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Restorative Practices Effect on the Culture and Climate of a School or District

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Educational Leadership

Submitted in partial fulfillment

of the requirements of

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RESTORATIVE PRACTICES EFFECT ON THE CULTURE AND CLIMATE OF A SCHOOL
OR DISTRICT

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Abstract

Restorative practices have emerged as a transformative approach within various domains, particularly education, aiming to nurture constructive relationships, address conflicts, and foster community. This research delves into the multifaceted world of restorative practices in educational settings, exploring their impact on school climate, conflict resolution, social and emotional learning, and broader implications for equity and justice in the classroom. This study looks to see if restorative practices affect the culture and climate of a school or district. It looks at how students describe a classroom that uses these practices. The feelings and reactions of students participating in these practices were also examined.

This study aims to comprehensively examine the application of restorative practices in educational settings and assess their impact on various aspects of the school environment. By exploring the principles and methodologies inherent to restorative practices, this research aims to elucidate their significance in promoting positive school climates, effective conflict resolution, social and emotional learning, and cultivating equity and justice in schools.

The context of the inquiry into restorative practices lies within the educational landscape, where traditional discipline and conflict resolution approaches are increasingly being challenged. Schools worldwide recognize the need to shift from punitive measures to more restorative, relationship-centered methods. The study reveals that implementing restorative practices in schools significantly impacts the school climate. Students and staff reported feeling safer, more valued, and a greater sense of belonging within the school community.

When restorative practices are consistently applied, the research findings demonstrate a noticeable reduction in disciplinary incidents, such as suspensions and expulsions. This reduction indicates the potential of restorative approaches to improve student behavior and mitigate disruptive incidents. The study highlights that restorative practices align with and promote social and emotional learning (SEL) competencies among students.

This research offers recommendations related to the implementation of restorative practices. Schools should implement a robust system for monitoring and evaluating the ongoing application of restorative practices, tracking their impact on disciplinary incidents, school climate, and student outcomes.

Preface

As the author embarking on the journey of researching restorative practices, I was excited to delve into a subject that has the potential to reshape our educational landscape. Restorative practices offer a new perspective on addressing conflicts, behavioral issues, and school community building. This research endeavor represents not just an academic pursuit but a heartfelt belief in the transformative power of these practices. In a world where traditional disciplinary measures often fail to create safe, inclusive, and supportive learning environments, restorative practices emerge as a beacon of hope. This preface marks the beginning of a journey to understand, analyze, and advocate for these practices to improve our educational systems. A genuine curiosity drives this research to uncover the effectiveness of restorative practices in fostering dialogue, empathy, and community-building among students, teachers, and all stakeholders in the educational process. I acknowledge that there is much to learn and understand, and the path may be challenging. However, I fervently believe that by exploring restorative practices, we can contribute to the ongoing discourse on improving our educational systems and creating more positive, supportive, and harmonious school communities. I invite you to join me on this journey as I embark on a collective quest to make our schools better places for all.

Writing this dissertation was a significant undertaking beyond just producing a long research paper. It was a complex and challenging process that involved conducting original research, contributing to the academic field, and developing a deep understanding of restorative practices. In addition, writing this dissertation was a rigorous process that contributed to my academic field and equipped me with valuable skills and knowledge that can be applied to various aspects of my personal and professional life. It's a challenging journey, but the lessons learned are invaluable. Writing this dissertation provided a unique opportunity for leadership development and growth within me as a leader. Several leadership lessons and growth areas

were fostered during this dissertation writing process. It was a solitary endeavor, requiring self-discipline, self-motivation, and self-management. This experience taught me how to lead myself effectively, set goals, and stay on track, a fundamental aspect of leadership.

As a leader committed to enhancing student learning and fostering positive relationships through restorative practices, I hold several hopes for the future of our educational community. I hope to see a future where empathy and compassion are at the heart of our educational interactions. Through restorative practices, students and educators will cultivate deep empathy, understanding, and care for one another, creating a more compassionate and supportive learning environment. I hope to see deeper, more meaningful connections between educators and students. Restorative practices will enable teachers to build trusting, nurturing relationships with their students, making meeting individual learning needs and aspirations easier. Our commitment to restorative practices will lead to improved academic outcomes. When students feel safe, supported, and valued, their engagement and motivation to learn will increase, leading to greater success in their educational journey.

I look forward to a future where students take responsibility for their actions and actively shape their educational experiences. Restorative practices will instill a sense of accountability, encouraging students to make amends when necessary and contribute positively to the school community.

Acknowledgments

I am honored to have the opportunity to acknowledge the invaluable support, guidance, and inspiration I have received throughout the journey of writing this dissertation. Completing this research would not have been possible without the contributions and encouragement of numerous individuals.

First and foremost, I am deeply grateful to my dissertation chair, Dr. Don Angelaccio, whose unwavering support, expertise, and mentorship were instrumental in shaping this work. Dr. Angelaccio provided invaluable insights, constructive feedback, and a constant source of motivation, for which I am profoundly thankful.

I wish to acknowledge the teachers, students, and administrators participating in this study. Their willingness to share their experiences and insights has been fundamental to the research and, I hope, will contribute to a broader understanding of restorative practices.

My family and friends have been a constant source of support, understanding, and encouragement throughout this academic endeavor. I am grateful for their patience and unwavering belief in my abilities.

This dissertation reflects the collective efforts of many, and I sincerely appreciate each individual who has played a role, whether large or small, in its completion. This work is a testament to the power of collaboration, the importance of mentorship, and the value of the academic community.

Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to the individuals who have been my unwavering source of inspiration, encouragement and love throughout this academic journey.

To my husband, Andrew, whose unwavering support, love, and understanding have been a constant source of strength and motivation in my academic and personal endeavors. Your boundless support and belief in my abilities have been the cornerstone of my academic pursuits. Your sacrifices, understanding, and faith in my dreams propelled me forward. Your presence in my life is a blessing.

To my children, Clara, William, and Maeve, your sacrifices, encouragement, and belief in my potential have driven my educational achievements. Your enduring faith in my dreams and tireless efforts to provide opportunities have been a constant source of inspiration.

To all who have been a part of my life's journey, whether as mentors, colleagues, or doctoral peers, your contributions, large or small, have been appreciated.

This dissertation is dedicated to all of you, a testament to the power of collective support, the importance of meaningful relationships, and the value of shared dreams. Thank you for being an integral part of my life's story. I am profoundly grateful for your presence in my life.

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Chapter 1: Design/Introduction

“‘I need a teacher I can really talk to,’ many have said. ‘And not just about school things, but things going on in my life. I want to know that a teacher cares about me’” (Wagner, 2021, p.192). Without powerful relationships, students feel less connected with their teachers, which means they are less likely to be high-performing learners, and academic performance is impacted.

Seven years ago, I became an elementary principal. I had no idea of the impact I would have on students, especially students who would come into the office identified as “in trouble” or the “bad kids.” Brayden is one of the first I met this way. He was a second grader. Like many students with ADHD, Brayden showed aggression toward others, excitability, fidgeting, hyperactivity, impulsivity, irritability, difficulty focusing in the classroom, problems paying attention during whole group instruction, and a short attention span throughout the school day. He was sent to my office for inappropriate behavior that disrupted the instruction of others or the teacher. If Brayden could not complete his work quietly in class, he was sent to my office to complete it. As the building principal, the classroom teacher always requested that I call his parents to explain his behavior in class. Ultimately, the teachers wanted students like Brayden to be punished and to “pay for” their misbehavior. Brayden did not care for the school rules and couldn't care less if he listened to his teachers or followed instructions. Brayden knew his teachers didn't like him. He knew they didn't want to “deal with him,” he told me. During my first year, Brayden was one of many students sent to my office for me to “deal with,” and he wasn't the only one who felt that his teachers didn't like him.

Often, I found myself with a line of students outside of my office. Teachers wanted students “punished” for their actions and behavior. Staff also wanted to know that students were punished, hoping it would change student behavior. At the end of September 2014, one month

into my principalship, I knew I would not be a principal who used punitive discipline. Something in that school culture needed to change. It needed to change for the sake of the students, but it would improve the lives of everyone in the building. I needed to lead with the whole-child approach that modeled the importance of relationships in development and learning. I needed to model positive discipline and nurture a sensitive learning environment based on the needs of the students. I needed to be mindful of my students' situations and why they were sent to the principal's office. I was confident that implementing Restorative Practices would allow me to do that.

“The term ‘Restorative Practices’ was derived from a significant development in the criminal justice field called ‘restorative justice.’ Research in restorative justice has revealed very positive outcomes for victims and offenders alike, including a reduction in reoffending. Similar Restorative Practices in schools have also yielded significant improvements in behavior and school climate” (Costello, Wachtel & Wachtel, 2009, p. 12). The Restorative Practices movement is based on building good relationships and restoring a sense of community in a disconnected world, whether those worlds be our families, workplaces, neighborhoods, and/or schools. Restorative justice is not just a way of disciplining; it is also a way to restore relationships where harm has occurred.

This research aims to show the past, present, and future of discipline in schools and how it can be used to engage students, allow them to take greater responsibility for their behavior, and enhance relationship skills both inside and outside of school. For example, in my experiences with Brayden, establishing a connection and relationship was important. He needed to take responsibility for his actions and learn how to repair relationships. “Showing the importance of using Restorative Practices in the classrooms with teachers, in dealing with students with discipline and implementing them throughout the whole school will help our students improve

relationships and behavior which in the long run will impact student achievement” (Costello et al, 2009, p. 45).

Purpose:

In explaining the value of Restorative Practices, we do not label or criticize other programs as negative or positive, effective or ineffective. My goal in this work is to create an understanding of this program and the effect it has on student behavior. A restorative circle, conference, or conversation is a specific process with defined protocols that bring together the people who have caused harm with those who have been directly or indirectly harmed. It is a social science that studies building social awareness and achieving social discipline through participatory learning and decision-making (Wachtel, 2016). Throughout this research, I will examine the Restorative Practice Model (Wachtel, 2016) and circles within the restorative approach. There are six areas relevant to understanding how circles work in schools:

1. The whole-child approach.
2. The importance of relationships in development and learning.
3. A Whole-School Approach.
4. Positive Discipline.
5. A Trauma-Sensitive Learning Environment.
6. Mindfulness Practice.

Within the whole-child approach, the focus is on social-emotional learning. Emotional habits such as persistence, grit, focus, and curiosity appear to be more influential than intelligence when determining which individuals will succeed in school and transition into a healthy adult life. Circles provide space for emotional, social, and moral development and physical and mental development for humans. Research confirms that “emotional skills for

empathy, patience, and emotional self-management can be taught and nurtured within the classroom and the whole school community” (Boyes-Watson & Pranis, 2015, p.12).

Understanding the importance of relationships in development and cognitive and social learning, Restorative Practices are a process for building relationships. Using circles strengthens trusting and caring relationships that become highly beneficial for adults and children in lifelong cognitive and social learning.

A whole school approach focuses on a positive school climate, including a sense of belonging and feeling connected. “School connectedness” is a term that encompasses the sense of attachment that a student feels to the school community (Boyes-Watson & Pranis, 2015). Building a strong community for students and teachers is essential and will foster the idea of school connectedness. This process creates a designed space that promotes a sense of safety and belonging when looking at circles in schools. It cultivates an awareness of consideration for others.

Restorative Practices are positive discipline and based on the restorative justice theory. “Circles create space for the community to have shared values with a common set of behavioral norms” (Costello, Wachtel, and Wachtel, 2022, p.8). There is a structured process for addressing the harm that meets the needs of those hurt while promoting accountability and responsibility for wrongdoers. Employing positive discipline models builds a stronger community that resolves wrongdoing favorably. According to Wachtel, using conflict resolution and creating an opportunity to strengthen relationships helps create a positive community.

Many schools work with students who have been abused, neglected, and exposed to chronic stressors in their personal lives. Trauma theory helps to reframe academic struggles and student misbehavior and can offer support rather than punishment for misconduct. Through the trauma-sensitive learning environment, children feel supported, appreciated, and cared for by

adults in their schools and classrooms. The expectations for behavior are clearly stated and reinforced through positive interventions and in environments where students feel emotionally and physically safe. Doing this work is transformative, simple, and cost-free. Most of all, this practice benefits all students—those who are emotionally healthy and those who are struggling.

The last element of restorative practice is mindfulness practice, a wellness technique with a long-standing tradition that is timeless and universal. Mindfulness enables participants to slow down and be present with themselves and others around them. Research on mindfulness within schools shows that simple techniques can improve the quality of attentiveness and calm focus within a classroom (Boyes-Watson & Pranis, 2015, p. 14). Restorative Practices in a school district serve several essential purposes, primarily promoting a positive school culture, resolving conflicts, and improving relationships among students, teachers, and administrators.

This evaluation aims to create a plan for change in my district related to discipline practices and how students view their relationships with their teachers.

Rationale:

My goal is to bring awareness about Restorative Practices to schools because I have seen many students humiliated in front of their peers. I have seen staff shaming students in front of other staff. I have also seen students get even angrier because of how they are treated or due to a lack of a relationship with significant others, resulting in negative behavior. I want students to know people care about them. I want students to take responsibility for their wrongdoing and repair the harm done, building solid relationships with peers and adults in their schools. “Being in a positive relationship, the feeling of being recognized, heard, respected, and valued, is a form of healing” (Boyes-Watson & Pranis, 2015, p.18). Incorporating Restorative Practices in schools is vital for various stakeholders, including students, staff, district, and the broader community. Restorative Practices focus on repairing harm, building relationships, and fostering community.

Restorative Practices help students feel safe, heard, and valued. When conflicts or disciplinary issues arise, these practices encourage dialogue, empathy, and understanding, leading to improved relationships and a more positive school climate.

Implementing Restorative Practices empowers staff to build stronger connections with students, enhancing their ability to address conflicts constructively and create a supportive learning environment. Restorative Practices can reduce disciplinary actions and suspensions by addressing the underlying causes of behavior, promoting accountability, and teaching conflict resolution skills. Fewer suspensions contribute to a healthier educational environment and reduce the negative impact on student's academic progress and overall well-being. Learning and practicing restorative approaches teach students valuable life skills, such as communication, conflict resolution, and empathy, which are vital for future community interactions. Restorative Practices promote a culture of understanding and compassion, contributing to a more harmonious and inclusive community by reducing conflict incidents and promoting positive interaction.

Incorporating Restorative Practices in schools aligns with creating a more nurturing, empathetic, and inclusive educational environment that benefits students, staff, the district, and the broader community in the long run.

Goals:

I aim to identify and clarify for teachers, building-level administrators, and the community that neglectful or punitive discipline does not support students the way we think it does and does not help with student achievement scores. Through this paper, I will demonstrate how important it is to have a mindset that promotes flexibility that is proactive and intentional. I will explore how Restorative Practices are built around relationships and a strength-based approach. For example, checking in with students at the beginning of each class is essential.

Praising them for their participation, even if they need help to come up with something or are reluctant to speak, is a great way to start building relationships. We can hold them accountable by engaging with young people in proactive ways. How are the ideas of Restorative Practices and student learning related? Restorative Practices use “informal and formal processes and practices that proactively build relationships and a sense of community to prevent conflict and wrongdoing” (Wachtel, 2016, p. 61). Social-emotional learning (SEL) programs support the goals of Restorative Practices by providing a “coordinated and coherent approach to helping children recognize and manage their emotions, appreciate the perspectives of others, establish positive goals, make responsible decisions, and handle interpersonal situations effectively” to enhance a student’s connection to school (Payton et al., 2008). Often, proactive Restorative Practices circles are filled with content from the participants themselves. The students learn from their peers, feeling safe and supported in their classroom environment. Wagner (2014) said it best in his book *The Global Achievement Gap*:

Teachers also have to model the behaviors they’re trying to teach. They need to show critical thinking and problem-solving. Finally, they have to listen to what kids do in their free time and then try very hard to figure out how to get students from where they are to where they need to be. (p.192)

When students feel cared for by their teachers and trusted by their peers, their achievement will increase, and negative behaviors will decrease. We have learned new models of what motivates and inspires our students to be successful, building relationships through supportive, encouraging, and limit-setting ways.

Research Questions:

In exploring the nexus of educational practices and their effect on school culture and climate, this research delves into the pivotal questions around different practices in schools and districts.

Q1: How do Restorative Practices affect the culture and climate of a school?

Q2: How would a student describe a classroom that uses Restorative Practices?

Q3: What feelings and reactions do students show when Restorative Practices are used in the classroom?

Understanding the profound influence of educational practices on schools' broader cultures and climates, this research aims to discern the key strategies and approaches that foster a positive, supportive, and conducive learning environment for all stakeholders.

Conclusion:

I hope that this study enables teachers and administrators to learn how Restorative Practices lower discipline referrals and school suspension rates. Building relationships with students, taking responsibility for their actions, and holding them accountable for their wrongdoings is powerful. School districts and school systems still have policies and procedures they need to follow. However, what is in administrators' control is how they lead and build relationships with their students. I challenge any educators to go above and beyond when addressing student behavior. We must remember that students' brains are not fully developed until early adulthood. They will make mistakes and need support from their teachers and school staff to help them learn from their mistakes. "As educators, our students must be taught how to act, make good decisions, and succeed in the real world. We cannot expect this to happen if we

don't support their social-emotional development along the way" (Hannigan & Hannigan, 2016, p.31). Our students will not learn through punitive discipline. We need to be restorative in our approaches and teach our students how to be successful citizens in our world.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

“School discipline and punishment for students continue to be a lightning rod of controversy” (Scribner & Warnick, 2021, p.1). This research review examines existing literature regarding practices impacting the culture and climate within schools and classrooms. When reading other literature, I noticed themes about the different practices impacting how teachers and administrators approach their schools, mainly related to discipline and building student relationships. Experts have identified “restorative practice” as an essential new strategy: *“Restorative practice is an emerging social science that studies how we can strengthen relationships between individuals, as well as social connections within communities”* (Maynard and Weinstein, 2020, p.11). Prior strategies are failing our students: “Children with disabilities, some of them as young as five, have been locked in isolation rooms for hours on end, screaming, for behaviors as trivial as throwing Legos or ripping up a worksheet” (Scribner, C. F., & Warnick, B. R., 2021, p.1). Throughout history, “police officers have regularly handcuffed children for displaying symptoms of behaviors related to autism” (Scribner, C. F., & Warnick, B. R., 2021, p.1). All humans are hardwired to connect, just as we need food, shelter, and clothing, reports the International Institute of Restorative Practices. We need strong and meaningful human relationships to live and thrive. I intend to adequately employ the abstracted concepts, opinions, and methodologies of professionals who have utilized Restorative Practices to reduce disciplinary action, improve behavior, and report on how adults and students can restore relationships and repair harm. Within school environments, time spent disciplining students takes away from the primary reason many teachers went into teaching: to help kids learn and grow. Some states are further behind than others: “Corporal punishment, usually involving paddling or spanking students, is still legal in public schools of nineteen US states” (Scribner, C. F., & Warnick, B. R., 2021, p.1). With children growing up

and operating in a more complex, competitive, and accessible world, we must combat the different ways students learn and help teach them how to show respect, navigate relationships, and repair harm resulting from wrongdoing.

In this literature review, I dive into Restorative Practices and their impact on the culture and climate of schools and districts. First, I explore the definition of Restorative Practices and consider highlights from several researchers. Wachtel (2019) defines Restorative Practices and discipline as dealing with bad behavior without limiting corrective action to punishing offenders. Traditional modes of discipline focus on punishing bad behavior or offenders. Restorative discipline and practices flip that script, focusing on repairing harm done to people. Wachtel (2019) also shares that Restorative Practices are a field within the social sciences that studies how to strengthen relationships between individuals and social connections within communities.

