ” *“I like that students have been empowered as peer mediators and that the practices give voice to both students and teachers.”*
– Teacher
- ” *“In spite of all the things that happen every day, and the struggles, and difficulties, they [students] have even getting to school, they show up...they continue to try, even though it's very difficult.”*
– RJ Coordinator

4. Address underlying racial justice and equity issues.

As noted earlier, several staff emphasized the importance of RJ providing a meaningful opportunity and space to talk about issues of social justice, race and equity. We don't expand on it specifically here, as it deserves much greater exploration and documentation

- ” *“RJ practices have helped my son's class talk and understand underlying issues that have been happening and causing some kids to act out.”*
– Teacher
- ” *“...It counteracts the school to prison pipeline.”*
– RJ Coordinator
- ” *“I love RJ. It is equity focused and is truly a practice that promotes positive learning environments and also community building in classrooms.”*
– Teacher

5. Self-development.

Several teachers alluded to the importance of RJ providing professional development opportunities, and how they have grown and learned new tools and techniques to be a more effective teacher and relate to students better.



- ” *“I've had a really pleasant time rebuilding relationships with students that get mad at me within the class. These have almost always gone favorably.”*
– Teacher
- ” *“It helps teachers to self-explore, which can impact classroom practices.”* – Teacher
“I have learned new techniques and approaches in dealing and speaking with students that support and enhance my own classroom practices.”
– Teacher
- ” *“I have liked the training on Restorative Circles. I have incorporated some of the ideas behind the circles in my class this year and plan to do circles with select classes next year. I like the ability to make amends with students in a productive manner with everyone's views and emotions shared to come to a common understanding of a situation that went badly. I have slowly been building my use of restorative practices in my classroom for 4 years, and am committed to improving them.”*



A SUCCESS STORY #3

"I led a circle at a middle school between a boy who was a Special Ed student and a girl who used to be friends. There were some misunderstandings between them which led to the students feeling mutually harassed by each other. The drama extended to facebook and ultimately to the girl's high school boyfriend. The boyfriend came to the middle school with friends from high school looking for the boy who has harassing his girlfriend. He made threatening comments about having a gun. The circle consisted of the boy and girl, their Mothers and one community member. The student from the high school was not included. The students had a chance to clear up misunderstandings and create a plan for safety in their relationship as well as communicate to the rest of the school community that they should not fear that her boyfriend would return to the school to cause harm."

Source: RJ Coordinator

6. RJ is a sustainable solution

All of the students appreciated the notion of Restorative Justice as a sustainable solution to conflict. Additionally, students felt that restorative justice was making their school a better place and teaching them true conflict resolution. These students credited RJ circles with teaching them how to effectively resolve conflict and understand the motivation behind another student's behavior.



"What I like about Restorative Justice is that even though I'll never be friends with the girl I had a conflict with... we know why she was being rude to me. I understand where she was coming from. Like even though I'm not going to be approached by her...I'm no longer enemies with her."

– MS Student

Staff Satisfaction

Overall, the staff reported positive experiences with the RJ. During the focus group, there was strong commitment and energy in the room, with strong affirmation for the values and practices of restorative justice. All seemed highly satisfied.



"I've had nothing but a great experience with the process." -Teacher at the end.

Nonetheless, in the implementation survey, there seemed to be some mixed emotions about whether the program is effective, they have not seen any strong evidence.



"I think it's hard to say [whether circles are effective] but until we are also supported by staff and administration, these methods are not practical for teachers."

- Teacher



September 2014

WHAT WORKS? KEY LESSONS LEARNED

Source: Staff Focus Group, Interviews.

Staff, specifically RJ coordinators and teachers, shared with us what is working well for them in terms of specific practices they are using, and overall lessons learned.

1. Preparing for the circles



"What works best has been when there is a lot of preparation for the circles, creating accountability on the part of all participants. This makes follow-up clear and timely; everyone knows their part and role."

– Teacher

2. Having clear expectations, roles and follow-up.



"What works is having clear expectations along with an open door policy so that students feel comfortable coming into the space and getting support."

– RJ Coordinator

3. Speaking the restorative language daily.



"Speaking the language of restorative practices on a daily basis with students sets a tone of equity and empowerment. The students enjoy an alternative to the cut and dry policies of school site administrators. Restorative resolutions seem to have a more lasting impact (low rate of further conflict) on our student population."

– Teacher

4. Complete teacher and administrative buy-in and support is important.

Many alluded to the importance of having top leadership buy-in at the school level as key to ensuring successful implementation. Some schools seem to have that (e.g., Dewey, Bunche) where the principal in fact initiated and brought RJ to the school, whereas others are struggling to get administrative and many of the teachers to buy-in.



We have the great fortune of full buy in from administrators, students, teachers, and parents. There is a unique energy at [our school] that allows the RJ coordinator to incorporate practices learned from training and front line experiences.



"Complete administrative support and buy in... [would make it easier]."

5. Having first grade period in all classes once a week across the school with admin support to do a check-in circle.



"...Why can't we make it a practice across all schools. It works!"

– RJ Coordinator

6. Building relationships and changing the culture across the whole school takes time.

7. In terms of classroom practices, the restorative justice questions have been the most practical and useful.

8. RJ Coordinators experience and ability to engage, communicate with and follow-up with all teachers and staff is key.

Sustainability

(Source: staff focus groups, implementation survey)

There was a strong sentiment from staff (teachers, principals/AP, coordinators, SSO, counselors) and students alike to continue and sustain the RJ program. Many would like to expand the program school-wide; though with more effective systems in place

”

“I have seen no students who disrespect or disrupt the academic standards apologize or make amends (picking up trash?) to the school as a whole. It seems to be an action in lieu of suspension, to which the district holds a high priority”.

- Teacher

”

“I believe that the foundation has been laid. Continuation with improvement from staff and students will continue to result in positive changes in school climate. Follow through and support are essential from administration”.

- RJ Coordinator

We need to have better systems in place if this is going to work.”

- Teacher

”

“Our justice system has clearly shown that solely punitive measures are ineffective. RJ offers all an opportunity to safely discuss issues.”

- RJ Coordinator

”

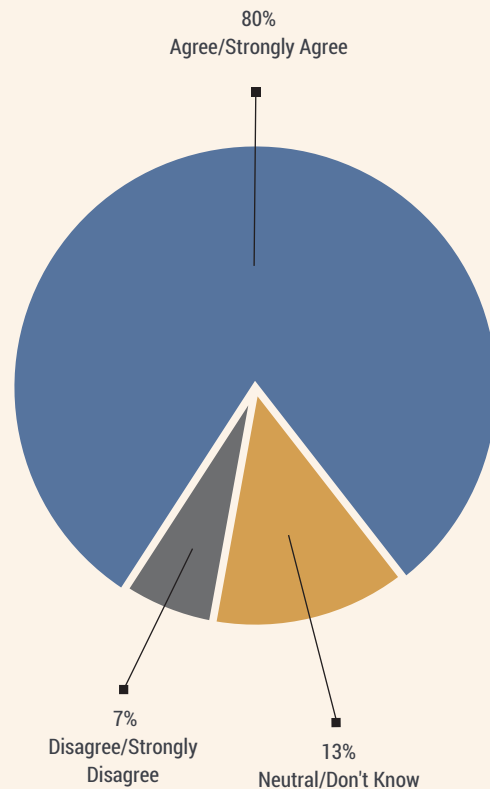
“We are an expulsion school which seems no different than kicking a kid out of society and putting them in jail. It is just another form of punishment. All schools in the district should be using RJ to help stop the idea and the reality of the school to prison pipeline.”

- Teacher

”

“We need more practice and exposure to RJ for it to set root as the basis for disciplinary resolutions. I think we need to be patient with each other and with the process.”

Figure 13: Percent Staff believe School should continue using Restorative Practices



Source: RJ Implementation Survey, 2014

Suggestions to Improve School-level Implementation

Source: Staff and Student Focus Groups, Interviews, RJ Implementation Survey, 2014.

Following are most common suggestions made by over 300 staff currently implementing restorative practices in Oakland schools, to help improve the program and RJ practices at their school- or district-wide. These findings were similarly voiced by the student and RJ coordinators during the focus groups.

1. Develop more structure, protocols and documentation of best practices.

Many staff would like more systematic documentation of protocols, procedures and best practices that have worked for specific schools and practitioners that set clear expectations for what they need to follow; though they appreciated the flexibility they have to modify practices as needed in specific situations, it would be helpful to have either at school or district-level clear documentation of RJ milestones to achieve, best practices that have worked well so far, and procedures to follow in different situations. Many staff were unclear about the impact of the program, suggesting more routine data tracking and reporting that is shared back with the staff would be helpful.



"Unless it's built in, with structure and policies...every time the principal changes, you're back to square 1, and half the teachers are new...how do you maintain the culture change when you're starting over new every year."

- RJ Coordinator



"First period can be consistently done across every school, where every child in Oakland can us this, every Monday there's a check-in circle across district."

- RJ Coordinator

2. Develop and monitor a clear school-level discipline policies and practices for serious student behaviors vs. use of restorative practices

Several staff mentioned the importance of having more serious consequences for serious student misbehaviors; making sure an equitable and fair policy is in place that is used to hold all students including the high risk students accountable. It came up several times, to have a clear discipline policy that states these are the 4 primary reasons for suspensions, and for which ones you use or refer students to RJ.



"We need some concrete decisions made about what it is OK to suspend for? In addition to the RJ policy in place, we also need teachers and principals some milestones that this is discipline policy that this school operates by...this can be used as classroom management."

- RJ Coordinator



"Fair and equitable for all students with specified outcomes for specified referrals. Students almost never have to apologize even to staff/students for intentional and inappropriate body contacts."

-Teacher

"Using restorative justice as a habitual practice, rather than a last resort...It should be a first option!"

- Teacher

3. Inform and engage more teachers and younger students. Embed the entire school culture.



Several staff alluded to strategically engaging more teachers, getting more buy-in from them, starting with better understanding their views and concerns.

"[I am] worried that only some teachers use and others disregard these practices. We need consistency if we want to create a restorative school-wide culture."

- Teacher

” *“Many teachers who most need to change the way they act toward students are not the ones participating in the struggle with RJ.”*

– RJ Stakeholder

” *“Teachers should become better informed of the philosophy and practices of restorative justice program.”*

– Teacher

Many students felt that restorative justice should be offered to more students who are experiencing conflict while others suggested an increase in student leaders would assist the main facilitator.

” *“More students should be able to get involved because I know [the facilitator] is already doing a lot, so she can use more help.”*

– MS Student

” *“The jury is still out. It needs to be embedded in the culture of the entire school.”*

– Principal

” *“More students and teachers should be trained in the practices. AND the program should be expanded to train younger kids.”*

– Teacher

4. Greater support and investment from the district to sustain.

Though staff felt that the district is supportive of RJ, they were concerned about the district funding being used to support and sustain the program. They mentioned that even the program director position is supported by MediCal, and more built-in funding needs to be allocated to RJ. In addition, staff mentioned that district can play a crucial role to help facilitate shared learning, develop and track shared accountability, and shared best practices to help sustain and expand the program. These findings are also supported by a newspaper article that recently published limited future funding available to support restorative justice in Oakland schools.⁸³

5. Leverage existing capacity and experiences to expand.

Several staff noted that they had not been trained in RJ, whereas others noted specific aspects they would like to be more trained in – such as how to handle specific situations for tier 2 or tier 3. Teachers were most knowledgeable about community building circles in classroom; they felt they didn't know enough about mediation, and were disconnected from that process at times. Several staff also alluded to needing more refresher trainings and coaching opportunities, where regular time is allowed for continuous learning and professional development.

” *“I could see district playing that role, to identify where that talent is, and take steps to help leverage those skills to develop structures and protocols.”*

– RJ Coordinator

” *“A master trainer needs to come in and give PD on this. How do teacher build relationships with difficult students?”*

– Teacher

” *“Only if there is more training for teachers on how to use these practices successfully, and also for parents and guardians.”*

– Teacher

” *“Using restorative practices are the key in creating successful students that have the social and emotional opportunities to repair harm and build trusting/supportive relationships between students/adults. Without these practices we take a huge risk in allowing our children [to] fail without any accountability for their outcomes and I don't believe that is a path we should continue on.”*

– RJ Coordinator

6. Change the "reputation" of restorative justice circles.

While the majority of students would not change anything, some noted that Restorative Justice was viewed as a way to get out of classes or as a different "form of punishment." Many of the students emphasized that sharing accurate information about restorative justice would result in other students may be more open to and "comfortable with using restorative justice."

”

"A lot of people think that Restorative Justice is like a form of punishment and it's something you can do if you don't want detention."

– HS Student

”

"I would change... the reputation that people think it's something that you can get out of class for. It's like, why does she always get to miss like 3 periods of time. That's why people don't like it."

