An Evaluation Of The Restorative Justice Program At One Middle School

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AN EVALUATION OF THE RESTORATIVE JUSTICE PROGRAM
AT ONE MIDDLE SCHOOL

Edward Jerome Thompson
Educational Leadership Doctoral Program

Submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements of
Doctor of Education
in the Foster G. McGaw Graduate School

National College of Education
National Louis University
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A DISSERTATION:

AN EVALUATION OF THE RESTORATIVE JUSTICE PROGRAM

AT ONE MIDDLE SCHOOL

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Educational Leadership Doctoral Program

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Date Approved

3-3-19
This document is organized to meet the three-part dissertation requirement of the National Louis University (NLU) Educational Leadership (EDL) Doctoral Program. The National Louis Educational Leadership EdD is a professional practice degree program (Shulman et al., 2006).

For the dissertation requirement, doctoral candidates are required to plan, research, and implement three major projects, one each year, within their school or district with a focus on professional practice. The three projects are:

- Program Evaluation
- Change Leadership Plan
- Policy Advocacy Plan

For the **Program Evaluation** candidates are required to identify and evaluate a program or practice within their school or district. The “program” can be a current initiative; a grant project; a common practice; or a movement. Focused on utilization, the evaluation can be formative, summative, or developmental (Patton, 2008). The candidate must demonstrate how the evaluation directly relates to student learning.

In the **Change Leadership Plan** candidates develop a plan that considers organizational possibilities for renewal. The plan for organizational change may be at the building or district level. It must be related to an area in need of improvement with a clear target in mind. The candidate must be able to identify noticeable and feasible differences that should exist as a result of the change plan (Wagner et al., 2006).

In the **Policy Advocacy Plan** candidates develop and advocate for a policy at the local, state or national level using reflective practice and research as a means for supporting and promoting reforms in education. Policy advocacy dissertations use critical theory to address moral and ethical issues of policy formation and administrative decision making (i.e., what ought to be). The purpose is to develop reflective, humane and social critics, moral leaders, and competent professionals, guided by a critical practical rational model (Browder, 1995).

**Works Cited**


ABSTRACT

This project evaluated the initial implementation of the restorative justice program and practices at a middle school. As data-gathering instruments, I surveyed teachers and administrators, interviewed my area superintendent, senior administrator for instruction, and two resource teachers who train individuals districtwide on the restorative justice program and practices. The results indicated a lack of training for many staff members and a need for more training for those previously trained. Improving the training protocol process of the teachers and administrators was a dominant need that I identified based on my Change Leadership Plan. Consequently, this included a policy amendment regarding mandatory restorative justice programs and practices in secondary schools to assist students in exercising self-regulating and self-advocacy skills.
PREFACE

I serve as a Title I middle school principal in Purple Public School District. My school had a high number of out-of-school suspensions, particularly with my minority students. I was one of the original participants to receive restorative justice (RJ) training for my school district. Based on research, I saw the benefits of restorative justice and how the program helped to create a culture of mutual respect while building relationships. Creating a positive culture and being able to build relationships with and for students is paramount in the 21st century.

Two of the significant leadership lessons I learned were collaboration and perseverance. I planned and completed this project because I learned the importance of collaboration. The collaboration was essential to the rollout and success of the implementation of RJ on my campus. I was able to collaborate with the administrators and counselors on my campus during the initial implementation. In addition, I learned to persevere. Perseverance was essential to this program because I learned that restorative practices were not a quick fix. Students will not participate in one community circle and all their problems disappear at once. Through my practice of perseverance, I was able to see how the process of restorative practices aid in the building of positive relationships.

This experience has contributed to my growth as a leader by supporting me in researching a topic that can make a difference in the lives of students not only in my middle school but in all secondary schools. Before I began my research on restorative practices, I knew I needed to do something to reduce the out-of-school suspension rate at my school because students who do not attend school have a higher rate of dropping out of school. I did not want to contribute to the already high-dropout rate and the more than
1.4 million high school dropouts nation-wide each year. Researching restorative practices helped me to see the how:

- How can we keep students in school?
- How can we help students restore the harm that was caused by a disrespect for one another?
- How can students avoid fights?

The research led me to determine some more significant questions:

- How can we create a culture of mutual respect?
- How can we help students build positive relationships?
ACKNOWLEDGMENT

This work would not have been possible without the support of my school for allowing me to conduct the research study. I am especially indebted to Dr. James Lawson and John Wright. During the time of my program, they provided an opportunity for me to shadow and be involved in the internship for three years. I am grateful to my professors; they guided me personally and professionally. Also, I would like to thank my dissertation committee and committee chair. Dr. Carol Burg, without you, none of this would be possible. Dr. Burg, your e-mails, text messages, and general concern helped me tremendously throughout this process, and for that, I say thank you! Also, I would like to thank Dr. Dan Buckman and Dr. James Schott for your encouragement and professionalism. Last and definitely not least, I have to thank my family for putting up with me while I spent countless hours working on assignments and my dissertation. I love you: Diana, Kyla, Mia, and Isaiah.
DEDICATION

I want to dedicate this paper to my parents, Mamie Z. Thompson and Isaiah J. Thompson, who have passed; they played a big part in my life. This degree is for you. My previous degrees, one or both of my parents were physically present, so this is the first without mom and dad. However, prayerfully my 104-year-old grandmother will get to see me walk across the stage. Thank you, Momma Sadie, for the love, guidance, discipline, and counsel you have provided me throughout my entire life. To my wife and kids, I thank you for all that you endured with the long hours I spent at Panera working on my paper or various assignments. I thank God for giving me the ability to stay the course and not give up.
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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

My purpose for conducting this evaluation was to investigate the effectiveness of the restorative justice (RJ) program practices at Thompson Middle School (TMS) (pseudonym) in Purple Public School District (PPSD) (pseudonym) where, currently, I am the principal. With the steady increase of students missing numerous days of school because of out-of-school suspensions (OSS) as a result of fighting and disrespect toward their peers and teachers, I wanted to determine if the implementation of restorative practices reduced the number of suspensions and increased students’ social and academic success. Hence, the students took ownership of their problems and came to a more practical solution. Data below indicate the suspensions during two years.

Table 1

Suspension Rate Data for 2014-2015 and 2015-2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Infractions</th>
<th>Years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Physical Violence (Fighting)</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disrespect</td>
<td>127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Often, educators have considered if students missing multiple days could learn and develop the skills necessary to break behaviors related to such absences and be more academically successful. As a result of the numerous OSSs of middle school students during the summer of 2015, TMS leaders implemented a RJ program as a means to decrease the OSS rates of their middle school students. When students were absent from school because of OSSs, teachers were not able to teach them; hence, increasing the likelihood of their falling behind academically. Table 2 indicates the number of students suspended in the 36 middle schools in the district of my study and academic performance
rate based on the number of failed courses in the 2014-2015 and 2015-2016 school years. There was a vast number of students suspended from school. I felt that the school needed to make some adjustments in its practices.

Table 2

_Suspension and Academic Performance Numbers for 2014-2015 and 2015-2016 School Years_

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2014-2015</th>
<th>2015-2016</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Suspension Number</td>
<td>12,193</td>
<td>13,428</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Performance</td>
<td>36,411</td>
<td>42,114</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: Academic Performance is the total number of failing grades received by the suspended students.*

Often, when students receive a suspension from school, they were out a minimum of five days or a week of instruction. That meant that they missed seven periods each school day with at least four of those classes being core academic courses: Math, English Language Arts, Social Studies, and Science. The teachers provided the students with the work they missed, but there was no direct instruction provided, and students were not able to ask questions of their teachers because they were not in school. Also, students suspended from school were not able to collaborate with their peers to discuss and better understand and do the assigned work during the school day.

The program I evaluated in TMS was the RJ program. Given the extensive loss of instruction from suspensions, the school leaders started a RJ program to help address this problem. RJ has a philosophy based on a set of principles that guide responses to conflict and harm. It dealt with having empathy for others, being responsible and accountable for oneself, and to respect others. RJ aimed to achieve just as the title suggests, that was, to restore the students’ dignity lost from the dispute. It was not punitive. RJ was grounded
on those principles and practices for centuries in indigenous cultures and religious groups (Ashley & Burke, 2009).

**Purpose of the Evaluation**

The purpose of my study was to evaluate the RJ program and find out how the program was doing in reaching the stated goals of the program. The goals of RJ were to reduce, currently in middle schools, the suspension rate by building a school culture that focuses on relationships. This act means giving voice to students, having them engage in problem-solving with others, enhancing their responsibility skills, and empowering them to change and become more productive students. In addition, I wanted to determine if the RJ program decreased the number of OSSs. For RJ to work, it requires implementation with fidelity. The adults working with students during this process were required to use the RJ circle, a method used during the RJ process where students pass an object, and the only person allowed to speak about the object is the one holding it, or just use a portion of the time and not allow all participants an opportunity to speak. It forces them to listen patiently to others and better control their responses.

RJ was an effective alternative to a zero-tolerance policy and was designed to keep students in school when implemented correctly. I planned to compare suspension data for the 2014-2015 school year with the 2015-2016 school year for middle schools in PPSD to determine the effectiveness of RJ. I chose the RJ program to evaluate because it was crucial for not only me but for my district to determine if this program helped decrease the number of times students were not in school because of fighting and disrespect. They were offenses subject to suspension because it is a Level 3 disciplinary infraction of the Code of Student Conduct (COSC). The suspension could be for up-to 10
days. I believe the RJ program could have a lasting, positive effect on middle school students and teachers alike because it could provide skills to use in everyday life.

There was a need to establish procedures for the school staff members to implement RJ processes adequately to improve the school’s disciplinary actions. There was a need to modify the culture of the school because teachers wanted and supported responses to students’ infractions that were strictly punitive. I believed that when students were in school and given the opportunity and the ability to mediate their problems productively, they were more likely to perform better academically. I believe teachers would be able to teach students who were present and on-task because they have learned through the RJ process how to be respectful and productive. Also, the program can prevent bullying and strengthen the campus community (Grossi & dos Santos, 2012).

The possible benefits of RJ were to reduce the amount of OSS days of students that would allow for an increase in student achievement. It empowered students to resolve conflicts on their own and in small groups. The idea was to bring students together in peer-mediated small groups to talk, ask questions, and air their grievances (Davis, 2013). Moreover, after the implementation of RJ, attendance, behaviors, and communication between students improved in a culture of collaboration and culture of respect.

RJ was designed to empower students to resolve conflicts on their own in small groups (Davis, 2013). RJ has three main goals:

- **accountability**: provide opportunities for wrongdoers to be accountable to those they have harmed and enable them to repair the harm they caused to the extent possible,
- **community safety**: to recognize the need to keep the community safe through strategies that build relationships and empower the community to take responsibility for the well-being of its members, and

- **competency development**: seeks to increase the pro-social skills of those who have harmed others, address underlying factors that lead youth to engage in delinquent behavior, and build on strengths in each young person (Ashley & Burke, 2009).

At TMS, students have resolved their conflicts with physical violence and loud verbal confrontations for several years. Rarely did they seek out an adult and request support in resolving the issues. As young people on the campus of TMS, historically, they tend not to accept accountability for their actions; they quickly blame others.

**Rationale**

I chose this project because I believed its results could have a positive effect on students who go through the program. RJ provided ways to address negative behaviors effectively and positively as an alternative to OSSs. According to Skiba and Losen, (2016), schools that have a zero-tolerance approach to discipline have suspended numerous students for up-to 10 days at a time. If a student is not in school, a student could not receive instruction from the teacher. RJ could result in increased student achievement by keeping students who often received an OSS in school. RJ could change the negative behavior and offer a restorative process instead of a punitive one resulting in the loss of instructional time.

As the instructional leader of the school, I am responsible for the achievement of students. Also, I believe that education is the vehicle that can lead many of my students
out of their current plight from low-socioeconomic environments to a better quality of 
life free of violence and poverty. I want to ensure preparation for continued education, 
productive citizenship, and fulfilling careers. Also, I believe RJ can help students 
mediate their problems with peers and adults. If students are not present, they cannot 
receive instruction, and public educators are charged to teach every child that comes 
through the door. Educators do not get to choose which students can attend public 
schools. Students come with many diverse needs, challenges, and life stories; however, 
when they enter the middle schools of PPSD, educators need to do everything in their 
power to help them stay in school for 180 of 180 school days.

According to DeRidder (1991), being suspended or expelled was one of the main 
reasons for students dropping out-of-school. Also, Amurao (2013) recognized the impact 
of suspension and stressed that it had become a severe issue in the educational arena. 
The author further indicated that students forced out-of-school often become stigmatized 
and fall behind in their studies. Moreover, he mentioned that low-school attending 
students decide to drop-out of school and tend to commit crimes and otherwise become 
users of high-cost social services (Amurao, 2013). I agree with this assertion. Because 
suspended students have more unstructured or unsupervised time, they can become 
indoctrinated with negative influences.

The evaluation of the RJ program is essential to stakeholders: teachers, 
counselors, administrators, parents, and community members. The students’ attendance 
was essential to classroom teachers because they could not teach them if they were 
absent. Also, it is important for teachers because it limited the amount of reteaching of 
students absent from class. Counselors benefited from the restorative process because it
kept students in school and addressed meaningfully many of the behavioral issues they have some responsibility to address. They were advocates for students, and they could not provide their specialized services to meet the needs of individual students when they were not in school.

Administrators could be the benefactor of this process. They were the leaders of the schools, and it was their responsibility to ensure that students were safe, secure, and the recipients of quality instruction. If students received a suspension, the students could not receive the valuable instruction they needed. Parents have a great personal interest in the academic and lifetime success of their children. Moreover, the community prospers more with well-educated, competent, and productive citizens.

Each student had a unique identity, and school staff aimed to see each of them one day become a lifetime learner, a productive citizen, and a successful member of the workforce. RJ could help students solve problems, develop conflict resolution skills, and reduce the amount of out-of-school time for students who go through the RJ process. My program evaluation through surveys and interviews helped determine the overall effectiveness of the RJ program and provided valuable ideas for improving it if needed.

**Goals of the Program Evaluation**

I attempted to find out the effectiveness of the RJ program at TMS. In seeking the results of the program, I was hoping to ascertain if RJ was doing what it purported to do. If it did not, then I aimed to determine the perceived challenges and to develop a course of action for improvement. My goal for this evaluation project was to build relationships with the school and its capacity to address challenges along with other stakeholders. I wanted to create a community where students respect and care for one
another. In essence, I want to have a school community that strengthens relationships between adults and students and relationships between students and students, creating a positive, inclusive school discipline culture. This project could enhance both teaching and learning significantly.

I centered my goals on the RJ process and what was best for children and the improvement of student achievement (Hansberry, 2016). The goals of my program evaluation relate to student learning by providing students with self-advocacy and self-regulation skills to help them avoid suspension and keeping them in school where teachers can provide quality instruction. Students cannot learn if they are not in school.

**Exploratory Questions**

For this study, I focused on the TMS’ RJ program and its effectiveness in keeping students in school, so they can receive adequate instruction and improve their academic growth. I identified primary and secondary exploratory questions that guided my program evaluation research. There were four critical primary exploratory questions for my research:

1. What do the participants (teachers, counselors, and administrators) at Thompson Middle School perceive as working well with the restorative justice program?

2. What do the participants (teachers, counselors, and administrators) at Thompson Middle School perceive as not working well with the restorative justice program?
3. What do the participants (teachers, counselors, and administrators) at Thompson Middle School perceive as the most significant challenges in the implementation of the restorative justice program?

4. What do the participants (teachers, counselors, and administrators) at Thompson Middle School suggest as methods to improve the restorative justice program?

My secondary exploratory questions were:

1. What role can administrators play in the improvement of the RJ process?
2. What role can teachers play in the improvement of the RJ process?
3. How can counselors assist in the process of improvement?
4. What are the perceptions of stakeholders (teachers, counselors, and administrators) regarding the impact, if any, the restorative justice program has had on the school culture at Thompson Middle School?

Answering these questions helped me examine the program operating at TMS, and they helped me identify essential strategies for improving the program to be a top-quality program in the district.

Conclusion

PPSD leaders were committed to reducing the students’ suspension rate in its middle schools. Also, TMS leaders were committed to keeping students in school, so students realize increased academic success. The culture of the school must change where everyone was driven to make students successful through a more active approach to addressing severe student discipline problems to minimize lost instructional time. The RJ process and practices were tools that I thought would cultivate that climate of success.
However, I evaluated the RJ program to determine what worked, did not work, and how to make the best use of it to improve student learning.
CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

In the summer of the 2015-2016 school year, PPSD began training 34 middle school administrative teams and counselors in a program called RJ. The reason was simple; there were too many middle school students suspended from school. There was a disproportionate number of minority students suspended. The minority students in many cases represented more than half the total number of OSSs even though they comprised less than 50% of the total population. The traditional method of discipline was punitive. For example, if a student did something wrong, the student was suspended from school when some lesser form of response may have been a better choice. The lesser form of discipline includes: calling home, removal of privileges, detention, and alternative class placement. There was little in place to help a student, so he or she would not repeat a COSC violation; consequently, it was not uncommon for a student to have multiple OSS days.

RJ allowed students involved in conflicts such as fighting, insubordination, or disrespect toward another person to sit down and through dialogue resolve the situation (Davis, 2014). I gleaned from Cole Middle School in Oakland, California that the RJ practices they implemented were the reason why they decreased their suspension rate by 87% in three years, and expulsions practically were eliminated (Dalporto, 2016). From this study, I realized that RJ had the potential to work if the participants have a belief in the process coupled with the ability to stay the course because change does not happen overnight.
Perspective on Discipline

Before the zero-tolerance movement, there was corporal punishment in PPSD as it had been nationwide. Principals had the authority and a process to paddle students for violations of the COSC (Hecker, Hermenau, Useke, & Thomas, 2015). With this form of discipline, the consequence was immediate, but the problem was that the parents no longer wanted school administrators to administer this form of discipline. So, the zero-tolerance movement emerged. The zero-tolerance trend started in the late 1980s, and to this point, there was no evidence that zero-tolerance decreased the number of times students were suspended from school (Dunbar & Villarruel, 2004). This policy of intolerance led to large numbers of students suspended or expelled from schools (Losen, 2014). Students received a suspension for up-to 10 days from school. If they received expulsion from school, this constituted removal from school for up-to one year depending on the severity of the discipline offense.

In addition to being an alternative policy for zero-tolerance, people considered RJ as a means for helping students learn how to solve their problems by dialogue and not violence, which decreased the number of incarcerated students overtime. Many secondary schools now have full-time school resource officers, which contributed to a significant number of students arrested on campuses (Petrosino Guckenburg, & Fronius, 2012). Middle schools, in my opinion, needed to educate students and not create a pipeline to jail. RJ was designed to be an alternative to punishment by suspension, expulsion, and incarceration. The latter resulted in an increased number of student dropouts. RJ started many years ago in Native American cultures in the United States and similar populations of Polynesians in Australia and New Zealand (Van Bockern,
Kinsley, & Woodward, 2000). Modern-Day RJ started in the 1970s. Moreover, many indigenous cultures throughout the world never stopped using it (Braithwaite, 2002; Zehr, 2002).

With zero tolerance, school administrators were able to suspend students from school for whatever reason their district policies allowed. For example, they would suspend students for being insubordinate. There were no real checks and balances. Students who fought automatically received at least five days of out-of-school suspension. The suspension was the culture in the schools in PPSD.

PPSD has tried some approaches or programs, like Peace by Piece, Positive Behavior Support, CHAMPS, and peer mediation to name a few. The Peace by Piece program addresses violence by using artistic expression through rap, dance, and the spoken word to create conversation around peace (American Friends Service Committee, 2015). It is a systematic, collaborative approach that ensured integration of the topic of peace in the curriculum. Also, it involves simultaneous actions on many levels, addressing curriculum, pedagogy, and resources. The essential parts of this program involve teacher education as well as training for parents and community members (Wright & Kowalczyk, 2000). The results of these programs nationwide and even internationally have been positive. Many schools in PPSD have reduced the number of suspensions and acts of violence; however, they have not been sustainable in many cases.

The Positive Behavior Support (PBS) program provided students with acknowledgments and appropriate rewards for positive behavior. Critical components of PBS include (a) active teaching and support of some clear social-behavioral expectations, (b) execution of dependable consequences for violations of school expectations, and (c)
use of data to drive intervention development (Feuerborn & Tyre, 2012). In PPSD, PBS was used to manage student behavior, and it had slightly improved the schools’ climate becoming more student-centered and supportive. Ultimately, it makes it safer and less violent. Also, it can create a you can do it attitude or the whatever it takes mindset. Because of more limited funding, schools have difficulties in sustaining the program though many of the rewards did not require funding.