Traditional Disciplinary Practices

Disciplinary practices in schools vary from district to district; all school systems operate with their own rules and regulations. The need for schools to move away from outdated, punitive, unsuccessful discipline is imperative and urgent. As recent as the middle of the 20th century, teachers in most U.S. schools could still spank children with impunity. Corporal punishment wasn't working; suspensions and expulsions were rising (Scribner and Warnick, 2021, p. 1). In early American school days, keeping order was the goal, but punishment never meant keeping the classrooms quiet.

Punishment in early American schools was about schools exercising control. The ways students were disciplined based on how the specific individual was expected to behave as an adult (Scribner, C. F., & Warnick, B. R., 2021, p.34). According to Scribner and Warnick's (2021) research, American educators relied on three types of discipline and punishment between the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries: corporal punishment, shaming, and moral suasion. Shaming is a social or psychological phenomenon

involving publicly criticizing, embarrassing, or condemning an individual or group for behavior or attributes deemed socially unacceptable, immoral, or deviant. It involves making the person feel guilty, embarrassed, or humiliated, often in an attempt to enforce social norms, control behavior, or exert power and influence over others. "Moral suasion" refers to using moral or ethical persuasion to influence and encourage individuals, groups, or society to adopt particular behaviors, values, or principles. It is a non-coercive method of influence that appeals to people's sense of morality, conscience, and ethical beliefs to guide their actions and decisions.

Corporal punishment made explicit the contest for power in the classroom, while children started to defend themselves and fight back. According to Scribner and Warnick (2021), it was known that older boys sometimes subdued teachers and meted out their punishments, occasionally killing their instructors. School punishment methods remain in dispute and flux, depending on who the student and administrator are, but one improvement is that state and federal discipline policies largely focus on reducing suspension rates. Many districts across the United States are implementing programs that integrate various programs that provide Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) opportunities to students to support and help reduce student misconduct and discipline. I hope these effective reforms and programs also reduce racial and gender discipline disparities within school districts. The goal is to make school systems and classrooms healthier through more favorable environments, to enhance social and emotional competencies, and to improve the overall social-emotional well-being of students and staff. I have worked in districts with various cultures, ethnicities, and minorities and can report that punitive discipline happens daily, "[a]llowing administrators to exercise discretion in assigning consequences" (Gregory & Fergus, 2017, p.2). Discretion leads to a gross discrepancy in consequences, often based on gender and ethnicity, and school systems must put practices in place so students are not treated differently based on an administrator's biases (conscious or implicit) and the infraction.

Lack of Practical Discipline Approaches

Nineteenth-century courts upheld the school's right to strike children over parental objections. (Scribner & Warnick, 2021, p.83). During the late 1960s and 1970s, the court system began reviewing the discipline of students in the context of children's rights. Most parties agreed that schools should be orderly and punishment should be educational. However, according to Scribner and Wanick (2021), in schools in the 1970s, tens of thousands of incidents of corporal punishment were reported each year, among dozens of cases of children being cuffed, thrown to walls, and hospitalized after beatings. Even with these statistics, courts typically deferred to elected officials (school boards and/or committees) whenever possible related to punishment and discipline. Progress was slow, but by 2000, the courts regularly intervened in school disciplinary decisions. Courts began to review specific disciplinary practices and assign more rights to students. Despite the continued use of outdated disciplinary practices, many school boards and stakeholders have called for even narrower disciplinary measures, relegating many school leaders to stricter school managers. Therefore, they may feel that the Restorative Practices approach is not palatable. Glanz (2006) suggests that school leaders' effectiveness is predicated on their ability to demonstrate a broad approach to leadership. While managing the learning environment is critical, operational leadership cannot become the only key used to unlock students' and teachers' more significant potential (p. 2). Research shows that more than 150,000 children a year are still physically punished in U.S. public schools, often in legally suspect ways.

One example that Scribner and Warnick share is that of an 18-year-old in San Antonio, TX, who left her high school campus for breakfast and returned before the tardy bell. In doing so, she violated the school's "closed campus" rule. She was struck with a four-foot-long piece of wood, leaving her bottom bloodied and her hand swollen. She sued the district and lost. Students suffer severe mental tolls from this kind of physical punishment, such as mood disorders, anxiety disorders, substance abuse, and

exacerbation of personality disorders (Scribner and Warnick, 2021, p. 84). There are also serious concerns related to physical punishment's effects on the classroom environment and the trust in relationships between teachers and students. This discipline not only interrupts school instruction but also damages relationships and causes long-term adverse effects on students. It is time for schools to stop relying on physical punishment.

Improving Behavior

According to Pam Leo, author of *Connection Parenting*, "Either we spend time meeting children's emotional needs by filling their cup with love, or we spend time dealing with behaviors caused by their unmet needs. Either way, we spend the time" (2021, p.12). One of the most significant concerns of parents and educators in the 21st century is how to assist children, through teaching and guidance, to become responsible and caring adults (Amstutz & Mullet, 2015, p.9). The term *discipline* comes from an old English word that means "to teach or train." Discipline is about teaching children rules to live by and helping them become socialized in society (Amstutz, L. S., & Mullet, J. H., 2015, p.9). This instruction includes helping children control their impulses and develop social skills that allow them to participate in a community. Teaching students self-discipline requires time, patience, and respect for our children. We must invest the time required to prepare our children for life. Restorative Practices are strategies and approaches that focus on building and repairing relationships, fostering empathy, and addressing conflicts constructively and inclusively. These practices have improved behavior and created a positive social and emotional environment within schools and other settings. Incorporating Restorative Practices into a school's discipline and conflict resolution approach can lead to a more compassionate and understanding community, ultimately resulting in improved behavior and overall well-being of students and staff.

The Role of Punishment

Nelsen, Lott, and Glenn, in their book *Positive Discipline in the Classroom* (2000), ask, “Where did we ever get the crazy idea to make people do better, we first have to make them feel worse?”

Punishment generally serves to restrain a child temporarily but does little to teach self-discipline directly. The adverse effects of punishment are well documented. These include feelings of anger by the one being punished, which change the focus from the harm done to resenting the given or the painful punishment. According to Amstutz and Mullet (2015), the punished student tends to question the nature of the punishment and blame the punisher rather than take responsibility for the harm done by the behavior. “Punished students exhibit a domino effect: they blame teachers, vent their frustration on peers, and passively resist assigned work” (Amstutz & Mullet, 2015, p.12). Research has shown that suspensions, detentions, and referrals to the office all have one thing in common: they are all exclusively punishments. Students often choose specific actions in order to be excluded from class. Frequently, they misbehave because they do not feel welcome or safe in their environment. They might feel unwanted by the teacher or classmates or bored and disengaged in the lesson. Often, students will misbehave because they can't keep up with the lesson or have undiagnosed disorders that make it hard for them to concentrate in class. In *Hacking School Discipline*, Maynard and Weinstein (2022) discuss the pros and cons of a suspension. They argue that suspensions teach a student that negative behavior has a consequence and that the student's removal reduces classroom disruptions. They also share that suspensions alleviate classroom management pressures from the classroom teacher and temporarily remove the struggling student from the environment. They also discuss the disadvantages of suspensions. Not only does giving suspensions to students create labels, but they are only a temporary

approach with very few lasting results. Research has shown suspensions don't include a teaching tool to improve behavior. They also place students at high risk of dropping out of school or engaging in criminal activity in the community. According to Maynard and Weinstein (2020), "When we look at the behavior, we try to use the 'iceberg perspective' and realize that every behavior has other things packed under it" (p. 56). We need to start identifying particular behaviors and work with our students to understand better the causes of their behavior.

The Role of Restorative Practice in Schools

Many have begun to look at the principles and practices of restorative justice to address issues in other arenas beyond the legal justice system, schools being one of them. According to Amstutz and Mullet (2015), restorative justice promotes values and principles that are inclusive, collaborative approaches to being in a community. These approaches validate the experiences and needs of everyone within the community, particularly those marginalized, oppressed, or harmed. Guiding questions for a restorative approach is what centers this practice. You may find more factors and underlying issues by asking these questions and seeking to understand them. Restorative Practices aim to improve school well-being and strengthen the community. Through this process, open-ended questions are asked: What happened? What were you thinking of at the time? What have you thought about since? Who has been affected by what you have done? In what way have they been affected? What do you think you need to do to make things right? Other factors and underlying issues don't make it acceptable for unacceptable behavior. Still, the knowledge helps us understand the student as a disciplinary problem and a whole child. These questions help teach responsibility while creating caring climates. Once educators understand the reasons for their students' misbehavior, they can help them make a change. Educators need to help students identify all the people affected by misbehavior. Asking them open-ended questions on whom their specific behavior affects can be powerful: "Involving students in creating the

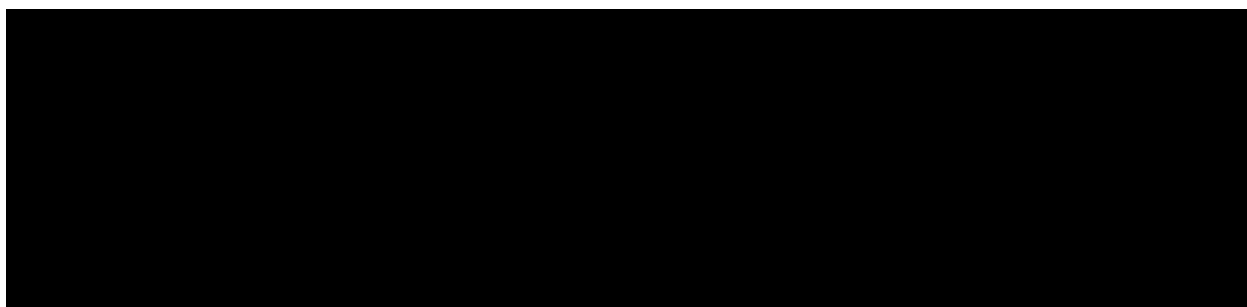
expectations allows class-wide conversations about how the expectations, and breaking them, affect all the students" (Maynard & Weinstein, B., 2020, p. 70). We need to discuss with the students what environment students need to succeed, what kind of classroom culture supports that environment, and what attitudes, values, and habits create that culture. When all students participate and feel safe in the classroom, the expectations and rules help put empathy into the core of the class community and how the classroom functions.

Restorative Practices and Discipline: New Thinking, New Practice, New Result

The term “Restorative Practices” was derived from the development in the criminal justice field called “restorative justice.” Research in restorative justice has revealed positive outcomes for victims and offenders, including reduction of recidivism. Similar Restorative Practices in schools have significantly improved behavior and school climates. According to Costello, Wachtel, and Wachtel (2022), to be “restorative” means to believe that decisions are best made and conflicts are best resolved by those most directly involved. This practice seeks to develop good relationships and restore a sense of community in an increasingly disconnected world.

There are many different approaches related to Restorative Practices. These practices can be powerful, starting within the classrooms. According to Costello, Wachtel, and Wachtel (2022), using affective statements is the most informal response on the restorative continuum (See Figure 1). Practical questions and affective statements are the most accessible and valuable tools for building a restorative classroom within schools. “When teachers set a more positive tone daily, more serious problems that require more serious responses tend to diminish in intensity and frequency” (Costello, Wachtel, and Wachtel, 2022, p.11). *Using affective statements* is another way of saying “expressing your feelings” or “sharing impact.”

Figure 1: Restorative Continuum from Restorative Practices Handbook (Wachtel, 2022)



As a symbol of community, circles are one of the most distinctive and flexible forms of Restorative Practices. Sitting in a circle can create a feeling of being a part of a group or larger community. When a teacher sits among their students in a circle, and an administrator sits among their staff members, the quality of their relationship is enhanced (Costello, Wachtel, and Wachtel, 2022, p.22). When students circle up daily and spend a few minutes chatting with their peers about a specific question their teacher presents, relationships within their class community are built. The point of this practice is for students to feel safe and respected in an environment conducive to learning. These little circle-ups also help students resolve conflict and management issues within the classroom. Students can gather ideas within their small circle groups and then share them with their peers in other groups. It has been shown that behavior issues are minimized when students know they have peers to collaborate with and support them. Students who feel comfortable with their teachers and classmates will engage in productive work and hold one another accountable. As Maynard and Weinstein point out, "Many students misbehave because they don't feel successful academically. If we can build their confidence, the behavior will often take care of itself" (2020, p. 89). For students to start to buy into Restorative Practices, they need to believe they can grow and change as individuals. When

restorative discipline involves all stakeholders, transformation happens among people, relationships, and classroom communities. "Students learn self-regulation best when they feel connected and safe, and they feel connected and safe when educators focus on building empathy instead of doling out punishment," write Maynard and Weinstein (2020, p. 109). Many students lack self-awareness and regulation because no one has taught them how to communicate their emotions effectively. Students find it hard to explain their feelings because they don't know the language to label them. There is also pressure on students (mainly boys) to mask their feelings/emotions so they don't appear weak or vulnerable, which can lead to a tornado of unfortunate behavior.

We must be intentional about cultivating empathy within the classrooms: "Students are not hardwired to understand others. Empathy must be learned and practiced" (Maynard & Weinstein, 2020, p. 127). Teaching students empathy must be a part of the school curriculum. We must also ensure that we create safe environments where students can be their emotional selves. We want students to take risks, speak freely, and not fear ridicule, judgment, or shame. We also want classrooms where negative behavior is minimized because students can empathize with one another. Punishing students for minor behaviors is easy and quick but never leads to long-term improvement. For students to grow and learn from their mistakes, they need coaching, modeling, and mentoring regarding expectations. Restorative Practices take effort, but the long-term effects make a difference in students' lives. We have a choice as educators. We can try to correct and support our students' behavior by spending time building relationships, or we can punish them. We must get to the root causes and help students repair the harm they have caused due to their lack of coping mechanisms.

Conduct and Social Discipline

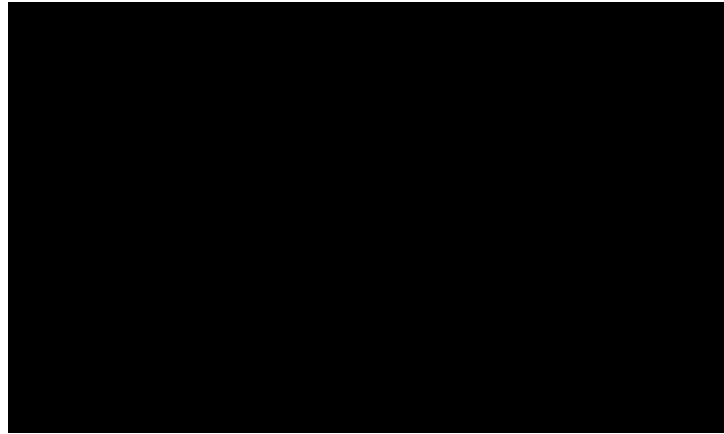
The role of an administrator or disciplinarian in schools offers unique challenges. The balance between holding students accountable and creating a positive environment for learning is sometimes

difficult to achieve. As education changes, there is a shift in the way administrators respond to misbehavior within their schools. Costello, Wachtel, and Wachtel point out in their book, *The Restorative Practices Handbook for Teachers, Disciplinarians, and Administrators*, that schools that fail to build good relationships and a sense of community will find it more challenging to respond restoratively to problems when they arise (2020, p.46). There is no list or guide of restorative responses that match students' misbehavior. A restorative response in one situation could be punitive or permissive in the other. The overall fundamental hypothesis of Restorative Practices is that human beings are happier, more cooperative, more productive, and more likely to make positive changes in their behavior when those in positions of authority do things *with* them rather than *to* them or *for* them.

The Social Discipline Window below highlights the four results (see Figure 2). High control with low support is punitive, and high support with low control is permissive. Another response to wrongdoing combines low control and low support. This is an example of an irresponsible or incompetent choice that characterizes a neglectful school or classroom where behavior has spun out of control and the adults have abdicated their authority and responsibility to the students. Another response to wrongdoing based on the window combines high control and support. This is a critical choice that is missing in the Punitive-Permissive Continuum. It occurs when those in authority exercise their control, refusing to accept inappropriate behavior and doing so in a caring and supportive way; it is the “restorative” response to wrongdoing. The idea is to support students and engage them in finding ways to curb their own negative behavior (Costello, Wachtel, and Wachtel, 2022, p.49). By engaging with students, we can hold them accountable for their actions in an active way, while doing things *with* them. When we simply hand out punitive punishments, we do things *to* them. Or we take care of their problems and make no demands; we are doing things *for* them. When we ignore their behavior, we are *not* doing anything at all. Adults also need to be self-reflective and remember their purpose and intentions. When students are punished, they usually see themselves as the victim. They often fail to reflect on their actions of harm done and dwell on

their own feelings. According to Costello, Wachtel, and Wachtel (2022), restorative responses create opportunities for learning and making things right.

Figure 2: Social Discipline Window (Wachtel, 2022, p. 48)



Restoring Relationships, Repairing Harm

In many systems, students are labeled "bad kids" when their behavior is a concern or problem. Research has found that troublesome students often find themselves stuck in bad behavior patterns and don't know how to change. It is our job as educators to teach them how to do that and to help them achieve it. Studies show that when adults respect students by (a) holding them accountable to a higher standard of behavior and (b) supporting them, students become more responsible for their conduct. Being restorative requires teachers and administrators to be creative in responding to different situations as they arise, both in the classroom and in buildings. Teachers don't always think they have the power to influence their students, but on the contrary, their feelings carry weight. "Through affective statements, teachers can learn how to talk to students without embarrassing them and help them express their feelings respectfully, which builds the relationship. Understanding and using such statements can help foster an immediate change in the dynamic between a teacher and student" (Costello, Wachtel, J., & Wachtel, T., 2009, p. 12). When teachers tell students how they feel, they show their students that they are human beings with emotions and that they care about their students. These statements help build relationships based on students' image of teachers as

invested in them and caring about their feelings rather than as authority figures in a school setting. Relationships built on trust and care minimize improper student conduct. For example, if a student is teasing other students, the typical response, "Stop teasing Rebecca, or you will go to the office," will not stop the behavior. However, if your response is, "It makes both me and Rebecca uncomfortable when you tease her, so please stop," the student will understand the effects of their actions. Teachers and administrators must set boundaries, provide student feedback, and teach empathy. Accepting that conflict is a part of life is crucial to adopting and understanding Restorative Practices. Affective questions help foster learning and build better relationships when misunderstandings occur or harm is done.

We must make decisions between what is a punishment and what is a restorative kind of consequence. Sometimes, punishment only reinforces student behavior or even causes outrage in students. The natural restorative consequence is often for students to take necessary action and restore harm or a relationship given the situation. Evidence of positive results from affective questions exists in the criminal justice system, where as far back as the 1990s, "Terry O'Connell, a former Australian police officer and restorative justice pioneer, emphasized the power of restorative questions and talked about how effective he had found them for working with offenders and victims of crime" (Costello, Wachtel, J., & Wachtel, T., 2009, p. 17). It's important to understand that restorative questions are only practical when correctly asked. You must use an appropriate tone of voice, remain calm, and never appear angry. It is essential to show neutral emotions and be engaged. Showing emotions doesn't work if you come across as sounding punitive. When using Restorative Practices, the goal is to de-escalate a situation, moving from anger to less intense feelings so all parties can repair harm and move forward. This strategy even works outside the classroom: if something happens in the classroom, hallway, or on a field trip, for example, where multiple people are involved, a small impromptu conference is a great effective response to understand the concern and behaviors at hand.