– MS Student



IMPACT OF RESTORATIVE JUSTICE IN OAKLAND SCHOOLS

Evaluation Questions

- Did WSRJ/Peer RJ reduce suspensions among student participants and at school level, compared to control students and schools?
 - * Schools with RJ have fewer suspensions than those without RJ
 - * Schools with peer RJ or WSRJ have fewer suspensions for African American and Latino students than schools without RJ
 - * Schools with RJ program will have reduced the African American/White Discipline gap more than the Non-RJ schools
- Did WSRJ improve school attendance, academic performance and engagement for participating students and schools?
- Have Restorative practices been effective in reducing disproportionality?
- Did the WSRJ program activities lead to positive school climate?

Data Sources

- Matched participant data with OUSD Student Information System (AERIES) 2011-12, 2012-13, and 2013-14.
- California Department of Education suspension and expulsion data 2011-12, 2012-13.
- Cityspan Data 2013-14.
- California Healthy Kids Survey.

Key Indicators of Interest

- Comparison of suspensions rates overall and by race/ethnicity for RJ versus non-RJ schools, over time
- Number and rate of suspensions due to "willful defiance" over time
- Black/White and Latino/White Discipline Gap
- Comparison of School-level Outcomes (graduation rate, dropout rate, chronic absence, Scholastic Reading Inventory (SRI) reading levels) for RJ versus Non-RJ schools.
- Comparison of student-level suspensions and academic outcomes for students who participated in RJ program versus not (adjusted models not included)
- Comparison of staff and student perceptions of school climate in schools with RJ vs. not (not included)



"The proof is in the way our students respond to RJ and the reduction in suspensions."

– RJ Coordinator



"It has created a more sincere relationship between me and some of my harder to manage students."

– Teacher



Key Accomplishments of the OUSD RJ program, 2014.

1. Successfully expanding the Peer Conflict Resolution program to include restorative practices
2. Increased number of RJ sites substantially.
3. In 13-14SY, eliminated disproportionate discipline of African American students at Bunche and Community Day School.
4. In 13-14 SY, there was 41% reduction of disproportionate discipline at Edna Brewer and 40% at Elmhursts Community Prep.
5. Creation of RJ Youth leadership Council made up of youth from across the district.

Source: Program Manager

¹Suspension rate by race/ethnicity: for instance, of all students suspended, what percent were African American; Suspensions by race/ethnicity: Of all African American students, what percent were suspended.

²Scholastic Reading Inventory (SRI) is a reading assessment conducted in 9th grade that provides immediate, actionable data on students' reading levels and growth over time. SRI helps educators differentiate instruction, make meaningful interventions, forecast growth toward grade-level state tests, and demonstrate accountability.

Helpful in Managing Student Behavior

- More than 90% of the teachers surveyed reported that restorative practices were very helpful or helpful in managing difficult student behaviors in the classroom.
- Several teachers alluded to how RJ has essentially given them tools to more effectively communicate and engage more difficult students, as well as to be able to talk about 'hard' issues, such as racism, social justice in a way that is meaningful and safe.



"It has impacted me personally by showing me how much more we need to talk...and how many more conversations we need to have...I learn so much more about myself...life healing, and being able to communicate with people in a way that's safe."

– Teacher

- Though most teachers felt that RJ has been somewhat or very helpful in managing difficult student behaviors, many also seemed quite mixed about the consequences of RJ. Some felt that it was swift and effective, yet others felt it took a few days to resolve.



"Honestly, I think the best practices in managing difficult student behaviors in the classroom revolve around building positive relationships between student and teacher, effective communication and partnership with parents, and clear, consistent expectations and follow through on fair systems of reinforcement (i.e. due process)...If teachers do this faithfully, it's going to solve 99% of your problems."

– Teacher

Reduced Disciplinary Office Referrals⁹ and Suspensions

- Almost 44% of staff surveyed agreed that Restorative practices helped reduce office referrals¹ in the past year at their school, 35% were neutral or didn't know and 21% said not true.



"We have been using RJ for about 4 years. It has transformed student discipline so that the consequences are realistic and understood by students."

– Teacher



"I think it is a much more holistic way to deal with conflict than just melting out punishment."

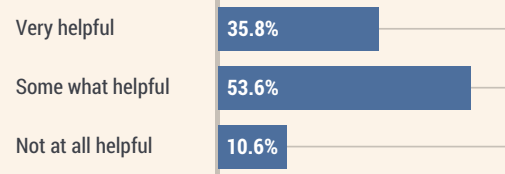
– Teacher



"One of the instances was when a student who I do not teach came a grabbed a ball out of my hand after I had confiscated it. RJ allowed me to hear his side of the story and give him a chance to "be heard." Even though it wasn't the hardline "discipline" that I was initially seeking, we prevented an AAM from being suspended, and he gave me a genuine apology and a hug after! I think that's the best outcome that could have occurred in that situation."

–Teacher

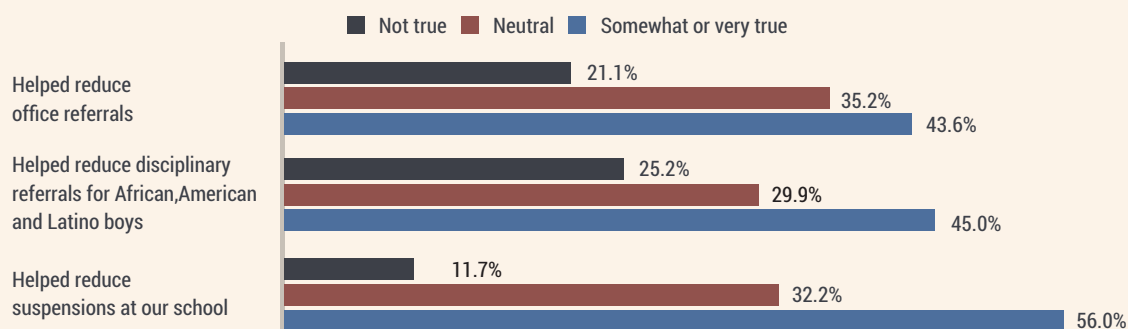
Figure 14: As a Teacher, How Helpful have you found Restorative Practices in Managing Difficult Student Behaviors in Classroom?
N=151



Source: RJImplementation Survey 2014

⁹Office referrals = Students sent from classroom to office for discipline infractions.

Figure 15: Perceived Impact of Restorative Practices on Office Referrals for Discipline and Suspensions this year, 2013-14, N=298



Source: RJImplementation Survey 2014

- Almost 56% believed that restorative practices helped reduce suspensions at their school.

”It teaches kids a better alternative to dealing with difficult situations and is a much better way to deal with problems rather than suspending kids.”

- Teacher

”I have seen positive changes in my class room and in the whole school. Less fights and less disruptions in my class room”.

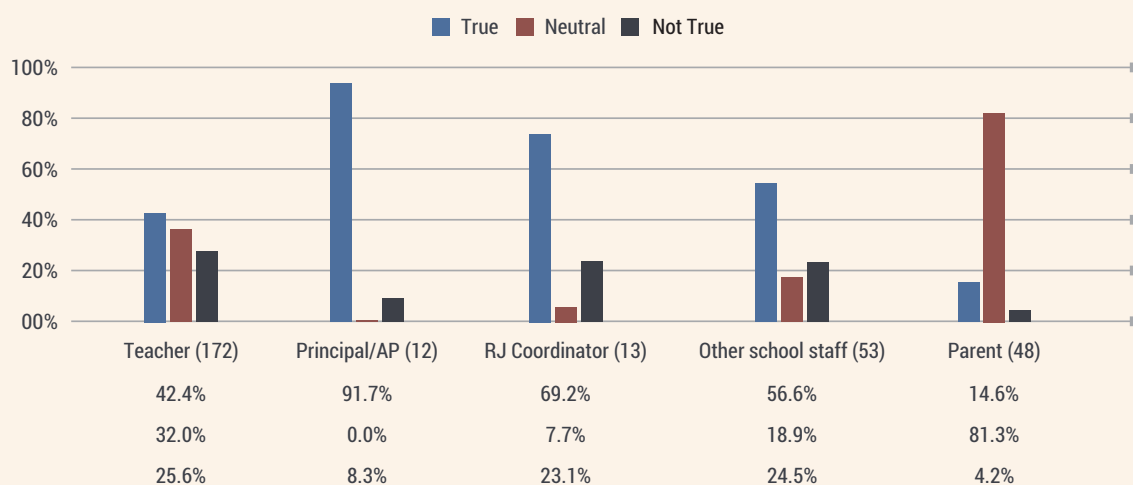
- Teacher

- About 45% of staff believed that restorative practices helped reduce disciplinary referrals for African American and Latino boys specifically, whereas 30% did not know or were neutral, and 25% said not true.
- This varied significantly by staff type. For instance, the majority of Principals/Assistant Principals (92%) and RJ Coordinators (69%) believed that restorative practices at their school helped reduce disproportionate disciplinary referrals for African American and Latino boys, whereas only 42% of teachers believed that to be true.

”[We thought let's] have other options [that] Dean might use to deal with discipline...why don't we have in-school suspensions for behaviors that are not too serious...so that was another opportunity.. so first part of suspensions we do a RJ Circle..”

- RJ Coordinator, Focus group

Figure 16: Percent Staff who believe that RJ have Helped Reduce Disciplinary Referrals for African American and Latino Boys in past year 2013-14, disparities by staff type



Source: RJImplementation Survey 2014

- Parents were mostly neutral or did not know (81%) whether restorative practices resulted in fewer disciplinary office referrals for African American and Latino boys (81%), or for suspensions. This reiterates that parents were the least aware of the impact of restorative practices on student behavior, teacher practices around discipline and school-level outcomes.

Improved Conflict Resolution Skills

- About 2 out of 3 respondents (63%) noted that having restorative practices at their school in the past year, have improved the way students resolve conflicts with adults and with other students.

“The RJ circle and reflective questions are great tools for the children to use and have through life.”

– School Staff

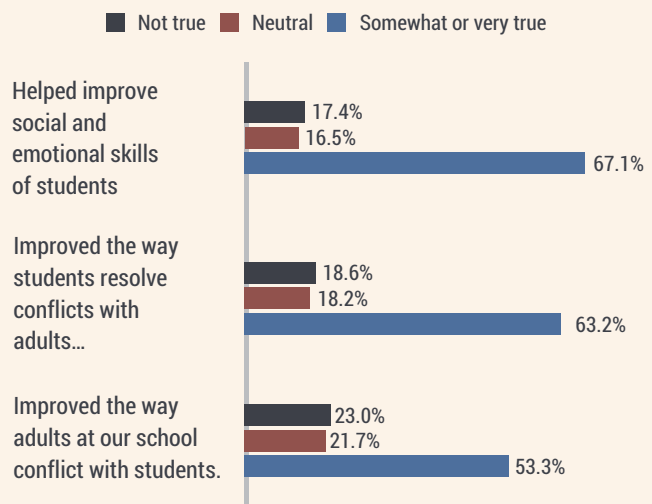
- Though slightly fewer (55%) felt that it improved the way adults at their school resolved conflicts with students; implying that perhaps students are benefitting more from RJ than adults. During the staff focus groups, adults also emphasized the importance of having more adults involvement, for instance from more teachers, to get more involved and buy-in for RJ as well as additional coaching and professional developmental opportunities.

“The problem is with adults, it's not the kids...if we are able to have that conversation with each other, and we are [not] tweaking each other's style in dealing with the kids...then we create a restorative community.”

– Stakeholder Focus Group

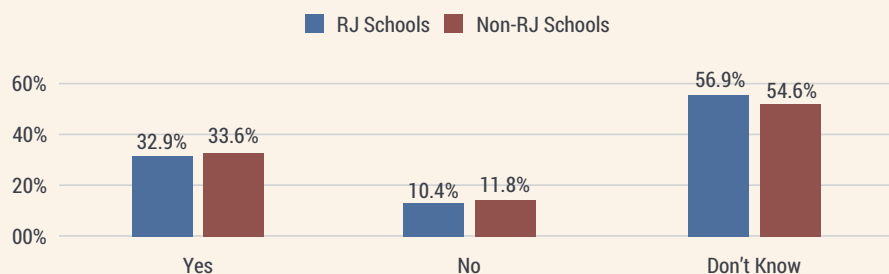
- Interestingly, even when a conflict resolution process such as RJ circles held through tier 2, existed at a school, many students were not aware of it. In CHKS, a question asked “if there is a conflict at your school...does your school have a process to confidentially and safely resolve the conflict (such as restorative justice)?”