Conversation, Help, Activity, Movement, and Participation (CHAMPs) is a PBS program designed to be sustainable and to implement better school improvement plans (Sprick, 2017). Founded on the philosophy that students met a teacher’s expectation providing they know the behavioral expectations is the CHAMPs program. Students must try to meet the teachers’ expectations with the program’s strategies to modify negative behaviors. The CHAMPs program helps teachers design a classroom management plan and teach their students how to behave during every activity and transition in the classroom and between classes (McCloud, 2005). Few schools in PPSD adopted the program. Those who did continue with the program; however, they did not evaluate the program through collected data to show its effectiveness; consequently, others were reluctant to assume the program.

Peer mediation was another conflict resolution strategy based on the foundation of practical or applied conflict resolution. Peer mediation was a dominant strategy led by students and established for elementary, middle, and high school students. The goal of the program was to empower students to share responsibility for producing a safe, secure school environment rather than placing the sole responsibility on administrators, teachers, and counselors (Morse & Andrea, 1994; Shepherd, 1994).
In PPSD, only middle and high schools instituted the peer mediation program. Some schools volunteered to implement PBS and allowed students to volunteer to participate. Because many schools did not implement it well, there was little meaningful information to ascertain from many schools. Each program listed was designed to help decrease violations of school rules and regulations resulting in school instructional time lost. On the other hand, peer mediation has been quite successful in other school districts, and students have taken ownership of the program (Saraswati, 2014).

Through the training I attended during the summer of 2015 and the research I performed; I have discovered a significant component to RJ titled circle time. The RJ circle was where students involved with conflict have the opportunity to talk about their differences and begin the healing process (Pavelka, 2013). This process was not 100% effective, but whenever one can get students talking about their problems in a controlled, nonthreatening environment, the higher the chance of keeping students in school. Also, students were less likely to repeat the offense.

The RJ circle includes the students involved in the conflict and at least one adult, either a counselor, dean, or administrator. The participants received the rules that govern the circle, and the leader discusses the talking piece (Pavelka, 2013). The talking piece was any item that someone in the circle deems unique or essential to him or her. The rule was the person holding the talking piece was the only one allowed to speak. Therefore, when a person has completed speaking, he or she passed it to the next person.

In my opinion, the process was similar to peer mediation, which started decades ago like RJ circles. The proceedings were confidential. Students opened-up and discussed their problems more readily when they know that what was said remained
confidential. In addition to the school setting, RJ played a role in the criminal justice system. In middle schools in Hawaii, victims and offenders met, and the sessions were sometimes beneficial. The recidivism rate was better than offenders that do not participate in this practice (Walker, 2002).

Even though RJ has been in existence for years in the premodern, native cultures as previously mentioned, RJ was still relatively new in the school setting. The results have been promising and have had a positive impact on school behavioral culture impacting the attitudes of students and teachers alike (Ashley & Burke, 2009). In the premodern cultures, individuals would work with each other in their community for a successful resolution. The resolutions were done through open and honest communication and give and take.

As mentioned previously, Native Americans often used a talking piece during their disagreements, and the process worked for them. They wanted the offender to be accountable for their actions and to repair the harm caused and develop a plan for repairing that harm. In the class setting, RJ seeks to develop a sense of community much like in premodern cultures (Zehr, 2002). RJ in schools was designed to bring the stakeholders together and build positive relationships (Gonzalez, 2012). The archaic belief of an eye for an eye (Zehr, 2002) needs to be eliminated and not used again.

In Zehr’s research, he described the use of RJ in the criminal justice system. The practice of RJ in the school system was comparable; it was about restoring rights and oneself in a system. Incarceration in the penal system was synonymous to suspension. Howard Zehr was thought by many to be the godfather of modern-day RJ. He indicated that in a restorative system, the practice must begin immediately after an incident to
address the victim’s needs. He stressed that the process should involve the victim even if the perpetrator receives consequences for his action. Even if the practice is not perceived as fully restorative, it is a critical component of a restorative system to at least be perceived as partially restorative (Zehr, 2002).

Currently, in PPSD, if students were involved in a physical altercation, both students were suspended for 10 days. However, in the restorative practice process, if students could immediately be brought together without further altercation, they were brought in a restorative circle. This practice could involve two administrators or adults to ensure that students do not hurt one another. If one person instigated the fight without provocation, then that one person could be sent home and asked to bring in a parent. These actions could have resulted in the student receiving a reduction in suspension days or placement into the in-school suspension (ISS) program. The student at least receives partial restorative support.

**Conclusion**

In conclusion, RJ was a system that has been in existence for hundreds of years and has evolved to use in school systems to help reduce the suspension and expulsion rates of youth throughout this country. Research showed there were numerous other approaches like RJ with similar strategies, and RJ was as old as many Polynesian and American Indian societies and showed great potential for public schools. It had a rich history of success. Expulsions could extend for a year. RJ was not a quick fix solution, but I believe if supported by administrators, RJ could be an effective alternative to more serious disciplinary problems. Also, to the administrators and deans in the schools, there
needed to be sufficient training for essential stakeholders. Students have missed too many days because of OSS, and RJ appears to be a viable option to curbing their use.
CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

Students cannot learn if they were not in school (B. Jenkins, personal communication, May 17, 2016). This sentiment was of the board members and school superintendent in PPSD. Many of the students were suspended from school for 10 days because of acts of violence (e.g., fighting), and in many cases, the suspensions were disproportionate for Black male students. The institution of restorative practices as a way of reducing suspension and having a harmonious campus was the intent. This evaluation of the RJ program at TMS could determine if students were benefiting from such procedures and were taking a better path in their decision-making, which constituted fewer or no OSS days and a more therapeutic environment at the school, resulting in better student achievement.

Research Design Overview

As a researcher of this evaluation process, I used student behavior data and student attendance data at TMS. Also, I used student pass-fail data to determine student achievement. There were 40,053 middle school students in PPSD, so I narrowed my focus to students at TMS who received a Level 3 offense as indicated by the COSC in the areas of disrespect and fighting. I did not collect data from students. I interviewed and surveyed teachers, counselors, school-level administrators, and deans. Deans perform the duties of an administrator; however, they did not have evaluative authority respective to teachers. The responsibilities of working with students were considered a quasi-administrators. For the sake of this research, I included them in the administrative category. The survey and interview questions were designed to relate to my research questions. I intentionally wrote the questions for the survey and the interview protocol
that I needed to evaluate the program. I performed a crosswalk of the research questions to the questions in the survey and interview to assist in securing the necessary data appropriate to my program evaluation.

Participants

The target participants for this study were up-to 140 classroom and resource teachers, up-to three counselors, and up-to five administrators (e.g., assistant principals and deans). The teachers include the Reading coaches, Math coach, Science coach, and the curriculum resource teachers. As mentioned earlier in this research, the deans were quasi-administrators and participated in the administration category. I am the principal of the school, and I was not a participant. I chose participants because they were aware of the restorative program and could provide valid information about the program at TMS.

Eighty-Seven percent of 122 teachers taught at TMS three years before implementation of RJ practices, and 13 (9%) of the teachers came the same year the practices began. Participants were between 21-85-years-old with a mixture of males and females with no set number. Instructional personnel was eligible to participate. Students were not participants in this study. I informed participants that their participation in the survey and interview was voluntary, and they could discontinue their participation at any time during the process with no negative consequences.

Data Gathering Techniques

I used two data-gathering instruments: surveys and individual interviews. I chose a survey because of its unbiased approach to gathering data, and I thought that I would easily make decisions because I did not have to rely on my opinion. I chose interviews because it allowed me to obtain information about personal feelings and opinions, and I
thought I would get a higher response rate. Participants at the school were familiar with surveys because TMS conducted a school climate survey yearly. I provided a written copy of the interview questions and allowed responders a few minutes to read the questions before commencing the interviews. This prep time allowed for some to gather their thoughts.

**Surveys**

The surveys were used to collect data. At a faculty meeting, I provided the teachers with two consent forms (Appendix A) and a survey form (Appendix B). I explained the process and shared with them that this is a partial requirement in completing my doctoral studies. Also, I clearly stated in the *Adult Participant Consent Form* that their participation in the survey was voluntary, and they could discontinue their participation at any time during the process with no negative consequences. I placed two large envelopes in the conference room where I met with them. One envelope was for signed consent forms, and the other one was for the completed survey. I stepped out of the room while the participants completed the survey and the consent forms. I asked the participants to place the separate surveys and consent forms in the envelopes.

I asked the five administrators, two assistant principals, and three deans, to take the survey (Appendix B) at an administrative team meeting. I considered the deans for this study quasi-administrators and were in the administrative category. Also, they attended the administrative team meetings. I explained the process and shared with them that this was a partial requirement in completing my doctoral studies.

I distributed two consent forms (Appendix A) and a survey form (Appendix B). I left the room while they completed the survey. Also, I informed them that participation
was voluntary, and they could have discontinued at any time during the process with no negative consequences. I placed two large envelopes in a conference room where I met with the administrative team. An envelope was for the signed consent forms, and the other one was for the completed surveys. I stepped out of the room while the participants completed the survey and the consent forms. The participants were to place the surveys and consent forms in the envelopes, and I collected the envelopes after they completed the surveys. I chose to use this technique because I did not want the participants to think I wanted to sway their responses. I wanted them to have total autonomy free of any influence from me.

**Individual Interviews**

I conducted all the interviews after school and not during instructional hours. I asked participants to provide me confidential feedback through my interview protocol. I gave participants a hard copy of the interview questions (Appendix D), which I created to collect data based on the participants’ perception of RJ. I coordinated the date and time for the interviews. After the participants completed the interviews with me, I collected and tabulated the findings.

I interviewed two district resource teachers who trained school personnel on the RJ practices. After I scheduled the resource teachers for the process, I met with them at their worksite to perform the interviews. Initially, I informed them their participation was voluntary, and they could discontinue the process at any time. Before beginning the interviews, I provided each participant with two *Informed Consent Interview Forms* (Appendix C). They gave a completed and signed form back to me, and the other remained with the participants.
I interviewed my supervisor, the area superintendent, and the senior administrator for curriculum and school services. I used the same process of setting up and interviewing these individuals as I did with the district resource teachers. I did not interview the classroom teachers in my study; they completed the survey. It still gave me enough information to compare the two viewpoints.

After I scheduled sessions with my supervisor and the senior administrator, I met with them at their worksites to perform the interviews. I informed them their participation was voluntary, and they could discontinue the process at any time. Before beginning the interviews, I provided each participant with two Informed Consent Interview Forms (Appendix C). The participants were to complete one of the forms, sign it and given back to me, and the other remained with the participants. I chose this technique because it was an intimate process where I could sit in front of the interviewees and read their physical responses as they pondered the questions for their responses. I wanted to know what they knew about the process. I knew the resource teachers would have a great deal of knowledge about the restorative process. Also, I wanted to glean what they knew about the process at TMS. The data I gathered from the two processes helped as I determined what would be plans and implementation.

**Data Analysis Techniques**

I analyzed the data describing the details and information gathered from the surveys and interviews. Upon gathering the data and using the processes described below, I used descriptive statistics and described the results. I decided on this method because it could help me see the results in a more meaningful way and help me determine my next steps. With the descriptions, I was able to see patterns develop, and I
determined themes. To avoid my biases from impacting the results, I used only the information gathered from the surveys and interviews. Interpretation took place later in the research after I analyzed the data. Because I was the principal of the school for five years, I have seen patterns. However, I wanted to know what others saw and knew about what a day is like at TMS.

**Surveys**

I was consistent in the process of analyzing the data for each group. Upon discussing this process with other researchers, I learned of and used a process that would help me to capture participants’ thoughts and ideas and guarded me against forcing my biases into the research. It included the following:

- I typed responses to determine what the respondents were saying. I typed every response on a single piece of paper. I determined if the responses needed to be divided up to capture a single thought. If some of the responses included two or more ideas, I typed each idea separately. For example, if I received a response for one participant and three ideas were expressed, I captured three ideas.
- On a single poster paper, I wrote a question from the survey at the top. Then, I posted the responses. Each posted strip of paper had a single idea.
- I clustered the single responses by similar ideas and determined the theme.
- I used the number of clustered ideas to calculate the frequency. I used the frequency to indicate how people felt because it was important enough for them to mention it.
- I addressed the information in this study.
**Individual Interviews**

The interview process was more time and energy consuming and required a great deal of attention. I interviewed the two resource teachers at the district office. They trained administrators and teachers on the RJ process. I later interviewed my area superintendent. This interview was exciting for me because it was she who supervised me and did my evaluation. The senior curriculum administrator was the last person I interviewed. I recorded all the interviews. I sent the recording of the interviews to a court stenographer who transcribed the interviews.

Upon receiving the transcripts, I highlighted repeated themes to determine new central themes and emergent codes. After I got some general themes for each question, I followed the same process that I used in analyzing the surveys:

- I wrote the responses on a strip of paper. Each idea constituted a strip of paper.
- I wrote the question on a poster board paper and pasted the ideas on the page.
- I clustered the ideas based on the themes. I identified many more themes as I worked through this process.
- I devised a matrix to plot the themes and frequencies.

**Ethical Considerations**

This portion of the study required sensitivity and careful consideration. Each participant knew that I employed ethical considerations throughout my study. There were no emotional, physical, social, or political risks to the participants in this project beyond that of everyday life. Participants did not receive any direct benefits from being in this research study. It contributed to my understanding of the RJ process at TMS and what
changes, if any, may be needed. Participants signed an informed consent (Appendices A and C) indicating that it was voluntary, and they could have discontinued at any time with no negative consequences. The informed consent (Appendices A and C) notified participants that the results of this study might be published or otherwise reported to scientific bodies, and their identity would be anonymous. I let the participants know that I would hold all data in the strictest of confidence.

I indicated I would not share the information I gathered from the surveys and interview protocols. I noted I would keep the identity of the participants, the school, the district confidential, and I used pseudonyms for participants in the report. Only I would have access to survey data that I am maintaining in a locked cabinet at my home and on a password-protected hard-drive for up-to five years. I informed participants that I would share results only if I received written consent and permission to do so. They were informed that I would contact the impacted participants and inform them that their collected information from the survey and the interview process were available for access by contacting me. Also, I informed individuals that they might contact me to request a copy of the final report as well.

Conclusion

I desired that this research help improve the current RJ program at the school in my study and the district. Also, I wanted to provide a research study to inform and motivate other school administrators and their staffs throughout the district to use RJ with fidelity. In addition, I wanted to provide data to help school and district leaders to develop a venue for students to solve conflicts through communication, instead of physical conflict, to reduce OSS and expulsion days, which can extend for a year. Last, I
wanted to give the victims of any such behaviors a voice in a nonthreatening environment.

This RJ process should encourage dialogue where students talk honestly about what happened, who was affected and find a way to repair the harm done to the greatest extent possible (Holtham, 2009). Ultimately, I want something to help students to realize the consequences of their poor choices and how their choices harm themselves and affect others. I believe RJ practices can help students examine the reasons that caused them to misbehave and discover alternative solutions.
CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS

Findings

For the program evaluation section of this study, I studied the RJ practices at TMS. RJ practices have been shown to create a school climate that improves learning (Waajid, Garner, & Owen, 2013). That was one of the primary reason why I chose to evaluate this program. As principal of the school, I looked for best practices for school improvement and student achievement growth. Located in an urban school district, TMS’ site is in the suburban part of the district. It has an enrollment of 1,106 students, a per pupil-staff ratio of 14.4 to 1. TMS is 22.1% White, 1.7% Asian, 34.4 Black, 1.7% multiracial, 40% Hispanic, and 78.74% are low-socioeconomic.

I disclosed the results of my study through an analysis of survey and interview data I gathered from teachers, administrators, and district administrators. I ascertained that both the qualitative and quantitative data I gathered was necessary evaluative information and was relative to my study of the TMS restorative practices. I reported my findings from survey information from 46 of 77 teachers on my staff (60%), five administrators, including the deans that were considered quasi-administrators, and from four individuals I interviewed, which included the area superintendent, a senior administrator, and two district resource teachers. In reporting the findings, I described the participants’ perspective of the TMS RJ program.

Teacher Surveys

Forty-Six of the 77 teachers at TMS participated in the survey. At one of the faculty-staff meetings, I provided the teachers with two consent forms (Appendix A) and a survey form (Appendix B). I explained the process and shared with them that this was
a partial requirement in completing my doctoral studies. I addressed the form indicating that it clearly stated in the Adult Participant Consent Form that their participation in the survey is voluntary, and they may discontinue their participation at any time during the process with no negative consequences. Because I did not want them to think that I was observing who did or did not fill out the survey that day, I placed large envelopes in the back of the media center where I met with them. The participants completed a consent form and placed it with their survey. At that meeting, 37 teachers completed the survey, which was a 47% return.

I was not pleased with those returns and announced through e-mails to faculty members in a non-authoritative way that they still have time to complete the survey at their convenience. That yielded an additional four surveys. As teachers were leaving for the last day of school, I announced through the PA system that teachers could still participate in the restorative practice survey, and five additional teachers participated. The process required my giving them additional consent forms and survey ballots because they misplaced or may have thrown away their first forms. Because of my tenacity and persistent requests, I produced a 60% return of surveys.

Of the 77 faculty members, there were 46 respondents (60%). Below are the results of the survey data from the respondents. Part A, Statement 1 of the teacher survey states, “I have used restorative justice during the school year.” There were 46 respondents. Thirteen (28%) disagreed with using RJ. Twelve (26%) respondents agreed with using RJ. Ten (22%) teachers strongly disagreed; six (13%) were neutral. Five participants strongly agreed (11%) to ever having used RJ during the school year. For this study, it is evident that 36% of the respondents used RJ at least once during the
school year. Because 50% of the respondents did not use RJ, it may cause difficulties in determining the effectiveness of RJ at TMS. I was aware that few teachers implemented RJ because I was piloting the process to see if I would want to expand the program.

Table 3 depicted the responses to Statement 1.

Table 3

*Part A Teacher Survey: Statement 1 (n = 46)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Part A: Statement 2 of the teacher survey stated: “I have used restorative more than once during the school year.” There were 43 (93%) respondents. Thirteen (30%) disagreed with using RJ. There were 10 (23%) teachers who strongly disagreed to using RJ once during the school year. Eight (19%) agreed to the use of RJ at TMS. Seven participants strongly agreed (16%) they used RJ at least once, and five (12%) were neutral. Thirty-Five percent of the respondents used RJ more than once. This data gives some merit to the process to at least repeating the process. With this kind of information, I could determine the effectiveness of the program at TMS. At least some have used it during the school year. That was comforting knowing that teachers implemented a form of intervention and not solely relied on punitive measures. Table 4 revealed the results below.
Table 4

Part A Teacher Survey: Statement 2 (n = 43)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Part A: Statement 3 of the survey stated, “I perceive RJ as working well in our school.” There were 46 (100%) respondents to this statement. The area that received the most substantial rating was 18 (39%) were neutral. Ten (22%) of the respondents strongly disagreed that RJ worked well at TMS. Nine (17%) respondents disagreed that RJ worked well; six (13%) agreed. Three (6%) respondents strongly agreed that RJ worked well at the school. Based on the percentages of respondents, 39% viewed RJ as not working well, and another 39% were neutral, which led me to believe additional work was necessary for the implementation restorative practice at TMS. These data indicated a need for change at TMS. That change could be in the implementation or the need for more training of individual teachers. I need to ascertain why 18 of the respondents were neutral and did not indicate if RJ worked well at TMS. Table 5 displayed how the teachers at TMS perceived RJ working on the campus.

Table 5

Part A Teacher Survey: Statement 3 (n = 46)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Part A: Statement 4 of the survey stated, “I do not perceive RJ as working well in our school.” There were 46 respondents (100%) to this question. Nineteen (41%) were neutral to this question. Nine (20%) disagreed with RJ working well while eight (17%) actively did not perceive RJ as working well. Seven (15%) of the respondents agreed that it was not working well, and three (6%) strongly disagreed with the statement that RJ is working well in our school. Based on the respondents to this question, 67% were either neutral or did not perceive RJ as not working well. This data was somewhat inconclusive because many who responded to the question had not experienced RJ. It would seem that the teachers failed to provide a comprehensive analysis of the program and their view would somewhat skew the data. This data helped me to understand better what I needed to do as I worked to improve the implementation of RJ at TMS. Table 6 replicated the information below.

### Table 6

**Part A Teacher Survey: Statement 4 (n = 46)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Part A: Statement 5 stated, “I have not noticed any difference in student behavior at my school.” Forty-Five respondents (98%) responded to this statement. Nineteen (41%) respondents were neutral. This data caused concern because I cannot determine how they felt. The purpose of implementing RJ was for a change in negative student behavior, and many adults gave no opinion about if they noticed a difference in the students’ behavior. Nine (20%) disagreed. They noticed a change in student behavior
while eight (17%) agreed, and three (6%) strongly disagreed with not noticing any
difference in student behavior at TMS. Table 7 reflected what the teachers noticed about
the behavior at the school. Forty-two percent of the respondents strongly agreed or
disagreed with not noticing any difference in the student behavior at my school. When I
consider 36% of the respondents were neutral in answering this question, as a school, I
must require more emphasis in implementation.