Conclusion

In conclusion, American schools have moved away from traditional discipline with corporal punishment to a new practice based on the restorative justice system. As we learned through research, it is a challenge to hold our students accountable for their behavior and create a warm, positive environment for learning. It can be complex with children growing up and operating in a more complex, competitive, and media-accessible world. We need high levels of support and control when it comes to discipline and supporting our students. We must provide students with high levels of nurture and support while also setting high expectations and accountability for their behavior and actions. When we do things *with* them, we engage meaningfully with them. When we assign a punishment, we do things *to* them and create more distance in the relationship. If we ignore the behaviors and do nothing or fix the situation ourselves, we are being neglectful and doing things *for* them. "Punishment allows offenders to be passive and to avoid real responsibility for their actions" (Costello, Wachtel, J., & Wachtel, T., 2009, p.52). By relying on Restorative Practices, we create learning opportunities. We create opportunities for our students to repair harm and acknowledge their mistakes while taking responsibility. As we move past traditional discipline and improve student behavior, we foster an understanding of the impact of individual behavior. We seek to repair the harm done to people and their relationships. We also want to focus on the needs of the victims and others within the school culture and climate who are affected. We don't want students to be embarrassed, shamed, or uncomfortable, and we want to actively include others as much as possible.

Chapter Three: Methodology

Research Design Overview:

My purpose is to provide an overview of the impact of Restorative Practices within individual classrooms and schools. The summary determines which practices must be implemented to ensure the programs are effective. I examined what happens during Restorative Practices within a given school or classroom. As I collected my data, I reviewed the full implementation of Restorative Practices within Elm School District as a whole and within each school and classroom. I also examined whether the staff participated in any training, workshops, or professional development that supports the use of Restorative Practices in their classrooms or schools. "Not knowing enough about implementation limits the usefulness of findings of effective programs and contributes to confusion about why programs succeed or fail" (Patton, 2021, p. 20). There are two ways a program could be seen as failing: (1) the district and/or schools failed to implement the program, or (2) they implemented the program but failed to attain the desired outcomes. "For an evaluation to support decision making, it is critical to be able to distinguish theory failure (ideas that don't work) from implementation failure (ideas that haven't been appropriately tested" (Patton, 2021, p. 23). The outcome of this research is to determine the impacts on students of implementing Restorative Practices within classrooms or schools. The desired outcome for students is to build positive, nurturing relationships within their school environments and to help students repair the harm and the relationships that were damaged through wrongdoing.

I gathered data for my study using a mixed-methods approach. First, I used qualitative data to support and answer my research questions. I collected information from others in both written and visual form. "Qualitative evidence extracts depth and adds body to the conclusions drawn" (James, E. A., Milenkiewicz, M. T., & Bucknam, A., 2008, p. 14). Some researchers argue that qualitative

research seeks in-depth inquiry better to understand the specifics of people's experiences and stories. Qualitative research gathers a comprehensive view of inquiry. Using a mixed-method approach, my goal and purpose was to understand the experiences of Restorative Practices used within classrooms and schools and how students, teachers, and staff feel about the use. I also wanted to determine the impact on the culture and climate of the systems as a whole. Qualitative research seeks to develop a better understanding and can be accomplished through various research designs and methodologies.

My methodology helped me discover how to find the answers to my research question. I utilized both qualitative and quantitative methodology: the mixed-methods research model. I examined specific data, such as Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) test score results; 5 Essential Data from the 2021-2022 school year; teacher, student, and administration surveys; and student, teacher, and principal interviews. My focus on empirical research methods helped paint a data-driven story to complement the narratives gleaned through my qualitative research, combining to answer my research question. It was necessary to obtain student voices and perspectives from the surveys and interviews. The qualitative information was measured through different criteria than the quantitative research data from the test results. Conceptually, each methodology is interdependent with the other. Moving through this process, I maintained awareness that the qualitative results (feelings and opinions) could be quantified into discrete categories that can be quantitatively analyzed with standard statistical methods. The quantitative data came into play as I analyzed the surveys administered to the participants within the school system that uses Restorative Practices. Using a mixed-methods approach, I collected more varied data that strengthened the validity of my conclusions.

Participants:

The key participants from whom I gathered data were students, teachers, and building-level principals. I chose these participants because I wanted to hear from them about how they are affected within the school setting, particularly regarding their feelings and relationships. We should be helping our students thrive in the environments we set up for them, helping them feel calm and confident in their educational setting. As adults, most students will act out less and feel more in control and can work better when they know what is expected from them and that they are cared for. I wanted to hear from them throughout this study. How do these three participant groups feel when building a safe place within schools? For them to belong, they have to be seen. I wanted to get first-hand data on what it means for them if they feel like they belong, feel safe, and have relationships within their school cultures. There needs to be a paradigm shift with the head and heart when talking about Restorative Practices. Students, staff, and administration talked about how they feel and what they value, which helped build excitement and engagement around making a change in their culture and climate as well as in their relationships with one another. I am interested to see the implications of the data from the students, staff, and administration. I interviewed and surveyed nine students, nine teachers, and three administrators.

Data Gathering Techniques:

I used the mixed-methods research approach. I examined specific data, such as SEL test score results; 5 Essential Data from the 2021-2022 school year; 9 teacher, 9 student, and 9 administration survey results; and 9 student, 9 teacher, and 3 principal interviews. In addition, I focused on empirical research methods. Data and qualitative responses helped paint a full story while answering my question. (My quantitative data and statistics will contribute specific, measurable details.) Obtaining student voices and perspectives on the surveys and from the interviews was essential and imperative.

The information was measured through different criteria than the quantitative research data from the test results. Using a mixed-methods approach enabled me to collect more varied data and strengthen the validity of my conclusions. I held interviews with individual staff members and students and sent surveys to the different school buildings based on grade level and subject areas taught. I got to understand the level of teacher-to-student or teacher-to-teacher nonviolent communication. I also saw how the participants felt about trust-building circles, academic circles, and collaborative and proactive solutions used within their schools, classrooms, and systems. When repairing relationships and rebuilding communities, I saw the data on restorative circles, peer mediation, and community conferencing within the school systems and classrooms. After I gathered my data, I looked at both methods. In many cases, qualitative and quantitative methods should be used together (Patton, 2002).

Ethical Considerations:

Ethical considerations are paramount when providing safeguards for participants. This study adheres to the ethical principles outlined in the Institute Review Board (IRB) application at National Louis University. In addition to the requirements outlined in the IRB application, the general ethical principles and ethical standards outlined in the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (APA) ensured the study's integrity and the participants' safety. Participation in my surveys and interviews was voluntary. I took special care to ensure all parties knew there was no pressure to participate. Through informed consent, all participants received and understood the information they needed ahead of time and the study's benefits and risks. Then, they had the opportunity to decide if they wanted to participate. I shared that the study was about the impact of Restorative Practices on school culture and climate. Participants' risk was in the sharing of thoughts and feelings. The benefits are that participation will help make a change with research on the impact of Restorative Practices within schools. Anonymity in the study is also protected by the participants'

identities; I have not linked any individual participant's data. My relationship with the participants is that I am the Director of Student Services for the district. Although I am not the staff's direct supervisor, and they did not feel compelled to complete the survey or interviews, I reiterated to participants that despite our relationship, participation was completely voluntary. The students are from the classrooms of the teachers who participated in this study.

Complete anonymity and confidentiality are maintained throughout this process; all participants have the right to privacy. I did not collect personal data or identify anyone with their names, email addresses, phone numbers, or photos. In addition, individual participants' contributions are kept confidential. All identification information and data were collected anonymously, secured with confidence, and removed from the research report. Since surveyed and interviewed students are minors, they are also protected appropriately. Students who participated have a parent or guardian fill out a signed consent form to participate in the research study.

Data Analysis Techniques:

Within this research process and study, the data collection and analysis are iterative processes that interact throughout the mixed-method approach. "Data from research subjects originally come bundled with other bits and pieces. It is only through the sorting and resorting of the data that key concepts across topics are tied together at the end of a study" (James, E. A., Milenkiewicz, M. T., & Bucknam, A., 2008, p. 20). Since I used a mixed-methods approach, I coded the qualitative data and analyzed the quantitative data. When I coded my interviews, I looked at what the words and short phrases represented from my participants. Categorizing the data and looking for themes and like information was necessary on how Restorative Practices impact the culture and climate of the school. I was also interested in how the students described their classroom that uses Restorative Practices. Looking at the participants' experiences drove my analysis. I read my interview transcripts freely

before coding. I reviewed, revised, and coded them, looked for themes, and revised them a second time before concluding how my participants felt about the ways Restorative Practices impact culture and climate in a school. Through my interviews, I was also curious to discover what feelings and reactions students showed in the classrooms that use Restorative Practices. This coding and analysis was derived from my interviews with teachers and administrators. All of this work was transcribed into quotations to paint a broader picture. The use of open codes for this study worked well as I wanted to see what was captured from my participants related to their feelings.

I also used surveys to gather data from SEL test scores and the 5 Essentials Data, teacher, student, and administrator surveys. Using these quantitative methods, I built a solid mathematical base with the data using charts and numbers. I made sure the analysis is valid and reliable.

Conclusion:

This mixed-methods research study utilized an empirical research design. Data was collected through specific data, such as SEL test score results; 5 Essential Data from the 2021-2022 school year; teacher, student, and administration surveys; and student, teacher, and administration interviews. The study utilized purposeful sampling to obtain participants who met the requirements of the study. Data was analyzed using values coding to generate themes. Finally, trustworthiness and ethical considerations were observed to ensure the integrity of the study. In the next chapter, I discuss the findings through the themes that emerged through the data analysis and my research.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

Restorative Practices are an alternative approach to addressing harm, conflicts, and school misconduct. The main points of Restorative Practices will be summarized in this chapter through my research and other reviewed literature. Restorative Practices focus on repairing the harm caused by conflicts or wrongdoing (Putnam, 2001). The emphasis is on addressing the affected individual's needs and restoring relationships and trust. Restorative Practices encourage individuals to take responsibility for their actions and be held accountable meaningfully. This accountability is not punitive but aims to promote personal growth, learning, and understanding of the consequences of behavior. Restorative Practices prioritize the importance of building and maintaining positive relationships within a community. These practices foster community members' sense of belonging and connectedness by fostering open communication, active listening, and empathy. Unlike traditional punitive approaches, Restorative Practices focus on healing and reconciliation rather than punishment. They seek to address the root causes of conflicts and misconduct to prevent future harm and promote positive behavioral change. Restorative Practices also rely on facilitated dialogue and communication to unite those affected by harm or conflicts. Individuals are encouraged to share their experiences, perspectives, and feelings through structured processes such as circles or conferences, promoting understanding and empathy. These practices are inclusive and equitable, recognizing and respecting individuals' diverse backgrounds, experiences, and needs within a community. They seek to address systemic biases and promote fairness and justice for all. Restorative Practices involve all stakeholders, including those directly involved in the harm and the wider community. Through collaborative decision-making processes, individuals collectively work towards finding solutions and resolutions that meet the needs of everyone involved. Restorative Practices emphasize continuous learning and improvement. Regular evaluation, feedback, and reflection are vital components to refine and enhance the effectiveness of these practices over time. By embracing these main points, Restorative Practices provide a

framework for addressing conflicts, repairing harm, promoting accountability, and building healthier and more supportive communities (Wachtel & Wachtel, 2022, p. 80).

Patton (2008) explains a systematic approach to make sense of the findings of an evaluation, which will be utilized in this study. Those four processes include analysis, interpretation, judgment, and recommendations. These processes will be explained in the remaining chapters of this dissertation. Chapter Four focuses on the first two steps: analysis and interpretation. Patton explains that this step includes a presentation of primary findings. It "involves description and analysis, essentially organizing raw quantitative and qualitative data into a form that reveals basic patterns so that primary intended users can understand the findings and make sense of the evaluation evidence generated by the data" (Patton, 2012, p. 337).

In this study, the primary intended users are the stakeholders invited to participate in the study through interviews and a survey. The stakeholders include the students, administrators, and teachers in Elm School District. Chapter Four summarizes the findings of a mixed-methods approach to data collection and analysis and seeks to evaluate a program and answer the following questions: What practices affect the culture and climate of a school? How would a student describe a classroom that uses Restorative Practices? What feelings and reactions do students show when Restorative Practices are used in the classroom?

Overview of Findings

Based on the data themes through my research, several areas of concern are related to implementing Restorative Practices within Elm District. The themes indicate a disconnect between the perceptions of students and staff regarding relationship-building, student voice, celebrations, and teaching through discipline. The data suggests that students feel their voices need to be adequately heard and valued within the educational setting. The data may indicate a need to create opportunities for students to actively participate in decision-making processes, express their opinions, and contribute to shaping their learning environment. While staff members believe they are building relationships, the students' perception indicates otherwise. The data suggests a

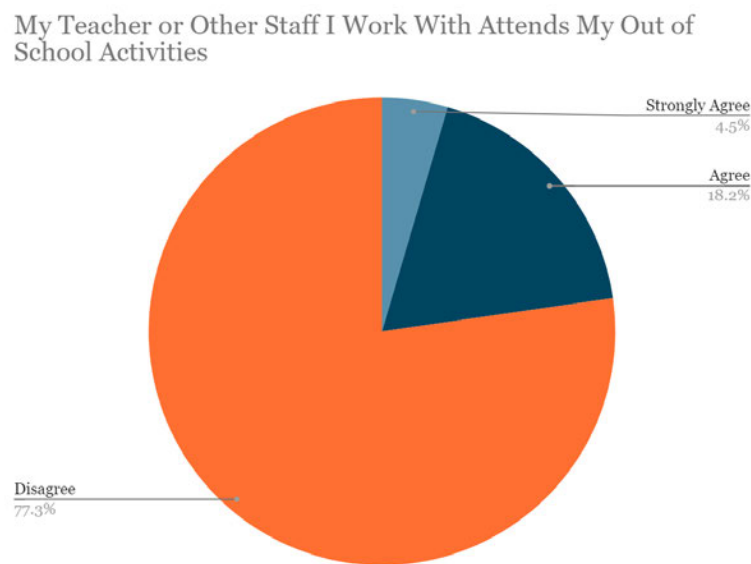
disconnect between staff intentions and student experiences and perceptions. Elm District will need to explore strategies and practices that foster genuine connections between staff and students, such as regular check-ins, mentoring programs, or restorative circles, which may be beneficial to building trust and rapport within the district. The absence of celebrations for students indicates a missed opportunity to recognize and appreciate their achievements, contributions, and growth. This is true in the middle school and high school settings. Celebrations are crucial in creating a positive and supportive school culture (Smith, D., Fisher, D., & Frey, 2022, p.90). The district must consider implementing regular celebrations or acknowledging milestones, talents, and positive behavior to promote a sense of belonging and accomplishment. By implementing regular celebrations, the out-of-school suspension rates would decrease (Evans, K., & Vaandering, 2016). The students need to feel like valued members of the school community. The data suggests that teaching through discipline, a core component of Restorative Practices, must consistently happen. This approach involves using disciplinary incidents as teachable moments to help students understand the impact of their actions and develop skills for better decision-making and behavior—training and supporting staff on effectively utilizing restorative approaches in disciplinary situations is also vital. Data shows that training and ongoing professional development are needed for the district.

Student Quantitative Survey Data

Below, you will find data that supports the student survey that looked at the impact of practices in the unit school district. Sixteen elementary, middle, and high school students were surveyed for feedback. The questions examined the students' feelings based on relationships, support, and response to behavior and discipline. The participants I gathered data from were students from my K-12 district, Elm Park. I chose these participants because I wanted to hear from stakeholders in my district about how they affect their feelings and relationships within the school setting. I wanted to see if we are helping our students thrive in the environments we set up for them. I wanted to hear from them throughout this study. I interviewed three elementary-age students (grades 4

and 5), three middle school students (grades 6 and 7), and three high school students (grades 9-11). I sent the survey to these participants as well. How do these three participant groups feel when building a safe place within schools? For them to belong, they have to be seen. I wanted to get first-hand data on what it means for them if they feel like they belong, feel safe, and have relationships within their school cultures. “Clearly, far too many students do not experience school as a place they feel a sense of connection, pride, support, and safety” (Quaglia & Corso, 2014, p.57). When discussing Restorative Practices, there must be a paradigm shift between the head and heart. When students start talking about how they feel like people and what they value, that can help build excitement and engagement around changing the culture, climate, and relationships with one another.

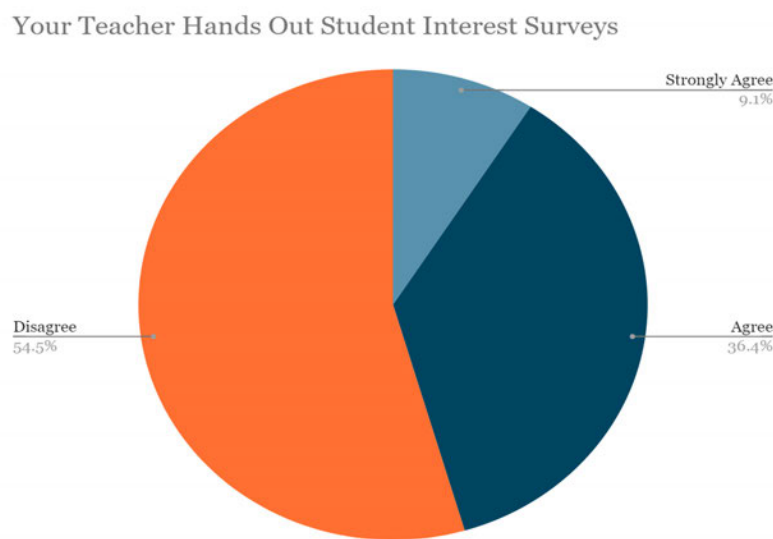
Figure 3: My Teacher or Other Staff I Work with Attend My Out of School Activities



When teachers and staff attend events students participate in outside the classroom such as extracurricular activities or competitions, it can benefit the students and the school community (Thorsborne, M., Riestenberg, N., & McCluskey, 2019). Teachers and staff attending outside events show their support and encouragement for their students. It helps students feel valued and motivated, knowing their educators are interested in their progress and achievements beyond the classroom. Teachers and staff can provide mentorship and guidance

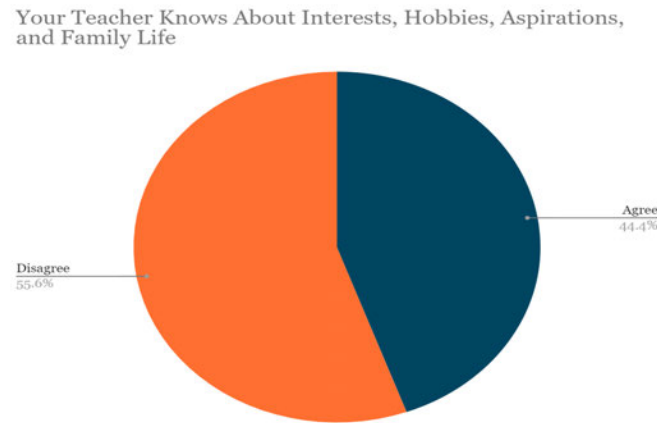
during outside events. According to the data collected, 77.3% of students disagreed that their teachers, administration, and other staff attend their out-of-school activities (See Figure 4). Students reported that 4.5% strongly agree, and 18.2% agree that they are supported outside the school with events and extracurricular activities. Data shows that more students disagree than agree with this support. Overall, this impacts students' relationships with their school staff within Elm District because they don't feel that their teachers support them or value them other than as the person they are when in the school building. This finding was consistent with students in all three settings.