Figure 17: Perceived impact of Restorative Practices on Students; Conflict Resolution and Social-emotional Skills, N=307



Source: RJImplementation Survey 2014

Figure 18: Student Awareness of a Process to Resolve Conflicts at School, 2012-13, RJ vs. Non-RJ schools



Source: California Healthy Kids Survey, 2012-13, OUSD

- About one third of the students on average in RJ and non-RJ schools were aware of a process at their school to resolve conflicts confidentially and safely at their school, implying that they knew about restorative justice for instance. Interesting even in non-RJ schools, students were aware of a conflict resolution process, suggesting existence of other conflict resolution programs or services.
- About 10% of the students on average across RJ and non-RJ schools reported such a process did not exist, and the majority (57%) reported they did not know or were aware whether such a process existed or not. There was no significant difference across schools with RJ or not; even with high implementation RJ schools, the majority of the students were not aware of RJ or a similar conflict resolution process.
- It is partly understood as only those facing conflicts/harms might be using the Tier 2 conflict/ harm repair circles. However, it also suggests that to be able to reach and positively impact a larger percent of students through RJ as through Tier 1 community building circles, there needs to be greater awareness of RJ approach and practices school-wide. Sharing information and increasing awareness with students and all teachers, through perhaps outreach, social media, or promotion of educational materials and success stories may certainly influence greater buy-in and support for RJ. Involving students and teachers who have had positive experiences with RJ may be useful in this regard.

Improved Social Emotional Skills of students

- More than 67% felt that RJ helped improve social and emotional skills of students.



"The student RJ programs appear to have a positive effect. I believe that RJ is an important way to promote social-emotional wellness in a culturally competent manner."

– School Staff

Building Youth Leadership Skills

- Several staff and students repeatedly recognized how students participating in RJ are becoming leaders in their schools, becoming more responsible for their actions, and are able to resolve conflicts on their own.
- Along the same lines, over 64% of staff who took the RJ implementation survey felt that restorative practices have supported youth leadership opportunities at their school.



"It has helped students become leaders and resolve conflict on their own."

– Teacher



"Students were able to take a leadership position in school which helped them become more responsible for their actions."

– RJ Coordinator



"Students involved in the Restorative Justice program have emerged as leaders at our school. Those students planned a very positive week of events on campus promoting peace, respect, and culture...the RJ coordinator has done an excellent job of supporting students and building a positive school climate. We are headed in the right direction."

– School Staff

Improved School Climate including Caring Relationships

- Almost 70% of staff surveyed reported that restorative practices have improved school climate at their school in the past year. Most of the respondents were teachers.
- More than 64% of staff reported that restorative practices have helped build caring relationships between teachers and students.

”

"It builds students' trust that school is not out to get them and that adults hear their voices. Too many students feel the opposite in OUSD."

– RJ Coordinator

”

"I believe it is useful and beneficial to teach students and teachers this approach to communicating and airing concerns using open discussion, equity of voice and good listening skills. We can all benefit from this process."

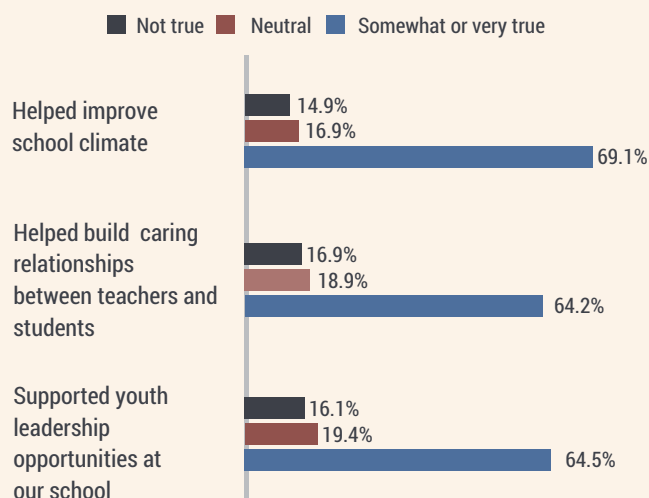
– Teacher

”

"RJ relieves the stress and tension between student and student and teacher and student."

– Staff

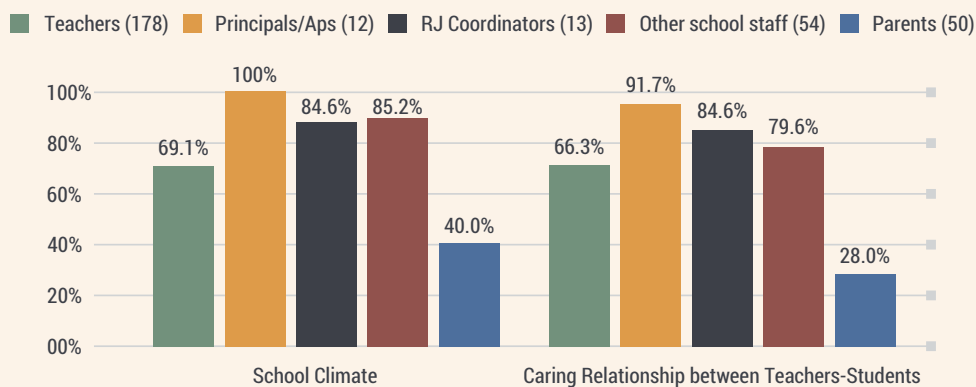
Figure 19: Perceived impact of restorative justice practices on school-level outcomes this year, N=307



Source: RJ Implementation Survey 2014

- Principals/ APs, RJ Coordinators and other school staff (counselors, office staff, SSO) were much more likely to report improved school climate and improved caring relationships between teachers and students, than teachers or parents. About half the parents were neutral or reported that they didn't know the impact on school climate or caring relationships with teachers.

Figure 20: Disparities in Perceived RJ Impact on School Climate and Building Caring Relationships, by Staff Type, 2013-14



Source: RJ Implementation Survey 2014

”

"Sadly, there has been little to no communication with parents about this program and whether or not it's working. I remember going to a PTA meeting last year and learning what it's all about. It sounded like a great program and I am eager to hear if it's helped."

– Parent

”

"Restorative practices help you build true relationships with your students that are caring and authentic. This is the only way a teacher can really start to reach a troubled student to begin the process of engaging them academically."

– Teacher

”

"I believe that the foundation has been laid. Continuation with improvement from staff and students will continue to result in positive changes in school climate. Follow through and support are essential from administration."

– Teacher

Teacher Experience with RJ Circle with Parents and Students: A Case Study

(Source: Case Study Template)

"It was a very positive experience. The children were able to express their sadness in viewing the film. Many children said it was "shocking", "...didn't know the violence would be so harsh...", "...couldn't believe people would do this." "...thought I was going to watch someone talk about what happened...didn't know there would be real footage." I was so impressed with the wisdom from the 5th grade children.

Many of them suggested that the teacher preview the film before showing it to them, and wished they had been warned, and that their parents were contacted. I was a little nervous about the parents being present, but because they were prepped, and asked to make sure that "adult talk" be expressed at a later time, their comments were honest and in support of the children. I appreciated the advice you gave me about maintaining a positive tone, and as a result - after asking the Restorative Questions - I asked the question, "What did you notice about the film that was positive?" followed up with "What do you feel should happen to make thing right?".

This allowed the children to notice brave and courageous actions in the film. All of the children were so happy, and expressed gratitude and appreciations for being able to talk about their feelings. As one kid said, "I am happy to get it up and out of my head, because I have been thinking about it non-stop."

"I am loving the powerful impact of RJ!"

-Teacher on Special Assignment, January 28, 2013



Enhanced Developmental Assets

- Evidence from focus groups points to enhanced ability of the students who participated in restorative justice circles to have the following outcomes. Though these are preliminary outcomes, and additional data from more students is needed to substantiate this evidence, this suggests powerful and promising results of RJ:

✓ Enhanced ability to understand peers

”One time my friend got into a conflict with another one of my friends. And they fought [But] we came to [the facilitator], and we all...talked about the situation. We got to see where everybody was coming from, and we understood that ... it was all just a misunderstanding and now we're all friends

-HS Student

✓ Enhanced empathy

”What I did is, if I see someone bully him, like I would just help him out, and yeah, he sort of does the same for me. I consider us friends now.”

-Student

”It allows kids to feel they are being heard and to learn empathy for others.”

- Teacher

✓ Enhanced ability to manage emotions

✓ Enhanced ability to resolve conflict at home

”Well, once my parents were in an argument and they started like attacking each other, not like physically, but like with words. So I remembered the second day of training from RJ and so I helped them, and they settled down.”

-HS Student

✓ Developing positive lasting relationships with peers

”I got into a fight with a girl and we were still having problems after our suspension. It had gone on for 4 months and then [the facilitator brought me in.] We sat there for a really long time, even stayed after school...and now she's like one of my best friends.”

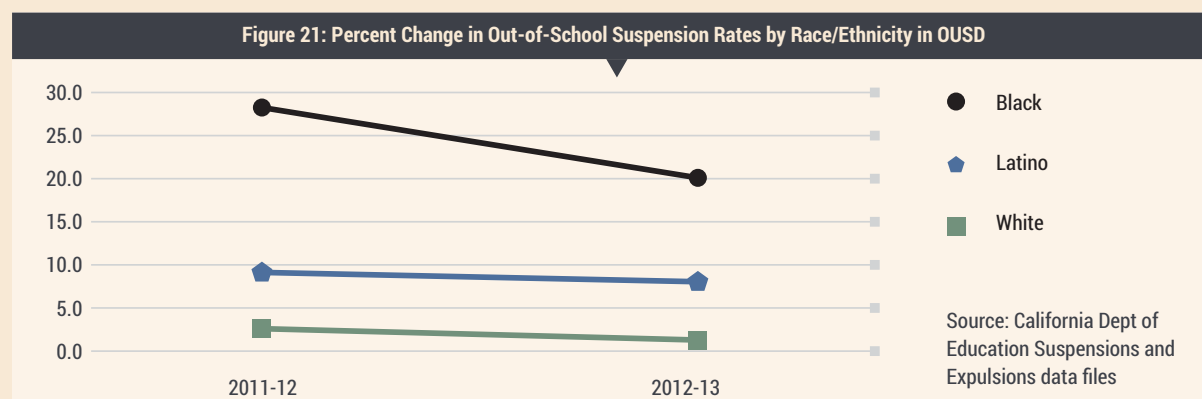
-Student

Suspensions and Expulsions

District-Wide Suspensions

- District-wide, the overall number of out-of-school suspensions in OUSD have declined significantly in the past 2 years. In 2011-12, 3,914 African American students were suspended in OUSD once or more. Of these, 1,050 were suspended for disruption/willful defiance, and 1,069 for a serious offense (source: CDE).

As the trend lines show, out of school suspension rates for all groups declined. Black students saw the largest decline by nearly 7 per 100 enrolled, compared to 1 per 100 White students.



- Since 2011-12, there has been a significant decline in the number (29%) and rate (26%) of African American students suspended in OUSD in one year.
- The most significant decline has been for African American students suspended for disruption/willful defiance, down from 1,050 to 630, a decrease of 40% or 420 fewer suspensions in only one year. The African American suspension rate for disruption/willful defiance also declined significantly by 37% from 7.4 to 4.7 within that year.
- The decline continues for Latino students as well, but not as prominent, down for overall out-of-school suspensions by 10% and for disruptive/willful defiance by 15%.
- The Black/White discipline gap¹⁰ in 2011-2012 was almost 25 between African American and White students and it closed significantly down to 19 in 2012-13.** Significant progress has been made particularly in the past 3 years, OUSD is on the right track – yet there is still a long way to go to close the discipline gap between African American and White students.

Table 7: District-Wide Percent Change in Suspensions and Discipline Gap, 2011-12 to 2012-13

	Number Suspended 1112	Number Suspended 1213	Number Change	% Change	Suspension Rate 1112	Suspension Rate 1213	Number Change 2	% Change	Discipline Gap 1112	Discipline Gap 1213	Gap attributable to disruption
Out-of-School Suspensions OVERALL											
Overall	6150	4758	-1392	-22.6%	13.2	10.2	-3.0	-22.7%	–	–	
Black	3914	2774	-1140	-29.1%	27.6	20.5	-7.0	-25.5%	24.7	18.7	
Latino	1742	1564	-178	-10.2%	9.2	8.0	-1.1	-12.2%	6.3	6.2	
White	117	78	-39	-33.3%	2.9	1.8	-1.0	-36.1%			
Out-of-School Suspensions for Serious Offense											
Overall	1744	1403	-341	-19.6%	3.8	3.0	-0.7	-19.5%	–	–	
Black	1069	785	-284	-26.6%	7.5	5.8	-1.7	-22.8%	6.2	5.1	27.1%
Latino	502	455	-47	-9.4%	2.6	2.3	-0.3	-11.4%	1.3	1.6	25.7%
White	55	32	-23	-41.8%	1.3	0.7	-0.6	-44.8%	–	–	
Out-of-School Suspensions for Disruption/ Willful Defiance											
Overall	1636	1106	-530	-32.4%	3.5	2.4	-1.1	-32.4%	–	–	–
Black	1050	630	-420	-40.0%	7.4	4.7	-2.7	-36.9%	6.8	4.4	23.6%
Latino	474	404	-70	-14.8%	2.5	2.1	-0.4	-16.9%	1.9	1.8	29.0%
White	23	11	-12	-52.2%	0.6	0.3	-0.3	-53.6%	–	–	–

*Suspension rate by group (for example, Number of out-of-school suspensions for serious offense per 100 students)

Source: California Department of Education 2011-12, 2012-13. CDE data includes charter schools so interpret with caution.