Table 7

Part A Teacher Survey: Statement 5 (n = 45)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Part A: Statement 6 stated, “Restorative Justice is not working well at my school.”

Nineteen (41%) were neutral with this response. I concluded that I must tweak the
implementation process. I needed to do things entirely different from what I was doing
because it was not working as I thought it would. Nine (20%) disagreed. This data was
an indication that some of the teachers felt that RJ did have a positive effect on the
students. However, eight of the 46 respondents (17%) strongly agreed that RJ was not
working well at the school. An additional seven (15%) agreed. Three (6%) strongly
disagreed with RJ not working well. That small contingency of teachers who participated
in RJ during the pilot program saw the effects of the process. Moreover, I became
concerned that 32% of the respondents felt it was not working well. The results forced
me to consider to do things differently for better results. Table 8 indicated how teachers
responded to the statement.
Table 8

**Part A Teacher Survey: Statement 6 (n = 46)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Part A; Statement 7 stated, “The RJ process will change the culture of my school.” One-Hundred percent of the respondents responded to this statement. When I first introduced the possibilities of culture change, I shared with the staff that TMS will become more restorative and less punitive. Many felt that this change was needed. Fifteen (33%) agreed that RJ would change the culture of the campus. Eleven (24%) were neutral. Neutral selections caused me concern. I never knew what the individuals thought when they selected neutral as a choice. Ten (22%) of the respondents strongly agreed that RJ changed the culture while five (11%) disagreed, and five (11%) strongly disagreed that the RJ process changed the culture of the school. Table 9 revealed how teachers felt about the culture change on their campus. Fifty-Five percent of the respondents strongly agreed or agreed that the RJ process changed the culture of their school. It was good that the teachers saw the value of RJ. I believe if they were exposed more to the implementation, they would have implemented with fidelity and put forth the effort of making the program work better at TMS.

Table 9

**Part A Teacher Survey: Statement 7 (n = 46)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Categories</td>
<td>Respondents</td>
<td>Percentage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Part B of the teacher survey (Appendix B), there were five open-ended questions. This section allowed for teachers to respond to the questions expressing themselves freely without guidance. I encouraged teachers to give meaningful responses using their knowledge of the restorative processes at TMS.

Twelve (26%) of the 46 teachers responded to Question 8, which asked, “If you perceive RJ as working well in your school, how? Give examples.” This question yielded 21 responses. Another 74%, 34 out of 46, did not respond. I identified 10 themes from the respondents who participated in the survey. See graphic representation below in Figure 1. The most frequent theme with 27% (6) of the respondents provided inconclusive replies. They did not answer the question of if RJ was working well. The responses, for the most part, were, “I have not personally witnessed RJ,” “Students were called from class to attend groups,” and “I was only a part of the circle once,” which is not a direct reply to this question. I did not feel that their responses to this question would yield significance in determining the effectiveness of the project. Their responses would have properly conformed to Question 9 on the survey.

The second most frequently reported theme was accountability. Four of the 21 respondents (19%) focused on student accountability. One teacher indicated that students remained in class; however, the teacher mentioned that RJ produced fewer fights. Also, another teacher felt that RJ was a tool for those children who wanted to change. Those responses provided evidence that RJ’s implementation at TMS produced changes in student behavior.
The third, fourth, and fifth most frequently reported themes were building relationships, solving issues, and enhancing communication, respectively. Each of these themes had two responses (10%). One teacher indicated that relationship rekindled friendship when a student participated in the circle. Another teacher indicated that while some students were in a circle, they developed a better relationship. The experience of being in the circle helped them to solve their issues with each other. A teacher indicated that communication with staff and students were enhanced. With the information provided, I determined that RJ at TMS could help in my project because it replicated what the research purports restorative practices can do on school campuses.

The last five themes received one response (5%). The sixth, seventh, eighth, ninth, and tenth responses were that grades were improving and that RJ worked well, RJ provided face-to-face support, when applied there was a temporary effect, and RJ stopped rumors, respectfully. With the limited responses, teachers projected that RJ could positively affect a school culture when implemented appropriately.

Note. Responses to Question 8 of the teacher survey are represented in percent based on the number of responses.

Figure 1. Part B Teacher Survey: Question 8
Twenty (43%) of the 46 teachers responded to Question 9, which asked, “If you perceive RJ as not working well in your school, why? Give examples.” This question created 24 responses. I identified seven themes from the respondents who participated in the survey. Figure 2 represented a graphic illustration below. The most frequently reported theme “unaware of RJ,” which received eight (33%) responses. The eight respondents indicated that they were not aware of RJ on the school campus. These data indicated at least two significant points from my research: (1) training was necessary on campus and (2) communication must be a significant component of the training.

The second most reported theme was the persistent misbehavior of students. Five (21%) of the responses focused on this theme. One teacher stated that with the implementation of RJ, students continued to engage in the same negative behavior. Another teacher felt that students’ misbehaviors persist with the enforcement of restorative practices. Again, the data indicated that some teachers expected positive change in students’ behavior, and they did not see it.

The third most frequently reported theme was the lack of follow-through by the administrators. This theme received four (17%) responses. Teachers specified that administrators failed to process student referrals. Having teachers respond about administrators failing to process referrals was a significant implication to this study, especially because teachers felt that all misbehaviors required punitive responses.

The fourth, fifth, and sixth most frequently reported themes received two responses (8%) each. The themes respectively were disrespect to staff, no teacher input, and broader use. One teacher indicated that students were continually breaking the rules and being disrespectful to adults. Regarding teacher input, two teachers felt that teachers
do not have input. Another two teachers specified that RJ should have broad use, and it should be a campus-wide approach. These data information stress a need for improvement.

The last most frequently reported theme is that there was limited success with the staff. This theme received one (4%) response, and this teacher mentioned that RJ was successful when used with a student-to-student discussion but not as effective with a teacher-to-student session. An important point to consider with this study as it progressed to the change leadership portion of this research.

*Note.* Responses to Question 9 of the teacher survey are represented in percent based on the number of responses.

*Figure 2.* Part B Teacher Survey: Question 9

Thirty-Three (72%) of the 46 teachers responded to Question 10, which asked, “If you perceive RJ as not working well in your school? Why? Give examples.” This question generated 39 responses. I identified 12 themes from the respondents who participated in the survey. Figure 3 depicted a graphic representation below. The most frequently reported theme lack of training received six (18%) responses. The six respondents indicated that there was a need for training. They did not participate in the
district-level training. This result indicated an obvious decision that training must require a school-wide approach at TMS.

Three themes garnered five (15%) elements as the most frequent responses. The second, third, and fourth themes were teacher buy-in, student responsibility, and poor results, respectively. One teacher indicated that some teachers refused to set up a committee to implement the process. Another teacher indicated that other teachers do not respect the process. When dealing with student responsibility, a teacher stated that students’ attitudes are not conducive for the process to work and that students do not take the process seriously. Teachers did not like the lack of negative consequences to the students for rule violations and students having the ability to go through the RJ process and receive a reduced punitive penalty (e.g., five-day OSS reduced to three). They felt that the discipline outcomes were not consistent. These teachers were looking for more punitive consequences rather than restorative ones. These three themes indicate that targeted training for a better understanding of the program purpose, goals, and processes was needed.

The fifth and sixth most frequently reported themes were time and lack of knowledge of the RJ process. These themes received three (9%) responses. One teacher indicated that the process took too much time and that going through this process would take them away from their school work. Another teacher felt that finding the time during the day would make them less effective. According to three other teachers, they did not know about RJ. The data were an indication that the administration must institute RJ training at the school site.
The seventh and eighth most frequently reported themes were discipline and communication. Each received two responses (6%). One teacher indicated that discipline and RJ should be coordinated activities. It was apparent that this teacher felt that the two are separate strategies, not understanding that they should work in concert. Two other teachers felt that there was a communication problem. One indicated that they do not receive feedback from the sessions, and the other indicated that they do not know who has participated in sessions. Again, these responses indicate that training in RJ is critical.

The last four themes received one response (3%). The ninth, tenth, eleventh, and twelfth responses were teacher accountability, RJ not implemented, lack of leadership, and school population, respectively. One teacher thought that other teachers were not on board and consistent in the implementation of RJ. Another just felt that RJ was not implemented school-wide. It was the opinion of one teacher that there was a lack of leadership regarding RJ. Last, one teacher felt that the school population and culture were not conducive to having RJ at the school. RJ was necessary at the TMS, and there must be extensive training provided.
Note. *Figure 3* responses to Question 10 of the teacher survey are represented in percent based on the number of responses.

*Figure 3.* Part B Teacher Survey: Question 10

Twenty-Seven (59%) of the 46 teachers responded to Question 11, which asked, “What are some suggestions for improving RJ at your school?” This question created 29 responses. I identified eight themes from the respondents who shared in the survey. Figure 4 represented a graphic illustration below. The most frequently reported theme was professional training received nine (31%) responses. The nine respondents indicated that there was a need for training. One teacher indicated that if there were training at the school, everyone would be on the same page of RJ’s purpose, goals, and strategies. Another teacher mentioned that in-house training improved RJ at the school. This data resulted in an obvious decision that training must occur on campus.

The second most reported theme was communication. Six (21%) of the responses focused on this theme. One teacher stated that if the teachers worked and communicated better as a team, there would be an improvement in the RJ process. Another teacher felt that more information should be available so that everyone understands what is needed to be successful. Again, the data indicated a lack of communication; this was useful information for the study in terms of supporting a need for change or at least improvement.

The third most frequently reported theme was a coherence to program implementation. This theme received three (9%) responses. One teacher specified that rules and protocols across the board should be compulsory. Another teacher felt that rules should be consistently applied. The third response indicated that strict adherence
must be compulsory. There was great implication to this study, especially when considered for change and improvement.

The fourth, fifth, sixth, and seventh most frequently reported themes were administrative support, frequency, after-school projects, and unrelated to the question. Themes received 2 (7%) of the responses. A teacher felt there was not sufficient support from the school administrators. Another teacher felt that school administrators should provide more support, and finally, two teachers felt that the practices should commence after school. Two responses were unrelated to the question. This indicated that the school should bring back someone who has retired from the system to provide the needed administrative support. One teacher expressed staff members need to embrace the changing culture. More education was needed so that teachers get a better understanding of the RJ processes: intentions and expectations. The final most frequently reported theme was to do away with the RJ at the school. This theme did not address improving RJ at the school.

![Figure 4](image-url)

*Note.* Figure 4 responses to Question 11 of the teacher survey are represented in percent based on the number of responses.

*Figure 4.* Part B Teacher Survey: Question 11
Twenty-Two (48%) of the 46 teachers responded to Question 12, which asked, “As a stakeholder of Thompson Middle School, what impact did the RJ program have on the culture of your school?” This question engendered 27 responses. I identified nine themes from the respondents who participated in the survey. Figure 5 showed a graphic representation below. The most frequently reported theme was a change in student behavior, which received eight (30%) responses. Seven teachers indicated that students learned to listen to each other and saw the perspective of others. Another teacher stated that RJ worked for some students by improving students’ behavior. This data showed that some teachers knew RJ was enforced and saw the evidence of the school’s implementation.

The second most frequent theme garnered six (22%) responses. The second, theme was an adverse change in the culture of the school. Some teachers indicated students’ behavior changed for the worse, citing that students felt there was no consequence for their negative behavior. These data indicated that training to understand the process was needed. It was evident that the two teachers felt that all misbehavior required punitive responses.

The third most frequently reported theme was that there was no change in the culture. These teachers saw no significant change in the culture. Whereas, three (11%) indicated for the fourth most frequently reported theme that they were not sure if there was a change. I gathered from these responses that these teachers did not know what to expect to see in the culture with the implementation.

The fifth most frequently reported theme received two responses (8%). It dealt with discussion circles. One teacher questioned where the circles were, and the other
teacher stated that there was no built-in time for circles. At least these teachers knew of one component of RJ, and for this study, it was essential that these questions be addressed in the change process.

The sixth, seventh, eighth, and ninth most frequently reported themes were consistency, poor presentation, research, and support for teachers, respectively. Each of the last four themes received one response (4%). One teacher felt that there was a need for consistency with school rules. Also, a second teacher felt that the principal or assistant principal failed to present RJ well to the staff. Another teacher indicated that research is necessary for the best method of implementation of RJ. Finally, a teacher felt that teachers need more support to garner changes in the culture. The data gathered from this question is significant in terms of impacting my change process.

![Pie Chart](image)

*Note.* Figure 5 responses to Question 12 of the teacher survey are represented in percent based on the number of responses.

*Figure 5.* Part B Teacher Survey: Question 12

**Administrator Survey Responses**

The five administrators, two assistant principals, and three deans, completed the survey (Appendix B) without constant prodding. Deans for this study were considered
quasi-administrators and were in the administrative category. Thirty minutes near the end of the administrative team meeting, I explained the process and shared with them that this was a partial requirement in completing my doctoral studies. I distributed two consent forms (Appendix A) and a survey form (Appendix B). Also, I informed them that participation was voluntary, and they could have discontinued at any time during the process with no negative consequences.

I placed a large envelope in a conference room where I met with the administrative team. The envelope was for the administrators to enclose the signed consent forms and placed atop the completed surveys. I left the room while they completed the survey, giving them the liberty to complete the form without my giving the appearance that I was looking over their shoulders.

I collected the envelopes after they completed the surveys. I chose to use this technique because I did not want the participant to think that I wanted to sway their responses. I wanted them to have total autonomy free of any influence from me. Of the five administrative team members, there were five respondents (100%). Below are the results of the survey data from those five respondents.

Part A: Statement 1 of the administrator survey stated, “I have used restorative justice during the school year.” There were five (100%) respondents. Four participants strongly agreed (80%). One (20%) agreed to use of RJ. No one responded neutral, disagreed, or strongly disagreed to ever having used RJ during the school year. Based on this information, it seemed that the administrators were actively involved in the administration of the RJ process. Figure 6 depicts a graphic representation of the data acquired from the administrators.
Part A: Statement 2 of the administrator survey stated, “I have used restorative justice more than once during the school year.” There were five (100%) respondents. Four participants strongly agreed (80%). One (20%) agreed to use RJ more than once. No one responded neutral, disagreed, or strongly disagreed to ever having used RJ more than once during the school year. Figure 2 represents the data stated above. It seemed that the administrators understood the purpose of restorative practices and used them as they worked with students throughout the year.

Figure 7. Part A Administrator Survey: Statement 2
Part A: Statement 3 of the administrator survey stated, “I perceive RJ as working well in our school.” There were five (100%) respondents. One participant strongly agreed (20%). Four (80%) agreed that RJ is working well at their school. No one responded neutral, disagreed, or strongly disagreed to the statement, which indicated that RJ was perceived as working well in the school. For this study, this expected data came from the administrators. They were the ones who administered the process, and they found it to have some rather good results. Figure 3 reflects the data gathered from the administrators on the effectiveness of the RJ process at TMS.

![Figure 3](image.png)

Figure 3. Part A Administrator Survey: Statement 3

Part A: Statement 4 of the administrator survey stated, “I do not perceive RJ as working well in our school.” There were five (100%) respondents. There were no responses for strongly agreed, agreed, or neutral categories. Three respondents disagreed (60%) with the statement. Two (40%) strongly disagreed with the statement. The administrators have strong positive impressions about RJ and its effectiveness on the campus. The administrators felt strongly about RJ; that it was working on the campus.

Figure 8. Part A Administrator Survey: Statement 4
The data were contrary to the thinking of the teachers. Figure 4 shows the data based on the question above.

![Bar chart showing responses to a survey question.]

**Figure 9.** Part A Administrator Survey: Statement 4

Part A: Statement 5 of the administrator survey stated, “I have not noticed any differences in the students’ behavior at my school.” Five administrators responded (100%). There were no responses for the strongly agreed, agreed, or neutral categories. Three respondents disagreed (60%) with the statement. Two (40%) strongly disagreed to the statement. The administrators noticed a change in the school with the implementation of RJ. There must have been some significant indicators to help them to determine change. Figure 5 captured the data in a graph below.
Figure 10. Part A Administrator Survey: Statement 5

Part A: Statement 6 of the administrator survey stated, “Restorative Justice is not working well at my school.” There were five (100%) respondents. There were no responses to the strongly agreed, agreed, or neutral categories. Three respondents disagreed (60%) with the statement. Two (40%) strongly disagreed with the statement. The administrators had positive impressions about RJ and its effectiveness on the campus. I gathered they felt so positive about RJ because many of them were responsible for the implementation, especially the deans. Figure 6 reflects a graphic representation.

Figure 11. Part A Administrator Survey: Statement 6
Part A: Statement 7 of the administrator survey stated, “The RJ process will change the culture of the school.” There were five (100%) respondents. Two respondents agreed (40%) with the statement, and three (60%) agreed. There were no neutral, disagreed, or strongly disagreed responses. The administration saw a change in the environment or culture of the school. This information is critical to this study to compare their perception and that of the teachers. Teachers felt just the opposite. Many did not know that RJ was part of the discipline process.

![Bar Chart](image)

**Figure 12.** Part A Administrator Survey: Statement 7

There were five open-ended questions in Part B of the administrative survey (Appendix B). This section allowed for administrators, two assistant principals, and three deans, to respond to the questions expressing themselves freely without guidance. I encouraged my administrators to give meaningful responses using their knowledge of the restorative processes at TMS.

Five (100%) of the administrators responded to Question 8, which asked, “If you perceive RJ as working well in your school, how? Give examples.” This question yielded 10 responses. I identified eight themes from the respondents who participated in the
survey (see graphic representation in Figure 8). Two themes garnered two responses (20%). They were a reduction in suspension and solving conflicts. The administrators felt that RJ was working well in the school. These data were quite supportive of the purpose of RJ and provided this study with data that indicated how the administrators felt how RJ worked in their school.

The third, fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh, and eighth most frequently reported themes, all received one (10%) response to RJ’s impact. They were as follows: (a) it gave students the opportunity to express their feelings, (b) it helped resolve issues with students, (c) it provided an alternative to discipline, (d) it built awareness of tolerance and second chance, (e) restored relationships, and (f) it gave students an opportunity to discuss concerns without fear of repercussion, respectively. The administrators understood RJ. Their responses embodied the purpose of RJ indicating that the restorative practices proactively built healthy relationships and a sense of community that prevented and addressed conflicts (Morrison & Ahmed, 2006).

Note. Figure 13 responses to Question 8 of the administrator survey are represented in percent based on the number of responses.

Figure 13. Part B Administrator Survey: Question 8
Three (60%) of five administrators responded to Question 9, which asked, “If you perceive RJ as not working well in your school, why? Give examples.” This question yielded five responses. I identified five themes from the respondents who participated in the survey (see graphic representation in Figure 14). Each theme garnered one response (20%). They were as follows: (a) the approach not used appropriately, (b) there is no real commitment to the process, (c) it is not used throughout the campus, (d) it is not used more at the Tier 1 level; instead of Tier 3 only, and (e) RJ has worked well on campus, respectively. The administrators felt that teachers and staff were not correctly using the process. This information was useful for my study as I further develop my research. The most telling part of this data was that teachers and administrators were not compatible with their thinking. Further study of this data indicated a necessity in better communication with the two parties.

Note. Figure 14 responses to Question 9 of the administrator survey are represented in percent based on the number of responses.

Figure 14. Part B Administrator Survey: Question 9

Five (100%) of five administrators responded to Question 10, which asked, “What do you consider to be challenged with the implementation of RJ at your school?” This question yielded eight responses. I identified six themes from the respondents who
participated in the survey (see graphic representation in Figure 15). Two themes garnered two responses (25%) each. They were teacher buy-in and teacher mindset. One administrator felt that fewer teachers had buy-in to the process. Another administrator felt that mindset is the challenge with restorative practices. This administration believes that people have to believe that there is power in restoring relationships and discussing concerns as a community to benefit a member or several members.

The third, fourth, fifth, and sixth most reported themes with one response each (12.5%) were as follows: (a) difficulty to balance a curriculum and RJ scheduled conference, (b) many think it is a waste of time, (c) time and consistency, and (d) no supervision of students as they report to the RJ circle. These data points proved crucial for the change leadership portion of the research. As the researcher of this project, I now know what essential concepts that I need to focus my attention on as I progress through this study. I see what others value in the implementation of success.

Note. Figure 15 responses to Question 10 of the administrator survey are represented in percent based on the number of responses.

*Figure 15. Part B Administrator Survey: Question 10*
One-Hundred percent of administrators responded to Question 11, which asked, “What are suggestions for improving RJ at your school? By teachers? Counselors? Administrators?” This question yielded seven responses. I identified seven different themes from the respondents (see graphic representation in Figure 16). Each theme garnered one response (14.3%) each. They were as follows: (a) teachers should have restorative mindset as opposed to a punitive one, (b) more teacher should participate in RJ practices, (c) use students as ambassadors, not just when an issue arises, (d) create 20 minutes weekly to complete an RJ group around campus, (e) have more people conduct the meetings for efficiency, (f) a general overview of RJ practices for teacher would be beneficial and (g) counselors and administrators should be actively involved in RJ so that it becomes a part of school norms. These were excellent suggestions as I addressed change. The administrators may consider the implementation of a school-wide approach. Also, they are of the belief that teachers need more training; however, they failed to mention that they too could benefit from additional training.