Figure 4: Your Teacher Hands Out Student Interest Surveys



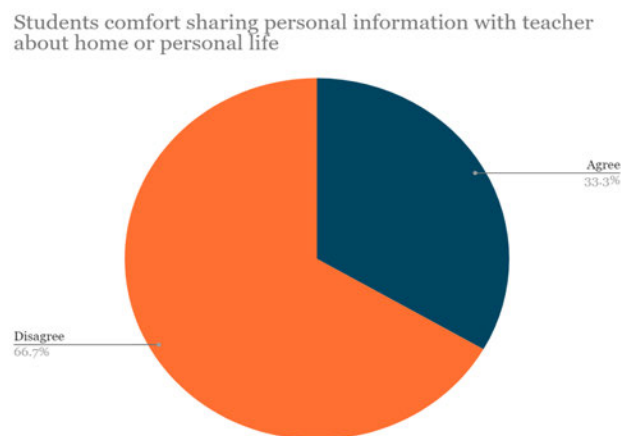
When students were asked if their teachers handed out student interest surveys, there were varied responses. According to the survey, 9.1% strongly agreed, 36.4% agreed, while half, 54.5%, said no, they disagreed with this statement. When teachers hand out student interest surveys, they seek to gather information about their students' preferences, strengths, and areas of interest. This is important for getting to know students and building trusting relationships (Wachtel & Wachtel, 2022, p. 39). The collected data should be used responsibly to inform instructional decisions, support students' learning experiences, and build relationships. Based on this data, 45.5% of students say some of their teachers provide interest surveys, whereas 54.5% do not.

Figure 5: Your Teacher Knows About Interests, Hobbies, Aspirations, and Family Life



Looking at the chart above, the question is whether teachers know their students' interests, hobbies, aspirations, or family life. Students reported that 55.6% disagreed, while 44.4% agreed that their teachers knew about them. Knowing their students' interests, hobbies, aspirations, and family life can significantly enhance their ability to support and engage their students effectively. Knowing about students' interests and hobbies allows teachers to connect their lessons to topics students find personally engaging.

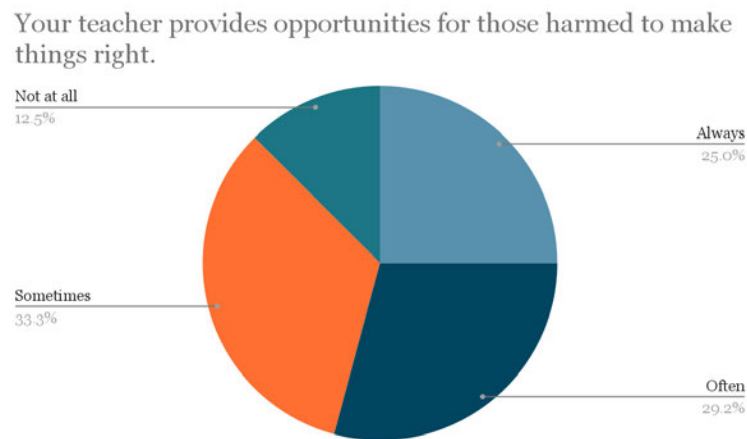
Figure 6: Student's Comfort Sharing Personal Information with Teacher about Home or Personal Life



The research shows that building relationships is essential with Restorative Practices (Costello, Wachtel, and Wachtel, 2022). In the survey, students were asked if they felt comfortable sharing their personal information with their teachers related to personal life or home life. Only 33.3% of students surveyed said they agreed with

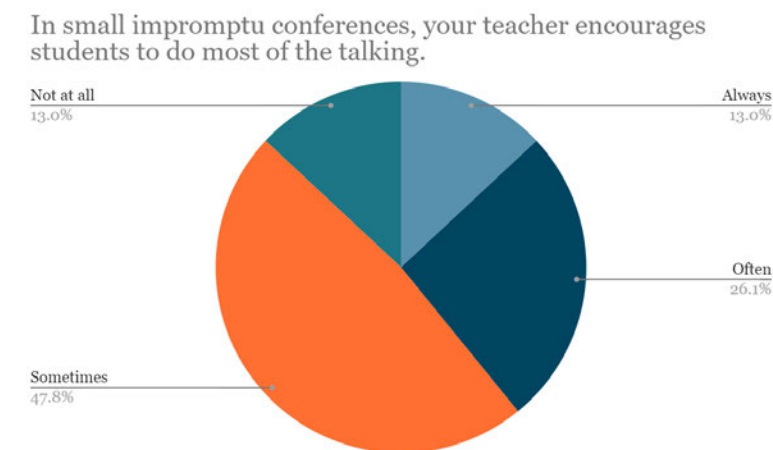
that statement. Where 66.7% of students said no, they disagree and don't feel comfortable sharing personal information with their teacher. Creating a safe and supportive classroom environment is essential for students to feel comfortable sharing personal information about their home and personal lives with their teachers. Building trust and rapport between teachers and students is crucial for creating relationships. It's important to note that when students share personal information with their teachers, it fosters a positive and supportive learning environment. Students should feel empowered to share information without fear of judgment or misuse.

Figure 7: Your Teacher Provides Opportunities for Those Harmed to Make Things Right



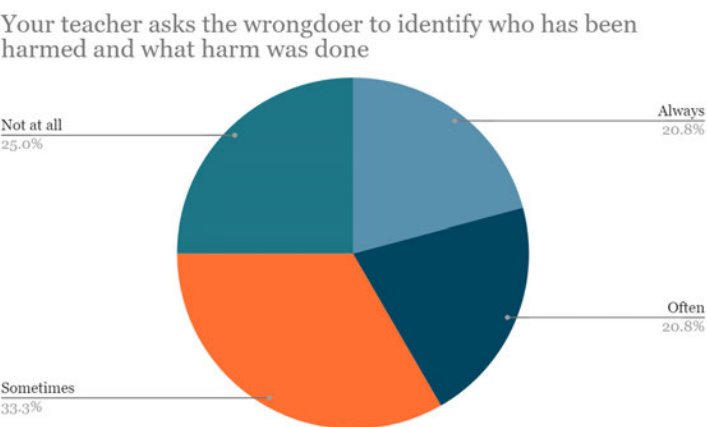
As the findings are being shared based on the survey about Restorative Practices and the different restorative components, student responses varied based on the above question. Students reported that 12.5% shared that no opportunities are provided to correct things or repair harm. Students reported that 29.2% of their teachers often provide opportunities, with 33.3% saying sometimes and only 25% saying always. When a teacher provides opportunities for students who have harmed others to make things right, it can contribute to a positive and restorative approach to addressing conflicts and promoting personal growth (Wachtel, T., 2016. p. 47).

Figure 8: In Small Impromptu Conferences, your Teacher Encourages Students to do Most of the Talking



Encouraging students to take the lead during small impromptu conferences can be a valuable approach to promoting active engagement, critical thinking, and leadership skills. (Wachtel, T., 2016, p. 52). Based on the data collected for Elm District, 39.1% reported that their teacher always or often encourages them to take the lead and do most of the talking. In addition, 60.8% reported that their teachers sometimes or not at all allow them to do most of the talking during impromptu or classroom circles.

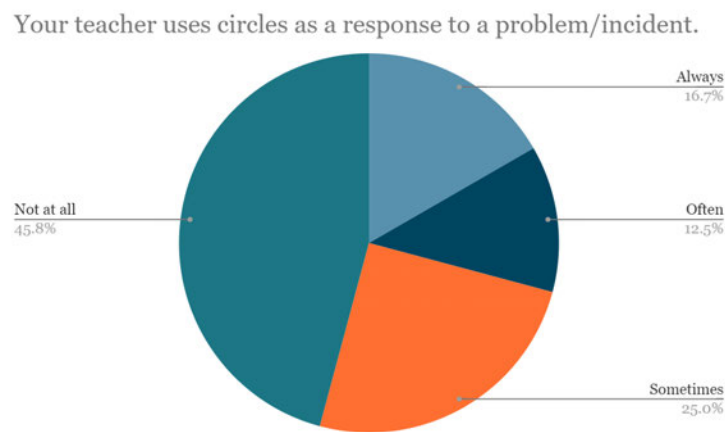
Figure 9: Your Teacher Asks the Wrongdoer to Identify Who Has Been Harmed and What Harm was done



When a teacher asks a wrongdoer to identify who has been harmed by their actions, it can be a part of a restorative approach to addressing conflicts and fostering accountability (Wachtel, 2016, p. 55). The above data

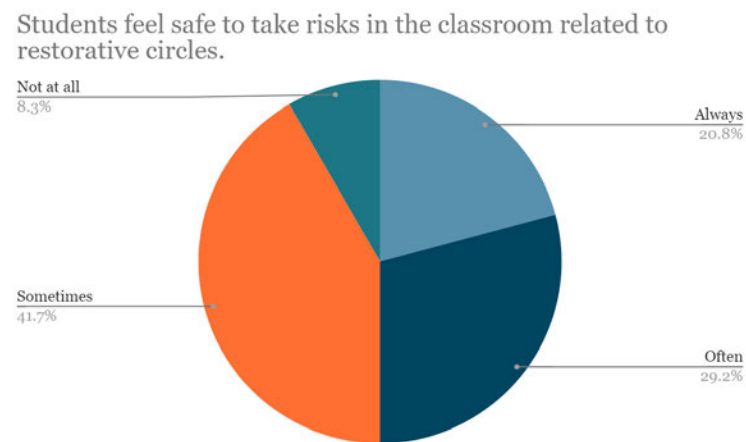
shows that 41.6% shared that their teacher always or often asks the wrongdoer. A majority of respondents, 58.3%, shared that their teacher sometimes or not at all will ask the wrongdoer to identify who has been harmed or what harm has been done. These findings show that teachers need to do more to must identify who has been harmed or what harm has been done during a situation.

Figure 10: Your Teacher Uses Circles as a Response to a Problem/Incident



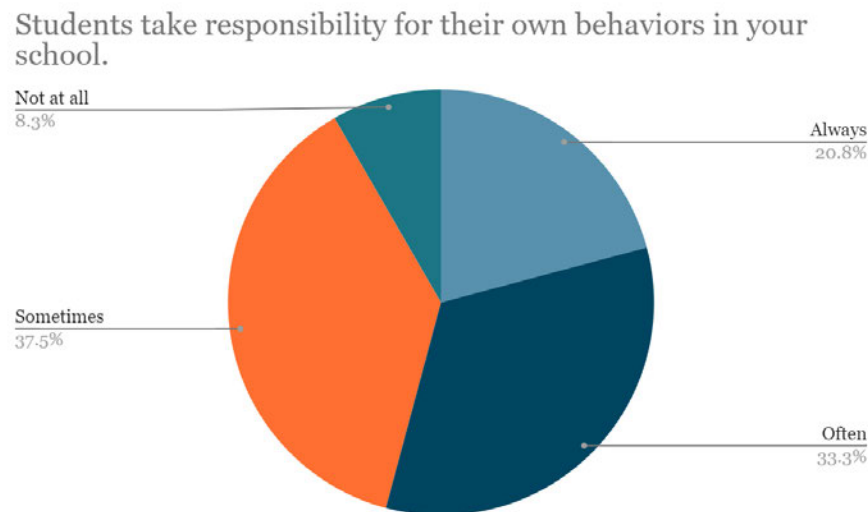
Restorative circles are an influential tool teachers can use to address conflicts or problems in a restorative and inclusive manner. Rather than resorting to punitive measures, restorative circles foster dialogue, understanding, and empathy among individuals involved in a conflict or problem. The teacher first needs to prepare for the restorative circle. This approach promotes accountability, empathy, and a sense of belonging, fostering a safe and inclusive environment for all students. Staff reported that 29.2% always or often use restorative circles as a response, whereas 70.8% said they do not at all or sometimes use circles to support students with conflict or incidents.

Figure 11: Students feel safe to take risks in the classroom related to restorative circles.



Restorative circles can create a safe and supportive classroom environment where students feel encouraged to take risks (Wachtel, 2016, p. 62). Elm District students reported that 50% feel safe taking risks related to circles, whereas 50% of staff also shared that students don’t feel safe taking risks with circles.

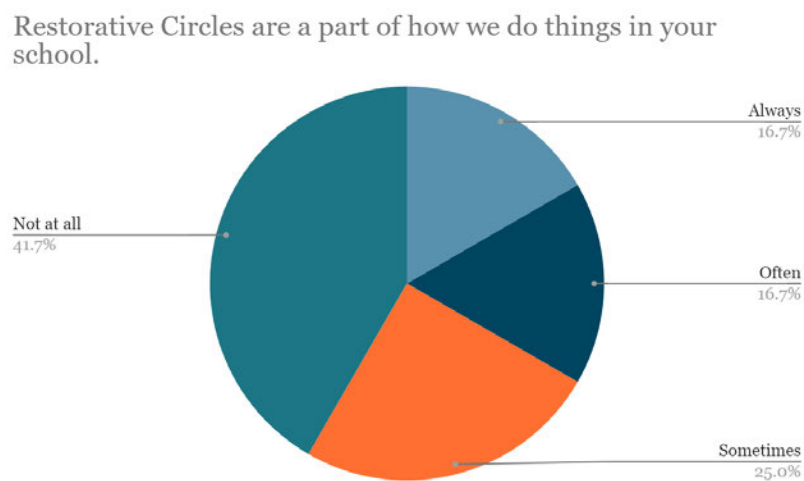
Figure 12: Students take responsibility for their own Behaviors in your School



“When students understand the expectations of their learning environment, they are more likely to make decisions and take actions consistent with their agreements” (Smith, D., Fisher, D., & Frey, 2022, p. 25). Showing students that a school has high standards and expectations, encourages students to take ownership of

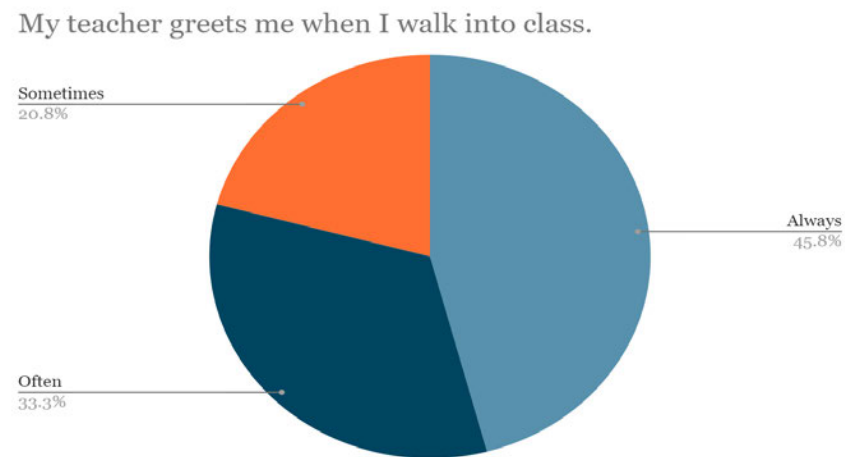
their behaviors and to hold themselves to expectations related to performance and behavior. According to the survey, 91.6% reported that our students in Elm District take responsibility for their behaviors. Additionally, 8.3% reported that students don't take responsibility for their behavior. Elm School District strives to foster a sense of responsibility among students for their own behaviors.

Figure 13: Restorative Circles are a part of how we do things in your School



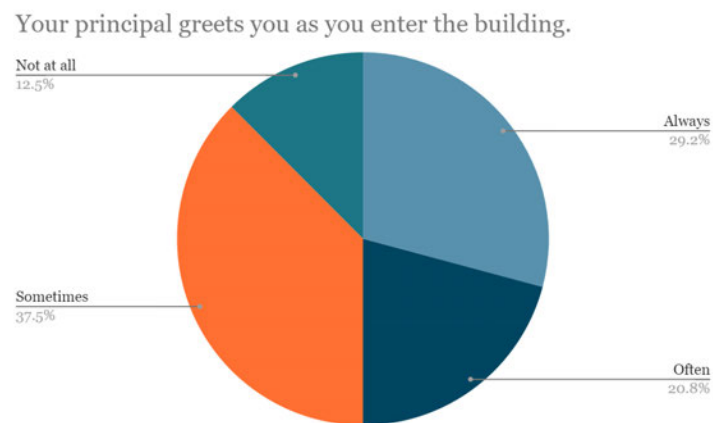
Incorporating restorative circles as a regular practice can have numerous benefits for students and the school community as a whole. As shown in the above chart, students shared that 41.7% do not have restorative circles in their classrooms. However, 58.4% shared that they always, often, or sometimes engage in restorative circles during the school day. Restorative circles provide a structured and inclusive method for addressing conflicts within schools.

Figure 14: My teacher greets me when I walk into class



Establishing a “Positive Classroom Climate” is extremely important to help build relationships with students. The students surveyed in Elm District shared that 45.8% said their teachers always greet them when they enter their classroom. It was reported that 33.3% often greet their students, and only 20.8% sometimes greet them.

Figure 15: Your principal greets you as you enter the building



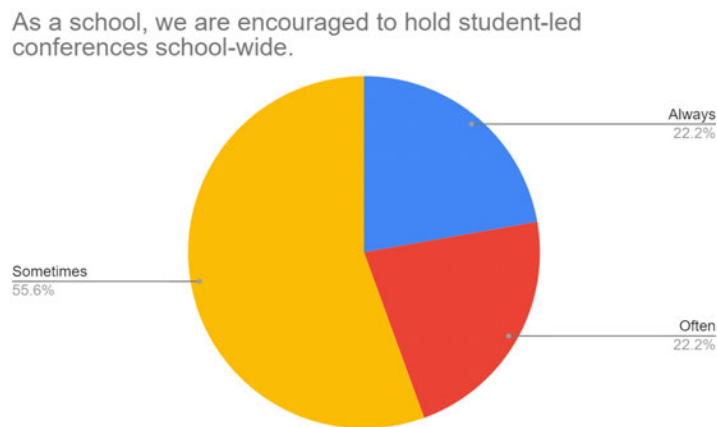
When principals greet students, it creates a warm and friendly atmosphere. It sets a positive tone for the day and helps students feel valued and appreciated. This welcoming environment can increase student

engagement and a sense of belonging within the school community. Students shared in the survey that only 29.2% reported that principals greet their students every morning, 20.8% that they often greet them, and 37.5% that administrators and teachers sometimes greet their students; 12.5% shared that principals don't greet their students. (This data was reported from the student's perspective.)

Administration and Teacher Quantitative Survey Data

In this section, I will review and analyze the data collected from some administrators and teachers in my K-12 district. I interviewed one elementary principal, two middle school administrators, and two high school administrators. In addition, I interviewed three middle school teachers and four high school teachers. I also sent the survey out to these participants as well. How does this participant group feel when building a safe place within schools? For them to belong, they have to be seen. I want to get first-hand data on what it means for them if they feel like they belong, feel safe, and have relationships within their school cultures. The questions below will look at the results from questions the administrators and teachers answered about their practices and their impact on their school's culture and climate.