¹⁰ Black White Discipline Gap: This measure is calculated by taking the rate of suspensions for Black/African American students and subtracting that value from the rate of suspension of White students.

- About 23% of the Black/White discipline gap is attributable to disruption/ willful defiance behavior¹¹.
- From 2011-12 to 2012-13, the discipline gap between Black/White students has closed for all suspensions, those for serious offenses and for disruption/willful defiance.
- Several RJ schools had reduced suspensions by more than 50% in the last 3 years, meeting the program objective.

Suspensions in RJ vs. Non-RJ Schools

- Based on the Office of Civil Rights database, we can calculate baseline disciplinary profile. It shows that African American and Latino students were 8 times more likely to be disciplined using suspensions in RJ schools in 2011-12, and 4.5 times more likely to be disciplined overall in the district, including elementary schools.
- There was a significant difference in the proportion of African American students who were suspended (41.7%) in RJ schools, compared to non-RJ schools (35.8%), suggesting these were useful targeted schools for RJ intervention to reduce Black/White and Latino/White discipline gap.

Table 8: Baseline differences in Race- and Gender-specific Suspension Rates for RJ vs Non-RJ schools, 2011-12.

Schools	% Male	% Female	% African American	% Latino	% White	African American / White Gap	Latino/ White Gap
RJ schools	54.2	45.8	35.8	49.0	3.1	32.7	46.0
Non-RJ schools	52.5	47.5	32.5	41.2	9.1	23.4	32.1

Source: Civil Rights Data Collection file Data; 2013-14 data not yet available.

Note: please use this data as estimates as it might vary from the actual district data. The number of white students suspended in specific schools might be based on small sample size, hence rate might be unreliable; though this table represents aggregated data.

- There was no difference for Latino suspensions across RJ or Non-RJ schools, averaging about 40%.
- Males were significantly more likely to be disciplined, compared to females, in all schools including RJ vs. Non-RJ schools.

Suspensions among Participants

Note: this is a sample of students whose information was tracked in select schools in WSRJ and Peer RJ sites in past 2 years. We matched Aeries data to a set of comparable set of 'control' students, who did not receive RJ intervention. See methods for more info.

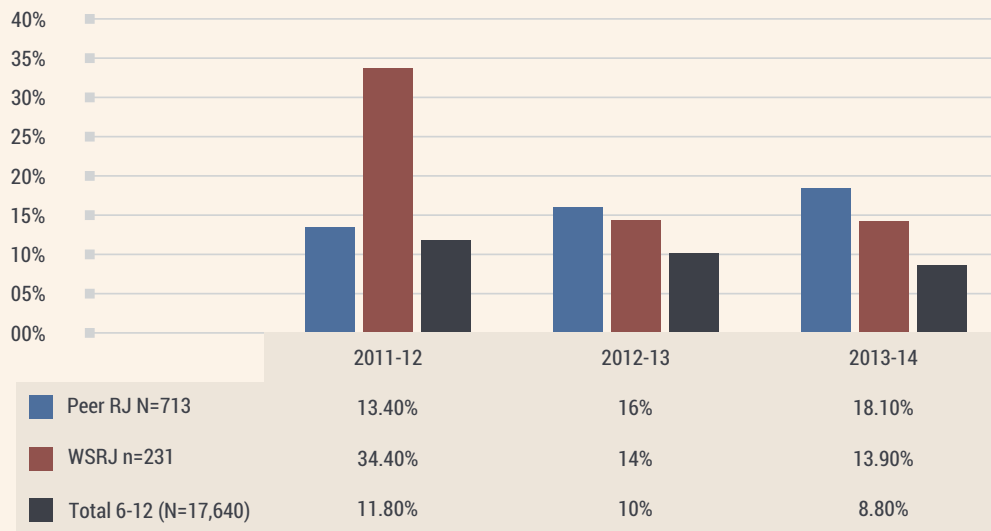
- Among the 713 program participants that we have data for in the past year (13-14), from Peer RJ only or both, and 231 from WSRJ program only. Note, this only represents about half the 1,354 participants in Peer RJ program, and 10th of WSRJ participants¹².

¹¹ Percentage of Gap Attributable To Disruption/Willful Defiance: This measure is calculated by taking the gap between Black and White student rates of suspension for willful defiance and dividing that value by the gap between Black and White student rates for out of school suspensions.

¹² We did not compare differences in matched vs. unmatched sample at this time. Hence, please consider all results as estimates based on exploratory outcome analyses, to be confirmed for the supplement report.

- Of these, 364 were African American students in Peer RJ program, 18% were suspended, 82% were not.
- Of the 168 African American students in WSRJ program, 25% were suspended, 75% were not.
- At baseline, participants in Whole School RJ middle and high schools were 3 times more likely to be suspended, compared to Non-RJ participants. This is expected as schools and students with the higher risk of being suspended or referred for disciplinary actions, are the ones referred to and participate in Restorative Justice program.

Figure 22: Changes in Suspension Rates for Students in Peer RJ, WSRJ and District-Wide from 2011 to 2014



Source: Matched Aeries Data.

- In the last 3 years of WSRJ implementation, the percent of WSRJ student participants who were suspended dropped by half, from 34% in 2011-12 to 14% in years 2 and 3. There was no change in the proportion of participants who were suspended in the past year. The rate of change is more significant ($p < 0.05$) for RJ students than district-wide or for non-RJ students.
- Overall, almost 8.8% of 6th to 12th graders in OUSD were suspended in 2013-14. The rate was higher among WSRJ students (13.8%) and Peer RJ students (18%); which is expected, as these are the students most likely to be placed in RJ because they are at higher risk of being suspended.
- For Peer RJ program participants, the % suspended is much lower than those in WSRJ and increased slightly in the past two years, from 13% in 2011-12 to 18% in 2013-14. Note, this may be due to the final sample not being representative of all Peer RJ participants (as only half was matched). There could also be several confounding factors apparent at specific Peer RJ schools, for instance, teacher practices that would need to be better understood and contextualized in the context of these findings. Note, this report does not present a comprehensive evaluation of specifically Peer RJ program and its tier 2 strategies- a more focused formative and summative evaluation of the program would help to extrapolate effects of its specific practices on student participants and school-level, including on African American students.

Table 9: Differences in race-specific 3-year average suspension rates for RJ versus Non-RJ Participants, 2011-2014.

	African American Suspension rate	Latino Suspension rate	White Suspension rate*	Total Suspension Rate for 6-12	Black/ White Discipline Gap	Latino/White Discipline Gap
RJ participants	19.8%	10.3%	6.6%	16.2%	-13.2%	-3.6%
Non-RJ sample	19.8%	8.6%	2.6%	10.9%	-18.4%	-6.6%

Source: Aeries 2011-12, 12-13 and 13-14 data files

*White suspension rate for RJ participants for each year is unreliable due to small sample size ($n < 10$). hence 3-year aggregate data is presented.

- About 20% of all African American students from 6th to 12th grade, including RJ participants or not, were suspended each year – the suspension rate stayed about the same. Percent Latino students suspended also stayed about the same, with slight lowering in 2012-13 at about 9%, regardless of program participation.
- Based on a 3-year average and each year, the Black/white discipline gap was lower among RJ participants compared to the non-RJ participants.

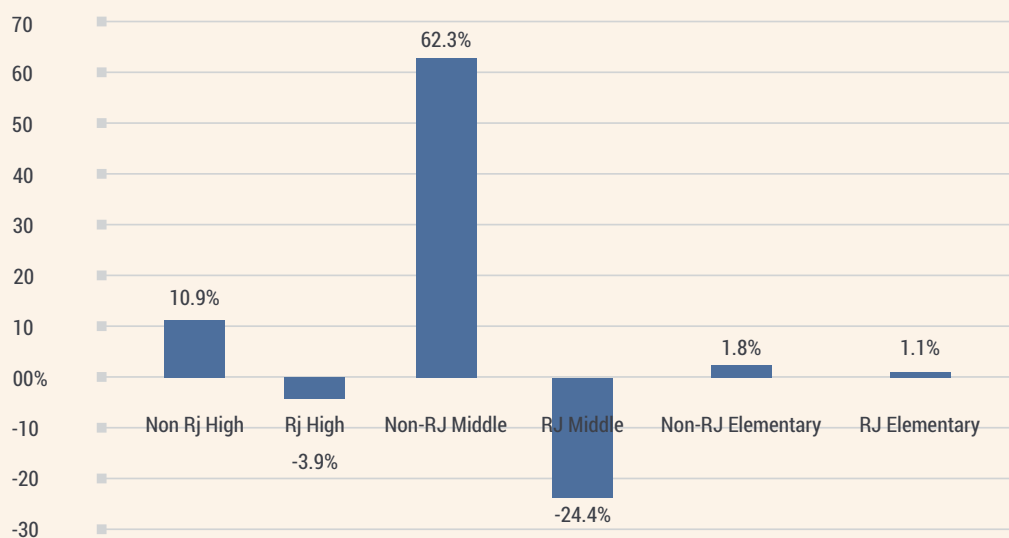


School-level Academic Outcomes

Differences in Chronic Absence in RJ vs. Non-RJ Schools

- From 2010 to 2013, the biggest decline was seen for RJ middle schools of 24.4%, compared to a staggering increase of 62.3% in chronic absence in middle schools without RJ ($p < 0.000$).
- However, the relative rate for RJ middle schools is still higher than the rate for non-RJ middle schools.
- On average, about 9-18% of students in OUSD schools were chronically absent each year. In 2011-12, % chronic absence was the highest among RJ middle schools (17.6%), and lowest among Non-RJ middle schools (5.3%).

Figure 23: Percent Change in Chronic Absence in RJ vs. Non-RJ Schools, from 2010-2013, by School Type*



Source: OUSD Aeries Data 2011-2014 Scorecard data file.

*Schools from 6-12 and K-8 maybe included as middle schools, so use this graph data as estimates and interpret with caution, though the difference in chronic absence by RJ was significant based on t-tests.

- On average, about 9-18% of students in OUSD schools were chronically absent each year. In 2011-12, % chronic absence was the highest among RJ middle schools (17.6%), and lowest among Non-RJ middle schools (5.3%).
- However, since 2011, the percent of students who were chronically absent (i.e., % of students who were absent 10% or more of school days) decreased in RJ schools compared to non-RJ schools, for all school types. Elementary and high schools implementing RJ have had lower chronic absence rates than their counterparts in the district.

Table 10: Percent Chronically Absent Students in RJ vs. Non-RJ Schools from 2010-13 by School Type

	Chronic Absence Percent 2011-12	Chronic Absence Percent 2012-13	Chronic Absence Percent 2013-14	Year-to-Year Percent Change
Non-RJ High	13.7%	14.3%	15.2%	5.6%
RJ High	15.5%	13.1%	14.9%	-0.80%
Non-RJ Middle	5.3%	6.7%	8.6%	27.20%
RJ Middle	17.6%	12.1%	13.3%	-10.70%
Non-RJ Elementary	11.4%	12.0%	11.6%	0.80%
RJ Elementary	9.2%	9.6%	9.3%	0.80%

Source: OUSD Aeries Data 2011-2014 Scorecard data file.

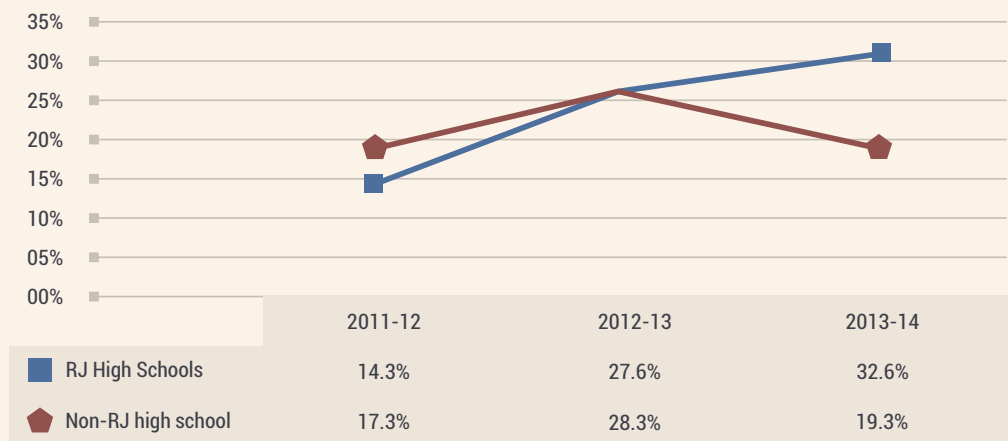
- Currently, non-RJ high schools have the highest rates (15.2%) of chronic absence of all school types, and RJ middle schools are still significantly higher than non-RJ middle schools (13.3% vs. 8.6%, $p < 0.05$). Note, since schools with higher suspension rates were selected for RJ participation, this might explain why RJ high and middle schools had higher chronic absence, which is highly correlated with suspensions (data not shown), at baseline or over time; those are higher-risk schools that need the RJ intervention.