Note. Figure 16 responses to Question 11 of the administrators’ survey are represented in percent based on the number of responses.

Figure 16. Part B Administrator Survey: Question 11
One-Hundred percent of the administrators responded to Question 12, which asked, “As a stakeholder of Thompson Middle School, what impact did the Restorative Justice Program have on the culture of your school?” This question yielded ten responses. I identified seven themes from the respondents who participated in the survey (see graphic representation in Figure 17). Three themes garnered two responses (20%) each. They were foster better communication, build a sense of community, and student responding positively to each other. One administrator indicated that when children communicate effectively, there is a better sense of community and trust. Another administrator stated that children learn how to deal with conduct productively. These data points suggested the school team experienced a positive reaction from students.

The fourth, fifth, sixth, and seventh most frequently reported themes received one (10%) response. They were as follows: (a) suspension with softer reintegration, (b) active with specific groups of students, (c) students are asking to form a circle, and (d) building rapport with students and teacher, respectively. One administrator indicated that RJ helped to resolve issues between student on campus through communication and reflection. Also, one indicated that RJ helped to affect the campus positively. The information gathered from this survey question provided useful information when working toward the change portion of this research. The information was useful because it provided me information about how the administration felt about the teachers. They shared that there needs to be an attitude adjustment of many teachers. They mentioned what teachers need to do, but they failed to include themselves more in the process.
Note. Figure 17 responses to Question 12 of the administrator survey are represented in percent based on the number of responses.

Figure 17. Part B Administrator Survey: Question 12

Interviews

I conducted the interviews after school and not during instructional hours. I asked participants to provide me confidential feedback through an interview protocol. Participants were given a hard copy of the interview questions (Appendix D), which I created to collect data based on the participants’ perception of RJ. I coordinated the date and time for the interviews. After the interviews were completed, I tabulated the findings.

I interviewed two district resource teachers who trained school personnel on the RJ practices. After I scheduled with the resource teachers for the process, I met with them at their worksite to perform the interviews. Initially, I informed them that their participation was voluntary, and they could discontinue the process at any time. Before beginning the interviews, I provided each participant with two Informed Consent Interview Forms (Appendix C). The interviewees completed one of the forms, signed it, and gave back to me, and the other remained with the participants.
I did not interview any school-based employees. I interviewed my supervisor, the area superintendent, and the senior administrator for curriculum and school services. The process of setting up and interviewing these individuals was the same as with the district resource teachers. After I scheduled with my supervisor and the senior administrator, I met with them at their worksite to perform the interviews. I informed them that their participation was voluntary, and they could discontinue the process at any time. Before beginning the interviews, I provided each participant with two Informed Consent Interview Forms (Appendix C). They completed one of the forms, signed it, and gave it back to me, and the other remained with the participants. I chose this technique because it was an intimate process where I could sit in front of the interviewees and read their physical responses as they pondered the questions for their responses.

In response to interview Question 1, which asked, “What is your perception of what was working well with the Restorative Justice Program?,” 10 themes evolved (see Table 10). The most frequently reported theme identified was a change in school culture. Two of four respondents (50%), Resource Teacher 1 and 2, discussed that the program created a change in the school culture. The second most frequent theme was a reduction in OSS. Two of the respondents (50%), area superintendent and Resource Teacher 2, stated that students did not lose an enormous amount of time of instruction because of suspension. The third most reported theme was communication. Two of the respondents (50%) indicated that students received the opportunity to talk about what behavior was appropriate or inappropriate. The last seven themes had a single response each (25%). The themes were as follows: (a) testimonials shared by staff, (b) testimonials from students, (c) positive results, (d) students strive for excellence, (e) relationships were
restored, (f) students exposed to a structured environment, and (g) behavior did not affect
academics. Table 10 depicts the responses of the four respondents.

With restorative practices at TMS, people from the outside looking in view the
climate as calm and organized. The data reflected that the area superintendent, senior
administrator, and the two resource teachers placed a high value on the program and its
practices. The data indicated that some aspects like the reduction in OSS and a positive
change in the school culture helped TMS to be effective; this information may be helpful
in the implementation of another structured program.

Table 10

Responses to Interview Question 1

<table>
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<th></th>
<th>Perc</th>
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<th>Sr. Admin</th>
<th>Resource Teacher 1</th>
<th>Resource Teacher 2</th>
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<td>Reduction in out-of-school suspension</td>
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<td>Communication</td>
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<td>Testimonials of staff</td>
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<td>Testimonials of students</td>
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<td>Positive results</td>
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<td>Students strive for excellence</td>
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<tr>
<td>Behavior not affect academics</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

In response to interview Question 2, which asked, “If you have had
communication with the teachers relative to the RJ program, what have you gleaned from
that communication regarding the Restorative Justice Program as working well at Thompson Middle School?,” six themes evolved (see Table 11). The most frequently reported theme identified was that they have not communicated with the teachers about RJ. Two of four respondents (50%), area superintendent and senior administrator, indicated that they never broached the topic of restorative practices with teachers. The other five themes were that (a) RJ was impactful, (b) it was building character, (c) it was building a relationship, (d) it was restoring relationships, and (e) the increasing number of trained teachers who have facilitated a circle were opened to the process. They had one response (25%) each. These data proved was essential as I developed the change leadership portion of this research. It is evident that district-level personnel do not have much communication with the teachers at the school. The school community will play a vital role in the restructuring of restorative practices.

Table 11

*Responses to Interview Question 2*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Perc</th>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>Area Sup</th>
<th>Sr. Admin</th>
<th>Resource Teacher 1</th>
<th>Resource Teacher 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No communication with teachers</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RJ was impactful</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RJ was building character</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RJ building relationships</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RJ was restoring relationships</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More trained teachers were receptive to the process</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In response to interview Question 3, which asked, “What is your perception of what is not working well with the Restorative Justice Program?,” six themes evolved (see Table 12). Two themes received two responses (50%). The first most frequently reported theme identified was that few people on the staff shoulder the responsibilities of conducting circles. The second most frequently reported theme was the lack of training. The belief of one of the respondents was that the administrators did not send teachers to receive training in the process. These responses were adverse to one respondent in the previous question. The last four themes received one response. They were (a) the circle was not done with fidelity, (b) teachers were not documenting their completion of circles, (c) circle took too long to conduct, and (d) dean and administrators did not have the buy-in of the process. These data points would serve as pointers that could be used in the latter part of this research. The district-level personnel did not believe that the school invested time and energy on the implementation. They felt that the school personnel needed to implement with fidelity.

Table 12

*Responses to Interview Question 3*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Perc</th>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>Sr. Admin</th>
<th>Resource Teacher 1</th>
<th>Resource Teacher 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fewer teacher shoulder the responsibility to conduct circles</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of training</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Circles not conducted with fidelity Not documenting circles</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In response to interview Question 4, which asked, “What do you perceive as challenges to the Restorative Justice Program at your school?,” seven themes evolved (see Table 13). Two themes received two responses (50%). The first most frequently reported theme identified was that teachers did not see the value of the consequences. The area superintendent said that a challenge was that teachers needed to understand that the students were youngsters who were still learning to make the right choices. The second most frequently reported theme was the lack of training. One respondent indicated that more teachers should have been trained.

The third, fourth, fifth, sixth, and seventh themes received one response each (25%). They were as follows: (a) not enough time to conduct circles, (b) tracking the circles was a challenge, (c) the program lost too many who could have benefited, (d) teachers need to understand what restorative is all about, and (e) some teachers saw it as being soft on the children. The area superintendent expressed that more training was imperative, especially because teachers felt that students must pay for their infractions. Training was on the minds of this individual when working with the teachers. There were several reasons why these individuals saw challenges, but training and consequences were the two highest on their list. This information would serve as valuable information as I build support for a change. The district administrators, area superintendent, and senior administrator realized that there were inconsistencies and a lack of systems in place; therefore, it was apparent that adjustments were necessary.
### Table 13

**Responses to Interview Question 4**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Perc</th>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>Area Sup</th>
<th>Sr. Admin</th>
<th>Resource Teacher 1</th>
<th>Resource Teacher 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not seeing the value of the program</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of training</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No enough time to conduct circles</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not tracking circles</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program benefits lost</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers understanding restorative</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers too soft on students</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In response to interview Question 5, which asked, “If you have had communications with the teachers relative to the RJ program, what have you gleaned from that communication regarding Restorative Justice Program as not working well at Thompson Middle School?,” six themes evolved (see Table 14). One theme received two responses (50%). The first most frequently reported theme identified was that teachers that received RJ training did not understand the process. The second most frequently reported theme identified students’ manipulation of the system and got away without receiving consequences. The third most frequent theme was that teachers were trained and did not facilitate any circles. The fourth most reported theme was that some teachers were trained and did not understand what to do with RJ or how to facilitate circles. Teachers in middle school believed that if punished in middle school, the scars on a child could have a life-long effect. That served as the fifth most reported theme. The last themes were that teachers thought students were getting away with murder in the
figurative sense. The second through sixth themes received one response (25%). As district administrators and the district resource teachers responded to the question, they failed to share why they possessed a lack of information to substantiate their comments. I will need to delve deeper into the responses to interpret their thoughts as best as I can without bringing my bias into the mix.

Table 14

*Responses to Interview Question 5*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Perc</th>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>Area Sup</th>
<th>Sr. Admin</th>
<th>Resource Teacher 1</th>
<th>Resource Teacher 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Training</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students manipulating the system</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trained and not facilitating</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not understanding what to do</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life-long effect</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students getting away with murder</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In response to interview Question 6, which asked, “What would you suggest as an improvement to the RJ program at Thompson Middle School?,” three themes advanced (see Table 15). One-Hundred percent of respondents responded to this question. The first most frequently reported theme was training (100%). Each of the respondents expressly vocalized on this question with training. They felt that the school would have significantly improved their process if more teachers received training. The second most reported theme was teacher support. Two respondents, the senior administrator and one of the resource teacher, felt that teachers should have been better supported. No specifics were provided. The third way of improving the process was to monitor and have a
discussion about the implementation of behavior team meetings. These were good suggestions, and the school could have benefitted from knowing this information earlier.

The change in leadership paper would address this suggestion.

Table 15

*Responses to Interview Question 6*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Perc</th>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>Sr. Admin</th>
<th>Resource Teacher 1</th>
<th>Resource Teacher 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Training</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support for the teachers</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitor implementation and discuss in</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discipline Team Meeting</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In response to interview Question 7, which asked, “What role can the administration play in the improvement of the RJ process?,” seven themes developed (see Table 16). Three themes received two responses (50%) each. The first most frequently reported theme identified dealt with the implementation of the practices. One respondent indicated that the administration should be more involved in the process. The second most reported theme was communication of successes. The area superintendent felt that the administration should share the successes of the program at the school. The third most frequently reported theme was training for teachers. One respondent stressed that administration should stress teacher participation in the training. The third, fourth, fifth, sixth, and seventh themes received one response each (25%). They were as follows: (a) administration should receive training themselves, (b) not placing the burden on one person to facilitate circles, (c) being clear what the target is, and (d) getting mentors for the students. The data collected in this section was quite valuable. It was apparent that
these individuals did have a significant amount of knowledge about the implementation at TMS. I gleaned from this activity and garnered the information needed for TMS move ahead in the implementation of restorative practices.

Table 16

Responses to Interview Question 7

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area Sup</th>
<th>Sr. Admin</th>
<th>Resource Teacher 1</th>
<th>Resource Teacher 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Implementation of practices</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication of Successes</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training for teachers</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training for Administrators</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Placing burden on one person to facilitate circles</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clear of targets</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Get mentor for students</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In response to interview Question 8, which asked, “What role can teachers play in the improvement of the RJ process?” four themes evolved (see Table 17). One theme received two responses (50%). The first most frequently reported theme identified was teacher training. One respondent indicated that teachers must be trained and promote and encourage others for training. The second, third, and fourth themes received one response each (25%). The second theme was the teacher testimonials. One respondent suggested that the principal and teachers should give those testimonials. The third theme was supporting the process, and the fourth theme was talking to others to improve their skills. There were a couple of reasons listed as to what role teachers can play in the improvement of the RJ process. Finding essential teachers to provide testimonials of
what they liked about the RJ process, and talking to other teachers to improve their skills were two essential components. This information would serve as valuable information as I build support for a change.

Table 17

*Responses to Interview Question 8*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Perc</th>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>Sr. Sup</th>
<th>Resource Teacher 1</th>
<th>Resource Teacher 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Training</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Testimonials</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talking to others to</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>improve their skills</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In response to interview Question 9, which asked, “How can counselors assist in the improvement process?” six themes evolved (see Table 18). One theme received three responses (75%). The first most frequently reported theme identified was collaboration. One respondent indicated that counselors should talk with other counselors to improve their skills. The second, third, fourth, fifth, and sixth themes received one response each (25%). The second theme was that the training required implementation with fidelity. One district resource teacher indicated that teachers must receive training. The fourth theme dealt with students needing a transition back into class from the RJ process. The fifth theme was that counselors should provide resources and support for teachers. Moreover, the sixth theme was that counselors ought to use RJ. There were several reasons as to how counselors can assist in the improvement of the RJ process. The number one reason was collaboration, which garnered a 75% response rate. This information would serve as valuable information as I build support for a change. As I
further work to improve the process, I know that I must be instrumental in involving the counselors more and have them take principal roles in the implementation.

Table 18

Responses to Interview Question 9

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Perc</th>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Sr. Admin</th>
<th>Resource Teacher 1</th>
<th>Resource Teacher 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Collaboration</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implement the training with fidelity</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They must be trained</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have a transition back into class from RJ</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counselors can provide resources and support for teachers</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use RJ</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In response to interview Question 10, which asked, “Do you think that the proper implementation of the RJ process will improve the culture of the school? Why or Why not?,” 11 themes evolved (see Table 19). There were 15 responses to this question. One theme received a response from 100% of respondents. The first most frequently reported theme identified indicated it would improve the culture. They failed to share how simply that culture will change for faculty, staff, and students.

The second through 10th themes responded with a yes that it would improve the culture, and they responded with the following themes: (a) it would help students to arrive to a mutually agreed decision to resolve the problem, (b) all would benefit because of it, (c) it helps to get to the root of the problem, (d) students get to save face, (e) it is a different approach to punitive measures, (f) if one believes it will work, it will, (g)
students get to discuss concerns with a goal of resolution, (h) students can build and maintain relationships, (i) everyone will feel heard, and (j) there will be better understanding of problems that may arise. One respondent further elaborated that schools should use this approach proactively instead of waiting for a conflict to arise. These data were quite revealing from those individuals who were not directly involved in the school’s day-to-day operation. However, data support continued implementation of the restorative practices for better operation and a change in the culture of the school for positive interactions. They provided an array of culture changing or building structures that the school could use as RJ is implemented school-wide.

Table 19

Responses to Interview Question 10

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Perc</th>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>Sr. Admin</th>
<th>Resource Teacher 1</th>
<th>Resource Teacher 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes, with no specific recommendations</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solve Problems</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All benefit</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Get to the Root of Problems</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students Save Face</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Different Approach</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Believe that it works, and it will work</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discuss concerns with a goal of the resolution</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Build and maintain relationships</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A better understanding of problems that may arise</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Organizational Changes

I was convinced and determined to make an organizational change at TMS regarding RJ practices. In almost every answer to the questions from the survey and the interview protocol, teachers, administrator, the area superintendent, the senior administrators, and the district resource teachers expressed that more training and comprehensive implementation of the restorative circles and practices were imperative for better implementation of RJ at TMS. What I thought was a strategic move in practice when I initiated RJ practices at TMS was a smidgen of what I should have done. I needed to execute the training of teachers and administrators with intensity. Conceptually, the RJ practices as it operated was a good program, especially for those who received training. It offered those teachers a tool with valuable information and best practices that they used to provide a small number of students in which they facilitated in circles. They used that tool to develop relationships, give students a voice, and help students to understand the situations and circumstances of their counterparts. Also, it provided teachers with the ability to acquire a better understanding of their students and to think restoratively.

An organizational change in TMS practices is essential. After an analysis of the data I received, I realized that I must change to the system of operation at TMS. This change will require a four-prong approach: (a) develop a plan for training, (b) scaling up practices and implementation, (c) implement universal circles, and (d) monitor practices to ensure implementation operates with fidelity.

This organizational change addresses an adaptive challenge. It was not something that could remain handled with a technical approach. My initial approach to
implementing the RJ practices at TMS was because I felt that it was required because of the discipline problem on the campus, and I was reacting to a negative situation. The district was addressing discipline as a whole with a more restorative approach rather than a punitive one, and as principal, I wanted to join in this movement to minimize the discipline, and the OSS increased.

The data I gathered from my evaluation of my approach showed that I needed to progress more systemically and to involve more stakeholders in the practices. The first approach to change is to develop a plan for training in restorative practices. Planning is bringing stability, growth, and reassurance that things will work if it is strategic and in order. Planning involves being proactive; however, this will be reactionary because I saw from the data that I needed to go back to the drawing board. Also, planning will allow for rapid responses to unexpected changes. Planning is an integral part of the process for effectiveness; it requires collaboration with the school staff (Ashley, 2015, 2016). The purpose of choosing planning as one of the four major components to change at TMS is that I want to be strategic about my next approach to RJ. TMS has implemented in the school with little quality planning taking place. For the school to have an effective RJ program, I need to plan it better and completely.

Many of the respondents in the survey and the interview indicated the lack of teachers trained, had knowledge of or used the RJ practices. Also, it is imperative that TMS scale up the practices; therefore, scaling up was chosen as the second organizational change that is needed. According to Bryk, Gomez, Grunow, and Hallinan (2011) efforts to scale up effective practices emphasized the need to engage educators in developing the innovation and building understanding about it. Many were left in the dark about the
application of these practices hindered the success of practical implementation. Scaling up in a school involves stakeholders in implementation and in the design of an innovation (Redding, Cannata, & Taylor Haynes, 2017). The reason for scaling up the implementation of RJ is because little effect came out the few who received training on the campus. The constant complaint and the data proved it was that only a few knew about RJ and only a few effectively implemented RJ appropriately.

The third organizational change is to implement universal circles. It is the first tier of restorative practices. In this stage, it is for reaffirming relationships through developing social and emotional skills. According to Lukey (2012), universal circles cultivate an academically safe community of examination that requires time, patience, and an assurance to the critical practices of talking, listening, and thinking with one another. According to Gregory and Kuzmich (2007), it permits participants to feel included and have a voice to create favorable climates. Also, it is an opportunity for sharing, reflecting, and discussing. Some use it as a vehicle to celebrate. One recommended suggestion is that school-wide, quarterly, have members on the campus use the community to discuss classroom issues to get the class to discuss issues that are of class concern. Universal circles are the most effective tool or process of RJ. It became evident from the data gathering and analyzation of data that pointed to the ineffective use and the use of the circle to deal with the Tier 3 approach to RJ. The use of the Tier 1 approach, universal circles, would have proven more effective at TMS. TMS would have had fewer fights and confrontations if a proactive method was taken.

The last organizational change is monitoring the changes and progress. This way, I can make whatever adjustments needed in a timely fashion. According to Camilleri
(2016), she indicated that “whenever a new program is put in place, it is crucial that you carefully monitor the progress of the change and review the data collected to look for areas of concern” (p. 45). Monitoring indicates where ineffective implementation needs to be addressed and spotlight effective execution. It helps to identify where additional preparation may be needed and where resources must realign (Marchant, Christensen, Womack, Conley, & Fisher, 2010). My choice for monitoring RJ practices was simple. I should have taken on the continuous monitoring approach; therefore, I would not have needed the evaluation to tell me that the implementation was not as effective as it could have or should have been. The monitoring could have provided the students and teachers at TMS with an effective program, and it could have changed the dynamics and culture of the school positively.

**The 4Cs AS-IS Chart of the Restorative Justice Practices**

I proposed a change to the RJ practices at TMS. I developed a comprehensive diagnostic chart, 4Cs AS-IS chart, that reflects the current problem with the implementation of restorative practices at TMS (Appendix D). According to Wagner, et al. (2006), the AS-IS section focuses on the current context, culture, conditions, and competencies of a situation. At TMS, a limited number of teachers and staff have been trained and implemented RJ to include students in the circles. I surveyed teachers and administrators. Also, I interviewed other district-level individuals, area superintendent, a senior administrator, and two district resource teachers. I sat with them individually for a 30-minutes interview. The details below depict the existing AS-IS context, culture, conditions, and competencies of RJ implementation at TMS.
Context

Context, as defined by Wagner et al. (2006), referred to the skill demands students must meet to succeed and related concerns of the family and community the school serves. In addition, context referred to the larger organizational system within work, informal and formal (Wagner et al., 2006). The context was the fundamentals. A comprehensive description of the context of this study falls under the three context issues I need to address when it comes to the implementation of the restorative practices at TMS. First, students who are victims do not have a voice. Second, there was a racial disparity of students suspended from school, and third, students receive a suspension for an exorbitant number of days.