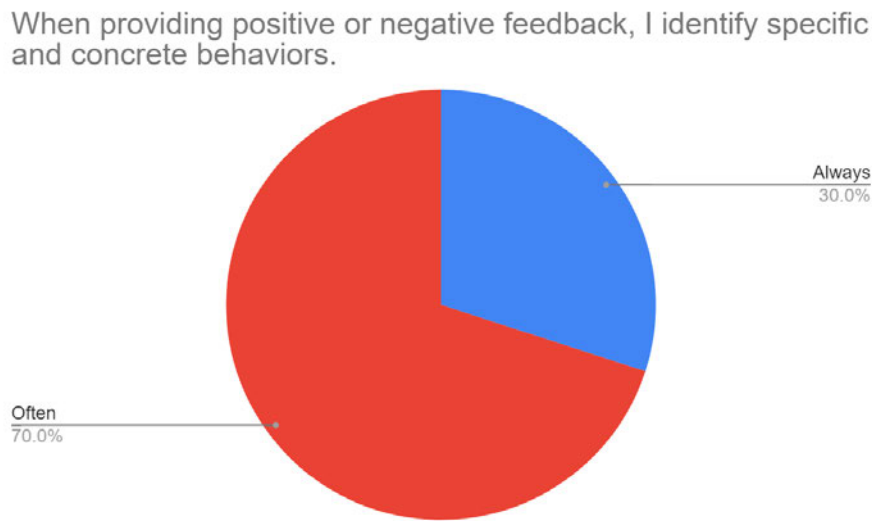
Figure 16: As a school, we are encouraged to hold student-led conferences school-wide.



The districts that implement student-led conferences can have several benefits for both students and their parents/guardians. The Elm District survey reported that only 22.2% were encouraged to hold student-led

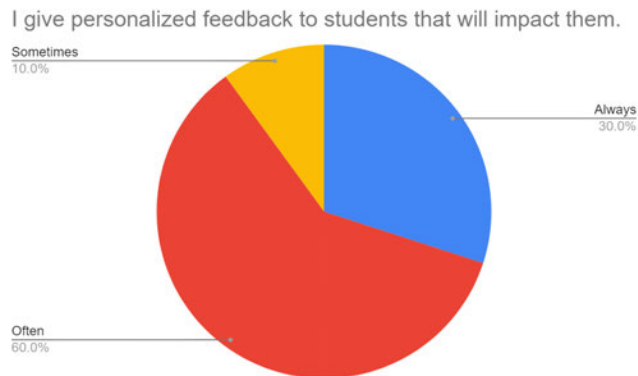
conferences, 55.6% shared that they sometimes were encouraged to hold student-led conferences, and 22.2% reported they often were encouraged to hold them.

Figure 17: When providing positive or negative feedback, I identify specific and concrete behaviors



Among the administrators and teachers in Elm District surveyed, 30% *always* share concrete behaviors when giving students positive or negative feedback, whereas 70% say they *often* share concrete behaviors.

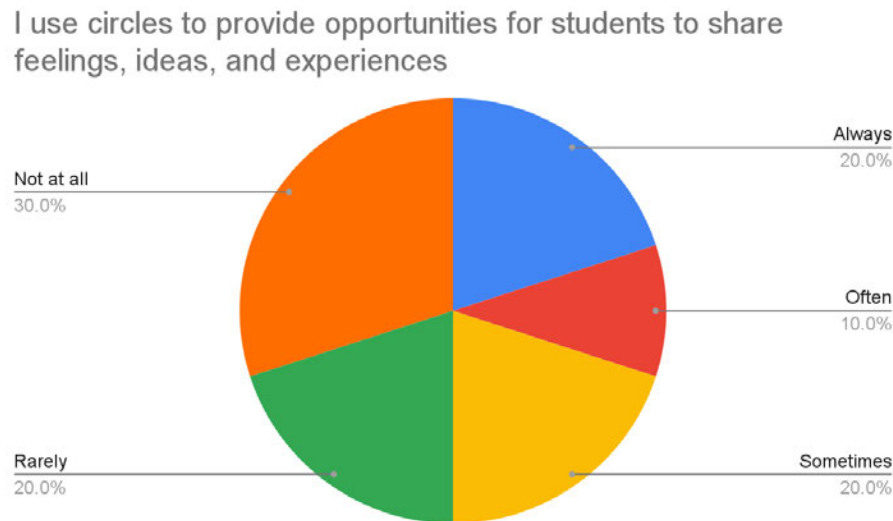
Figure 18: I give personalized feedback to students that will impact them



Looking at the chart above regarding the surveyed teachers and administrators, it is clear that 30% give personalized feedback to their students that impacts them. Sixty percent give personalized feedback, and 10% sometimes give personalized feedback. Personalized feedback is a valuable tool for optimizing learning

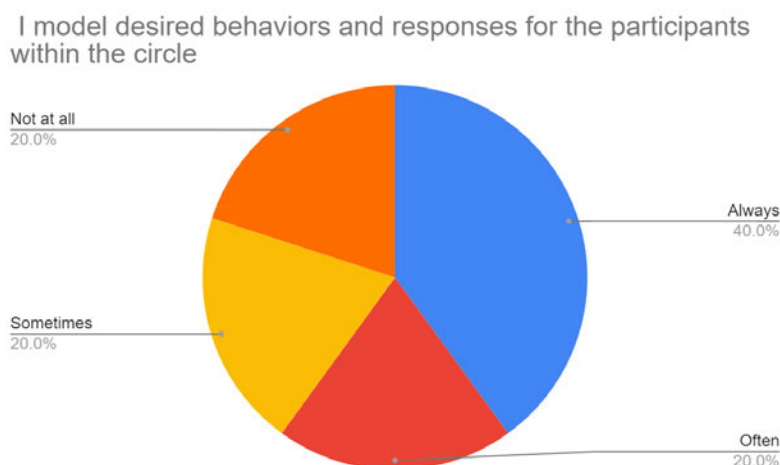
outcomes, fostering student engagement and motivation and supporting individualized growth and development within the educational setting. It is also essential when building relationships.

Figure 19: I use circles to provide opportunities for students to share feelings, ideas, and experiences



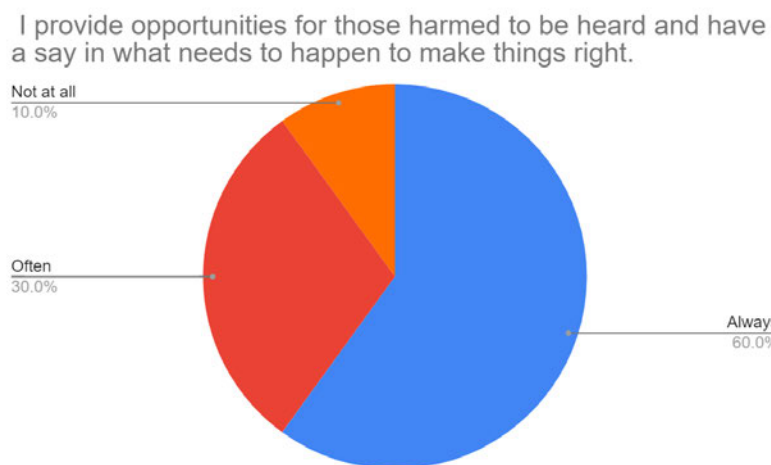
When looking at implementing restorative circles in Elm District, a survey asked teachers and administrators if they use them to provide opportunities for students to share feelings, ideas, and experiences. There were mixed results based on the chart above. Only 20% shared they always or sometimes implement restorative circles, 10% reported often, 20% reported rarely, and 30% did not at all implement restorative circles with their students.

Figure 20: I model desired behaviors and responses for the participants within the circle



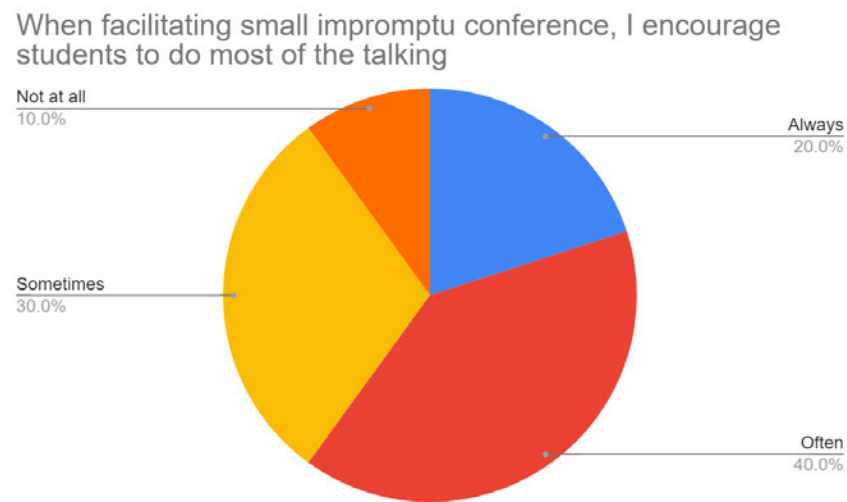
Modeling desired behaviors and responses for students within circles is powerful. Of those implementing the circles, 40% always model the desired behaviors, and 20% often, sometimes, and don't model desired behaviors in Elm School District.

Figure 21: I provide opportunities for those harmed to be heard and have a say in what needs to happen to make things right



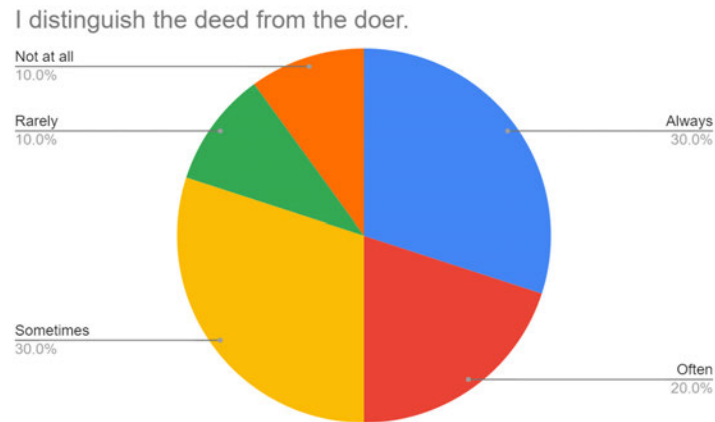
Another part of Restorative Practices discussed in this paper is staff providing opportunities for those harmed to be heard and have a say on what is needed to make things right. The staff surveyed in the chart above shows that 60% always provide these opportunities, whereas 30% shared they often do, and 10% shared they don't. The data suggests that the teachers are selectively implementing parts of circles.

Figure 22: When facilitating small impromptu conference, I encourage students to do most of the talking



In addition to providing restorative circles for students, small impromptu conferences significantly impact a school's culture and climate, as we have learned through research. In Elm District, only 20% of staff facilitate small impromptu circles, whereas 40% shared they often facilitate them, 30% sometimes do, and 10% don't.

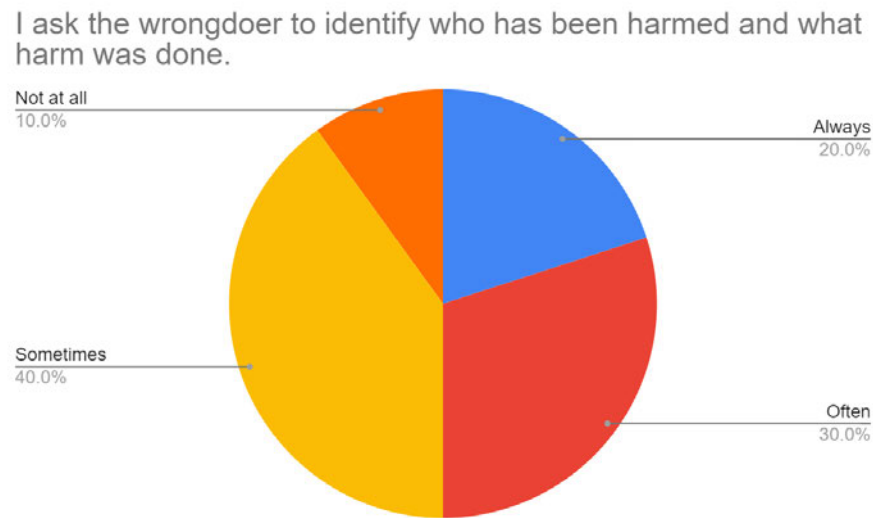
Figure 23: I distinguish the deed from the doer



Distinguishing between the deed and the doer during conflict is imperative for educators to have relationships with students. Based on the chart above, the staff in Elm District stated that only 30% always and

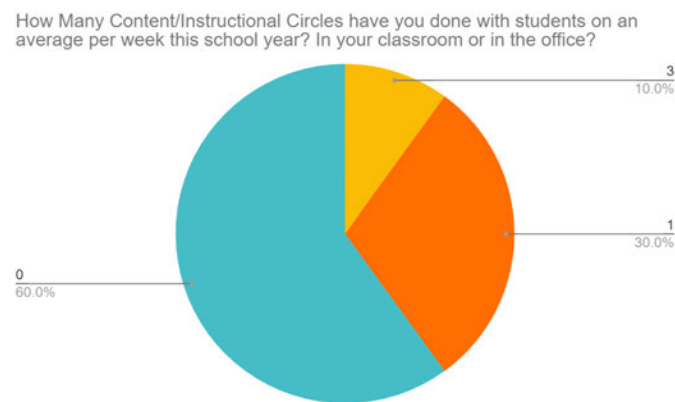
30% sometimes distinguish between the deed and the doer, whereas 20% often do, and 10% either rarely or never do.

Figure 24: I ask the wrongdoer to identify who has been harmed and what harm was done



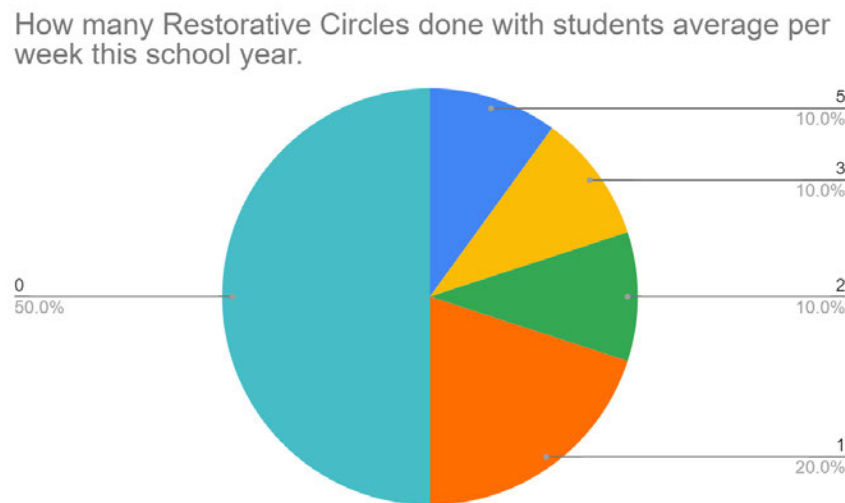
Research shows that asking the wrongdoer to identify who has been harmed and what harm has been done radically changes the environment in a schoolroom or school. In Elm District, only 20% shared they always asked the wrongdoer this question, 40% that they sometimes do, 30% that they often do, and 10% that they never do. Overall, the survey tells the story that teachers are implementing what they know related to Restorative Practices, while some are just beginning to do so. Others are not doing anything differently than when we relied strictly on punitive practices.

Figure 25: How Many Content/Instructional Circles have you done with students on an average per week this school year? In your classroom or the office?



On average, 60% shared that they do no content/instructional circles with students per week, 10% said they do three on average weekly in their classroom or office, and 30% shared they do one circle per week.

Figure 26: How many Restorative Circles were done with students on average per week this school year



The above chart shows that on average over the past year in Elm District, 50% do no restorative circles with students weekly, 10% do anywhere from 1-5 on average per week in their classroom or office. As you can see, 20% do one restorative circle with their students weekly. There are inconsistencies with the implementation of Restorative Practices among the elementary, middle, and high school teachers. Some of this is due to comfort levels as well as teacher preparedness in this area.

Figure 27: Qualitative Results Concept Map



The interviews with students from grades K-12, teachers, and administrators show some outstanding themes. In **Figure 27: Restorative Practices Concept Map**, those themes are highlighted. Each participant was asked various questions that focused on different practices and discipline.

Inviting Students into Learning

Inviting students into learning fosters engagement and creates a positive learning environment. Research suggests that inviting students into learning requires continuous effort and adaptation (Smith, D., Fisher, D., & Frey, 2022). Staff need to be open to feedback from their students and to continuously seek ways to make the

learning experience enjoyable, challenging, and meaningful. When teachers and administrators in Elm District were asked how they invite students into learning, some provided the following responses:

“One challenge is to get students to buy in and participate. I need to find out how they feel about school and learning. Share about myself and build community. It's the relationship piece.” — *Middle School Teacher*

“I like to know their story to understand better why the altercation in the classroom or why they are disrupting the classroom. I agree with them, so it's not just about consequences. Like to get parent participation. Students' behavior, does apology letter- parent completely against it. Can create a halt—then OSS happens.” — *Middle School Administrator*

“Student surveys. I like to get to know students at a deeper level. I try to participate in clubs with them to get to know them on a different personal level. It is basic and truly all about building relationships with the students. Learning about my student's culture and background is important. That also helps when it comes time for a difficult conversation.” *High School Administrator*

The main theme that emerged from these interviews was relationship building.

There were mixed responses when the administrators were asked if they celebrate good behavior with their students. It was shared at one school that good behavior rewards come in the form of incentives like candy or donuts. Some have pep assemblies to applaud the students with high grades. There are no specific celebrations based on behavior. It was shared that there is communication with parents from teachers but nothing from the administrative level. At the high school, it was shared that they don't celebrate the achievement of good behavior. There is no formal PBIS or public recognition for positive behavior or celebrations. However, based on the data and observations within the district, these types of celebrations need to be more consistent.

“We don't celebrate our behavior or recognize students who follow the rules.” — *High School 11th Grade Student*

Classroom and Whole School Discipline

The interviews asked what discipline looks like in the classrooms and the school as a whole. In middle school, it was shared that minors and majors based on the PBIS Tier 1 classroom managed versus office management system were created, but the process needs more work. Teachers have reflective sheets in the classroom and will have conversations in the hallway. One way to handle behavior and discipline is for teachers to change student seating or to email parents. In the high school, the administrator shared that they use old-school approaches and that solutions are punitive. Teachers' classroom management style is mainly traditional discipline. The culture is that the class expectations are where the teacher makes the rules, and the students must follow them. Teachers try to handle discipline independently but don't do anything if they don't see the follow-through from the dean's office.

"Students are redirected, or students are asked to change seats. After several redirections, students are written up, or the dean is called to take them out of class. Usually, a lecture with the student by the dean. No student involvement. There is always an in-school or out-of-school suspension given to the student if the dean gets involved." — *High School Teacher*.

Concerning discipline from the whole school perspective, it was communicated that it is very similar. Everybody has tried to adopt reflection sheets across all content areas. However, there are still inconsistencies, and building administration does not mandate this practice. It was shared that students always receive suspensions and detentions for misbehavior. The middle school administrator shared that in-school suspensions (ISS) are a newer piece for them this year. It was shared that there are a high number of out-of-school suspensions (OSS) in this school.

"There is no impact with the OSS for the students; it is like a day off for the kids." — *High School Administrator*.