School-level Reading levels in RJ vs. Non-RJ Schools

- Proficient Reading levels, as measured by % of students reading at or above the SRI (Scholastic Reading Inventory) in Grade 9, also increased steadily in high schools implementing RJ, doubling from 14% in 2011-12 to 33% in 2013-14.
- Whereas for high schools without RJ, reading levels increased in one year, then declined significantly down to 19%, 1.5 times less than RJ high schools.
- Whereas district-wide reading levels in grade 9 have declined slightly from 2011 to 2014, high schools with RJ had a substantial change in reading levels of 128% increase, compared to 11% increase in non-RJ high schools.

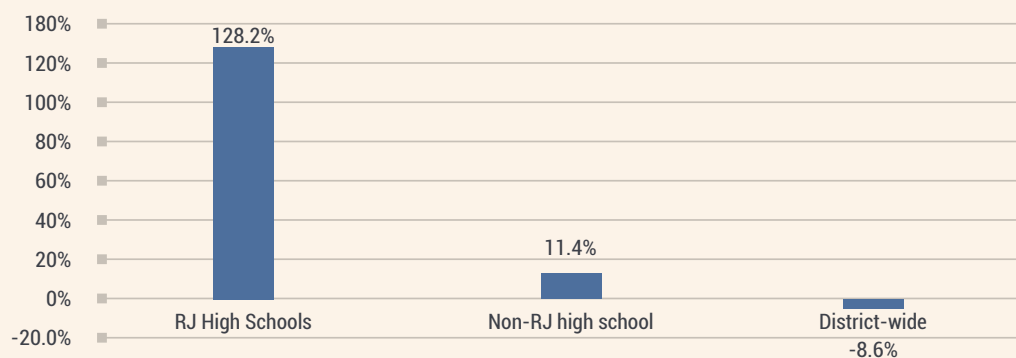


Figure 24: Grade 9 Reading Levels in RJ vs. Non-RJ public schools over time, 2011-2014



Source: Aeries Scorecard Datafile.

Figure 25: Percent Change in SRI-Grade 9 Reading Levels in RJ versus Non-RJ Public Schools, from 2011-2014



Source: Aeries data 2010-2013;

Note, data is only for public schools. Ralph Bunche, Community Day School and some non-traditional high schools are missing.

Graduation Rates for RJ versus non-RJ Schools from 2010 to 2013

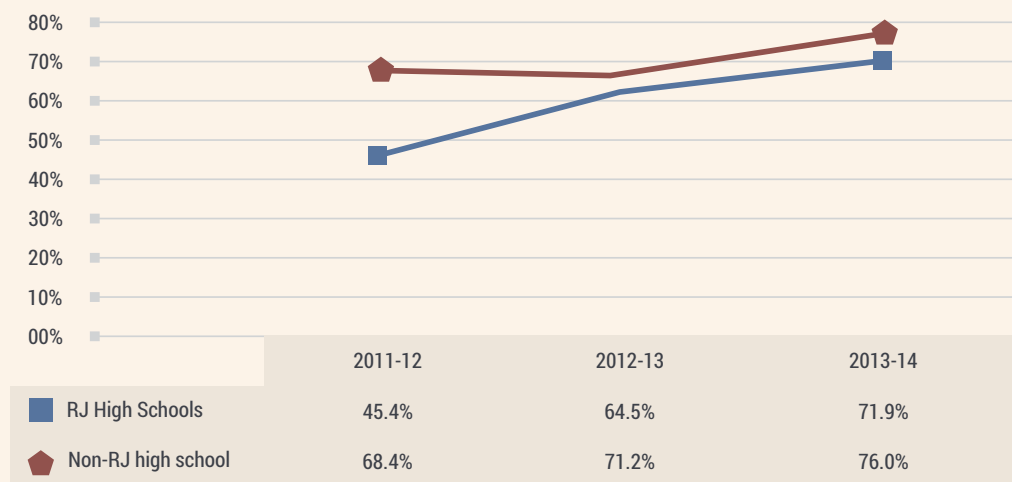


"the proof that it works is that I've been working with valedictorians for the past couple of years, and these cats that came from [where] they were making all the F's, and they all had in common is that they were kicked out of school 4-5 times in the past...it [RJ] works!"

- RJ Coordinator

Four-year graduation rates in RJ schools increased significantly more than Non-RJ schools (public schools only) in the past 3 years post-RJ intervention-- a cumulative increase of 60% for RJ schools, compared to 7% for Non-RJ schools.

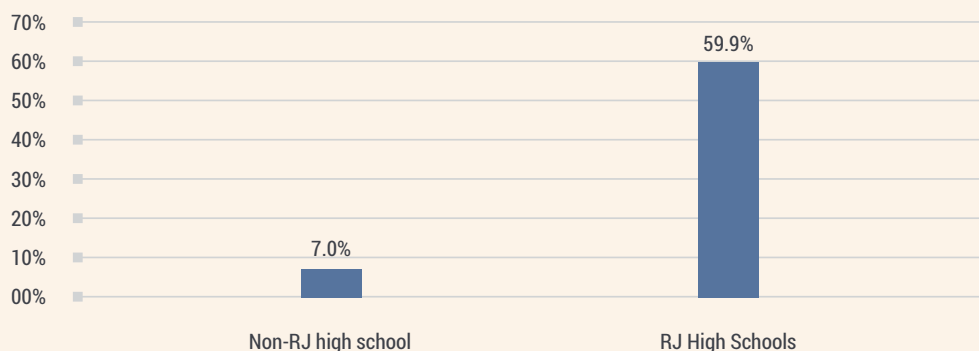
Figure 26: Graduation Rates for OUSD RJ versus Non-RJ Schools over time, 2010-2013



Source: Aeries Scorecard Datafile, OUSD.

- The four year graduation rates for RJ public high schools increased significantly more than for Non-RJ high schools in the past 3 years, from 45% in 2010-11 to 72% in 2012-13, compared to 68% to 76% for comparable non-RJ high schools.

Figure 27: % Cumulative Change in 4-year Graduation Rates, RJ vs Non-RJ High Schools 2010-2013



Source: Aeries Scorecard Datafile, OUSD.

Drop-out Rates for RJ versus Non-RJ Schools from 2010 to 2013

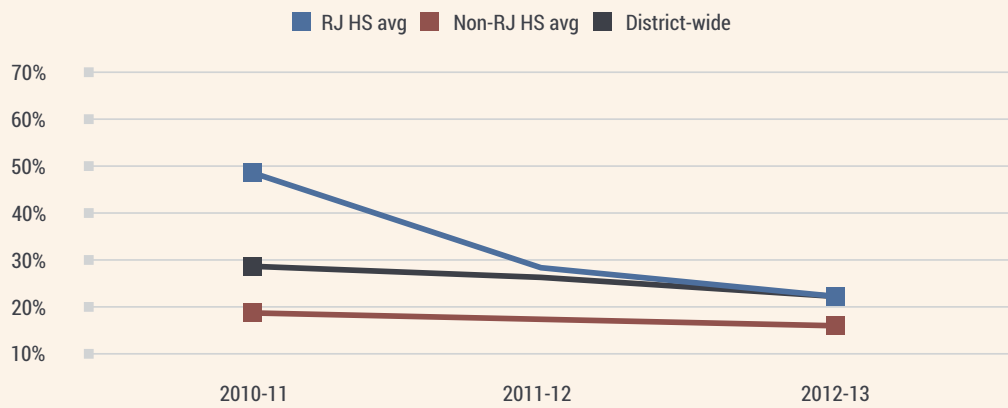
- In 2010-11 at baseline, about 30% of OUSD high school students dropped out during the four-year high school. For RJ schools, the dropout rate was almost 50%, compared to 20% for non-RJ high schools.



"Somehow i can bring in a buffer saying that we care about you.. to correct the injustices.. we are losing generations of black men..because they are getting kicked out of school..they are ending up on streets when they should be in school..there's a whole bucket of why [use RJ]..and to have it at school made a lot of sense to me..because it's a place that brings together a lot of children."

- RJ Coordinator, FocusGroup

Figure 28: Percent Dropout for RJ versus Non-RJ High Schools from 2011-13

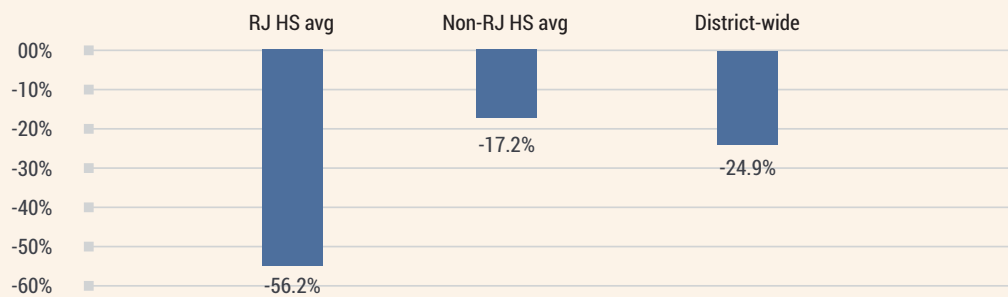


Source: Aeries Scorecard Datafile, OUSD.

- There has been a significant decline in dropout rate for high schools implementing RJ (i.e., either Peer RJ or WSRJ, emerging or developing), compared to schools without RJ, 56% vs. 17% ($p < 0.05$).

Four year dropout rate for high schools with RJ has declined significantly in past 3 years, compared to schools without RJ.

Figure 29: % Cumulative Change in Four-year Drop out rates for RJ vs. Non-RJ schools over time, 2010-2013



Source: Aeries Scorecard datafile, OUSD.

Multi-level Models - Preliminary Impact Analyses

The above comparisons, which are unadjusted descriptives, based partly on matched dataset, suggest that there are significant differences in rates and changes in suspensions, Black/White discipline gap, and academic outcomes (reading levels, chronic truancy, reading levels, dropout rates, and graduate rates) for schools that are implementing Whole School RJ or Peer RJ program, compared to the schools without RJ program over the last 3 years.

Whether these differences in school-level outcomes are a result of the RJ program implementation, above and beyond any other individual or school-level factors or covariates, we need to further explore. Hence, next, we conduct a set of advanced statistical analyses including multi-level regressions models to account for school-level and student-level differences⁵⁴. Note, classroom-level or teacher-level data is not included at this point, partly due to limited reliable data. Also, note, this is exploratory analyses at this point that will be further confirmed and expanded in a supplement to the report.

Table 11: Sample Characteristics of RJ Intervention vs. Comparison Schools.

School-level Indicator	RJ High Implementation schools (Developing)	RJ Emerging (tier2)	No RJ Control Schools (Comparison 1)	All Schools (Comparison 2)
Total Sample	4420	6760	6470	17650
% African American (N)	31.5% (1,392)	39.5% (2,671)	31.3% (2,028)	34.5% (6,091)
% of Students Eligible for Free and Reduced Lunches (School-level average)	77.5 (51.2-98.5)	83.7 (61.6-96.3)	73.3 (40.6-97.5)	78.3 (40.6-98.5)
% Suspended once or more	22.4	31.6	33.7	30.1
Attendance Average (range)	96% (29-100)	96% (29-100)	96% (36-100)	96% (29-100)
Suspension Rate (number of days suspended /100 students)	12 (0-100)	27 (0-120)	25 (0-15)	22 (0-15)

Source: Matched RJ Participant- Aeries dataset.