Usually, the victim in a student-to-student conflict does not give a voice to that individual. Administrators investigate the conflict, and the perpetrator often receives consequences. This process leaves a void for the victim, and that individual is usually not given an opportunity to discuss their feelings. Essentially, students had to keep their feelings to themselves. They were not able to sit at the table with the individuals who have wronged them and share the hurt that was caused by them.

Another concern deals with the racial disparity of students receiving a suspension from school. At TMS and other schools in the district, minority students receive suspensions more than nonminority students. Often, minority students make up less than 20% of the school population. In many cases, minority students are suspended from school more than 50% of the time. Suspension rates for minority students continue to be a problem within many schools and districts. With RJ in practice, the suspension rate has decreased because students are less likely to repeat the same or similar offense, which
could result in being suspended from school. The reduction is excellent; however, schools and TMS must address the disparity when disciplining students. This process would require equal treatment for students regardless of race.

Last, students receive a suspension for an exorbitant number of days from school. Students were suspended multiple times for fighting or disrespect to others. Even though suspensions still occur, the number of times students receive a suspension for fighting and disrespect has decreased. Students should be able to sit in a structured environment and talk about the harm caused by them. They should get to hear what the other participant in the altercation is feeling. Students should be able to work toward solving their problems with their voices positively instead of fighting or being disrespectful. Restorative practices would reduce the number of days or eradicate the suspensions.

As I look at the context involving RJ, there is still work my team and I have to do to bring about change. TMS must provide opportunities for victims to have a voice. The victims need an opportunity to speak, so they are not voiceless. Also, TMS must close the racial disparity of the suspension rate with students and use RJ to help curtail the excessive number of OSS days students receive.

**Culture**

Wagner, et al. (2006) defines culture as “the shared values, beliefs, assumptions, expectations, and behaviors related to students and learning, teachers and teaching, instructional leadership, and the quality of relationships within and beyond the school” (p. 102). A comprehensive description of the culture of this study fell under the three culture issues I need to address concerning the implementation of restorative practices at TMS. First, teachers believe that administrators are not suspending students for
misbehavior. Second, the teachers do not believe that RJ works at TMS. The third issue is that students do not entirely accept the RJ process at face value.

I believe TMS must move beyond teachers feeling that the administration should suspend students. Administration can suspend students for various reasons. The questions are:

- Will students have the opportunity to voice their feelings if they receive a suspension from school?
- Will they get the opportunity to use RJ either before or after their suspension?

The expectation needs to be that students will attend school for 180 days unless they are not able to come because of illness. With that said, TMS must find ways to keep students in school, and RJ provides a way for students to work through their differences and remain in school. However, teachers feel that the administrator is using RJ as a means for them to fail to do their jobs. It seems that teachers would rather see students suspended than for them to build relationships with students and each other. Healthy relationships make it possible for students to communicate through their disagreements.

As part of the culture, teachers believed that RJ did not work. Immediate attention is a need for this concern, and teachers should receive adequate training. I believe that whenever teachers receive training, they need to use the information they glean from the training to help their students. In addition, if this does not occur for teachers, their perception of the students will become their reality. Teachers can be the gatekeepers with RJ. They can buy-in to the process and support what the school is using based on research, or they can be the RJ gatekeeper and maintain the belief it does not work.
Students do not entirely accept the RJ process at face value because many of them have not gone through the RJ process. They have begun to listen to the voices of the teachers who do not trust or believe in the process of RJ. Also, students could be reluctant because they are sitting in the same room with the individual who has offended them. The purpose of RJ is to restore the harm and provide a voice to the voiceless. Using RJ can help shape the culture of the school to one that students feel valued, and respected by their peers.

**Conditions**

Wagner et al. (2006) defined conditions as “the external architecture surrounding student learning, the tangible arrangements of time, space, and resources” (p. 101). There are three concerns under the conditions of the RJ practices at TMS. First, suspensions negatively affect learning because students are not in school, and teachers are not able to provide direct instruction. If students receive a suspension, they miss group collaboration, peer interaction, and the school experience. In my district, there are alternative centers students can attend instead of being suspended from school; however, some cannot attend those programs.

Students attending the alternative center benefit by having a teacher present at the site, and students are directly supervised. If students are at home during their OSS, they do not do the work to keep themselves on target, and parents cannot ensure that they are working because many of the parents work during the day. There is no district-supported transportation to the sites, which means the parent or guardian is responsible for getting their student there and picking them up at a specified time. The fact that there is no district-supported transportation for students to the alternative sites creates a hardship for
some families. The alternative sites offer tutoring, a certified teacher, and a counselor for the students. If a student is not able to attend the site, that student remains at home until they can reenter the school, which typically is for one-to-five days.

Last, some administrators do not believe in the RJ process. Some administrators would still instead suspend students from the school as a form of discipline instead of using the RJ process. RJ does not take the place of suspension, but it does provide the victim an opportunity to have a dialogue with the person that caused harm to them in a nonthreatening environment. Many administrators need to develop a restorative mood rather than think that infractions deserve punitive measures.

**Competencies**

Competencies are the last of the 4Cs. Wagner et al. (2006) described competencies as “the repertoire of skills and knowledge that influences student learning” (p. 99). There are three concerns for competencies. First, not all teachers at TMS received training in restorative practices. Second, administrators do not use the RJ process with fidelity. Third, some teachers fail to understand the relationship between restorative practices and student performance.

Because not all teachers received training in restorative practices, they are less likely to display the competencies necessary to be successful with effectively holding an RJ circle or having good classroom management. Having a problem with classroom management does not mean that teachers are not competent; it means after they have received proper training, they will be better equipped to be successful. These competencies deal with the people within the organization. The people in the
organization include counselors and administration. If one group in the organization is inadequately trained, RJ can prove to be ineffective.

As it relates to fidelity, administrators do not use RJ with fidelity. The lack of implementing RJ with fidelity is the perception at TMS, and this is not a good perception. A possible reason for this perception deals with the administration not effectively communicating with teachers during the initial rollout of RJ.

There are three unanswered questions that I need to address when I attempt the organizational change and policy sections of this study; however, some of them may not receive an answer. The three questions are:

- How do I address scaling up the training and implementation of the school without losing or reducing the morale of the staff members?
- Why did the administrators have a different viewpoint about the implementation of RJ at TMS than the teachers?
- Why the reduction in suspension did not bring about the change in disparity when it comes to racial demographics?

These are three questions I acquired while I was conducting my data gathering and the analysis of the data.

TMS implemented the restorative practices with a few teachers; however, the entire school gauged on the small number of teachers and administrators trained in the process. That was not the plan. Implementation and scheduling of planning were supposed to be at capacity; whereby, the training was supposed to be scaled where it ran effectively. Because of poor planning and implementation, the school and the data suffered. TMS should have been meticulous in the application; instead, close monitoring
and guidance fell short. Upon review, research and a collection of ideas and information from others, I have become more knowledgeable of how I should follow through in implementing RJ at TMS. TMS experienced a reduction in suspensions; however, the administration and I did not gain popularity; administration gained distrust because teachers felt nothing was done about students’ poor behavior. Teachers felt and expressed that the students had begun to run the school. Truly, that was not how they felt; they expressed their resentment to students’ behavior and the fact that students received fewer days for infractions that they previously committed and received more severe penalties.

Even though the number of days students received previously was not appropriate, TMS was operating based on historical practices. As a dean, I learned that students who participated in a physical altercation; both students were to receive a 10-day suspension. Why 10 days, no one knew the answer. Why were both students suspended if one did not initiate it, no one knew that answer. Administrators in the district had begun to mitigate suspensions for the victims if they did not participate. Now, 10-day suspensions are not the options; the school has reduced those numbers of days. This question, I believe will receive attention in the change and policy phase of this study. TMS can plan better and ensure better implementation of the RJ process. It is the next two questions that I do not believe will be adequately addressed.

The second unanswered question deals with why the administrators had a different viewpoint about the implementation of RJ at TMS than the teachers. They heard and saw everything that the teachers saw and heard; however, their understanding of what took place on the campus vastly differed from that of the teachers and individuals
outside of TMS. I had begun to think that their responses were somewhat skewed because they were leaders in the program implementation or because they were members of the leadership team and answered to the principal, me. One would have thought that they would view the data gathering process as a tool to improve their practices. I feel they thought of it as a magnifying glass and that it enlarged deficiencies. This is probably not a question that would receive an answer; however, it causes me to wonder.

The third unanswered question focuses on racial demographics. There was not a change in the racial disparity regarding OSS. There was still the same percentage of Black, White, and Hispanic students as it was before RJ. TMS was able to reduce the suspensions, but TMS did not affect the disproportionalities.

In TMS administrative team meetings, leadership discussed how the school needs to become more culturally responsive to the children and families being served. Ten years ago, TMS was predominately White students. Today, a large percentage of Black and Hispanic students are the predominance, 60% of the population. TMS leadership has discussed the change in population. Those who have been there for that period have indicated the teachers’ practices, and mindsets have not made any adjustments. These situations compound my problem, which is evidence that TMS must address this situation. RJ practices require a shift in mindsets. It is a considerable investment of time and energy.

The organizational changes that I will implement will require an investment of time and energy. I will implement my Change Leadership Plan (CLP) explicitly. My first emphasis will involve developing a plan for training on RJ practices. Research and data gathering for this study helped to position me to better approach this activity.
Strategically, I will develop a team comprised of individuals who are willing and have the desire to see that restorative practices work at TMS. They will be members who are influential, trustworthy, and not necessarily individuals others identify as the principal’s favorites. Based on the data gathered in this study, teachers need to believe that TMS is being guided in the right direction; one better than what they are experiencing currently. I will intentionally have only one administrator on the team, either an assistant principal or dean, a teacher representing each grade level and a guidance counselor and the SAFE coordinator. They will develop the following plans: (a) a communication plan, (b) a training plan, (c) a scaling up plan, (d) implementation plan, (e) monitoring plan, and (f) an evaluation plan.

From the plans, I will place a greater emphasis on scaling up practices and implementation and to better monitor RJ practices at TMS. These are the two areas that TMS fell short in during the initial execution of RJ practices at TMS. The plan will involve training the entire staff and ensuring implementation fidelity. Monitoring will be vital in the process. Team members will serve as monitors. They will perform regular checks to ensure conformity. If teachers are deviating from the practices, the team members will address the teacher and offer additional support or more training. Further aberrations will require the principal’s intervention.

The one crucial practice enforced will be school-wide use of universal circles. Teachers will receive training on the use of circles, especially universal circles. In education, circles provide opportunities for students to share their feelings, build relationships, and solve problems. Consequently, it is a practice used when there is a transgression; the individuals play an active role in addressing the wrong and making
things right (Riestenberg, 2002). At TMS, it is imperative that the team establishes great relationships and rebuild what was dismantled with the first implementation of RJ. TMS must explore more than anything the use of community building and use universal circles. According Davidson, Lickona, and Khmelkov (2008), a school or classroom must build a sense of community by creating a group that extends to others the respect one has for self, to come to know each other as individuals, to care about each other, and to feel a sense of accountability to each other. This practice is what TMS’ staff and administration must establish.

I will collaborate with the Minority Achievement Officer (MAO) in my district on the implementation of the CLP, so administration can adequately discuss the situation at TMS. This department houses the two resource teachers who train district staff on the RJ practices. Because the training resides within this office, I will seek out methods for training the entire staff at TMS. This training will probably need to take place in the summer to accommodate staff. Current training in RJ practices in the district is a two-day training. With the 127 staff members, it would require 20 sessions of training, especially because training is limited to 25 individuals at a time. The department has two teachers, and they conduct the sessions alone. It will be asking for two tiers of training because others have received training.

Aside from the district training, TMS will receive, I will approach the MAO chief for permission and support to send five staff members to Bethlehem, Pennsylvania for training through the International Institute for Restorative Practices (IIRP). IIRP is internationally affiliated with other institutions and has trained more than 75,000 professionals from 85 countries around the world from 2006-2017 academic years. The
district staff received training from this institution and are licensed to offer training. I want and need staff members to receive the train-the-trainer model so that training will be available on the school site. With attrition my school experiences throughout the year, I will need immediate training for my staff instead of having to wait for available space at the district level. Becoming a school-trained staff will help me reach my goal of becoming a culturally responsive school with restorative values and practices. The school will become more orderly and academically focused.

**Interpretation**

The results of the surveys and interviews indicated that there are systemic problems with the implementation of RJ practices at TMS. The teachers were not happy with the program’s results. They felt that much more needed to be done for a change in culture, children’s behavior, and the overall discipline at the school. It is my interpretation that the area superintendent, the senior administrator, and the two district resource teachers felt the same as the teachers. Only 21% of the teachers felt that RJ was working well on the campus.

The results meant that a small number of teachers received exposure to the practices or the training. Many did not have a clue as to what the students or what the trained teachers were experiencing. Because of poor planning and implementation, the school experienced poor results. The findings indicated that change is necessary. I believe that the poor display of implementation was because I was attempting to implement a program that the district shared as a panacea for poor discipline and OSS. Many indicated that it would curb or help to narrow the disproportionality of racial gaps
that exist in student suspensions. I saw it as that remedy or cure-all, but I failed to take
the necessary steps to ensure that the school received the best execution of practices.

In addition, I do not think that my team of teachers and administrators committed
to making the implementation the most effective. I believe it was buy-in, but I cannot
ensure that was the problem. No one came to me on the administrative side to say that
there was a need to have more teachers trained; I did not seek out others to be trained.
Therefore, TMS settled with the number of people trained as sufficient.

**Judgments**

In this section of the study, I provided my judgment and responses to the primary
and secondary research questions in this study. I showed how the data answered the
research questions. Also, I made judgments about if the results were positive, negative,
or unclear, irrespective of what I might have thought. I aimed to report and judge results
honestly. The questions on the survey and the interview protocols prepared the groups
for answering the questions.

Primary Question 1 asked, “What do the participants (teachers, counselors, and
administrators) at Thompson Middle School perceive as working well with the restorative
justice program?” It became evident that some people understood that RJ was on the
campus, but many teachers did not perceive RJ as working well. There was a more
significant number of teachers who were neutral with questions that asked their
perception of RJ. I gathered this was because nearly half of those who responded did not
use the RJ processes. However, the administrators shared a different opinion. The
results of this question were positive because it taught me that the teachers understood the
purpose behind RJ; however, TMS may not have accomplished the goal of students’
understanding that they are accountable for their actions. That was TMS’ purpose for implementing RJ.

Primary Question 2 asked, “What do the participants (teachers, counselors, and administrators) at Thompson Middle School perceive as not working well with the restorative justice program?” Training dominated the responses. This question was great because I learned what is imperative as I move forward to improve RJ at TMS. Participants indicated that training was paramount in effective implementation of RJ.

Primary Question 3 asked, “What do the participants (teachers, counselors, and administrators) at Thompson Middle School perceive as the most significant challenges in the implementation of the restorative justice program? The teachers, counselors, and administrators believe that they must enhance the training on the campus. Therefore, this question was excellent in getting the results. The area superintendent voiced in her interview that more teachers needed training.

Primary Question 4 asked, “What do the participants (teachers, counselors, and administrators) at Thompson Middle School suggest as methods to improve the restorative justice program?” This question was an essential question because I was seeking to improve RJ. The first response was training. Groups indicated that TMS needed to improve implementation by offering more training. The results of this question were excellent and will be essential as TMS ameliorates the RJ implementation.

Three of the secondary questions dealt with improvement. The last secondary question sought out the impact RJ practices played at TMS. The first secondary question asked, “What role can administrators play in the improvement of the RJ process?” This question was probably a good one for the other participants (i.e., teachers, guidance
counselors, and administrators), but I failed to ask them. This question and the next three were interview questions, and the responses came from the area superintendent, the senior administrator for curriculum, and two district resource teachers. They felt that administrators could have helped with the implementation and could have been more involved. This question was probably not a good one for the results because of the people who were involved in answering the question.

Secondary Question 2 asked, “What role can teachers play in the improvement of the RJ process?” This question received the same response as Question 1. I would assess it as not being a good question for the results because many of the respondents may not have interacted with the teachers. This question was probably not a good one for the results because of the people who were involved in answering the question. They felt training for the teachers could have helped with the improvement of RJ practices.

Secondary Question 3, asked, “How can counselors assist in the process for improvement?” The results were not good for the results, and the rationale was the same as secondary Questions 1 and 2. The respondents suggested that the counselors collaborate with other counselors throughout the district. Their helping others to implement circles with fidelity was a suggestion that respondents thought was imperative. Also, they suggested that they receive training if need.

The final secondary question asked, “What are the perceptions of stakeholders (e.g., teachers, counselors, and administrators) regarding the impact, if any, the restorative justice program has had on the school culture at Thompson Middle School.” The responses varied. In many instances, I was not sure if they understood what was meant by culture. Many did, and they felt that the implementation of RJ helped to solve
problems, helped to get to the root of the problems, helped students to make a right
decision, and built relationships with other students and teachers. This was an excellent
question for the results. These results helped me to develop my organizational CLP and
my proposed policy advocacy plan.

**Recommendations**

Training is the recommended organizational change; however, more necessary
actions, like planning, meeting with essential stakeholders, and establishing a vision are
required before training. First and foremost, the leader or staff members at TMS are not
responsible for training. Resource teachers at the district level are responsible for
training in RJ practices; therefore, I would need to follow district protocol to secure
training at the campus. Having connections with individuals in the office that is
responsible for the training will allow me the support that would rectify the situation at
TMS.

I have indicated the need for strategic planning for effectiveness. TMS leadership
believed it planned well for the initial implementation. However, the data analysis
indicated that there were many nuances where TMS failed. According to Steiner (2010),
strategic planning is a process that begins with the setting of organization goals and
defining strategies and policies to achieve them. It results in a set of plans produced after
a specified period. Planning must be conceived as a continuous process and supported by
appropriate action when necessary. These actions are what needs to happen in the
organizational change process at TMS before training begins. The following plans
require development: (a) a communication plan, (b) a training plan, (c) a scaling up plan,
(d) implementation plan, (e) monitoring plan, and (f) an evaluation plan.
Immediately after developing the plans, I must guide the staff in the implementation of quality training in RJ. TMS must scale up the training where staff members receive appropriate training and focus on implementing universal circles to change staff’s belief, so they become more proactive to lessen or eradicate reacting to negative or violent infractions. Training will become an essential component in the organizational changes at TMS. According to Braithwaite (2003), the training must aim at providing skills in conflict resolution, taking into account the particular needs of the victims and offenders, and providing a thorough knowledge of the operation of the therapeutic program. Hopkins (2003) indicated that teachers need sufficient training time to ensure teachers become familiar with the intervention before implementation commences. She further indicated that teachers who desire training as facilitators should receive the opportunity to do so. Staff members at TMS will need training. Leadership must ensure the right people are trained to facilitate circles.

The circles in the restorative process represent a community. Generally, people formulate circles when a conflict requiring resolution. Because TMS wants more students to remain in school, which would generate more learning and student achievement, TMS must institute RJ. TMS needs to implement circles after conflicts. Leadership must stress the importance of using circles to preempt encounters. The proactive policy starts in the universal circles, Tier 1, primary, community or conference circle. Here initiatives will strengthen and develop the values of RJ practices–namely empowerment, honesty, respect, personal engagement accountability, collaboration, and problem-solving (Morrison, 2007). “Any initiatives should also strengthen the practice of restorative justice–including skills such as active listening, communication, and
problem-solving” (p. 167). TMS may have fewer conflicts if students practice more restorative skills. Ultimately more students will remain in school, and student achievement will improve.
CHAPTER FIVE: TO-BE FRAMEWORK

Introduction

In the last chapter, I identified training as an issue related to organizational change. In addition, I saw that I needed to ensure that I establish relative plans that will make the training happen and become sustainable at TMS. In this section, I will focus on the CLP that will lead me to address training, and I will concentrate on the specificity of the training. Respondents address training as a significant issue with the program evaluation portion of the study. When teachers responded to an open-ended question on the survey about what did not work well on their campus regarding RJ, their most frequent response was training. The school administrators’ responses to that same question centered on training. They gave responses like (a) not used appropriately, (b) no real commitment, (c) not used throughout the campus, and (d) used with Tier 3 only. The teachers failed to use the universal circles of the RJ practices as a proactive measure.