The middle school has a PBIS-like program, but it needs a lot of work within the school. In high school, discipline is mostly OSS for anything from vaping with weed or nicotine, physical confrontation, verbal

altercation, physical fights, other drug offenses, cutting class, non-compliance, physical aggression, and verbal aggression. The high school administrator shared that they don't have ISS daily, so OSS is the answer. They have what they call the “8th hour” (detention) within the schedule, but that the students don't take it seriously, and that it has no effect on behavior.

“No prominent structure in place. The lectures go nowhere. Students are suspended or expelled, and their behavior continues.” — *High School Administrator*.

The students were asked about discipline in their school and classroom. It is interesting to read their perspectives. One 5th-grade boy in the elementary school shared that discipline in his classroom is for students hitting other students. Another behavior mentioned is students talking to their friends while the teacher is teaching. Yet another is students screaming in the classroom and not paying attention during instruction. A third-grade student said, “Our teacher gets mad if we don't listen and if students play with their water bottles. She goes up to the student and asks them to talk. She talks about the behavior that isn't followed. You have to follow the rules.” A middle school student stated they get their phones taken away if they are using them. The students are aware that their teachers have the program “Go-Guardian,” so they are monitored for misuse of technology. A high school student stated, “You could get picked up by security if a teacher can't handle you in class.” It is true that some teachers don't know how to handle students' disruptions and that people are loud and disrespectful toward teachers or simply not paying attention in class. A 12th-grade student shared that some students are rude to teachers or on their phones during class. “When this happens, security or the dean will come to pull the students out of class and give them an OSS.” Student interviews made it apparent that the high school students are allowed to use their phones, but the middle school and elementary students were not.

Student and Staff Relationships

“The troubled students know they can talk to me.” — *High School Administrator*

The core of Restorative Practices centers around having a restorative culture. It begins with the wisdom and humility to acknowledge what we have experienced ourselves as victims and offenders at various times in

our own lives. “Establishing a solid foundation of respect in a classroom and school fosters students’ well-being and eagerness to engage in Restorative Practices” (Wachtel, 2016, p. 67). In Elm District, one administrator shared that they feel every student knows they can take the opportunity to talk to them regardless of previous consequences. They feel they have good relationships with students. Another stated that the students who aren't in trouble don't know him. Therefore, the ones who are always in the dean’s office are the ones who will talk to the deans.

“Together, we make behavior contracts which help students understand their consequences.” — *Middle School Teacher*

The middle school teacher shared that students talk about what is bothering them, what's happening at home, and/or their struggles.

Looking at how the students feel about their relationships with their teachers was eye-opening based on each student's experience. One 5th-grader shared that he had a good relationship with his teacher. He said, “She doesn't get mad at me. I have had teachers get mad at me.” He went on to share that his current teacher knows how he works. A 3rd-grader student shared that she has a good relationship because her teacher helps them learn. The student shared how her teacher has a positive attitude and makes learning fun. A 10th-grader stated, “I keep good relationships with my teachers because if I ever need help, I want them to help me. I want my teachers to be there for me. It is evident that not all teachers care about their students.” He continued, “It takes a while to get comfortable or trust your teacher. There needs to be mutual respect. I have better relationships with the teachers who greet me, give me attention, and care about me.”

Figure 28: Visual Representing Student Response vs Teacher/Administrator Response Related to Restorative Practices

Restorative Topic	Student Response	Teacher/Administrator Response
Inviting Students into Learning		<i>“One challenge is to get students to buy in and participate. I need to find out how they feel about school and learning. Share about myself and build community. It's the relationship piece” — Middle School Teacher.</i>
Inviting Students into Learning		<i>“ I like to know their story to understand better why the altercation in the classroom or why they are disrupting the classroom. I agree with them, so it's not just about consequences. Like to get parent participation. Students' behavior, does apology letter- parent completely against it. Can create a halt- then OSS happens.” — Middle School Administrator.</i>
Inviting Students into Learning		<i>“Student surveys. I like to get to know students at a deeper level. I try to participate in clubs with them to get to know them on a different personal level. It is basic and truly all about building relationships with the students. Learning about my student's culture and background is important. That also helps when it comes time for a difficult conversation” — High School Administrator.</i>
Inviting Students into Learning	<i>“We don't celebrate our behavior or recognize students who follow the rules.” — 11th Grade Student</i>	
Classroom and Whole School Discipline	<i>“Our teacher gets mad if we don't listen and if students play with their water bottles. She goes up to the student and asks them to talk. She talks about the behavior that isn't followed. You have to follow the rules.”— 3rd Grade Student</i>	<i>“Students are redirected, or students are asked to change seats. After several redirections, students are written up, or the dean is called to take them out of class. Usually, a lecture with the student by the dean. No student involvement. There is always an in-school or out-of-school suspension given to the student if the dean gets involved. — High School Teacher.</i>

Classroom and Whole School Discipline	<i>“You could get picked up by security if a teacher can’t handle you in class. When this happens, security or the dean will come to pull the students out of class and give them an OSS.” — 11th Grade Student</i>	<i>“There is no impact with the OSS for the students; it is like a day off for the kids.”</i>
Classroom and Whole School Discipline		<i>“No prominent structure in place. The lectures go nowhere. Students are suspended or expelled, and their behavior continues.” — High School Administrator.</i>
Student and Staff Relationships	<i>“ She doesn't get mad at me. I have had teachers get mad at me.” — 5th Grade Student</i>	<i>“The troubled students know they can talk to me.” — High School Administrator.</i>
Student and Staff Relationships	<i>"I have a good relationship with my teacher because she helps me learn." — 3rd grade student.</i>	<i>“Together, we make behavior contracts which help students understand their consequences.”— Middle School Teacher.</i>
Student and Staff Relationships	<i>“I keep good relationships with my teachers because if I ever need help, I want them to help me. I want my teachers to be there for me. It is evident that not all teachers care about their students.” He continued, “It takes a while to get comfortable or trust your teacher. There needs to be mutual respect. I have better relationships with the teachers who greet me, give me attention, and care about me.” — 10th-grade student</i>	

Interpretation

Analyzing the mixed methods data makes it clear that remarkable things happen when educators foster a safe learning space, develop healthy growth relationships with their students, maintain their credibility, and build student agency.

“Research shows that positive cultures are present when educators offer advice, share expertise, or help their students develop their skills” (Thorsborne, M., Riestenberg, N., & McCluskey, 2019, p.109). One important strategy is for educators to get to know their students' interests and to learn about their personal lives, which relates to Culturally Responsive Teaching and Leading Standards. Self-Awareness and Relationships to Others – Culturally Responsive Teachers and Leaders are reflective and gain a deeper understanding of themselves and how they impact others, leading to more cohesive and productive student development as it relates to academic and SEL for all students. The culturally responsive teacher and leader will:

- 1) Understand and value the notion that multiple lived experiences exist, that there is not one “correct” way of doing or understanding something, and that what is seen as “correct” is most often based on our lived experiences.
- 2) Approach their work and students with an asset-based mindset, affirming the students’ backgrounds and identities.
- 3) Know about their students and their lives outside of school, using this knowledge to build instruction that leverages prior knowledge and skills.
- 4) Include representative, familiar content in the curriculum to legitimize what students bring to class, while also exposing them to new ideas and worldviews different from their own.
- 5) Engage in self-reflection about their own actions and interactions and what ideas motivated those actions.
- 6) Explore their own intersecting identities, how they were developed, and how they impact daily experience of the world.

7) Recognize how their identity (race/ethnicity, national origin, language, sex and gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, physical/developmental/emotional ability, socioeconomic class, religion, etc.) affects their perspectives and beliefs about pedagogy and students.

8) Educate themselves about students' communities, cultures, and histories.

9) Critically think about the institutions in which they find themselves, working to reform these institutions whenever and wherever necessary.

10) Assess how their biases and perceptions affect their teaching practice and how they access tools to mitigate their own behavior.

Attending outside events allows educators to observe students' performances or presentations and provide constructive feedback for improvement. Being present and observing students' educators can help administrators maintain discipline, manage logistics, and provide immediate assistance to students. This presence offers a sense of security to both students and parents. When teachers and staff participate in students' extracurricular activities, it often creates a positive and supportive environment that fosters holistic education.

Another piece to building a positive culture and climate is for educators to provide surveys that can provide valuable insights that help teachers tailor their instruction and create a more engaging and relevant learning environment. Student interest surveys allow teachers to understand students' unique characteristics and preferences. Incorporating topics and activities that align with students' interests increases engagement in the classroom. Students are more likely to be motivated, actively participate, and take ownership of their learning when content is relevant and resonates with their interests. The data from Elm District suggests that there needs to be more connection between the students and educators regarding teachers showing interest in their students and/or surveying them. Administering interest surveys shows that teachers care about their students' individuality and want to establish meaningful connections with them. The teachers in Elm District could build more positive relationships with their students based on trust and mutual understanding by acknowledging and valuing their students' interests. Educators must handle their student interest surveys with sensitivity and confidentiality.

Students should feel comfortable sharing their interests and teachers should respect their privacy. In conclusion, more student interest surveys could be given in Elm District to help educators know their students better and support their learning through individualized instruction.

Themes that emerged from the data show that teachers could work harder to create an inclusive environment that celebrates diversity and respects all students, regardless of their background or personal circumstances. Adopting this practice in Elm District would foster an atmosphere of acceptance where students feel comfortable expressing themselves and sharing their unique experiences. The teachers should encourage open and honest communication in the classroom through impromptu or restorative circles. By fostering a culture of trust and respect, students are more likely to feel comfortable sharing personal information when appropriate or necessary. Teachers can initiate discussions, provide opportunities for self-reflection, and create a supportive space for sharing personal experiences. This can happen through restorative circles, impromptu circles, or restorative chats. **Figure 27: Restorative Practices Concept Map** shows that allowing inclusivity sends a message to students that their educators value their voices and there is a sense of belonging. Based on the data, the discipline in Elm District is more of a traditional discipline with punitive consequences than a restorative culture where students are held accountable for their actions. The students are not asked what needs to happen to make things right when they have done wrong.

Providing social-emotional support is crucial in making students feel comfortable sharing personal information. Educators in Elm District must ensure all staff integrate SEL into their curriculum, promote positive relationships among students, and provide access to counseling services or other resources to support students' well-being. Having other staff become part of class meetings or circles also makes a significant impact. Teachers can create a safe space for personal sharing by modeling vulnerability themselves. Sharing appropriate personal stories or experiences can help students feel more at ease and encourage them to open up about their lives. Restorative circles, the use of effective statements, the use of impromptu conversations, and the use of formal

restorative conferences and victim-offender dialogues are only happening throughout some of the schools. There are gaps in Elm District when it comes to incorporating Restorative Practices.

Teachers could and should do more to engage students in reflective activities that encourage them to think about their actions and their consequences on others. Reflective activities can involve guiding students to consider the impact of their behavior, empathize with those who were harmed, and reflect on their values and principles. Teachers can facilitate a process where students who have caused harm are encouraged to apologize to those affected and make amends. This may involve providing a safe and structured environment for students to express their remorse and take responsibility for their actions. Teachers can facilitate mediation sessions or restorative dialogues when there is a conflict between students. These sessions provide a safe space for open communication and understanding between the parties involved. Through active listening and guided discussions, students can work towards finding resolutions, repairing relationships, and rebuilding trust (Smith, D., Fisher, D., & Frey, N., 2022, p. 98). Elm District teachers should incorporate lessons and activities that teach students practical conflict-resolution skills. These skills include active listening, communication techniques, empathy, problem-solving, and negotiation. Teachers empower teachers to handle conflicts constructively and respectfully by equipping students with these skills. Integrating SEL into the curriculum can help students develop empathy, self-awareness, and responsible decision-making skills. SEL programs provide a foundation for students to understand the impact of their actions on others and develop strategies for repairing harm and maintaining positive relationships. Restorative Practices focus on repairing the harm caused by an individual's actions. Teachers can implement restorative circles or conferences where students gather to address the impact of their behaviors and collaboratively develop solutions. These practices emphasize accountability, empathy, and rebuilding trust within the classroom community.

When staff establish clear expectations for behavior and conduct in our school community, students are provided with guidelines and codes of conduct that outline the expected standards of behavior. By clearly communicating these expectations, students understand their responsibilities and know what is required of them.

Elm District is working to employ consistent Restorative Practices, such as restorative circles, to address conflicts and behavioral issues. These practices focus on repairing harm, promoting empathy, and finding solutions collaboratively. By engaging in restorative processes, students are encouraged to take responsibility for their actions, understand the consequences of their behavior, and work towards repairing any harm caused. Students are actively involved in the decision-making processes and rules of our schools. However, based on the data, some schools are implementing these strategies more than others. More could be done so that students can voice their opinions, contribute to discussions, and participate in student councils or similar bodies to make a difference in the culture and climate of the buildings. This involvement fosters a sense of ownership and responsibility for the school community and its expectations. Allowing these practices encourages students to reflect on their behaviors and actions. Through self-assessment activities, they can evaluate their conduct, identify improvement areas, and set personal growth goals. This process of self-reflection helps students develop a sense of responsibility for their own behavior and motivates them to make positive changes. When students make mistakes or exhibit inappropriate behavior, we should provide meaningful consequences that promote learning and growth. Rather than punitive measures, our approach should focus on teaching students about the consequences of their actions and providing opportunities to make amends and learn from their mistakes. By consistently promoting and reinforcing responsibility throughout the school community, we can empower students to take ownership of their behaviors. By understanding the impact of their actions, students develop the skills and mindset necessary for personal growth, positive decision-making, and contributing to a respectful and responsible school environment.

As I analyze these results from the data collected, I see discrepancies in what students feel and think compared to feelings and thoughts of the staff. The elementary students feel that if their teacher is nice and helps them, then everything is great. The students at the middle school and high school shared that whether they have relationships with their teachers depends on each teacher. Students shared that they are not taught when a mistake is made on how to repair that harm. Some students shared that the environments are punitive and they

feel the staff don't want them in school based on the numbers of OSS's (as well as expulsions). Creating a supportive environment where students feel comfortable expressing their ideas and taking ownership of the conversation is crucial. When teachers allow students to lead, they establish ground rules for respectful and inclusive discussion, emphasizing the importance of active listening and valuing diverse perspectives. Teachers can initially provide guidance or structure to the conferences held for their students. Elm District would do well to start by posing open-ended questions, sharing relevant information, or setting a clear objective for discussions. This framework can help students feel more confident and provide a starting point for their leadership role. Learning to act as a facilitator rather than a dominant voice is also an essential skill developed through impromptu circles. Encouraging students to ask questions, listen actively, and respond to one another, and fostering a student-led discussion, are all critical. Encouraging students to actively listen to one another in impromptu circles and to build on each other's ideas provides a massive benefit. Teaching students practical communication skills, such as paraphrasing, asking clarifying questions, and respectfully challenging perspectives, builds strong life skills. As a teacher modeling these skills and providing feedback to students, reinforcing the importance of active and respectful dialogue is powerful. This practice was absent in the data from both students and educators. Another powerful opportunity is to empower students to share their thoughts, opinions, and insights without fear of judgment or criticism. Validating their contributions and emphasizing the value of their unique perspectives encourages quieter students to participate. As they take on leadership roles, teachers can provide support and encouragement. Teachers can foster student agency, critical thinking, and communication skills by allowing them to lead during impromptu conferences. This approach promotes a collaborative and student-centered learning environment where students actively engage with the content and take ownership of their learning experiences.

Teachers are encouraged to have private conversations with wrongdoers to discuss situations and help them recognize the impact of their actions. During these conversations, the teacher can ask the wrongdoer to reflect on who might have been affected or harmed by their behavior. The teacher can guide the wrongdoer to

think from the perspective of others involved, encouraging them to consider the emotional, physical, or psychological harm caused. This helps develop empathy and a deeper understanding of the consequences of their actions.

Through guided questioning, the teacher can help the wrongdoer identify the individuals directly or indirectly impacted by their behavior. This includes those who may have experienced emotional distress, damage to personal belongings, or a loss of trust in the classroom or community. Once the wrongdoer has identified those harmed, the teacher can discuss the importance of taking responsibility for their actions. This involves acknowledging the impact, showing remorse, and being willing to make amends. The teacher can guide the wrongdoer in determining appropriate actions to repair the harm caused. This may involve an apology, restitution, or other forms of restorative action to address the specific needs of those affected. Throughout the process, the teacher provides support and monitors the progress of the wrongdoer in fulfilling their responsibilities. This includes providing guidance, offering resources or counseling if needed, and ensuring the wrongdoer follows through with the agreed-upon actions. The data suggests that Elm District educators should be sure to ask wrongdoers to identify who has been harmed. When adopting these practices, educators promote accountability, empathy, and understanding of the consequences of one's actions. This approach fosters personal growth, encourages responsible behavior, and supports restoring relationships within the classroom community.

The importance of restorative circles has a massive impact on students. In Elm District, teachers are encouraged to arrange the physical space in a circle formation, ensuring that all participants have equal visibility and can engage with one another. This physical arrangement promotes equality and encourages open communication. The teacher begins the restorative circle by providing an opening statement, setting the conversation's tone. This statement should emphasize the circle's purpose: to build understanding, repair harm, and find solutions collaboratively. A talking piece is used to facilitate respectful communication during the circle. The teacher can pass around an object, such as a small ball, that serves as the talking piece. Only the person holding the talking piece can speak, while others actively listen without interruption. Each participant

takes turns holding the talking piece and sharing their perspective on the conflict or problem. This allows everyone to express their feelings, thoughts, and experiences without judgment. The teacher may ask reflective questions to deepen understanding and promote empathy among participants. These questions might include, "How were you affected by the situation?" "What needs were unmet?" or "How do you think others were impacted?" Once everyone has shared, the teacher facilitates dialogue among participants. This may involve asking open-ended questions that encourage active listening, empathy, and the exploration of potential solutions. The restorative circle concludes when participants collectively reach an agreement or solution that addresses the conflict or problem. The teacher helps summarize the agreed-upon actions and ensures everyone understands their role in the resolution process. Using restorative circles, teachers empower students to take responsibility for their actions, repair harm caused, and develop positive relationships within the learning community. Currently, most staff in Elm District use the traditional punitive approaches when it comes to discipline. As reported at the monthly Board of Education meetings, there are in-school and out- of-school suspensions given for a variety of inconsistent reasons. See chart below for the March 2023 and May 2023 data.