Table 12: % African American vs. White students suspended by RJ Intervention vs. Comparison Sites, over time.

by year		Total	Developing	Emerging	Control	Difference between groups
2011-12	% African American students suspended	37.4	28.2	40.5	39.7%	F=48.2, p=0.000
	% White Students suspended	27.3	15.6	32.1	33.4	
	total	30.1	22.4	31.6	33.7	
2012-13	% African American students suspended	29.6	23.6	31.9	30.8	F=89.8, p=0.00
	% White Students suspended	16.7	9.2	21.4	19.9	
	total	22.3	17.5	23.9	24	
2013-14	% African American students suspended	16.1	11.6	20.8	13	F=89.8, p=0.00
	% White Students suspended	2.5	2.4	4.3	2	
	total	8.9	6.2	12.3	7	

- Based on matched school-level data with, there is a significant difference between developing RJ schools and control schools; but not emerging schools and control schools. For instance, in 2011-12, 28% of African American students in developing RJ schools (6th-12 graders only) were suspended, compared to 40% of African American students in emerging or control schools (with no RJ).
- By 2013-14, there had been a significant reduction in % of African American students suspended within RJ school sites, a trend observed district wide. The discipline gap between Black/White students had closed, down from 12.6 to 9.2; and was similar to the percent suspended within control schools. The Black/White discipline gap in control schools increased over time.
- Duration of suspension varied by treatment vs. control group as well.
- a At baseline, students were suspended for an average of 57 days in the control schools, and for 24 days in RJ high implementation or developing schools, 59 days in emerging schools, and 49 days in all schools (6-12th grades).
- b The Number of days suspended also decreased significantly over time for all schools, except for RJ high implementation schools which stayed about 21 days. Emerging schools had the highest number of days students were suspended in 2013-14 at 54 days.

Multi-level Regression Models, *using matched data and accounting for potential confounders*

Did schools with tier 1 school-wide RJ intervention (high implementation) have reduced average number of suspensions overall over time, compared to non-RJ schools, even after controlling for significant student and school-level confounders.

- RJ high implementation status (or not) was significantly associated with average number of suspensions received per student in school. β
 - Null model: intercept 10.6, β txt=-7.0, Standard error SE=0.15, p=0.00
 - Adjusted model 2 (for race and school type): intercept 15.2, β =-6.3, SE=0.2, p=0.00), school type remains significant – lower for middle schools
 - Fully adjusted: intercept =-139.4, β txt=-13.4, SE=0.5, p=.000)
 - In treatment schools, the average student was suspended 10 times per year. In control schools with no RJ, that increased by 7 (β =0.07, 0.067-.73). After controlling for school type and race, suspensions in high RJ schools were 15 on average, increased by 6 in control schools (β =6.3 (5.9-6.8). Even after controlling for school type, individual race, gender, year, mean SES at school level (% students on average eligible for free and reduced lunches), and baseline suspensions, there was a significant association between treatment (high implementation – developing schools), compared to control (no RJ) schools (β =6.3, p=0.00)

Were the WSRJ treatment effects more beneficial for African American students vs. White students, controlling for confounders (school type, SES, gender, year, baseline suspensions)?

- Next, we tested whether there was a significant difference in effect of the treatment differentially for African American vs. White students. For instance, was the treatment more effective for African American students. We found that even after controlling for significant individual student-level covariates, and school-level covariates, as noted above, the treatment effect remained significant, it was significantly associated with outcome ($\beta = 13.5$, $SE = 0.5$, $p = 0.000$).
- There was a significant interaction between being Black and being in the RJ developing schools, suggesting Black/White students benefit more from being in the treatment schools than their counterparts ($\beta = -0.36$, $SE = 0.58$, $p = 0.00$).
- There was also a significant interaction between time and race/ethnicity – hence, that Black students had significantly lower rates of suspensions over time ($\beta = -7.9$, $p = 0.000$ at year 1, $\beta = -3.47$, ($SE = 0.7$), $p = 0.00$ at year 2).

CONCLUSION



Schools and school districts implementing restorative practices should not expect an easy road; instead, they should expect significant, and sometimes surprising, challenges. The implementation of institutional reforms will be fraught with a range and depth of emotions"

– Morrison, 2007a, pg. 163⁷⁰

Systems change is not easy, particularly in school systems fraught with significant challenges at multiple levels, including limited resources and high-risk students of color living and learning in inequitable conditions at home, school and in their community. Schools adopting any kind of reform face numerous challenges including resistance, fear of failure, changing roles, scaling-up too rapidly, competing agendas, and battles over resources.^{55,56} Yet despite similar hurdles, OUSD has successfully launched district-wide implementation of WSRJ and Peer RJ in a manner consistent with theories of change^{57,58,59}. Over the past 10 years, Oakland Unified School District, one of the largest districts in the state serving over 37,000 students in public schools per year, with over 30% African American students, has implemented restorative practices in over 1/4 of its schools. Kudos to the district for its strong commitment and persistence to abide by principles of restoration, safety and equity.

There has been an impressive growth across OUSD in the number of schools adopting specific tiered RJ practices, whether WSRJ and Peer RJ. Though initiated almost 10 years ago, WSRJ and Peer RJ have taken hold in the past 3 years, since the Board of Education passed the Restorative Justice Resolution in 2010 (see Appendix). The RJ Program Manager, 2 RJ Specialists, recently hired RJ Coordinators, and the growing number of Peer RJ student leaders have been an instrumental part of ensuring that growth. Similarly, there has been considerable capacity building of staff/teachers/principals/and students in RJ practices. The district has well-exceeded its set targets to train staff and students in specific RJ practices such as harm/conflict circles, community circles, and conferences; though there is variation in capacity built by school site and staff type. Consistent with other research conducted in restorative justice is extremely well received by many of the student participants and select staff who have become empowered and are essentially serving as change agents in their schools. The role students play in implementation should not be underestimated; as partly explored in this evaluation, the students have been instrumental in the success of the program. Despite the varying degrees of WSRJ implementation, there has been considerable positive change observed at student and school-levels. Overall, the key findings of this report are consistent with the research literature on RJ in schools showing that RJ decreases problem behavior, improves school climate, and increases student achievement.⁶⁰

- There has been a considerable reduction in suspensions among specific RJ schools compared to non-RJ school sites. The difference remains even after controlling for select individual student-level socio- demographics, such as race, gender, suspension rate at baseline, and school level factors such as school type and SES. Based on our exploratory multi-level modeling analyses, there was significant interaction with race, such that African American students benefited more in RJ schools vs in non-RJ schools (e.g., had lower number of suspensions on average). Several RJ schools had reduction in suspension rate by over 50% in 3 years, reaching program objective.
- The most significant decline has been for African American students suspended for disruption/willful defiance, down from 1,050 to 630, a decrease of 40% or 420 fewer suspensions in only one year. The African American suspension rate for disruption/willful defiance also declined significantly by 37% from 7.4 to 4.7 within that year.
- In 2011-12, the Black/White discipline gap was 25 and it dropped down to 19 in one year district-wide. Significant progress has been made to close the discipline gap in the past 3 years, suggesting that OUSD is on the right track – yet there is still a long ways to go to close the discipline gap between African American and White students.
- The percent of WSRJ student participants who were suspended over time dropped by half, from 34% in 2011-12 to 14% in years 2 and 3. The rate of change is more significant than for non-RJ students. For the RJ participants, the Black/white discipline gap decreased significantly in the last 3 years, from -15.0 in 2011-12 to -14.4% to -10.1% in 2013-14. For non-RJ participants, the black/white discipline gap stayed about the same.

- Over 60% of the staff reported that implementation of restorative practices have helped to reduce suspensions at the school.
- The RJ Implementation Survey also supported this finding, revealing that 90% of teachers (who make majority of the disciplinary referrals) report that RJ practices are helpful or very helpful in managing difficult student behavior in the classroom. Almost 47% of staff/teachers reported that RJ helped reduce office referrals, and 53% reported that it helped reduce disciplinary referrals for African American students. This reduction in referrals and subsequent suspensions and paralleled increase in RJ participants, e.g., over 6,000 students in community circles, suggests that perhaps some of the disciplinary referrals have been deterred to the RJ program, which is serving effectively serving as an alternative to suspension.
- Based on Peer RJ data, 76% of the harms or conflicts were successfully resolved using RJ circles and conversations; 22% remain open; and only 2% unresolved or referred to admin. This data suggests that the program is successfully reducing conflicts and harms that may have led to more serious fighting or violence among student participants.
- Schools with RJ had significantly better academic outcomes and greater improvements over time, compared to their counterparts. For instance, reading levels in RJ high schools increased by 128% compared to 11% over past 3 years in non-RJ schools. Chronic absenteeism dropped by 24% in RJ middle schools compared to an increase of 62% in non-RJ middle schools. Four-year graduation rates increased by 60% for RJ schools, compared to 7% for Non-RJ schools, and high school dropout rates decreased by 56% compared to 17% in RJ vs. non-RJ high schools. Though not controlling for inclusion or implementation of other OUSD strategies at these schools that may be influencing academic outcomes, these exploratory analyses clearly suggest that schools with restorative programming, values, staffing and practices have significantly greater increase in student achievement over time.
- Qualitative data suggests that Peer RJ participants have increased empathy, understanding for peers, and increased sense of accountability and agency. This suggests that RJ is not only reducing conflict and harm, but is also aligned with the theories of positive youth development and resilience. Restorative practices have the potential power to enhance internal developmental assets for students. Resilience researchers have long documented meeting the basic developmental needs of all youth, but in particular for the highest risk students, as being fundamental for healthy development and learning.⁶¹
- The trainings/capacity built varied by staff type and schools. Parents were the least likely to have been trained (10%), and were the least familiar with restorative practices: Many asked for additional training opportunities and coaching.
- There is some evidence that students participating in RJ programs vs. those who are not are not only reducing harm and conflict, but also building community and caring relationships with their peers, resulting in feeling a greater sense of connectedness at school. In addition, some alluded to resolving conflicts at home and to building caring relationships with their teachers, other staff/adults, and parents. The life skills learned through RJ trainings and experiences thus are sustained and used in numerous social spheres of their lives, benefiting the larger community.
- These changes are consistent with the literature on what African American students need to succeed in school. Tosolt (2010) reported that particularly for African American students, a caring school environment had a homelike atmosphere, "with teachers and administrators interacting with students in relationships like the extended family"^{62,63}. Ladson-Billings (1994) explains that the importance of building an extended family is connected to African cultural norms such as ubuntu^{64,65}, that de-emphasize individual competition and instead emphasize the congruence between self and others. African American students expressed a desire to be treated with respect and care and to be taught in ways that reflected high expectations and discipline. Tosolt also found that girls were more likely to identify as caring those behaviors which focused on academics, such as having high expectations, while boys valued more interpersonal caring behaviors, demonstrated by teachers who took a personal interest in knowing their students⁶² – these findings mimic what we found during the focus groups. This is of particular importance in understanding the potential causes of misbehavior or defiance among African American male students, as it is possible that a lack of interpersonal caring behaviors from teachers and other adults in schools contributes to rebellion, defiance, and other disrespectful behaviors⁶⁸.

- Major challenges for school-wide RJ implementation included: limited time, limited trainings and coaching, buy-in, information sharing and communication, unclear discipline policies and protocols for serious offenses, student attitudes or misuse of RJ and inconsistency in application.
- The students' perceptions suggesting biased teacher disciplinary practices as noted by the Da Town researchers and supported by others in the literature on school discipline^{66,67,68} should be further investigated. This suggests using policy analysis and creative observation tools perhaps to dis-integrate disciplinary policies and practices used by a random sample of teachers, school staff towards students of color, vs. white students and in different situations. Key stakeholders then should be engaged to figure out how best to deal with such discriminatory teacher/principal attitudes, behaviors and policies, if these exist.
- Finally, we saw examples of students being empowered, with enhanced leadership skills and building caring trusting relationships. Traditional change theories regarding school improvement tend to overlook the important role of students as change agents^{57,58,59}. Yet research on antiracism clearly illustrates the essential role students play in transforming school culture – an area to further explore⁶⁹.



RECOMMENDATIONS



"Interventions are rarely delivered as planned...Any theory and causal factors that are incorporated into the planning process exist only in the form and to the extent to which they are both delivered and received".

-Elias et al., 2003, p. 310 as cited in Brown, 2014^{2,31}

OUSD has done a remarkable job of implementing restorative practices in the past 10 years, as an alternative strategy to suspending students for minor behavioral infractions. Particularly in the last 3 years, there has been substantial growth in number of schools implementing RJ, staffing, capacity, and subsequent effect over time on reducing suspensions particularly for African American students, closing the discipline gap, and improving academic outcomes (reading levels, dropout rates, graduation rates) for schools and students participating in RJ vs not. This report presented data on select outcomes of RJ intervention, and its differential effect by race, compared to a sample of schools with no-RJ and district-wide averages.

School-wide implementation takes time, and researchers generally agree that the transformation process takes 3 to 5 years^{70,71,72}. It takes considerable individual and collective time and effort and resources to scale-up and embed restorative approaches across various school contexts/cultures and barriers^{73,74}. RJ must be customized to each school, which requires thought, personnel, time, training, and a values shift to balance the interests of everyone involved, including students, teachers, community members, parents, and school officials.⁷⁵ Based on our understanding of the RJ processes and outcomes observed to date, we share the following recommendations for practice/program improvement geared towards key stakeholders at the district and schools implementing RJ, and separately a set of research recommendations to build on this preliminary outcome analyses. We hope the following recommendations are helpful to enhance integrity of implementation to RJ principles and practices and support expansion district-wide.