Review of Literature Related to Change

Organizational changes in educational practices are essential for improvement. After an analysis of the data, I realized that I must change the system of operation at TMS relative to RJ practices. This change will require a four-prong approach: (a) develop a plan for training, (b) scaling up practices and implementation, (c) implement universal or community circles, and (d) monitor practices to ensure implementation with fidelity. The four-prong approach is an essential component to bring about a change of the RJ processes and to reap the benefits of RJ practices. Throughout my research, data gathering and data analysis, training became the pervasive motif.
At TMS, a plan for continued training that includes the entire staff must be developed and supported through monitoring and offering additional training if necessary. Teachers and staff members deal with student-to-student conflict differently (Bitel & Rolls, 2000). That has been the situation at TMS; therefore, there is a need to look for a uniform way of handling discipline situations. Looking for a uniform way was a reason for looking at restorative practices. During the initial stage, school administrators and counselors received training. As some time progressed during the school year, district personnel trained an additional four teachers. Training teachers was a concern, and TMS leadership discovered this process would take the entire school year and summer to train teachers at TMS. Teachers must attend the two-day training. Compounded with teachers taking off for personal illnesses, illnesses of their children, family emergencies, and some personal non-illness absences, those absences would have required school personnel to acquire substitute teachers to cover classes. That was not the best practice, and I did not want academics to suffer.

After teachers received training, they came back with a better understanding of the RJ process. However, follow up training was not offered. TMS needed to devise a way to further include teachers and to train others. TMS would have to provide the training for teachers on the TMS campus. In year two, TMS planned a series of training, starting with an introductory session during preplanning for as many staff as possible, including teachers, counselors, administrators, support staff, and after-school program staff (Davis, 2014). That did not happen. Now, training in RJ is a focus for my CLP.

It is imperative to offer training for teachers that aims to provide skills in conflict resolution, considering the particular needs of the victims and offenders (Zehr & Mika,
According to Morris and Maxwell (2001), some disturbances on campuses require the intervention of a mediator. That facilitation between students or between teachers and students would require an individual who is skilled and sensitive. That person who is conducting the mediation or a circle would involve a great deal more when it involves other parties, as it does in the case of a conference. Training is essential in the relevant skills, which are separate from, but the intersection with, counseling and social-work skills, and in the upright orientation necessary for a role as an unbiased party.

Thorough training necessary and facilitators must have the ability to (a) not take sides (Cremin, 2000), (b) have empathy for different kinds of people, (c) have patience, (d) possess the ability to control the essential conditions while empowering the parties to take control of the content (Bazemore & Schiff, 1996), (e) possess the ability to remain calm and uninvolved when emotions are on display, and (f) have mental agility (Schiff, 2013). These skills are widely spread across a school campus and relegated to just administrators (Dandurand & Griffiths, 2006). After training, teachers develop skills through practice, professional development, and discussions in the process of self-improvement (Marshall, 1999).

Training in restorative practices is necessary at TMS. Students begin to act and live restoratively, but staff members must prove to students that they are worth the effort to make undesirable or bad situations right. Until TMS gets control, academics will suffer. According to Colbert (2016), teaching content while simultaneously guaranteeing that students own the social and emotional skills required to focus on learning and to engage with teachers and peers includes strong personal communications between teachers and students.
With the training, TMS must scale up practices and implementation. TMS must change the way it conducts RJ; it requires a school-wide approach. According to Latimer, Dowden, and Muise (2005), each school is unique and has its own culture, and implementing a whole-school restorative approach means changing the culture—it is not a program. While there is no single path schools must take to implement school-wide restorative practices, the field of implementation science offers a framework that can aid efforts and increase sustainability (Hopkins, 2003). RJ includes administration, counselors, and students as well as the teachers whom taught the students participating in the restorative process. Therefore, as a means of scaling up implementation, TMS must set out to train and expose teachers on RJ practices. TMS must implement school-wide. Hence, teachers will not have to wonder what RJ is and what do when students participate in a circle or conference. The training will create a greater buy-in because teachers understand the process. According to Edgar, Bitel, Thurlow, and Bowen (2002), a required whole-school commitment includes four components:

- sufficient teacher training time to ensure the majority of teachers are familiar with the intervention before implementation begins,
- teacher has the opportunity to become a facilitator,
- school personnel designs ways to inform students of the circle or conference process, and
- the option of RJ circles is in the school behavior policy.

According to Hargreaves and Fullan (1998), restructuring a project will require transforming a school’s culture and relationships. This change must involve the entire staff from the beginning and allow for ongoing representation of individuals throughout
the lifetime of the project. Hopkins (2003) proposed a five-stage model (Appendix F). This model supports the involvement of every member of the school. TMS must embrace such a model to involve everyone.

Stage 1 requires building a community where everyone embraces the vision. It may require several sessions where everyone can ask questions and become fully aware of expectations and possible situations. At this time, as a baseline evaluation of school, the principal shares the climate of the school.

Stage 2 is establishing a steering committee or group. It includes representatives across the school community. The group members are responsible for the initial development, monitoring, and oversight of the project. This team will receive training and may serve as trainers, if interested. In the third stage, a training team must be established comprised of several individuals across the school.

In Stage 4, the trainers begin training their colleagues in restorative skills. Other trainers are encouraged to join the team. Here, TMS formulates the steering group. Some members of the training team can serve on the steering group. At this stage, the school determines ways to introduce restorative practices like (a) introducing circle time (community circles) into tutor or classroom time for students, (b) using circles for staff and parent groups for the same reasons as the students, (c) training students, and (d) using RJ circles to address misbehavior, bullying, and other infractions (Hopkins 2003).

The fifth stage is an ongoing process that keeps the approach secured and sustained in the school. The fifth stage is an area where TMS failed. TMS knows the importance and understands that students need a tool for success. Previous research has shown that self-monitoring and self-regulation interventions improve a student’s ability
to monitor themselves and become aware of the thought process behind what they are doing (Rafferty, 2010).

Hirschfield (2018) believed that RJ practices like conferencing and circles aimed to reduce misbehaviors by resolving conflicts can improve students’ sense of connection to the school community and reinforce the validity of school establishments. According to Cowie and Jennifer (2007), a whole-school-community approach is necessary for successfully promoting nonviolence in the school (Pearce, Cross, Monks, Waters, & Falconer, 2011). They indicated that it would more than likely be successful if there are shared goals and values among all (Cohen, Kincaid, & Childs, 2007). They stressed that the principal’s leadership and management style must be democratic. Cowie and Jennifer (2007) emphasized that the impact on children will be to develop their ability to (a) enhance their emotional health, (b) participate in matters that affect the school, (c) respect others, (d) value cultural diversity, and (e) work cooperatively. For adults, it develops their capacity to (a) foster relations with students, other staff members, and the wider community, (b) focus on the curriculum and develop an emotionally intelligent organization, and (c) identify and implement their own training needs (Cowie & Jennifer, 2007).

Schools have addressed school-wide discipline problems with the use of many Tier 2 or Tier 3 approaches. The three tiers to school-wide positive behavior supports have organized a continuum of supports. The tiers are:

1. universal circles: school-wide practices used for preventing the development and occurrences of problem behavior for students in the school,
2. secondary circles: intensive practices for supporting students whose behaviors have been unresponsive to Tier I practices, and
3. tertiary circles: highly individualized practices for students whose behaviors were unresponsive to Tiers 1 and 2 practices.

Even though the staff at TMS understands that the tiers are a continuum of supports, as a leader, I want to emphasize that staff is examining closely the Tier 1 approach. TMS needs to learn more about this level to eradicate or lessen the number of discipline referrals and situations on campus. The data from the evaluation portion of my study indicated that more focus is needed in this area. TMS needs to spend more time reaffirming relationships through social and emotional skills building. Figure 18 provides a graphic representation of the hierarchy of proactive-to-reactive processes illustrated by Morrison’s (2004) model.

TMS has a large number of students who have engaged in many adverse situations according to staff and the data they provide in this study. TMS knows that students move up the continuum, and it is TMS’ responsibility to mitigate this from happening (Lewis, 2009). Teachers understand the importance of creating positive classroom environments to reduce disciplinary disparities, and the Tier 1 universal circle approach will help TMS. TMS is focusing on the early intervention, building a strong base at the primary level.
Figure 18. Hierarchy of Restorative Responses

The community, primary or universal circles, usually is structured as a sequential circle around topics or questions raised by the circle facilitator. It provides a great deal of decorum and forbids back-and-forth arguments. It maximizes the opportunity for the quiet voices, those that are usually inhibited by louder and more assertive people; therefore, there is no speaking without interruption. Students must be patient and wait until it is their turn to speak, even if they want to respond to something that has been said or they want to refute the statement. Sequential circles inspire people to listen more and talk less (Costello, Wachtel, & Wachtel, 2010).

The organizational change of the TMS RJ practices will require training, scaling up the school’s implementation, and focusing on the universal, primary, Tier 1, conferencing circles that will be focused and supported with organized, sequential circles. Essential strategies that will enhance school practices and processes. It will require close monitoring of the processes and practices. Little research was conducted on the monitoring process of RJ practice specifically. Any program implementation requires adequate monitoring as a means of accountability. According to Kane, Lloyd,
McCluskey, Riddell Stead, and Weedon (2007), the monitoring of restorative practices is vital to the success and sustainability of restorative practices. However, insufficient monitoring can negatively affect the achievement of the plan or project (Cavanaugh, 2009).

**Envisioning the Success TO-BE**

With the AS-IS situation at TMS, much must be done to correct the issues relative to the RJ practices. Teachers have expressed that they are not aware nor have they participated in restorative circles and have not been trained. They are disgruntled with the results of those who have been trained because they do not understand the principles of the program. Many are punitive and require a change in mindset. The TO-BE is the ultimate result of an organizational change and the whole-school approach, which will require training for staff members at TMS. Appendix G depicts the 4Cs of the TO-BE representation of TMS and the premiere RJ practices at the school.

**Context**

The ideal future context of my CLP consists of restorative practices at TMS working effectively where students have a voice, there is no racial disparity of students being suspended from school, and students are not suspended for an exorbitant number of days. Context, as defined by Wagner et al. (2006), referred to the skill demands all students must meet to succeed and relate concerns of the family and community the school serves. In addition, context referred to the larger organizational system within work, informal and formal (Wagner et al., 2006). The context was the fundamentals. A comprehensive description of the context of this study falls under three context issues I addressed when it came to the implementation of the restorative practices at TMS.
In conflict, the victim does have a voice. The victim can sit across from the person that has caused harm and have meaningful dialogue about the issues that occurred. By providing the victim an opportunity to have a voice, the void held by the victim is no more. The victim does not have to keep his or her feelings inside and is now able to sit across the table with the individual who has committed the wrong and share the hurt caused.

Another TO-BE for context is there is no disparity of students suspended from school. At TMS, when students are suspended, the suspension rates mirrors the student demographic makeup. Minority students are not suspended more than nonminority students. Overall, suspension rates decrease because of the increase of RJ circles conducted with fidelity. Student discipline is now equally dispensed regardless of race.

Last, the suspension is limited to extreme measures from school. In the past, students were suspended multiple times for fighting or disrespect to others. Student suspensions have decreased from fighting multiple times or being disrespectful to others. Students are now able to sit in a structured RJ circle and have a dialogue about the harm caused against them. Students now use their voices in a positive way instead of fighting or being disrespectful.

Culture

Wagner (2006) defined culture as “the shared values, beliefs, assumptions, expectations, and behaviors related to students and learning, teachers and teaching, instructional leadership, and the quality of relationships within and beyond the school” (p 102). A comprehensive description of the culture of this study falls under the three culture issues I have addressed when it comes to the implementation of restorative
practices at TMS. First, teachers understand RJ and know that administrators support them. Second, teachers understand and use RJ practices. Third, students understand the process and seek out assistance before it escalates to a major conflict.

The ideal culture situation is when teachers understand RJ and know that administrators support them. Teachers have received the necessary training for restorative practices and are supported by the administration. The fact that teachers understand the RJ process and are supported by the administration enables the process to work effectively for teachers and students. When teachers use RJ practices with fidelity, students and teachers reap the benefits. Also, the school reaps the benefits by shaping a more positive school culture.

Because teachers understand the process and use RJ with fidelity, students can understand the process, and they seek out assistance before problems escalate to a major conflict. Students are now part of the solution and not part of the problem. Students advocate for themselves through positive dialogue either in community circles with a larger group or a couple of students involved in the conflict. Students have no problem going to a teacher, counselor, or administrator before a major conflict occurs.

**Conditions**

Wagner et al., (2006) defined conditions as “the external architecture surrounding student learning, the tangible arrangements of time, space, and resources” (p.101). As a result of conditions being in place at TMS, students can focus more on academics. There are three conditions in place. The first condition is that students are benefitting from fewer suspensions, which means students are in class for more learning to occur. There
are times when students may need to spend some time away from school because of the offense they committed.

A second condition is an increased number of local alternative sites for students to attend instead of being suspended from school. The student is removed temporarily from the regular school setting and attends an alternative site, which has a certified teacher and counselor on-hand. The counseling is afforded for students and parents. The student does work with the help of a teacher at the site instead of sitting at home unsupervised.

Last, the mindset of school administrators has been adjusted to a belief in the RJ process. School administrators now use OSS as a last resort after everything else has failed. School administrators now encourage restorative practice as the first line of defense when students have a conflict with each other. Solving conflicts through dialogue using the skills learned from RJ training is the norm.

**Competencies**

Competencies are the last of the 4Cs. Wagner et al. (2006) described competencies as “the repertoire of skills and knowledge that influences student learning” (p. 99). There are three competencies in place. The first competency is teachers at TMS are trained in RJ. The second competency is administrators use RJ processes with fidelity, and the third competency is teachers see the relationship between RJ practices and student performance.

TMS will train teachers in restorative practices, and they will successfully conduct RJ circles in their classrooms. Students will ask their teachers to conduct RJ circles because they know their conflict has a great chance of being successfully handled.
through the RJ process. Teachers are better equipped to meet the needs of their students and help create and promote a positive classroom environment and school culture.

As it relates to fidelity, administrators use RJ with fidelity. Administrators effectively communicate with teachers throughout the initial training and subsequent professional developments as it relates to restorative practices. Also, teachers communicate with administrators and fellow teachers with what is working well and what is not working well with RJ.

Last, teachers see the relationship between RJ practices and student performances working together. Teachers know one way to increase academic performance with students is to build positive relationships with them. RJ helps teachers build those positive relationships through the RJ circles in a nonthreatening environment. Students work for teachers with whom they have built relationships. Ultimately, students are in school and instruction can be delivered.

**Conclusion**

The program evaluation discussed the RJ practices at TMS. With the data received through the surveys and interviews, it became apparent there is a need for a change in the way the school operated with the limited RJ practices on the campus. The organizational change requires training as expressed by the teachers and administrators on-site and those at the district level. Chapter 4 provided data gathering, analysis, and interpretation. I shared the current AS-IS conceptualization in Chapter 5 and the TO-BE future perspective conceptualization. I will discuss the bridge from AS-IS to the TO-BE conceptualizations in Chapter 6.
CHAPTER SIX: STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

Introduction

In this chapter, I will bridge the AS-IS and the TO-BE conceptualizations with a series of strategies and actions based upon research and best practice in organizational theory, professional development, leadership strategies, and communication strategies. The Strategies and Actions Chart addresses four best practices in Appendix H. The strategies and actions chart specifies issues identified in each of the four areas of change: context, culture, conditions, and competencies.

The main area of need is training. The implementation of the RJ practices at TMS is riddled with problems because there are few teachers and staff members trained in the facilitation of the essential component, circles. There are not enough people trained in restorative practices; consequently, untrained teachers have a negative verbal exchange about the topic because of their ignorance of the topic. According to the trained or untrained teachers from the qualitative portion of the survey, they indicated that students perceive the practices as a joke and do not take them seriously.

Even though students still receive suspensions, the number of suspensions has decreased. The genesis behind adopting the concept of restorative practice was to reduce the suspension rate (Cameron & Thorsborne, 2001) and reduce the disproportionality (Gonzalez, 2015) of suspensions of the Black and Hispanic students at TMS. I believe that restorative practice is an approach to improve the school learning environment. It has the potential to transform TMS if used appropriately and consistently school-wide.
Strategies and Actions

In the program evaluation section of the paper, I carefully evaluated the RJ practices at TMS. Survey data from the teachers and administrators of this study indicated that many of the teachers did not have complete knowledge about the practices; in fact, some were ignorant of its existence. The teachers that had little knowledge did not understand the purpose of the implementation of RJ practices and how it relates to student performance. Through the CLP section of this study, I intend to change the dismal AS-IS conceptualization (Appendix E) to the industrious TO-BE conceptualization (Appendix G). The Strategies and Action Plan (SAP) (Appendix H) detailed strategies and actions that bridge the AS-IS and TO-BE.

I structured the SAP for the CLP portion of this study in four phases:

- Phase 1: plans, vision, and expectation,
- Phase 2: steering group,
- Phase 3: training protocol, and
- Phase 4: monitor for effectiveness and sustainability.

Each phase has evidence of best practices through organizational theory, leadership strategies, communication strategies, or professional development. The CLP portion with the SAP will bridge the AS-IS to the TO-BE conceptualization to a highly-functioning whole-school implementation of restorative practices.

Phase 1

In Phase 1, I will show my leadership as principal of the school. During this phase, I will develop plans that I will share with the stakeholders of the school
community (e.g., teachers, administrators, students, and parents). Effective planning is vital for maintaining the vision (Shapiro, 1993).

The plans will be complete enough that when delivered, everyone will understand the concepts and be willing to participate and see the plans to fruition. However, plans will require more development and adjustments from staff members. The plan will enable staff members to have buy-in and feel committed to making this project a success. Proper messaging and communication from the principal are essential to help teachers and others to understand the importance of the ways restorative practices will improve classroom learning (Skiba, 2014). As an organizational theory, I will develop the following plans: (a) a communication plan, (b) a training plan, (c) a scaling up plan (d) implementation plan (e) monitoring plan, and (f) an evaluation plan.

Using leadership and communication strategies, I will share the vision of TMS with school-wide restorative practices. The vision of TMS is “to be the place where social and human capital is built in our student through social and emotional learning and restorative practices.” I want the philosophy and actions of the entire school community to support RJ practices where experiences are always humane and inclusive. I want the school’s atmosphere to be a safe place with little to no violence or interruptions. Also, I want students to have a voice; however, it will require execution civilly, and their interaction with other students and teachers is done in a manner to build or strengthen relationships.

I will share pertinent school-related data and information with the staff. The information will include baseline data regarding discipline and suspensions. I think it is imperative for teachers to know how students are performing and stress that importance
of improving. Also, I will address the disproportionally of OSS. Even though this seems to be a nationwide problem, I want TMS to be an exception.

Similar information will be shared with students and parents. I will convene students in an assembly to share vision and expectations. Anticipating some information shared will reach beyond some student’s capacity when shared verbally; I will show a video of students’ interaction before, during, and after an altercation. I will share similar information with parents at one of the parent meetings (e.g., School Advisory Council or the Parent Teacher Students Association).

Phase 2

In Phase 2 of the SAP, the steering group will be established. This group will learn their responsibilities and know that they will share a significant role at the school regarding restorative practices (Hopkins, 2002). The group will be comprised of representatives from across the school community. They are teachers representing different grades, teachers from different departments, coaches, and resource teachers. This committee will have at least one assistant principal or a dean.

A significant role of the group is to develop a training protocol. As mentioned earlier in this section, I will create the shell for this plan. It will become the responsibility of this group to fully develop it, including aspects of the plan relative to the training of staff members. Also, they will bear the responsibility of monitoring and overseeing the project. Consequently, they will have to develop a plan for monitoring and scaling up practices, especially because the vision is to have a school-wide program. The plan will involve training the entire staff and ensuring implementation with fidelity.
Monitoring will happen during training and implementation. The team will perform regular checks to ensure conformity. It is imperative that I administer close examination and monitoring of processes. Phase 2 of this SAP is replete with organizational theory and leadership strategies.

**Phase 3**

Phase 3 of the SAP is the training protocol. Here, training is scheduled adequately for the whole-school approach. This phase has organizational theory and professional development best practices for RJ. The teachers will need to commit to summer training to ensure implementation is ready for the first day of school. Currently, there are approximately 127 staff members. Proper training will require two consecutive days from the district staff trainers. It will necessitate 20 sessions of training because professional development in RJ practices is limited to 25 persons at a time. Unfortunately, there are two trainers at the district level, and each conducts the sessions alone. To combat this situation, I will seek out to acquire the train-the-trainer model for volunteer teachers on the steering team. Because some teachers have already received training, I will ask volunteers to become trainers as well. They may want or need a second tier of training because it has been a few years since they received training. Having trainers on staff is necessary to account for handling new staff after the start of the year. Measures must be in place to handle attrition.

The team must determine the standards for teachers who need to sharpen their skills. These standards must be determined and vetted by the administration before they are brought to the principal for final approval before sharing with teachers. Because I want TMS “to be the place where social and human capital is built in our students
through social and emotional learning and restorative practices,” TMS must have the preeminent implementation of RJ. Therefore, standards must be high, and TMS must strive to meet those standards.