Figure 29: Chart of Elm District School Board Suspension Reports for March and May 2023

Month	In-School Reason	In-School Numbers	Out Of School Reason	Out Of School Total
March	Tardy to Class	7	Drug Offense	10
	Left school without permission	3	Fighting	6
	Defiance to authority	2	Physical Aggression	5
	Tobacco Defense	2	Tobacco Offense	5
	Bullying	1	Defiance of Authority	3
	Cutting Class	1	Weapons Offense	2
	Drug Offense	1	Cutting Class/Left School w/o permission	3
	Major School	1	Disruptive Behavior	3

	Disruption			
			Assault/Battery	1
			Gang Activity	1
			Harrassment/Teasing	1
March Total	Total In School Suspensions	18	Total Out of School Suspensions	40
March	High School	17	High School	20
March	Middle School	1	Middle School	12
			Elementary School	7
May	Tardy to School	1	Alcohol Offense	1
	Left school without permission	8	Defiance of Authority	1
	Defiance to authoriy	1	Disrespect	2
	Vandalism	2	Disruptive Behavior	5
	Non-compliance	3	Drug Offense	1
	Cutting Class	2	Fighting	2
	Harrassment/Teasing	1	Gang Activity	1
	Other	2	Harassment/Teasing	1
			Hate Speech	1
			Other	5
			Physical Aggression	7
			Technology Violation	2
			Tobacco Offense	3
			Threat/Intimidation	2
May Total	In School Suspension	25	Out of School Suspension	35
	High School	19	High School	13

	Middle School	4	Middle School	17
	Elementary Schools	2	Elementary Schools	5

Restorative circles foster a sense of safety and risk-taking. Circles cultivate trust among students by providing a space where they can openly express themselves without fear of judgment or reprisal. This trust creates a foundation for students to feel safe taking risks and sharing their thoughts, ideas, and opinions. In restorative circles, active listening is emphasized. Participants are encouraged to listen to one another, demonstrating respect and empathy genuinely. When students feel heard and understood, they are more likely to feel safe to take risks and share their perspectives. Restorative circles promote a non-judgmental environment where every voice is valued. The focus is on understanding and problem-solving rather than blaming or shaming. Students recognize that mistakes or conflicts are opportunities for growth and learning, encouraging them to take risks and participate without fearing negative consequences. Restorative circles provide a space for students to address conflicts or problems collectively. Through open dialogue and collaborative problem-solving, students realize that their input and ideas are essential in finding solutions. This sense of ownership and involvement encourages them to take risks in contributing their thoughts and suggestions. Restorative circles promote empathy by encouraging students to understand and consider others' perspectives. When students feel supported and understood by their peers, they are more willing to take risks, express themselves authentically, and explore new ideas in the classroom. Restorative circles align with the principles of a growth mindset, emphasizing that mistakes and challenges are opportunities for learning and growth. When students perceive mistakes as a natural part of the learning process, they are more likely to take risks, try new approaches, and engage in meaningful discussions without fear of failure. Within restorative circles, feedback is given respectfully and constructively. Students learn to provide feedback focused on the issue rather than attacking or criticizing individuals. This encourages a supportive environment where students feel safe to take risks and share their work, knowing they will receive thoughtful and helpful feedback. By incorporating restorative circles in the classroom, teachers can

create an atmosphere where students feel safe, supported, and encouraged to take risks. This enables them to engage in their learning fully, express their creativity, and develop the confidence to grow and succeed academically and personally.

By bringing together those involved in a conflict, restorative circles allow for open dialogue, active listening, and understanding. This approach helps students develop problem-solving skills, empathy, and a sense of responsibility for resolving conflicts peacefully. Restorative circles help strengthen relationships among students, teachers, and staff members. “Restorative circles promote open communication, trust, and understanding by creating a safe and supportive environment” (Smith, D., Fisher, D., & Frey, N. (2022, p. 24). Regularly engaging in restorative circles allows individuals to develop deeper connections, fostering a positive and inclusive school community.

Restorative circles encourage individuals to take accountability for their actions and their impact on others. Through the dialogue and reflection that takes place within the circles, students learn to recognize the consequences of their behavior and take responsibility for making amends. This approach empowers students to actively participate in creating a respectful and responsible school culture. Restorative circles provide a platform for students to have a voice in shaping their school environment. They feel empowered and valued by actively involving students in the circle process. Encouraging students to express their thoughts, concerns, and ideas within the circles promotes a sense of ownership and fosters a collaborative approach to decision-making. “Restorative circles support social-emotional learning by addressing students' emotional needs and promoting self-awareness” (Domenech, D. A., Sherman, M., & Brown, J. L., 2022, p. 114). The circles create a space where students can express their feelings, perspectives, and experiences, leading to increased self-reflection and emotional growth.

Restorative circles also allow students to develop empathy and understanding for others, strengthening their social-emotional skills. By incorporating restorative circles as a regular practice, Elm District schools are adopting a preventative approach to conflicts and behavioral issues. Rather than waiting for conflicts to escalate,

restorative circles allow for early intervention and resolution. This proactive approach helps create a positive and supportive school climate, reducing the occurrence of conflicts and fostering a sense of belonging among students. It also cuts down on the number of out-of-school and in-school suspensions. Making restorative circles a fundamental part of how Elm schools do things promotes a culture of empathy, respect, and responsibility. This approach can support students in resolving conflicts and taking ownership of their actions and contributes to a positive and inclusive school environment where everyone can thrive. Only some staff are currently implementing pieces of Restorative Practices.

Greeting students at the beginning of the class sets a positive tone for the learning environment. As we learned from the data, students feel positive when their teachers greet them and show they care about them. Greeting students daily creates a welcoming atmosphere where students feel acknowledged and valued. This can create a sense of belonging and foster a positive classroom climate. Greeting students individually allows teachers to build relationships with their students. By greeting each student, teachers show a personal interest in their well-being and create opportunities for connection. Teacher-student solid relationships are linked to increased student engagement, motivation, and overall academic success (Domenech, D. A., Sherman, M., & Brown, J. L., 2022, p. 8). When teachers greet students, particularly by name, it helps students feel seen and recognized as individuals. Overall, greeting students is a simple yet powerful practice that can significantly impact the classroom environment, student-teacher relationships, and student engagement. It promotes a positive and inclusive learning environment where students feel valued, respected, and ready to learn. The data shows that this simple practice could be implemented more in Elm District to help with the culture and climate of the school buildings. Research also shows that by personally greeting students, principals have an opportunity to connect with them on an individual level (Ashley, D. M., 2015, p. 43). This interaction fosters relationships built on trust, respect, and care. Students are more likely to feel comfortable approaching their principal with concerns or issues, leading to improved communication and support throughout their academic journey. Students share

that a principal's presence and greeting convey a sense of importance and value. This recognition can enhance their self-esteem, boost morale, and increase motivation to succeed academically and behaviorally.

Student-led conferences shift the responsibility for sharing and reflecting on learning progress from the teacher to the student. Students take ownership of their educational journey by actively participating in the conference. They can articulate their strengths, areas for improvement, and goals, fostering a sense of responsibility and self-awareness. In student-led conferences, students play an active role in showcasing their work and achievements. This hands-on involvement can increase their engagement and motivation to excel academically and behaviorally. Students learn to articulate their thoughts, express themselves clearly, and actively listen to their parents/guardians' feedback. This interaction strengthens the parent-student relationship and fosters open lines of communication about academic progress, challenges, and future goals. Through student-led conferences, students reflect on their learning journey, identifying their strengths and areas for growth. Student-led conferences provide a platform for students to celebrate their achievements and behavior. This is when students showcase their best work, share their accomplishments, and receive recognition for their efforts. This celebration reinforces a positive attitude toward learning, boosts self-esteem, and reinforces the value of hard work and perseverance. Based on the data collected, Elm District doesn't foster student-led conferences or take time to hold consistent monthly celebrations for their students. By implementing student-led conferences, schools empower students to take an active role in their education, fostering ownership, engagement, communication, reflection, and goal-setting skills. These conferences also promote stronger parent-school partnerships, enhancing understanding and supporting students' academic growth.

Conclusion

Creating open communication channels between students and staff is essential to address the issues discussed in this chapter. Engaging in dialogue to understand students' perspectives, validate their experiences, and collaboratively work towards implementing Restorative Practices that address their needs and concerns is

imperative when building a positive culture and climate within a school or district. Additionally, providing professional development opportunities for staff members to enhance their understanding of Restorative Practices and their implementation can be beneficial in bridging the gap between staff perceptions and student experiences.

In conclusion, Restorative Practices need to be consistently implemented in Elm District. These practices focus on building relationships, repairing harm, and promoting a sense of belonging within a community. These practices are more effective than the traditional and punitive discipline in Elm District schools. Overall, Restorative Practices promote a sense of community, build emotional intelligence, and teach valuable conflict-resolution skills to students. By fostering a positive and supportive environment, these practices contribute to a healthier and more productive school culture and climate for everyone involved.

Section 5: AS IS/TO BE Change Plan

Introduction

Research has shown that building relationships, enhancing learning, and creating a safer and more caring school environment will improve the culture and climate. There have been years of research promoting the impacts on students of implementing Restorative Practices within classrooms or schools. Through my experience as a district-level administrator and years of being a building-level principal, schools and district cultures and climates can be chaotic. Stakeholders' need for understanding or professional development around the importance of Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) or Restorative Practices impacts a school or district's students, culture, and climate. Elm District works with Restorative Practices to make the necessary changes to positively impact students and their stakeholders. The 4 C's will be applied specifically to Elm District.

From analyzing data from the parents and teachers on the 5Essentials survey, conducting the Student Practices Survey and the Administrator/Teacher Practices Survey, and conducting teacher and student interviews, it became evident that improvements must be made in order for the culture and climate to improve within each building and the district as a whole. Before cultural progress can be made, a clear and concise vision must first be outlined. To support creating a plan for Elm District, I will refer to Wagner's 4 C's Diagnostic Tool (2006) and lay a framework using the four components: context, competencies, conditions, and culture (Wagner, et al., 2006, p.109).

Context

Context, as defined by Wagner et al. (2006), are "skill demands" all students must meet to succeed as providers, learners, and citizens, and the particular aspirations, needs, and concerns of the families and community the school district serves (p.104). Looking at Restorative Practices through the lens of the work done in Elm District, major adjustments still need to be implemented. The Student

Services Department, in collaboration with the Curriculum Department, is responsible for implementing and overseeing SEL across the district in all of its schools. The Student Services Department has a vision: *We believe every student, every day, whatever it takes, as we support our students to adapt, empower, care, and inspire in everything they do.* Social-emotional skills and the use of Restorative Practices are imperative to the success of every student and the school.

Each school within the district is expected to implement SEL standards and programs such as Second Step for grades PreK-8 and Ruler for grades 9-12. The Second Step is designed with specific learning standards, follows specific scope and sequence, and is implemented weekly over 28 weeks. The Ruler program is designed with the Ruler Approach, offered by the Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence, which provides an organizational approach to SEL: staff development resources, RULER tools, and high school curricular content. In addition, Elm District has sprinkles of Restorative Practices being used in addition to the SEL programs identified. To ensure each school implements the identified SEL programs, Elm has placed the responsibility of the implementation on the classroom teachers. At the onset of implementation, the district provided professional development by a district administrator. The professional development of both Second Step and Ruler covers a detailed program overview and the implementation expectations. Once professional development is implemented, teachers are expected to provide instruction to their students. Through the work of the district's SEL committee, a scope and sequence are being developed on expectations that need to be taught to cover all of the SEL standards. Implementing these two programs and Restorative Practices will be a must in the future. The Director of Student Services works with the building principals to provide feedback on various aspects of the program and Restorative Practices that need to be implemented.

Culture

“Culture is the shared values, beliefs, assumptions, expectations, and behaviors related to students and learning, teachers, teaching, instructional leadership, and the quality of relationships within and beyond the school” (Wagner et al., 2006, p. 102). School culture is deeply affected by the beliefs of every adult and student within the district and each school building.

In my experience, I have observed that some beliefs are left unspoken while others are loud and so vociferous that they cannot be ignored. For some, implementing Restorative Practices and SEL standards is another initiative schools are expected to do with no consistent follow-up or follow-through of fidelity. With no real, clear direction or alignment and a disconnect between what the district communicates and expects to happen and what is rolled out in the classrooms or buildings, results will be poor. In Elm District, punitive discipline is the daily practice for the majority of the district and there is a lack of a strategic plan to communicate the district's priorities around implementing Restorative Practices. Every Pre-K-8 teacher was given the Second Step program and training for Restorative Practices four years prior to the survey and has been left with complete autonomy on when to implement, how, what, and to what extent. This failure of clarity and follow-up leaves the schools feeling unsupported and uncertain about how well they meet the students' SEL needs. Building-level principals and other school leaders are expected to support teachers' developmental levels and understanding of skills and standards. No outside training has to date been provided to staff beyond the initial professional development. If schools or staff members want additional training, they are responsible for seeking and paying for it.

In the district schools, specific data sets (such as behavior data) often tell the story of the type of culture and climate in operation. Reviewing the discipline and suspension data, attendance data, and academic data paints a picture of what is happening in each school and overall district. In some schools, teachers focus on teaching academics without addressing the social-emotional skills impacting learning

or relationships. Teachers struggle with trying to teach social-emotional skills when the pressure is on for more academic growth. It is concerning that teachers express that they don't feel capable or prepared to teach social-emotional skills because they aren't prepared or don't have training during their education or ongoing professional development. As Wagner points out in *Change Leadership* (2005), school and district cultures that are more collaborative and value the process of inquiry and adult learning need to be created.

Conditions

Effectively implementing Restorative Practices in schools is often impacted by various barriers and hindrances, such as school schedules, academic instructional demands, and requirements. “Conditions are the external architecture surrounding student learning, the tangible arrangements of time, space, and resources” (Wagner et al., 2006, p. 101). Teachers' daily schedules can be overruled by mandated instructional minutes, grading papers, professional development meetings, managing student behaviors, and other daily teacher obligations. The average day for an Elm District teacher is 7.5 hours. Each building is identified with a 30-minute block for SEL once a week; however, according to research and standards, social-emotional and Restorative Practices must be part of their daily schedule. Teachers are expected to provide instruction such as Reading, Math, Science, Social Studies, Writing, or other specialized content. In addition to these core subjects, teachers are expected to teach the SEL standards and implement the Ruler or Second Step program.

At the onset of any implementation in the district, every stakeholder within the district is provided with a day or more of professional development of the specific program that is selected to implement. Through our early release Mondays, more ongoing professional development is also available. The general professional development is mostly an overview of the specific program, the scope, and the sequence of expected structure based on outcomes, along with helping each stakeholder

understand the program and its standards. After this, stakeholders are expected to implement it with fidelity fully. Scheduling is a barrier when teachers are still learning the ins and outs of the selected program. In other districts where I have worked, the implementation of Second Step, another SEL program, or Restorative Practices must be implemented weekly for a minimum of 30 minutes, according to the scope and sequence provided. However, research shows that Social-Emotional learning and teaching of the standards need to be embedded in everything we do. It is a juggle to teach the mandatory-scheduled content areas and provide the needed focus on the SEL/Restorative Practices and standards. This poses a significant challenge for teachers and staff and directly impacts the program's effectiveness.

Competencies

The skill level of teachers in every school and within this district varies greatly. Some teachers have the skill set to address a student's social needs and build lasting relationships; others do not. Teachers often have expressed unpreparedness in teaching SEL skills or having restorative conversations. Currently, the district doesn't or hasn't focused on developing SEL competencies or Restorative Practices with adults nor provides ongoing support for the teachers. Currently, teachers have the frightening task of managing all of the district's mandates and job requirements, which is stressful and taxing on so many staff. The lack of Tier 1 classroom management skills and positive relationships often hinders teachers' ability to provide meaningful instruction to their students effectively. Research shows a strong need to develop the capacity of every adult in the district who interacts with students. Relationships must be built with all students to meet academic rigor, and discipline data go down. According to Wagner et al. (2006), competencies are most effectively built when professional development is focused, job-embedded, continuous, constructed, and collaborative.

Envisioning the Success TO-BE

Context

Elm District is a Unit School District servicing students in grades Pre K-12. Our two elementary, one middle, and one high schools serve a total of 2,788 students. Our student population consists of 38% low-income, 14% IEP, 1 % homeless, and 23% ELL students. There are without question areas in which the district could improve regarding future commitments related to Wagner's work. Our staff can focus more on supporting our students to prepare them for the real world and continuous learning related to relationship building and leading within the community. We can better utilize and implement practices to support the culture and climate of the district and individual schools. We will need to create and implement a Strategic Plan tied to the Board of Education Goals. When writing those goals, we will need to consider the community's cultural norms, values, and traditions. We will need to adapt the language, processes, and approaches to align with the cultural context, ensuring they are inclusive and respectful of diverse perspectives. Staff will have posters with the restorative questions posted to guide expectations and norms of these practices. When considering our environment, we need to consider the existing school or district environments, including unique challenges, strengths, and dynamics. When assessing the readiness for Restorative Practices, we will first identify any barriers and facilitators to implementation. Understanding the specific context will inform the strategies and approaches for successful integration. When thinking about the student population we will recognize the students' diverse needs, backgrounds, and experiences. The district needs to tailor Restorative Practices to meet the specific needs of the student population, ensuring accessibility and inclusivity. In the planning stages, we will need to assess the readiness of the staff to implement Restorative Practices and provide comprehensive training and professional development opportunities to build staff members' capacity in

restorative approaches. When working with staff, the district will need to consider their prior knowledge, skills, and experiences, and provide ongoing support to ensure successful implementation. When we look at professional development, it will be imperative to align Restorative Practices with existing policies and regulations within the schools and district. Through a deep dive, the district will also need to review and revise disciplinary policies to emphasize restoration and repair rather than punitive measures at each school. It is essential to ensure Restorative Practices are integrated into the overall policy framework to promote consistency and sustainability in all four schools. Through the implementation process, the district will take stock of the available resources, including personnel, time, and funding, that can support the implementation of Restorative Practices. The district will need to allocate resources effectively to provide adequate training, materials, and support for staff and students. As we plan this implementation, we need to involve parents, families, and community members in implementing Restorative Practices. It will be essential to seek their input, feedback, and collaboration to ensure that the practices align with community expectations and needs. Fostering strong partnerships to support the sustainability and success of restorative initiatives is going to be key. As a part of our plan, it will be critical to establish an evaluation framework to monitor the effectiveness and impact of Restorative Practices within the specific context. Through this work, we will collect and analyze data to assess progress, identify areas for improvement, and make data-driven decisions. Our PLC teams will regularly review and refine the implementation strategies based on the context-specific findings.

Adapting Restorative Practices to the specific context is essential for their successful implementation and sustainability. By considering the cultural, environmental, and systemic factors within the school or district, Restorative Practices can be more effectively integrated and positively impact the community.

Culture

In today's rapidly changing and diverse workplace environments, establishing and maintaining a positive organizational culture is crucial for the success and well-being of both employees and the district as a whole. One effective approach to shaping a desirable culture is through setting clear expectations and implementing Restorative Practices. By combining these two elements, organizations can foster a supportive and inclusive work environment where individuals feel valued, respected, and empowered. Processes like circles, conflict-resolution programs, and peer-led practices to respond to incidents that cause harm. Continuous learning and professional development will be the norm within our district and schools. Restorative Practices focus on resolving conflict, repairing harm, and healing relationships. They support a positive and safe school climate, prevent bullying, and reduce disciplinary incidents. To foster a culture with Restorative Practices, it is vital to cultivate an environment that embodies the principles and values of restorative justice. We will need to establish a shared understanding and commitment to respect, empathy, accountability, and community building across the entire district. We will need to look at shared values and beliefs around these practices. These values should be embraced and consistently promoted throughout the school or district. Fostering a sense of belonging and inclusivity by creating a community where everyone feels valued, heard, and respected will be extremely important. As a school system, Elm District will need to encourage active participation from all stakeholders, including students, staff, parents, and community members for the benefits to be realized and witnessed. Promoting restorative language and communication strategies that encourage open dialogue, active listening, and understanding will need to be a part of this work. Encouraging all stakeholders to use "I" statements, non-violent communication, and restorative questions to promote reflection and personal responsibility will also be productive and beneficial. School leaders, staff members, and administrators must consistently practice and model Restorative Practices and behaviors. Through this modeling, demonstrating active listening, empathy, and

accountability in interactions with others will also need to be observed. Leading by example sets a positive tone for the entire school community. Incorporating restorative processes into daily practices, such as circles or conferences, will need to be the norm, as this will help build strong relationships among all stakeholders. These processes provide opportunities for dialogue, conflict resolution, and relationship-building. Regularly scheduling restorative circles in classrooms, staff meetings, and other settings to address conflicts, build community, and enhance relationships will help foster a positive culture and climate within each school. Prioritizing relationship-building as an essential aspect of the school culture will need to be who we are as a district. Encourage meaningful connections among students, staff, and families. Providing opportunities for relationship-building activities, team-building exercises, and community-building initiatives will need to be a part of our climate and classroom communities. When district administration thinks of the whole school approach, each school must implement Restorative Practices throughout the community, ensuring consistency across all levels. Engaging all stakeholders in the implementation and decision-making processes, including administrators, teachers, support staff, and students, will need to take place for the implementation to be successful. Building comprehensive training and professional development opportunities for staff and administrators will be imperative when thinking about professional development. The district must equip them with the knowledge and skills to implement Restorative Practices effectively. Offering ongoing support and coaching to sustain their growth and development will need to be a part of the plan.