Practice Recommendations

- 1) Build a greater infrastructure at the district and school levels that would support learning and networking opportunities where teachers can share best practices, outcomes, and resources across and within schools, specifically including the following. Effective change efforts ensure that staff/faculty have opportunities to reflect and collaborate, build shared capacity, learn in context, and communicate the availability of resources.⁷⁷
 - Develop more structure, protocols and documentation of best practices.
 - Develop and monitor use of a clear discipline policy and protocols at the schools.
 - Develop school-level implementation plans that include communication and information sharing procedures, roles and responsibilities and greater teacher buy-in and ownership of RJ.
 - Secure needed resources to ensure sustainability of RJ.
- 2) Invest to expand trainings and coaching to include additional teachers, younger students, and parents., particularly for Tier 1 community building in the classroom. Leverage the existing RJ capacity by empowering a core team of expert staff/students to train the trainers, their peers. Continue to ensure that staff are trained on pragmatic aspects of implementation and that they possess the skills and ability to track and use data, manage difficult and diverse situations, and other system level processes.⁷⁶
- 3) Invest in efforts to involve more parents; at the very least, familiarize them with the RJ program and tell them how they can participate in or support the program. Hold informational meetings in community centers and churches to increase community support for the students, schools, and the program overall. RJ Coordinators could train a parent group in the process and support them in using it to discuss topics important to them and the school community including sensitive topics such as race.
- 4) Capitalize on the enormous potential the students have for change. Their overwhelming support and capacity for RJ shows how much they want to create a school, system, and a community that is better than what they are currently experiencing. Invest in youth; continue to train them as leaders; systematically allow their voices to be heard so that they may influence policy and programmatic decisions.

- 6) Change reputation of RJ program from getting out of classroom or as an alternative to suspension to a more meaningful opportunity for engagement and achievement.
- 7) Situate RJ in Schools in the larger context of social justice and equity by showing how restorative processes, such as community-building circles, can be used to address other issues of inequity, including violence, poverty, housing, economic development, environmental protection, and access to healthy and affordable food. Build on the district's commitment to community schools by integrating restorative practices across all schools, particularly lower-income minority-majority schools that disproportionately serve students of color.
- 8) Emphasize RJ as a philosophy and set of values that underlies and complements all behavioral programs and practices, in addition to being a disciplinary alternative, it supports positive youth development and school climate.

Research Recommendations

- 1) Capitalize on the existing matched student- and school-level data to further conduct advanced impact analyses using longitudinal multi-level regression models and propensity score matching, to explore impact of RJ intervention on a number of academic and school climate outcomes, differentially for African American students, and controlling for select confounders. This would provide us with unbiased estimates of impact of RJ.
- 2) Further explore the impact of RJ participation on select school climate outcomes as well as developmental assets (e.g., empathy), guided by theoretical, practical and empirical evidence to date, using California Healthy Kids and School Climate Surveys.
- 3) Use more rigorous evaluation design, such as quasi-experimental study to examine impact of restorative justice tiered program and specific practices on specific student outcomes, using a comparison group and repeat measurements.
- 4) Streamline the data tracking system to include both WSRJ and Peer RJ that measures student-level participation at tiered levels, particularly being cognizant of parents' involvement, intermediate outcomes such as empathy, leadership skills, and classroom observations.
- 5) In this report, we did not yet explore the nuances of RJ implementation specifically for African American students, or by school type, gender etc., accounting for cultural differences and perhaps equity as an underlying framework; case studies are needed to further examine what's working or not in specific schools and situations, e.g., how teacher and principal disciplinary attitudes and practices may vary or be racially biased for African American students vs. White students; as well as special needs, or Native American or Latino students, and how restorative practices serve as an alternative in specific situations.
- 6) In light of the school-to-prison pipeline, it is critical to have more evidence of how well RJ tier 3 practices are working to ensure safe and successful re-integration of JJC offenders. Inquire, and obtain data from Alameda County's Juvenile Justice System, and match with educational data on student participants.

In sum, evidence in the report suggests that restorative practices in Oakland schools, if implemented with integrity, have the potential to positively impact student behavior and build positive developmental outcomes for African American students, at risk for being suspended for minor misbehaviors, as well as improve school suspensions, academic outcomes and possibly school climate. Whether these differences hold after adjusting for confounders needs to be further confirmed, within the context of other programs and confounds of disciplinary practices. The results are promising. It is imperative that the district and feds continue to support, strategically expand and sustain a district-wide multi-level restorative strategy as a fair and effective alternative to suspensions. It would be one of the most upstream effective way to curb the school-to-prison-pipeline.

METHODOLOGY

For the purposes of this report to be primarily prepared for the Office of Civil Rights in a timely manner, we capitalized on existing secondary data from multiple sources. This report is part of the program evaluation that is underway, though not a comprehensive evaluation report of the program due to time constraints. It is partly informed by the original evaluation design for WSRJ and includes information about Peer RJ within the context of the current implementation plan. Evaluation questions and select analysis presented were informed by the evaluation design incorporating what district wants to know, along with the requirements specified in the OCR Agreement with OUSD (Ref). Data was analyzed to answer key questions related to both process including implementation fidelity and impact, including how RJ practices could reduce racial disparities in discipline and improve academic outcomes. We used a combination of qualitative and quantitative data from multiple sources. Input from key stakeholders including students, teachers, RJ Coordinators, Principals, Assistant Principals, Program Manager was sought in the form of 3 focus groups, RJ implementation survey, 5 one-on-one semi-structured interviews, and informal discussions over the past year. The data collection activities to date were limited due to limited funding and to lessen the burden of extraneous data collection, yet highly informative and useful as first steps towards expanding future data collection activities.

Overall design and evaluation questions

We assessed the program's fidelity to implementation, per goals and objectives set in the logic model, and its impact on student and school-level outcomes using multiple datasets. We assessed individual participant and school-level changes as a result of RJ implementation over time, from 2011-2014. Data for this report were collected from the Online RJ Implementation Survey, focus groups with middle and high school students, and RJ coordinators/adults, and interviews with select staff and students. We considered both developing (highest level of implementation observed) and emerging (early implementation) RJ programs. The following evaluation questions guided our overall analyses, with specific hypotheses.

- How well is the Restorative Justice Program (WSRJ and Peer RJ) being implemented in schools? What's working well or not? Who is participating and what are their experiences like?
- How effective is the OUSD Restorative Justice Program in reducing conflicts, suspensions, and improving student behavior at the student- and school-levels?
- How effective is the OUSD RJ program in improving academic outcomes and building school community?

The primary data sources used for this report included

1) FOCUS GROUPS WITH MIDDLE SCHOOL AND HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

In June 2013, two focus groups were conducted, with students who had been involved with restorative justice in some capacity, that is person harmed or did the harm, Peer RJ coordinator/ leader, facilitator, participant in a circle etc. First was conducted at Ralph Bunche middle school with 22 middle schoolers, and the second one at Met West high school with 10 high schoolers, for about 2 hours total each. The participants were encouraged to be honest and share examples as much as possible. Food and transportation and stipends were provided. For the middle school focus group, the RJ coordinator, Yari Sandel was present which really helped in students being more forthcoming. For the high school group, to ensure safe space for the students, the RJ coordinator and teacher assisted in setting the stage but were not present during the focus group; it was difficult to get all students to speak up and share their voices. The focus groups were audio-taped/recorded, with youth permission, to ensure accuracy and completeness of information, and transcribed later.

2) FOCUS GROUP WITH ADULT STAKEHOLDERS

Input from key stakeholders was first obtained in the form of a focus group, where all RJ coordinators, principal/assistant principals, teachers and other adults were invited to participate. We had a room full of 18 participants, on the larger side, but the recording and facilitation was conducted in a way to allow each one to share any

additional thoughts. We felt the participants overall were very forthcoming with their responses and seem to share deep commitment and values towards restorative practices.

3) ONLINE RESTORATIVE PRACTICES IMPLEMENTATION SURVEY

In June 2014, a 20-item survey was developed and administered via survey monkey to all RJ stakeholders including teachers, parents, RJ coordinators, principals, assistant principals, and other school staff (e.g., psychologists, health center staff) who are responsible for or participate in RJ implementation at the school level. Our primary aim was to gauge at implementation experiences and lessons learned at the school-level, hence, no district staff took the survey. We also did not administer the survey to youth, as it was designed for an adult audience. A separate student survey is currently being designed to capture student experiences and perceived impacts, partly informed by the focus groups with students. We conducted snowball sampling to increase sample size and ensure representation from all 24 schools. The survey was piloted with 5 staff and edited accordingly. The implementation survey measured the following indicator areas: the extent and ease of use and experiences with RJ, training/capacity building, types of RJ practices, perceived impact on various student, teacher, and school-level outcomes, including social-emotional, behavioral and school climate related outcomes such as building caring relationships with staff-students and sustainability. A few open-ended questions were included re: what's working well or not, lessons learned and areas for improvement. The survey took about 10 minutes or less to complete. Over the course of one month, the survey was sent out twice two weeks apart. About 355 adults completed the survey, of whom 27-35 skipped most of the items so were deleted from analysis; hence, sample size per question varied.

4) ONE-ON-ONE INTERVIEWS WITH STUDENT AND SCHOOL STAFF

To capture recent progress and implementation particularly around peer RJ, 5 interviews were conducted with high schoolers who have served as Peer RJ leaders or facilitators. Semi-structured interviews for about 30 minutes each were conducted by phone, recorded and transcribed. Other local reports including Claremont Data Report⁷⁸, Da Town Researchers focus group findings⁷⁹, Castlemont Process Evaluation Report³⁰, UCLA Civil Rights Reports⁸⁰, and others were obtained and reviewed.

5) CASE STUDY AND SUCCESS STORY TEMPLATES

We also developed a standardized template to be used by RJ Coordinators randomly to document success stories subjectively defined, to provide compelling evidence of what's working in specific situations, for specific schools.

Secondary Data Sources

1) MATCHED PEER RJ AND WSRJ PARTICIPANT DATA TO AERIES

Peer RJ program coordinators have been systematically collecting participant-level data using a google spreadsheet/database for the past school-year, starting in August 2013. It was developed by Emilio x, and piloted in 2 schools, then expanded to the rest of 6 Peer RJ sites in January 2014. Then for WSRJ, we were able to obtain data through Cityspan for 2 schools (see details below), that were matched to district's student information system, Aeries for the last 3 years.

Though not analyzed extensively for the purposes of this report, matched nested student-level data within the context of schools, provides rich information about program activities/ services/ practices that was then linked to student-level and school-level demographics, suspensions, chronic truancy, academic outcomes, and school climate data sources.

2) CITYSPAN DATA

Student-level data for over 700 students participating in 2 WSRJ schools was obtained, namely Ralph Bunche Middle School and West Oakland Middle School, which are also part of the City of Oakland RJOY program, funded by Oakland Fund for Children and Youth and Measure Y, hence more extensive information is collected (and available to us for WSRJ evaluation). Though, only retrospective information was available for select schools, thus not representative of all WSRJ sites, short of having a more extensive participant-level data collection system it provided an important information about the WSRJ program. Accessed at www.youthservices.net.

Additionally, all of Peer RJ student-level and program level data including information on trainings, attendance, participants served, types of practices projected and actual was made obtained.

3) OUSD AERIES STUDENT INFORMATION SYSTEM⁸¹

Oakland Unified School District Research and Evaluation Unit were able to match RJ participant level data with their student information system, AERIES for the last 3 years, 2011-12, 2012-13, and 2013-14. It had student-level information about student demographics (date of birth, grade, race, % free and reduced lunches), school-type, number of out-of-school suspensions, # days suspended, and select academic outcomes (e.g., SRI Reading levels, Attendance, Grade Point Average, Dropout rates). They were able to match 800+ 'treatment' students, and provided de-identified data for all 6-12th graders in the past 3 years at OUSD, to be able to obtain matched comparison samples for our analysis. United for Success and Edna Brewer tags for RJ participant was provided but was inconsistent with participant level data, and since it is not collected consistently and reliably through WSRJ sites, we chose treatment status based on participant level data. The number of "white" students is inflated by the inclusion of Arab students who are listed as "white" by the state and in Aeries.

Additional school-level data files, such as the scorecard were provided for this analysis.

Note, disciplinary referrals information was not available at this time due to issues of limited reliability and validity.