I have determined that there will be a school-wide approach. Consequently, I must stress the requirement to focus on Tier 1, universal circles at TMS. School-wide use of universal circles will project TMS to success because TMS will be addressing the problems in a preventive manner. Circles provide opportunities for students to share their feelings build relationships and solve problems. During transgression, there is a required use; the individual plays an active role in addressing the wrong and making things right (Riestenberg, 2002).

It is imperative that TMS establish relationships and rebuild those relationships when dismantled with the first implementation of universal circles. TMS wants a sense of community in classrooms. Moreover, Davidson, Lickona, and Khmelkov (2008) expressed that the classroom needs to build a sense of community. It needs to create a group that extends to others the respect one has for self, to come to know each other as an individual, to care about each other, and to feel a sense of accountability to each other. This practice will help TMS be the preeminent RJ program in the nation.

**Phase 4**

Phase 4 is to monitor for effectiveness and sustainability. I know this is a crucial component. Monitoring provides a means to gauge if a program has been successful (Malone, Mark, & Narayan, 2014). The steering group will ensure implementation with fidelity, establishing sustainability. This phase of the SAP uses best practices in organizational theory, communication strategies, and leadership strategies. This section
is the support that enables the bridge of the SAP to operate effectively from the AS-IS to the TO-BE conceptualization.

Steering members will review policy and practices to ensure congruence to the restorative practices. They will visit circles to monitor facilitators to ensure consistency through the circles. If there are deviations, concerns will be addressed immediately after the circle adjourns. Interrupting a circle can be more harmful, so never will such action happen. The individual facilitator will be approached and guided to an amiable redirection. To ensure that steering members are congruent and standardization is determined, I am suggesting the committee to have bimonthly meetings with the members. Also, facilitators will meet monthly to address general concerns. The principal will meet with the steering group, collectively or individually, for a different level of support. That will involve solving problems, giving clarity, counseling a member or praising them for a job well done.

**Conclusion**

The SAP (Appendix H) was organized to ensure that the transition from the AS-IS to the TO-BE is seamless. Moreover, I need to provide leadership in making this come to fruition by researching and planning for positive results. This time, I want to ensure that staff members play a vital role in the process for buy-in and sustainability of the project at TMS. In the next chapter, I will advocate for a policy in my school district that includes restorative practices in every school and have schools ensure that structures are in place so that if principals transfer from one school to another, the effectiveness of the project remains.
CHAPTER SEVEN: IMPLICATIONS AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

In the PPSD, there are 208 different policies covering the gamut of areas relating to schools, district offices, departments, and the way of operation. However, three policies deal with student discipline. Of the three policies, one policy deals with school safety, entitled Safe School, seem to garner many details. It is a 19-page policy that thoroughly covers two major areas: (a) bullying and harassment and (b) teen dating violence or abuse. These were areas where the school board felt necessary to focus on because there was an outflow of expressions from the parents and the community when dealing with bullying, and there was an upsurge of expulsions regarding teen violence, especially relative to teen dating. The policy addresses prevention-based education for both areas of infractions. The polices stress proper prevention and intervention, and the steps that shall be applied based on the level of severity of infraction as outlined in the district’s COSC.

The second policy, entitled Code of Student Conduct, is a 13-page policy that addresses how personnel and students are to conduct themselves in the district at school or district held events. This policy addresses students violating policies, and it mentions that if students cause an infraction to the rules, they will be subject to disciplinary action. These actions may include detention, suspension or expulsion, and loss privileges; however, this policy does mention the word restorative or any related words.

The third policy, Discipline of Students, is limited to one page. This policy specifically addresses the action of the principal. It indicates that the principal is responsible for maintaining proper discipline throughout the school and cooperating with
instructional staff and other district employees in attaining this objective. Also, it indicates that the principal and faculty must develop additional rules as they deemed necessary in the operation of the school. Based on this policy, I chose to institute restorative practices at TMS.

The evaluation of the RJ program at TMS indicated that RJ did not have an effective implementation. Teachers needed more training and adjustments, and improvements are necessary. The CLP of this study addresses how I will overhaul the entire RJ program at TMS so that it will yield positive results and a possible positive change in culture in the school.

As part of my policy advocacy, I will provide a comprehensive description of the policy related to my findings that deal with the fact that, currently, RJ practices are an option and not mandatory for schools. I am advocating that the implementation of restorative practices become a requirement. Currently, the RJ program is strongly encouraged by the district, but it is not a policy directed by the School Board. I believe for restorative practices to be truly effective, it needs to be district policy for schools, especially secondary schools. Before considering OSS for any student, students must participate in a restorative circle for fighting or any manner of disrespect.

Furthermore, through this policy, every administrator, counselor, and SAFE coordinator will be required to receive RJ training. Principals will have the discretion about the number of teachers they wish to receive training. After experiencing the implementation at TMS, I would train teachers and institute a school-wide approach. Restorative practices have been an effective alternative for OSS, and with the policy in place, suspension rates will continue to decrease, and attendance will increase. If
students are in school, teachers can provide quality instruction to increase student achievement. Through the implementation of this policy, I expect to see an increase in academic achievement and a positive change in school culture.

The policy is directly related to the RJ program that this study emphasized. Throughout the study, a common theme of more training was prominent. Training with fidelity is essential for restorative practices to have a long-lasting effect on the school. The ongoing training (i.e., PD) benefits students, teachers, counselors, and administration by shaping the school culture where students can have meaningful, productive conversations and successfully solve their problems through communication. Students can advocate for themselves and seek to find a resolution that is peaceful and harmless.

**Policy Statement**

I am recommending a requirement for secondary principals to implement RJ practices in their schools. This recommendation will come with a full-time RJ coordinator. The primary function of the person in this position is to provide training for staff and students. Also, the coordinator will train others to facilitate restorative circles. Whole-School implementation will not be required because some principals may consider other creative approaches. The coordinator will maintain accurate record keeping of restorative circles conducted at the school, work as a liaison with the district’s MAO, and provide behavior intervention support to students in need of services. I am recommending this position because, currently, the deans and counselors coordinate the bulk of the work with restorative practices on campus.

The RJ coordinator is essential, so the responsibility to manage this program in the school is limited to one point of contact. I think it is imperative to have one person
coordinate restorative practices on campus to ensure consistency across campus (Karp & Breslin, 2001). Under the guidance of the MAO, the RJ coordinators will receive the same training to create consistency in training for schools. The RJ program will not replace OSS (Vaandering, 2010). There will be some infractions that will require suspension. With RJ in place, the suspension rate will decrease, and student attendance will increase (Umbreit, 2010; Reimer, 2011). When students are present, they benefit from the instruction of their teachers, which has a direct correlation to student achievement.

**Analysis of Needs**

In this section, I will analyze the need for a policy revamp that will require secondary school principals to institute RJ practices on their campus. The revamp is an enhancement to the discipline policy that addresses suspensions and expulsions. It is another intervention. I will provide specific suggestions or recommendations on the educational, economic, social, political, and moral and ethical analysis implications.

**Educational Analysis**

The goal of any organizational change in educational policy is to increase academic achievement and narrow or close the achievement gap that has persisted for decades (Adey & Shayer, 2006). When I implemented the RJ process at TMS, from the outset, it was to reduce suspension and keep students in school. Reducing suspension and keeping students in the school was the plea of the school community and the district as well as indicated by parent survey data through the district.

Society is losing students to the streets and possibly to the penal system when they are out-of-school because of suspension. The suspension is a critical element of the
school-to-prison pipeline (Novak, 2018). Throughout the RJ process, student achievement is at the forefront. Students need to have positive relationships with their peers and teachers (Cotton, 2003). When students cultivate positive relationships in school, they are more likely to do well and steer clear of discipline issues. Also, students need to feel safe while at school.

According to Lone and Lone (2016), when students feel safe, they are more in tuned to the educational process and have a more positive outlook on school. If students do not feel safe, they are not going to focus on learning. With restorative practices, students can help build a positive culture at the school. Restorative practices stem from character education. Facilitators of RJ are effective character educators who ensure that students feel safe. Character education is the foundation upon which students can reach academic success. It is not just about teaching kids to be good; it is teaching students to be their best. Restorative practices work as a proactive measure to discipline, which benefits teachers and students.

For years, the state legislature and local boards were very concerned with the educational performance of students; however, the legislature does some things that cause question. The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) was passed December 10, 2015, to close the skill gaps that addressed urban, suburban, and rural school districts, especially when it seemed that the Russian students were outperforming students in the United States in space development. The law represented a commitment by the federal government to quality and equality in educating students. When school suspend students for days, schools do the opposite of what this law represents. Schools are keeping students out-of-school and widening the skill gaps. RJ helps with that because it helps
school districts in reducing suspension when facilitated appropriately. Often, it is minority students who suffer the brunt of suspension in the PPSD and nationwide.

The No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act scaled up the federal role as it aligned to the ESEA when public performance was lagging. PPSD is in an urban district, and TMS fits the description of a Title 1 school. The NCLB Act of 2001 included Title I provisions applying to disadvantaged students. It supported standards-based education reform, setting high-standards, and establishing measurable goals that could improve individual outcomes in education. The act required states to develop assessments in basic skills.

Then on July 19, 2013, the Student Success Act (SSA) passed, and it triggered the attention and movement of the third major reform. The SSA altered parts of both the ESEA and the NCLB Act. The bill gave individual states more control over their educational systems. It eliminated federal mandated actions and interventions required of poor performing schools. Moreover, it allowed Title 1 Schools to receive funds to promote the academic achievement of students in need. I am advocating for my school district to refine the policy that requires implementation of restorative practices in secondary schools. Policy advocacy will constitute better functioning schools and better academic performance of students.

**Economic Analysis**

Completing high school is the most significant prerequisite for entering college. Consistently, economic competitors are increasing graduation rates at both levels; however, efforts continue to fall behind. Educated workers are the basis of economic growth (Beine & Rapoport, 2001). Reducing the current number of dropouts by just half,
may yield nearly 700,000 new graduates in the United States a year and will more than pay for itself. According to Levin and Rouse (2012), studies showed that the high school graduate will gain higher employment and earnings and will be less likely require public money for health care and welfare and probably not become involved in the criminal justice system. Levin and Rouse (2012) further said that the graduate will probably contribute more in tax revenues during his or her lifetime than if that person had dropped out. Requiring such a program in the schools will help with reducing dropout because many suspended students become dropouts.

When taken into account, the costs of investment to produce a graduate, there is a return of $1.45 to $3.55 for every dollar of investment. The return on investment depends upon the educational intervention strategy (Kotamraju & Mettille, 2012). With this estimate, each graduate can net a benefit to taxpayers of approximately $127,000.00 during the graduate’s lifetime (Kotamraju & Mettille, 2012). I present this information because suspended students are more likely to drop-out. They are missing instruction and likely fail courses along the way. RJ can alleviate this trajectory.

My advocating for restorative practices requires the secondary schools to implement RJ on their campuses and suggests that the district fund an RJ coordinator. The RJ coordinator is in the same necessary salary range as a permanent substitute teacher, $32,300.00. For the approximate 58 secondary schools, that is approximately $1,873,400.00 plus the cost for benefits. Economically speaking, the cost of having RJ coordinators on campus is far less than the cost of students dropping out of school or matriculating from school to the penal system. Students suspended from school usually require some type of remediation from the schoolwork they have missed, which adds cost
in the form or remedial materials. Seriously, it is best to keep students in school, educate them, and provide them with character education through the RJ process. High school graduates under most circumstances are less probable to involve themselves in criminal activities (Levin & Rouse, 2012).

**Social Analysis**

TMS has seen a shift in demographics during the past decade. The socioeconomic demographics of the community has shifted from middle-to-high-income families-to-low-to-middle-income families. Today, TMS is a Title I school and has been one for the past five years. The family makeup has changed. There are more single-parent families with the parent working hourly jobs and students are left home alone. Parents are less involved in school. According to McCormick, Cappella, O’Connor, and McClowry (2013), having parents required to work and not be involved physically in the schools’ activities or conferences is an invitation for behavioral issues. Rarely, parents attend scheduled conferences. Often, it is difficult for teachers to understand or remember the plight of parents. Quickly, teachers conclude that the parents do not care about their child’s education.

Many parents do not have the time or skills in delivering positive discipline where they can inspire or encourage their child to develop self-regulation and self-management skills (Glass, 2014). Consequently, when the children are in a structured environment like school, they require boundary-reinforcement. At TMS, boundary-reinforcement often results in a suspension. When that happens, the parents feel that the school personnel are not working with them in changing their children’s behavior. They begin to feel as if it is an *us-them* situation and share with students their old feelings about
school, especially if they never trusted the whole establishment of the school. The student begins to adopt the same sentiments, and many fail to self-regulate and involve themselves in a situation where the school must institute boundary-reinforcement.

RJ practices teach prosocial skills. Prosocial skills are the use of positive behavioral skills that benefit others encouraged by empathy, moral values, and a sense of personal responsibility of others and not for a personal gain. According to Rozanski, Blumenthal, Davidson, Saab, and Kubzansky (2005), through prosocial activities, students get lessons in self-regulation. When implementing RJ in schools, it teaches students to self-regulate, which will help with discipline. Students communicate effectively with each other, and school becomes a safe place to attend and learn. Socially, leadership must advocate for schools to be involved in RJ practices.

**Political Analysis**

Politics has always played a role in education, especially as it relates to discipline. Many politicians do not have an educational background. Many politicians are attorneys and have had many personal years in school. However, it is at a higher level, and they do not understand the troubled children. The politicians chose not to consult with educational personnel in their decision-making; hence, the evolution of zero-tolerance for a disciplinary infraction. The zero-tolerance movement, which started many years ago, was politically motivated (Stinchcomb, Bazemore, & Riestenberg, 2006). School leaders and politicians did not want students to allow problems in schools because of misconduct. As a means of control, school officials suspended students from school for up-to 10 days.

Suspension may worsen academics, and when students fail to get immediate educational alternatives, other symptoms of alienation, delinquency, crime, and substance
abuse may follow (Committee on School Health, 2003). Suspended students fail to learn appropriate coping and self-regulation skills. Social, emotional, and mental health support and a program like RJ where students use their voice can decrease the need for expulsion and suspension. The school community must advocate for RJ programs.

As previously stated, school official suspends more minority students, more specifically, Black male students. In the 1990s, zero-tolerance reached its height. With the implementation of high-stakes testing in the mid-1990s, school leaders began to take notice of the amount of OSSs. The test scores generated from the high-stakes testing magnified the realization that students needed to be in school. Zero-Tolerance in schools exacerbated a pipeline from public education to prison. Politically speaking, in some cases, prisons operate as a for-profit institution, and public schools are nonprofit.

It would behoove the school board members of PPSD to mandate a policy that allows for the school to provide students with prosocial skills. Currently, it is allowed. My policy will make it a requirement. This requirement will generate better environments and keep students in schools.

Legal Analysis

Legally, any student under the age of 16 shall be provided a free public education and is required by law to attend school. The law does not stipulate that unless the student is well-behaved, is a particular color, or lives in a particular zip code for them to attend school. However, nationwide, schools suspend students frequently. I do not intend to express that school officials are intentionally suspending students because of their race, ethnicity, or economic status. In many instances, there is disproportionality of Blacks or African-Americans to that of White students. Even more startling, according to Hannon,
Defina, and Bruch (2013), The National Longitudinal Survey of Youth, logistic regression analyses indicated that darker skin tone significantly increased the odds of suspension for African-American adolescents.

Compounded, PPSD’s implementation and other districts throughout the United State, zero-tolerance policies to respond to violent behaviors in schools appears to be in opposition to the purposes of public education, and specifically, to the purpose of building students’ capacity, so they can live as contributing members of society (Hart, 2000). In PPSD, the school board members sought other methods of dealing with violent behavior. They offered the option of RJ, but it was not a mandate. Schools are not legally bound to implement RJ, but they are legally bound to provide a fair and equitable education. RJ helps provide education by reducing the number of days of suspension. Some instances, students remain in school, but they must make restitution and perform a restorative deed.

The principles of RJ (Johnstone & Van Ness, 2007; Amstutz & Mullet, 2005) offer alternative ways of thinking, believing, and acting or behaving for teachers, administrators, and other educators who respond to students’ transgressions and conflicts and support students’ motivation to attend school. These prosocial behaviors or principles are focused on relationships for building and maintaining caring relationships. Legally, schools must educate students; consequently, I think schools must legally keep students in school beyond the required attendance age of 16. Sadly, students can drop-out of school after this age without any legal enforcement to stay. Schools must graduate students for better opportunities in the future, and the proper use of RJ practices can help make this happen.
Moral and Ethical Analysis

In addition to the fact that the law makes school attendance compulsory for students, especially before their 17th birthday, students must receive adequate and appropriate education from a moral and ethical perspective. Professor Robert J. Starratt, (2005) and department chair for the Educational Administration and Higher Education at Boston College focused on moral and ethical issues in education and declared that “…there is a basic level of respect and dignity with which human beings deserve to be treated” (p. 125). As educators in the United States, part of the obligation or responsibility is to act as a public servant accountable for providing certain services to people (Starratt, 2005). One of these services is to educate children by ensuring they receive the necessary supports to be successful regardless of their race, religion, socioeconomic status, or sexual orientation.

As a school leader, I must ensure the same educational opportunities for each student for 180 school days–failure to do so is educational malpractice. When students are not in school, teachers are not able to provide instruction, which ultimately creates gaps in student learning. RJ helps educators to keep students in school to provide educational instruction, which could help in closing or at least narrowing the achievement gap.

Teachers and leaders must create an environment in which students feel safe and are free to develop and grow, ultimately getting the students to like school. According to Hallinan (2008), students who like school tend to have better academic achievement and a lower occurrence of disciplinary problems, absenteeism, truancy, and dropping out of school than those who dislike school. Educators must shape students’ feeling about
school. RJ practices can allow for that. Students learn to self-advocate, self-regulate, and become more involved in their learning. They will stay in school more and realize the value of education.

**Implications for Staff and Community Relationships**

Restorative Practices helps cultivate positive staff relationships with students and each other. RJ is not the panacea for problems in schools, but if implemented correctly, it can improve the school environment, enhance learning, and encourage young people to become more responsible and empathetic (Youth Justice Board, 2004). By creating an environment of mutual respect, and a positive culture of self-advocacy, RJ helps restore the harm caused between the victim and the person causing the harm. With the implementation of RJ, staff relationships can strengthen. Stephen Covey (2014) stated that no significant learning takes place without an effective relationship; when staff members have positive relationships with each other and their students, learning can occur.

Restorative practices and school community relationships are essential to complete the RJ implementation at any school. The school community expects the school to take care of its prized possession, the kids who attend the school. Previously stated, there are times when parents are not able to attend parent conferences because of their hourly work schedule. With a positive school community relationship connection with the school, parents feel less defensive or intimidated by the school. Some parents with a high school education or less may have harbored negative feelings toward school because they may not have been successful as students. Schools have to create an
inclusive environment for parents and the community where the school is part of the community, and not viewed as a separate entity.

The remaining information will discuss in detail the policy that I am advocating for this study. As I indicated earlier, the district has a discipline policy, and it allows principals to address additional discipline issues at their schools. However, I am advocating that the implementation of RJ practices as a mandatory piece in the discipline program for secondary schools in the district. In doing so, I want the district to subsidize the allocation for a RJ coordinator for each secondary school. This coordinator is not to correctly operate in the circles. The people who lead the circles are facilitators. A coordinator is a person outside the classroom who manages restorative activities on campus (e.g., training, planning of circles, communication, and data gathering). Other responsibilities of the coordinators are (a) ensuring that circles followed the principles of RJ conferencing, (b) confirming that circle facilitators maintain a distinction between the offending youth and his or her behavior (i.e., treating the student as a valued member of the school community), and (c) guaranteeing that facilitators focus the discussion on the incident and rarely lecturing the offending youth. Outside of the circles and as a daily routine of the coordinator, that person will ensure the training for staff members, and he or she works with the district to safeguard the practices of the program and secure fidelity of the implementation schoolwide and districtwide.

Considering the study done in the Denver Public Schools (DPS) and their findings, there will not be a justifiable reason for the board members of PPSD to deny a policy of this magnitude. According to Gonzalez (2015), the findings of the longitudinal
study done in DPS on the impact of RJ provided educational policymakers with five significant deliberations:

- with a systemic implementation of RJ at the school and district levels and the reform of discipline policies, districts can eradicate disproportionality in discipline outcomes,
- academic achievement can increase,
- RJ can be aligned with clear, short, medium, and long-term goals, beginning with a pilot and transitioning to widespread adoption,
- it is not merely about adding another program to a teacher’s classroom or administrative practices, but about standardizing practices that facilitate responsive changes to the needs of individuals and communities, and
- RJ is a comprehensive continuum model, generating transformative effects within a school community and districtwide (Gonzalez 2015).

I am proposing this approach for PPSD because I see that considering their approach is what the district will need to get similar results. The PPSD experienced similar problems as DPS in that disproportionality in the discipline of students exist, and students received suspension; therefore, achievement is low in some schools. It will behoove PPSD to endorse restorative practices in secondary schools.

**Conclusion**

The program effectiveness of this study examined the RJ program and the practices at TMS and found that training was the major issue because few bought into the implementation. They saw little to no standard practices of the restorative circles. The CLP of this study offered training and better implementation with a school-wide
approach. The third portion, policy advocacy, offers an adjustment to the current district discipline policy by advocating a mandatory implementation of RJ programs for secondary schools with the support of a RJ coordinator at every secondary school. I believe that these recommendations will change the culture and the operation of the schools in the PPSD. As supported by the DPS longitudinal study, I believe the students will gain self-advocacy and self-regulation skill while becoming competent academically in the process.
CHAPTER EIGHT: CONCLUSION

Introduction

Students cannot learn if they are not in school. Suspension from school impedes upon student learning. That is the impetus to this study, and RJ became the catalyst of this study because it is a means of helping students to achieve. Students are in school more and suspended less. The issues addressed in this project study examined concerns relating to the implementation of the RJ program at TMS. Throughout my study, the motif of needing more training for staff and administrators at the school resonated with the teachers at TMS, district-level administrators, and resource teachers. The administrators suggested more teachers require initial training and some needed additional training. Proper training in RJ is critical for the overall success of school discipline, which aids in student learning.

As previously stated, when students consistently attend school, they have a greater chance of being successful than when they are not in school because of suspensions. RJ, based on research, has aided in building relationships between student-student and student-teacher. Students have learned to self-regulate and avoided spontaneous reactions that led to fighting. Also, it has been responsible for shaping a positive school culture as students acquire the skills to advocate for themselves through dialogue obtained from community circles successfully.

Discussion

A synthesis of the program evaluation based on the research I conducted concluded that there is a need to properly implement RJ training and practices because the school community (i.e., staff, students, administrators, area superintendent, and
district resource teachers) sees positive effects from the implementation at TMS. There was a 20% reduction in the OSS rate at TMS. Also, data indicated that many of the teachers did not have complete knowledge about the practices; in fact, some were ignorant of its existence. The teachers who had little knowledge did not understand the purpose of the implementation of RJ practices and how it can relate to student performance. Students are in the infant stage of self-regulating. Some have begun to resist their impulse to throw a punch when provoked. Students have begun the process of advocating for themselves with positive communication with their peers and teachers, but there is still work required as it relates to the overall school culture.

An organizational change in practices is essential for RJ to work as the research indicated. After an analysis of the data, I realized that I must change the system of operation at TMS. This change requires a four-prong approach: (a) develop a plan for training, (b) scaling up practices and implementation, (c) implement universal circles (i.e., school-wide practices used for preventing the development and occurrences of problem behavior for students), and (d) monitor practices to ensure implementation of the plan with fidelity.

The policy advocacy component requires each school to have a RJ coordinator who will serve as a liaison between the school and the MAO. Two teachers in the MAO train district personnel in the RJ practices. This person will be responsible for training and record keeping on campus as it relates to RJ practices. Having one person responsible ensures consistency of the RJ process. I believe this will be effective with the implementation of RJ because instead of having multiple people conducting the training, handling paperwork, and doing the bulk of the RJ circles, one person will be the point of
contact for each school and schools can avoid adding this responsibility to another person, which may cause saturation and lack of ownership.

The purpose of my evaluation was to determine the effectiveness of RJ at TMS and if it was a viable component to help reduce the number of OSSs for students fighting and being disrespectful toward their peers and teachers. This process addressed my purpose by surveying staff members, district coaches, an area superintendent, and senior administrator to garner their opinions on the effectiveness of RJ. I addressed my goals by determining the effectiveness of RJ, if it helped build relationships, and enhanced teaching and learning. I have addressed my goals by implementing RJ at TMS, provided training to faculty and staff, and utilizing RJ more on campus, which has reduced the OSS rate at TMS.

An issue raised with my organization change was that of training. TMS must do a better job of training staff members. Even though some teachers were trained, there was no follow-up training, and teachers soon lost interest. Teachers needed to have the same information and the benefits of an effective RJ process. Moreover, administrators need additional training and the approach of having a school-wide trained staff can yield a focus on community primary circles that will enhance the culture change at TMS.

The policy I am advocating for is to have a mandatory RJ program on secondary campuses. To properly support this program districtwide, PPSD needs to hire a RJ coordinator for each secondary school. This person will be responsible for the school-wide training, scaling up practices, implementation, implementing universal circles, and assisting with the monitoring of the program. This person will serve as a liaison between the school and the MAO.
Leadership Lessons

The leadership lessons I have learned in this process are enormous; however, I will spotlight six such lessons. They are (a) to persevere, (b) to learn the importance of research and decision-making, (c) to seek out credible and vital advice, (d) to effectively analyze and interpret data, (e) to work collaboratively with others, and (f) to understand that change can be adaptive and technical, and it matters. The first lesson deals with perseverance. When I started this process, I knew it would be difficult, but I did not realize how time-consuming the process would be. I have heard from others that there may be conflicts along the way, but I did not realize that those conflicts could come from family, school, and other personal interests. I contemplated quitting my pursuit in attaining a doctorate and did briefly. The encouragement from my professors helped me to determine that I needed to readjust and stick to my plans. The writing and the research became quite daunting, but as I continued with the processes: researching and writing. I saw improvement in both processes. I decided to preserve for I know that potential benefits are ahead.

Again, researching was something I thought was most difficult. Currently, I possess a bachelor and master degrees, and I researched and wrote papers previously. I have never faced the amount of research required for the pursuit of a doctorate. After researching on the topic of RJ and restorative practices, I realized the importance of researching processes and procedures before moving ahead and involving others. If I had adequately researched the topic before bringing it to my campus, I think I would have had a better implementation. Also, the staff and students at the school would have
experienced RJ in its pure form in that harm is restored, relationships are built, and the culture is positive and restorative.

The third leadership lesson I learned was to seek out credible and vital advice. Earlier in this process, I followed down the wrong pathway and deviated from my goal of graduating, but the diligence and attention of my professors in this program provided me with quality advice and guidance. It brought me back to reality and this program, and I feel that it was the most important decision I could have made. Frankly, there were times I questioned some suggestions from some of my colleagues. However, as I bounced some of them off of my professors, I realized that some of their suggestions were legitimate ones that yielded good results.

A fundamental leadership lesson I learned was to analyze and interpret data. Chapter 4 of this study is the mammoth and tedious part of my study; however, it is a vital portion of the study. Having gone through this process has made me a better leader and a better student. I know how to gather information free of immediately coming to the wrong conclusion and making an assumption without all of the facts. In some of the residencies, students learned how to gather information, separate individual thoughts, cluster similar information to determine the frequency, coding, writing qualitative thoughts from quantitative data, and turning quantitative data to qualitative information or data. Also, it helped me from allowing my bias to come to play into my study. To me, it was the most crucial time spent together. The processes gleaned from those meetings helped me to establish portability. I can now take the information I gathered in those meetings to any other experiences, like to new jobs should I choose to leave the one I
have now, to committee meetings when trying to develop a program, or to make changes or to establishments where a data-driven decision would require such processes.

The fifth leadership lesson I learned is that I must work collaboratively with others. I must be more inclusive and share in the planning process (i.e., shared leadership). I have even learned the art of having patience because I wanted every incident to have an RJ circle because I so badly wanted RJ to work at the school. I realized from members of my staff that every situation does not warrant RJ. Because of the way RJ was implemented at TMS, initially, I further learned the importance of effective communication when working collaboratively with others. I needed to communicate this to everyone and not just the ones who received the training.

I have grown as a leader by empowering others to assist in the vision, to have a shared leadership where the focus is not me but we. Also, I have become more of a distributive leader. I have been able to lead members of my team out of their comfort zones. I am not the only voice for PDs on campus; others have stepped up and have done a great job of delivering professional development. I will use this information gained from this study going forward by investing more in human capital. By investing in others, I am continuing the vision and lifting others. It is essential for me to share my knowledge and skills with others. I know that I must help nurture the future leaders of PPSD and to build something that is sustainable well beyond the time when I leave TMS.

My sixth leadership lesson is to understand that changes can be adaptive or technical, and it matters. I may have alluded to this fact earlier in this study. I wanted to make a change and improve the discipline in my school, establish better relationships with the students and teacher and with students and students, and reduce suspension and
the disproportionality stemming from the suspensions. I made a technical decision to implement RJ and restorative practices; however, to make changes or improvement of this sort requires an adaptive approach. The change required discussions, planning, training, regulations to ensure stability, and the process of monitoring for effectiveness. I now know that it matters that the appropriate approach is necessary or it will deteriorate.

**Conclusion**

As I shared earlier, the leadership lessons learned in the process of writing this study are enormous. The highlights of the six leadership lessons I learned made me a better leader and a better student. I will encourage leaders in PPSD to follow in my footsteps and pursue a doctorate. It is a process that will build character, stamina, and leadership. Having professors who bring their diverse career experiences and their knowledge of attaining a doctorate enhanced the experience. The skills learned will enable them to take on responsibilities of leading a school, serving in the district offices in cabinet positions, teaching at the higher-education level, or leading a large school district as superintendent.
References


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Appendix A: Informed Consent: Teacher Survey

Adult Participant Survey: TEACHER SURVEY

My name is Edward Jerome Thompson, and I am a doctoral student at National Louis University, Orlando, Florida. I am asking for your consent to participate in my dissertation project voluntarily. The study is entitled: “An Evaluation of the Restorative Justice Program at One Middle School.” The purpose of my study is to determine the effectiveness of restorative justice in Thompson Middle School to reduce the suspension rates of students. The study will also help us to establish procedures; whereby, we can adequately implement processes to improve our disciplinary actions rather than imposing punitive measures to many infractions.

You may participate in this study by signing this consent form indicating that you understand the purpose of the study and agree to participate in a printed survey. It should take approximately 35 minutes for you to complete the survey. All information collected in the survey reflects your experience and opinion either as an administrator or teacher in Thompson Middle School.

Your participation is voluntary, and you may discontinue your participation at any time with no negative consequences. I will keep the identity of you, the school, the district, and all participants confidential, as it will not be attached to the data, and I will use pseudonyms for all participants in the report. Only I will have access to all survey data that will remain a locked cabinet at my home for up to 5 years, at which time I will shred all data. Participation in this study does not involve any physical or emotional risk beyond that of everyday life. While you are likely to not have any direct benefit from being in this research study, you're taking part in this study may contribute to our better understanding of the parent academy at your school or district and what changes, if any, need to be made.

While the results of this study may be published or otherwise reported to scientific bodies, your identity will in no way be revealed. You may request a copy of this completed study by contacting me at edward.thompson@ocps.net.

In the event you have questions or require additional information, you may contact me at ethompson9@my.nl.edu. If you have any concerns or questions before or during participation that you feel I have not addressed, you may contact my dissertation chair, Dr. Carol A. Burg, email: cburg@nl.edu; or the EDL Department Chair: Dr. Stuart Carrier scarrrier@nl.edu 847-947-5017; or the NLU’s Institutional Research Review Board: Dr. Shaunti Knauth, NLU IRRB Chair, shaunti.knauth@nl.edu, 312.261.3526, National Louis University IRRB Board, 122 South Michigan Avenue, Chicago, IL 60603.

Thank you for your participation.

Participant Name (Please Print)

Participant Signature ___________________________ Date __________
Edward Jerome Thompson

Researcher Name (Please Print)

Researcher Signature ___________________________ Date __________
RESTORATIVE JUSTICE SURVEY

As part of my doctoral program at National Louis University, I have created a survey to determine the effectiveness of restorative justice in Thompson Middle School. Your participation is voluntary, and you may discontinue participation at any time. All information is kept confidential.

Part A:

Directions: Place an X in the appropriate box for each item:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I have used restorative justice during the school year.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. I have used restorative justice more than once during the school year.</td>
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<td>3. I perceive RJ as working well in our school.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. I do not perceive RJ as working well in our school.</td>
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<td>5. I have not noticed any differences in the students’ behavior at my school.</td>
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<td>6. Restorative Justice is not working well at my school</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. The RJ process will change the culture of the school.</td>
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Part B:

Directions: Please respond to the questions below:

8. If you perceive RJ as working well in your school? How? Give examples.
9. If you perceive RJ as not working well in your schools? Why? Give examples.

10. What do you consider to be challenges with the implementation of RJ at your school?

11. What are the suggestions for improving RJ at your school? By teachers? Counselors? Administrators?

12. As a stakeholder of Thompson Middle School, what impact did the Restorative Justice Program have on the culture of your school?
Appendix C: Informed Consent: Adult Participant

Adult Participant Interview

My name is Edward Jerome Thompson, and I am a doctoral student at National Louis University, Tampa, Florida. I am asking for your consent to participate in my dissertation project voluntarily. The study is entitled: An Evaluation of the Restorative Justice Program at One Middle School. The purpose of my study is to determine the effectiveness of restorative justice in Thompson Middle School to reduce the suspension rates of students. The study will also help us to establish procedures whereby we can adequately implement processes to improve our disciplinary actions rather than imposing punitive measures to many infractions.

You may participate in this study by signing this consent form indicating that you understand the purpose of the interviews and agree to participate a 30-minute interview, with possibly up to 5 email exchanges in order clarify any questions I may have regarding your interview data. All information collected in the interviews reflects your experience and opinion as to the implementation and processes of the Restorative Justice practices at Thompson Middle School.

Your participation is voluntary, and you may discontinue your participation at any time. I will keep the identity of the school and all participants confidential, as it will not be attached to the data and I will use pseudonyms for all participants. Only I will have access to all of the interview tapes and transcripts, and field notes, which I will keep in a locked cabinet at my home or on a password-protected hard drive for up to 5 years after the completion of this study, at which time I will shred all interview transcripts, tapes, and notes. Participation in this study does not involve any physical or emotional risk beyond that of everyday life. While you are likely to not have any direct benefit from being in this research study, you're taking part in this study may contribute to our better understanding of the implementation process the Restorative Justice practices at Thompson Middle School and what changes, if any, need to be made.

While the results of this study may be published or otherwise reported to scientific bodies, your identity will in no way be revealed. You may request a copy of this completed study by contacting me at edward.thompson@ocps.net.

In the event you have questions or require additional information, you may contact me at ethompson9@my.nl.edu. If you have any concerns or questions before or during participation that you feel I have not addressed, you may contact my dissertation chair, Dr. Carol A. Burg, email: cburg@nl.edu or the National-Louis Institutional Research Review Board: Dr. Shaunti Knauth, NLU IRBB Chair, National Louis University IRBB Board, 122 South Michigan Avenue, Chicago, IL 60603.

Thank you for your participation.

Participant Name (Please Print)

Participant Signature __________________________ Date __________________________

Edward Jerome Thompson Researcher Name (Please Print)

Researcher Signature __________________________ Date __________________________

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Appendix D: Interview Protocol

AREA SUPERINTENDENT, SR. ADMINISTRATOR, AND RESOURCE TEACHER
INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

This process will be a face-to-face interview process approximately 30 minutes in duration. The interview will take place during non-instructional school hours. All names are held in confidence, and only I will hold a copy of the verbatim interview responses. I will use a pseudonym during the interview to protect your anonymity. I will use both a tape recording device and paper-pencil for note-taking purposes.

1. What is your perception of what is working well with the Restorative Justice Program?

2. If you have had communications with the teachers relative to the RJ program, what have you gleaned from that communication regarding the Restorative Justice Program as working well at Thompson Middle School?

3. What is your perception of what is not working well with the Restorative Justice Program?

4. What do you perceive as challenges to the Restorative Justice Program at your school?

5. If you have had communications with the teachers relative to the RJ program, what have you gleaned from that communication regarding the Restorative Justice Program as not working well at Thompson Middle School?

6. What would you suggest as an improvement to the RJ program at Thompson Middle School?

7. What role can the administration play in the improvement of the RJ process?

8. What role can teachers play in the improvement of the RJ process?

9. How can counselors assist in the improvement process?

10. Do you think that the proper implementation of the RJ process will improve the culture of the school? Why or Why not.
Appendix E: 4Cs AS-IS

**Context**
- In conflict the victim does not have a voice
- There is a racial disparity of students suspended from school
- Students are suspended for an exorbitant number of days

**Culture**
- Teachers feel that administrators should suspend students
- Teachers believe that RJ does not work
- Students do not totally accept the RJ process at face value

**Conditions**
- Suspension negatively impacts learning
- Lack of transportation to alternative sites hinders learning and counseling
- Some administrators do not believe in the process

**Competencies**
- Not all teachers are trained in restorative practices
- Administrators do not use the RJ process with fidelity
- Some teachers fail to understand of restorative practice and students' performance

Students do not have a voice and are suspended excessively for disrespect, incoordination, and fighting.
### Appendix F: A Five-Stage Model

#### A Five-Stage Model for School Change along Restorative Lines

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Stage 1</strong></td>
<td>Owning and developing the vision: Awareness-raising sessions and a chance for everyone in the school to ask questions and make suggestions. Some baselines evaluation of school climate might be worthwhile at this stage so change can be measured.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Stage 2</strong></td>
<td>Establishing and developing a steering group, involving representatives from across the school community. This group is responsible for the development, the monitoring and the oversight of the project. They will need basic training in restorative approaches at the outset, so the project has restorative effects.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Stage 3</strong></td>
<td>Identifying and establishing the training team from within the school, also using representation from across the school community. This team will need basic training in the skills and then training for trainers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Stage 4</strong></td>
<td>Developing and suggesting the training team as the training begins across the school, with lunchtime teams, class groups, curriculum and year teams, governors, parents (or whomever the steering group has identified as a target group).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Stage 5</strong></td>
<td>Policy and organizational review to ensure the integration of restorative practices and ethos into every aspect of the school day.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix G: 4Cs TO-BE

Context
- Students have a voice through RJ process
- There is no disparity with suspension
- Suspension are limited extreme measures

Culture
- Teacher understand RJ and know that administrators support them
- Teachers understand and use the RJ practices
- Students actually understand the process and seek out assistance before it escalate to a major conflict

With RJ, students have a voice and are suspended less frequently

Conditions
- Because of fewer suspension, more learning occurs
- Increased number of local alternative sites
- Mindset of RJ has been adjusted

Competencies
- Teachers are trained in RJ
- Administrators use RJ processes with fidelity
- Teachers do not see relationship of RJ practices and student performance

Teacher understand RJ and know that administrators support them
 Teachers understand and use the RJ practices
 Students actually understand the process and seek out assistance before it escalate to a major conflict
 With RJ, students have a voice and are suspended less frequently
 Conditions
 Because of fewer suspension, more learning occurs
 Increased number of local alternative sites
 Mindset of RJ has been adjusted
 Competencies
 Teachers are trained in RJ
 Administrators use RJ processes with fidelity
 Teachers do not see relationship of RJ practices and student performance
## Appendix H: Strategies and Action Chart

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Action</th>
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</thead>
</table>
| Phase 1
  Plans, Vision, and Expectations    | Principal will develops plans and communicates his vision of restorative justice practices to the school community.                 |
| a. organizational theory              | • Principal share information with the staff, including baseline data regarding discipline, suspensions, and proposed vision, plan, and expectations (giving students voice) |
| b. leadership strategies              | • Principal assembles students and shares the vision and expectations. Students understand all rules and their responsibilities.       |
| c. communication strategies          | • At parent meetings (SAC and PTSA), the principal communicates plan, vision, and expectations                                    |
| Phase 2
  Steering group                     | A steering group established and responsibilities established                                                                           |
| a. organizational theory              | • The group comprised of representatives from across the school community (grades, departments, and leadership members)            |
| b. leadership strategies              | • The group develops a training protocol.                                                                                               |
|                                      | • The steering committee will also monitor and oversee the project.                                                                      |
| Phase 3
  Training protocol                  | Training is scheduled adequately for the whole-school approach.                                                                            |
| a. organizational theory              | • Schedule training for all members of the staff                                                                                        |
| b. professional development          | • Volunteered steering committee members will serve as train-the-trainers                                                                  |
|                                      | • Establish training schedules for new staff members to handle attrition.                                                                    |
|                                      | • Determine standards for updates on training                                                                                              |
| Phase 4
  Monitor for effectiveness and sustainability | Steering group members will ensure implementation is done with fidelity.                                                                  |
| a. organizational theory              | • Review policy and review practices to ensure restorative practices                                                                     |
| b. communication strategies          | • Visit circles and monitor facilitators are operating with consistency. Address any individual concerns                              |
| c. leadership strategies              | • Meet monthly with facilitators and address general concerns.                                                                             |
|                                      | • Meet with principal, if necessary, for the different level of support.                                                                  |