4) SCHOOL-LEVEL EXPULSIONS AND SUSPENSION DATA 2011-12, 2012-13, CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Student discipline public use flat data file for 2011-12 and 2012-13 were downloaded from <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ds/sd/sd/filesesd.asp>. It included information about expulsion, in-school suspension and out-of-school suspension by ethnicity at the school and district levels.

5) CIVIL RIGHTS DATA COLLECTION (CRDC) 2011-12, US DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

The Civil Rights Data Collection (CRDC) from 2011-12 was downloaded from <http://ocrdata.ed.gov/> to better understand baseline disciplinary actions in OUSD for RJ vs. Non-RJ schools. CRDC is a biennial (i.e., every other school year) survey required by the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights (OCR). We used data from the 2009-10 and 2011-12 school years; 2013-14 data are not yet publicly available.

6) CALIFORNIA HEALTHY KIDS SURVEY (CHKS)

The California Healthy Kids Survey (CHKS) is the largest statewide survey of resiliency, protective factors, and risk behaviors in the nation, managed by WestEd and funded by CDE. Data was obtained for this report for the last 3 years, 2011-12, 2012-13 and 2013-14, and cleaned by OUSD Research and Data Unit.

7) CALIFORNIA SCHOOL CLIMATE SURVEY (CSCS)

Since 2004, all local education agencies in California are required to administer the CSCS at least once every two years as part of compliance with No Child Left Behind. Districts have also been asked to support the state's efforts to close the racial/ethnic achievement gap and engage all students in learning, managed by WestEd. Data was obtained for this report for the last 3 years, 2011-12, 2012-13 and 2013-14, and cleaned by OUSD Research and Data Unit.

Note, analyses from the last 2 datasets is not presented in this report, due mainly to time constraints. It is planned to be shared in the future as a supplement to this report.

For the RJ evaluation, inclusive of analysis conducted for this report, a research application was submitted to OUSD Assessment and Data Unit, and approved in June 2014. Since this is not a research study, it was exempt from human subjects' approval. Though, strict guidelines and data collection, management and reporting procedures were followed to ensure confidentiality of all subjects, including de-identifying all student-level data. Additional methodological details are available upon request from Data in Action.

Sample

This provides some description of how the final analytic sample was calculated; though the final sample size varied depending on missing values for key indicators and schools included in the comparison groups etc. In general, Aeries data was matched for Peer RJ and WSRJ (from 2 schools) students, with complete date of birth, grade and school match, and comparable district-wide de-identified data was provided for matching for all 6th to 12th graders in Oakland public schools. Intervention was all students who attended schools with high implementation (developing) RJ programs for MLM, and developing or emerging for comparison descriptive tables. Intervention schools were selected based on the 24 schools implementing RJ. Since our sample for WSRJ was 2012-2014 (2 years), several students moved schools during this time; the school they were attending during 2013-14 school year was used. For instance, about 50 moved from high developing West Oakland MS to McClymonds HS, which is classified as an 'emerging' RJ school. For students with different exposures, their exposure in the first year of observation was used, so all of these students were classified as being exposed to developing RJ. Others who were tagged in Edna Brewer with United for Success, but not in the participant data, were tagged in the final database as participating in RJ. 10 participants were deleted because school name and demographic information was not available. School-level SES (average % of students eligible for free and reduced lunches) was added to this dataset. An implementation variable was coded as high/developing (2), low/emerging (1), and none (0). Models controlled for schooltype instead of stratifying by school type, else the sample size would drop. We kept life academy in the sample as it includes middle school grades, and excluded elementary school students/schools. Final dataset included total of 17,650 students in 33 schools excluding 2 alternative ed schools (Community Day and Gateway), 1 ES (Melrose Academy), and Barack Obama that closed. In matched school-level analyses, there were 10 developing, 12 emerging, and 11 control groups (no RJ). For detailed analyses information, please contact the primary author.

Limitations

Though informative, the analyses presented in this report had several limitations.

- 1) First of all, we did not have access to the disciplinary referrals data from OUSD, as it was considered unreliable to be used. Efforts are being made by the district to ensure referrals data is cleaned and its reliability enhanced.
- 2) Descriptive comparisons are presented comparing schools with and without RJ. These are unadjusted thus maybe biased estimates that do not account for confounders. Though some preliminary analyses using matched dataset was conducted that confirmed significance for many of the comparisons shown, and accounted for key confounders. But at this time, interpret with caution and use as estimates of effects.
- 3) A number of different datasets were used to examine suspensions and expulsions as they each provided different indicators relevant to our study; including from the Federal Office of Civil Rights, State's Suspension and expulsion data from CDE, and District's Aeries data – this may lead to slightly different estimates and rates of suspensions.
- 4) Comparing suspension and academic outcomes for schools with and without RJ, the sample size of schools included varied depending on which schools were included in the intervention or comparison groups. For most only public schools data was included, but for some, charter schools were included at this time.
- 5) Limited number of focus groups and interviews were conducted for this evaluation, mainly due to limited resources. The qualitative data would be further expanded, building on the findings in this report and specifically examining experiences and impacts on African American students.
- 6) We were not able to explore impact on school climate outcomes at this time due to time constraints.
- 7) We did not explore tier 3 activities impact, specific restorative practices impact, or separately program impact of Peer RJ vs. WSRJ. This is not explicitly a program evaluation report, specific to Peer RJ or WSRJ programs; rather presents outcome analysis to answer specific questions pertinent to OCR request.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1. RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION: RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION OF THE OAKLAND UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

RESOLUTION No. 0910-0120 Restorative Justice

WHEREAS, the Board of Education endorses the belief that “Restorative Justice Practices” among children and youth, will positively impact the District’s School Climate, Discipline Policies and Procedures; and

WHEREAS, the Safety Committee of the Board is recommending re-alignment of District resources to promote a framework of fair and equitable discipline practices which are restorative; and

WHEREAS, such framework will support and hold accountable students, teachers, administrators, parents, and district leadership to reduce racial, ethnic, and any other protected class disparities in school discipline, especially suspension and expulsion; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Education is committed to creating and supporting a culture shift in the way the district systematically responds to student discipline problems in District schools by moving toward restorative approaches, not inconsistent with law, which re-integrate rather than exclude; and

WHEREAS, notwithstanding the implementation of other school climate interventions, and violence prevention programs, and other existing strategies designed to offer alternatives to suspension/expulsion, there exists a need for reform to address the alarming rate of disproportionate minority contact; and

WHEREAS, a framework of restorative justice practices recognizes that misconduct damages relationships between the victim, offender, and the community, and promotes the opportunity to repair harm, and restore the relationships; and

WHEREAS, restorative justice practices subscribe to six key areas of practice including accountability and continuous improvement, relationships and community building, defining and teaching expectations, facilitating communication between families and schools, interventions for misconduct, and use of data and problem solving; and

WHEREAS, restorative justice practices support the use of a repertoire of strategies, or multiple strategies simultaneously, to deal with misconduct, especially for non mandatory expulsions, including administrative, restorative, and skill-building/therapeutic interventions; and

WHEREAS, schools are free to implement their own student discipline protocols consistent with Board Policy so long as those protocols are not in conflict with restorative justice practices; and

WHEREAS, restorative justice promotes teaching and learning which incorporates both academic and social-emotional development, and facilitates the development of social and human capital for students and families; and

WHEREAS, restorative justice practices increase classroom learning and teaching by minimizing misconduct and is built on consistent and effective classroom management supported by a positive school climate; and

APPENDIX 2: Whole School Restorative Justice Logic Model

**RESOLUTION
OF THE
BOARD OF EDUCATION
OF THE
OAKLAND UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT**

**RESOLUTION No. 0910-0120
Restorative Justice
Page 2**

WHEREAS, restorative discipline rests upon a continuum of age appropriate interventions that include reinforcement, support and re-teaching opportunities as well as family and community conferencing, to increase student' repertoires of effective responses; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the Board of Education hereby launches a District-wide three-year Restorative Justice Initiative to include professional development of administrators and school site staff redesign of District discipline structures and practices and promote alternatives to suspension at every school, in partnership with local law enforcement, Alameda County Probation Department, and the State Disproportionate Minority Contact Office to promote a District-wide "Culture of Caring" serving the whole child which promotes both social-emotional and intellectual development, meaningful inclusion of students, parents, teachers, administrators, and District leadership in efforts to create and sustain a safe and equitable learning environment where all students are cared for and can excel.

Passed by the following vote:

AYES:

NOES:

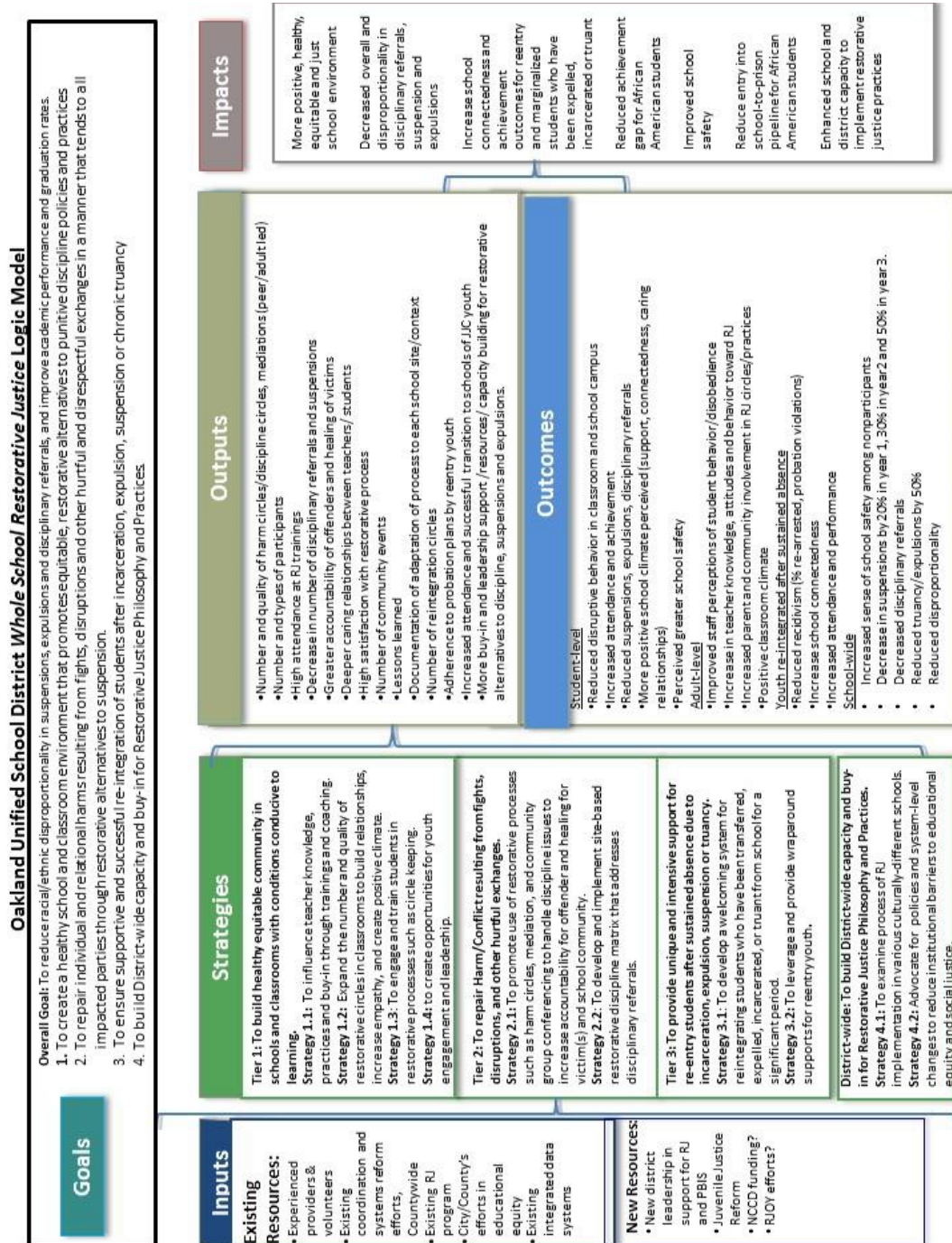
ABSTAINED:

ABSENT:

I hereby certify that the foregoing is a full, true and correct copy of a Resolution adopted, at a Regular Meeting of the Governing Board of the Oakland Unified School District held on December 16, 2009.

Edgar Rakestraw, Jr.
Secretary, Board of Education

APPENDIX 2: Whole School Restorative Justice Logic Model, Oakland Unified School District, 2012



For more information about this report or the OUSD Restorative Justice Program, please contact:

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www.ousd.k12.ca.us/restorativejustice



"I love RJ. It is equity focused and is truly a practice that promotes positive learning environments and community building in classrooms."

- Teacher



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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

September 2014



**OAKLAND UNIFIED
SCHOOL DISTRICT**
Community Schools, Thriving Students