When addressing harm and conflict, fostering a culture that views harm and conflict as opportunities for growth, repair, and learning is vital. Elm District needs to adopt this culture as a new norm. Through modeling, norms must also establish restorative responses to conflicts, focusing on repairing harm, restoring relationships, and promoting accountability rather than punishment and punitive consequences. Staff must regularly evaluate the implementation and impact of Restorative

Practices within the school and district. The administration at each school must seek stakeholder feedback, analyze data, and adjust based on the findings. The district must continuously strive for improvement and refinement in applying Restorative Practices. Climate and culture with Restorative Practices require a systemic and committed approach. It involves intentionally shifting mindsets, establishing supportive structures, and cultivating positive relationships within the school community.

Conditions

In recent years, Restorative Practices have gained significant attention as an alternative approach to addressing harm, conflicts, and misconduct in various settings, including schools, workplaces, and criminal justice systems. Restorative Practices emphasize repairing harm, fostering accountability, and building relationships within a community. By shifting the focus from punishment to healing and dialogue, these practices aim to create a sense of belonging, promote empathy, and empower individuals to take responsibility for their actions. However, the successful implementation of Restorative Practices relies on several crucial conditions. Merely adopting the principles and techniques without considering the underlying factors can hinder their effectiveness and limit their transformative potential. Exploring and understanding the conditions that support their successful application is essential to harness the benefits of Restorative Practices.

Looking at the dedicated time built into the school day for staff to practice restorative techniques with one another and their students. During building level, Professional Learning Community teams look at practices within the building to assess the district's approach to school climate, discipline, and Restorative Practices. Creating an inclusive and safe environment where individuals feel comfortable participating in restorative processes without coercion or pressure is essential. Restorative Practices thrive in an environment where trust and safety are prioritized. Establishing trust among participants and creating a safe space where open and honest communication can occur without fear of judgment or

retaliation is crucial. This takes time and needs to be modeled by all stakeholders. Restorative Practices should be implemented with a commitment to equity and inclusion for all. This involves ensuring that all individuals have equal access to and benefit from restorative processes regardless of their background, identity, or behavioral concerns. Efforts should be made to address power imbalances and foster a sense of belonging and respect among all participants. Staff needs to establish clear guidelines and processes for engaging in Restorative Practices. This includes defining roles and responsibilities, providing participants with a clear understanding of the purpose and expectations of restorative processes, and outlining the steps involved in resolution and healing.

Participants should receive adequate training and skill development to facilitate meaningful engagement in Restorative Practices. This includes educating on restorative principles, communication techniques, active listening, empathy, and conflict resolution strategies. Ongoing professional development opportunities should be available to enhance these skills. Restorative Practices emphasize collaboration and shared decision-making. As a district, we must stress the importance of a collaborative approach. Creating a collaborative environment where all stakeholders actively participate in the process, contribute their perspectives, and work together to address harm, conflicts, or challenging situations is essential. Restorative Practices should be supported by appropriate structures and policies within the school or district. This includes having policies aligning with restorative principles, such as discipline policies prioritizing restoration over punishment. Supportive structures may include designated restorative spaces, trained facilitators, and consistent implementation across classrooms and schools. Restorative Practices require ongoing and continuous improvement where teams regularly assess the impact and effectiveness of restorative approaches, gather participant feedback, and make adjustments based on the findings. This iterative process ensures that Restorative Practices evolve and remain responsive to the school community's needs. By establishing these

conditions, schools and districts can create an environment where Restorative Practices can flourish and positively impact the educational community's culture, climate, and relationships.

Competencies

Building Competencies for Restorative Practices is essential in fostering growth within Elm District. Restorative Practices have gained recognition as a powerful approach to promoting healing, accountability, and positive relationships within communities. As school districts and educational institutions increasingly adopt Restorative Practices, it becomes crucial to understand and develop the competencies necessary to implement and sustain these practices effectively. Competencies refer to the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviors that individuals must demonstrate to engage in restorative processes successfully. This paper focuses on building competencies related to Restorative Practices within Elm District. It explores the key areas where educators, administrators, and staff can develop their abilities to create a supportive and transformative environment. By nurturing these competencies, Elm District can empower its stakeholders to navigate conflicts, restore relationships, and foster a culture of empathy, inclusion, and growth. Ongoing and purposeful professional development in Restorative Practices will be critical in this transformation. Looking at the big picture, relationship building must be monitored, consistent, and done with fidelity. Having instructional leaders in each building to help build the capacity of all staff will be productive in this initiative. Proactive schoolwide strategies need to be utilized to create community and build healthy relationships, developing conflict resolution skills, a sense of belonging, and agency. To effectively engage in Restorative Practices, individuals involved should possess specific competencies. These competencies enable them to engage in meaningful dialogue, facilitate healing, and promote accountability. Listening attentively and empathetically to others and seeking to understand others' perspectives and experiences without judgment are also important skills. Active listening allows for deeper connections and understanding

during restorative processes. The skill to communicate respectfully and assertively is a skill that needs to be practiced and modeled for all stakeholders. Restorative practitioners should be able to express themselves effectively and encourage open and honest communication among participants without punitive responses from any stakeholder. The capacity to understand and share the feelings, experiences, and perspectives of others is a learned skill. Empathy helps foster compassion, build trust, and promote healing within restorative interactions. Facilitating constructive dialogue and guiding participants toward mutually agreeable resolutions will also be important for these practices to be successful. Restorative practitioners should be skilled in identifying underlying needs, managing emotions, and helping parties find common ground. A deep understanding and appreciation of cultural differences and the ability to work effectively with individuals from diverse backgrounds will be critical in identifying cultural competencies. Restorative practitioners should be sensitive to cultural nuances and ensure that processes are inclusive and respectful of diverse identities and experiences. Knowledge and understanding of trauma and its impacts reflect on this work as well. Restorative practitioners should be aware of trauma triggers, create a safe and supportive environment, and adapt practices to meet the needs of individuals who have experienced trauma. Helping teachers understand the culturally responsive teaching and learning standards would play an important role here. The capacity to facilitate restorative processes, such as circles, conferences, or dialogues, will be a training for all staff is critical. The skills are also needed in managing group dynamics, guiding discussions, and ensuring equal participation. The ability to reframe conflicts as opportunities for growth, learning, and transformation will be a new learning opportunity when implementing these practices. Restorative practitioners should help participants move beyond blame and encourage dialogue in promoting understanding, empathy, and accountability. Regularly reflecting on one's biases, values, and assumptions must be an ongoing strategy and a skill that continually needs to be honed. Restorative practitioners should continuously examine their perspectives and be aware of how they may impact their interactions with other staff and

students. A commitment to upholding ethical principles, such as confidentiality, neutrality, and fairness also plays a role in this process. Restorative practitioners should adhere to professional standards and promote a sense of trust and integrity within restorative processes. These competencies can be developed through training, professional development, and practical experiences when implemented. These competencies enable individuals to engage effectively in Restorative Practices, creating a supportive and healing environment for all participants within Elm District and our schools. By implementing Restorative Practices, our schools can transform their culture and climate, promoting positive relationships, student engagement, social-emotional skills, conflict resolution, and a sense of belonging. These benefits contribute to a nurturing and inclusive educational environment that supports the holistic development and success of all members of our school community.

Conclusion

In conclusion, for Restorative Practices to be successful in Elm District, several key elements and considerations are necessary. Restorative Practices focus on building and maintaining relationships, repairing harm, and promoting a sense of belonging within the school community. Successful implementation of Restorative Practices requires committed and supportive leadership at all levels, including district administrators, school principals, and other key decision-makers. Leaders must understand the philosophy behind Restorative Practices, provide adequate resources, and actively promote and model restorative approaches. District-wide training programs ensure that all stakeholders, including teachers, administrators, staff, students, and parents receive proper education and training on Restorative Practices. This training should cover the principles and values of restorative justice, effective communication skills, conflict resolution strategies, and restorative processes. Establishing clear policies and procedures that outline Restorative Practices within Elm District is essential. These

policies should address the implementation process, roles and responsibilities of stakeholders, referral mechanisms, data collection and evaluation, and integration with existing disciplinary frameworks. Restorative Practices should be approached collaboratively, involving all members of the school communities, including students, staff, parents, and community partners. Collaboration fosters shared ownership and collective responsibility for the success of Restorative Practices, leading to a more inclusive and supportive school culture. Adequate resources must be allocated to support the implementation and sustainability of Restorative Practices. This includes funding for professional development, training programs, materials, and dedicated staff or restorative coordinators who can facilitate and oversee school restorative processes. Establishing a system for collecting and analyzing data on the effectiveness of Restorative Practices is crucial. This will allow Elm District to track progress, identify areas for improvement, and make data-informed decisions. Evaluation should include quantitative measures, such as disciplinary referrals and student outcomes, and qualitative feedback from stakeholders, including students and teachers. Ongoing support and professional development opportunities will be necessary to ensure that educators and staff have the necessary skills and knowledge to implement Restorative Practices effectively. This support can include regular coaching, peer learning communities, and opportunities for reflection and growth. Restorative Practices should be implemented in a culturally responsive manner that respects and values the diverse backgrounds and experiences of students and families. Elm District should strive to integrate culturally relevant approaches and adapt Restorative Practices to meet the specific needs of different communities within the district. Engaging the wider community is vital for the success of Restorative Practices. Building partnerships with community organizations, involving parents and caregivers, and fostering meaningful connections between schools and the broader community can enhance the impact of Restorative Practices and promote a sense of collective responsibility for the well-being of students. By incorporating these key elements, Elm District can create an environment where Restorative Practices

thrive, promoting positive relationships, accountability, and a sense of belonging within the school community, affecting the culture and climate of Elm District and the schools within the district.

Figure 30: As Is/To Be Visual

As Is/To Be Framework

4 C's	As Is	To Be	Change Plan
Competencies:	<p>Professional Development on Restorative 5 + years ago.</p> <p>Service level districtwide and building practices.</p> <p>SEL is not being monitored, inconsistent, or done with fidelity.</p> <p>Need for building leadership in some buildings.</p> <p>The system overall is punitive, and practices are traditional.</p> <p>Lack of systems in place for classroom-managed practices.</p> <p>When thinking strategically, as a district, there are board goals. However, I don't see the system thinking strategically across the board with timelines and focused specific SMART goals. I also don't see building the capacity of their people across the board.</p> <p>Communication around restorative or building relationships within the system is missing.</p> <p>When identifying student learning needs, there needs to be more teacher knowledge of how to look at</p>	<p>Purposeful professional development in Restorative Practices.</p> <p>Practices being embedded in the district system.</p> <p>SEL is monitored, consistent, and done with fidelity.</p> <p>Having instructional leaders in each building to help build the capacity of all staff.</p> <p>Proactive schoolwide strategies to create community and build healthy relationships, developing conflict resolution skills, a sense of belonging, and agency.</p> <p>To effectively engage in Restorative Practices, individuals involved should possess specific competencies. These competencies enable them to engage in meaningful dialogue, facilitate healing, and promote accountability.</p> <p>Active Listening: Listening attentively and empathetically to others, seeking to understand their perspectives and experiences without</p>	<p>Creating a change plan for implementing Restorative Practices in my school district so the effect on culture and climate is impacted; some things need to be considered.</p> <p>Comprehensive Implementation: Ensure that Restorative Practices are implemented comprehensively throughout the school district, not limited to specific schools or classrooms. This will create a consistent and unified approach to cultivating a positive culture and climate district-wide.</p> <p>Here's an example of how you could organize the agendas and timelines for a change plan to implement Restorative Practices within a school district:</p> <p>Agenda 1: Pre-Planning Phase (Month 1)</p> <p>Establish Restorative Practices Committee with critical stakeholders and invite them to join the committee.</p>

	<p>learning needs or differentiate them. Regarding gathering and interpreting data, Teams are starting to work with PLCs in the schools. Teachers are looking at AimsWeb Plus data for K-8 and STAR data for 9-12 for academic data. There needs to be data on the effectiveness of relationship building or the implementation of SEL programs or standards.</p> <p>The district is just starting to focus on PLC work and hold principals accountable as instructional data leaders with the PLC work. This is a shift in how teams collaborate. They are asking the building principals to be a part of this work. Staff is embarking on collaborating around student data. Based on outside consultants coming in to assess our Tier 1, building principals don't appear to receive critiques well and don't know how to deliver messages to their staff for growth opportunities.</p> <p>Everyone I have talked to wants Restorative Practices to be fully implemented within the district. They don't know how to implement, or they don't have the people resources to "not be punitive." I see some sweeping under the rug or avoiding. A lot of punitive decisions are made. Currently, I haven't seen</p>	<p>judgment. Active listening allows for deeper connections and understanding during restorative processes.</p> <p>Effective Communication: The skill to communicate respectfully and assertively. Restorative practitioners should be able to express themselves effectively and encourage open and honest communication among participants.</p> <p>Empathy: The capacity to understand and share the feelings, experiences, and perspectives of others. Empathy helps foster compassion, build trust, and promote healing within restorative interactions.</p> <p>Conflict Resolution: Facilitating constructive dialogue and guiding participants towards mutually agreeable resolutions. Restorative practitioners should be skilled in identifying underlying needs, managing emotions, and helping parties find common ground.</p> <p>Cultural Competence: A deep understanding and appreciation of cultural differences and the ability to work effectively with individuals from diverse backgrounds. Restorative practitioners should be sensitive to cultural nuances and ensure that</p>	<p>Schedule an initial meeting to introduce the objectives and roles of the committee.</p> <p>Conduct Needs Assessment</p> <p>Determine the data collection methods (surveys, focus groups, etc.) and distribute them to relevant stakeholders.</p> <p>Set a deadline for data collection and analysis.</p> <p>Schedule a meeting to review the assessment results and identify priority areas for Restorative Practices.</p> <p>Research and Training</p> <p>Compile resources and materials on Restorative Practices.</p> <p>Schedule professional development sessions or workshops for the committee members to enhance their understanding of restorative approaches.</p> <p>Agenda 2: Planning Phase (Months 2-3)</p> <p>Set Objectives and Goals</p> <p>Schedule a meeting with the committee to define specific objectives and goals for implementing Restorative Practices.</p> <p>Document the objectives and goals for reference</p>
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	<p>reflection or teams making mid-course corrections.</p>	<p>processes are inclusive and respectful of diverse identities and experiences.</p> <p>Trauma-Informed Practice: Knowledge and understanding of trauma and its impacts. Restorative practitioners should be aware of trauma triggers, create a safe and supportive environment, and adapt practices to meet the needs of individuals who have experienced trauma.</p> <p>Facilitation Skills: The capacity to facilitate restorative processes, such as circles, conferences, or dialogues. This includes skills in managing group dynamics, guiding discussions, and ensuring equal participation.</p> <p>Conflict Transformation: The ability to reframe conflicts as opportunities for growth, learning, and transformation. Restorative practitioners should help participants move beyond blame and encourage dialogue to promote understanding, empathy, and accountability.</p> <p>Self-Reflection and Self-Awareness: Regularly reflecting on one's biases, values, and assumptions. Restorative practitioners should continuously examine their perspectives and be aware of how they</p>	<p>throughout the implementation process.</p> <p>Develop an Implementation Plan</p> <p>Assign tasks and responsibilities to committee members.</p> <p>Create a timeline with key milestones and deadlines.</p> <p>Determine the necessary resources (budget, personnel, etc.) and identify potential funding sources.</p> <p>Agenda 3: Pilot Phase (Months 4-6)</p> <p>Select Pilot Schools</p> <p>Develop criteria for selecting pilot schools (e.g., size, readiness, diversity).</p> <p>Review potential schools and finalize the selection process.</p> <p>Training and Capacity Building</p> <p>Organize intensive training sessions for selected pilot schools' staff members.</p> <p>Schedule coaching and mentoring sessions to provide ongoing support.</p> <p>Implement Restorative Practices</p> <p>Collaborate with pilot schools to develop implementation plans</p>
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		<p>may impact their interactions with others.</p> <p>Ethical Practice: A commitment to upholding ethical principles, such as confidentiality, neutrality, and fairness. Restorative practitioners should adhere to professional standards and promote a sense of trust and integrity within restorative processes.</p> <p>These competencies can be developed through training, professional development, and practical experience. They enable individuals to engage effectively in Restorative Practices, creating a supportive and healing environment for all participants.</p>	<p>tailored to their specific needs and context.</p> <p>Schedule regular check-ins and observations to monitor progress and offer guidance.</p> <p>Monitor and Evaluate</p> <p>Establish a data collection and analysis system, including disciplinary incidents, student surveys, and observation notes.</p> <p>Schedule regular meetings to review data and discuss lessons learned.</p> <p>Agenda 4: Scaling Phase (Months 7-12)</p> <p>Expansion to Additional Schools</p> <p>Develop criteria for selecting different schools for implementation.</p> <p>Create a timeline for scaling up Restorative Practices.</p> <p>Training and Support</p> <p>Schedule training sessions for staff members in newly added schools.</p> <p>Establish mentoring partnerships between experienced restorative practitioners and staff members in the new schools.</p>
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			<p>Data Analysis and Reflection</p> <p>Continuously collect and analyze data on school climate, disciplinary incidents, and student outcomes.</p> <p>Schedule meetings to review data and make data-driven decisions for improvement.</p> <p>Agenda 5: Sustaining and Scaling Up (Months 13+)</p> <p>Policy Integration</p> <p>Schedule meetings with district leaders and policymakers to discuss integrating Restorative Practices into district-wide policies.</p> <p>Capacity Building</p> <p>Identify potential candidates for becoming trained restorative practice facilitators within the district.</p> <p>Schedule training sessions and provide ongoing support for capacity building.</p> <p>Community Engagement</p> <p>Schedule workshops or forums to engage parents, community members, and stakeholders in Restorative Practices.</p> <p>Explore partnerships with local organizations to</p>
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			<p>support restorative initiatives.</p> <p>Continuous Improvement</p> <p>Schedule regular meetings with the Restorative Practices Committee to review progress and challenges and adjust implementation strategies.</p> <p>It's important to note that the timelines provided are illustrative and can be adjusted based on your school district's specific context and needs. Additionally, it may be beneficial to create a project management tool, such as a Gantt chart or project management software, to track progress, deadlines, and responsibilities throughout the implementation process.</p> <p>Professional Development: Provide ongoing and extensive professional development opportunities for teachers, administrators, and staff members. This training should cover the principles and techniques of Restorative Practices and effective communication, conflict resolution, and community-building skills. By equipping educators with the necessary tools, they can effectively implement Restorative Practices in their</p>
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			<p>interactions with students and colleagues.</p> <p>Student Empowerment: Actively involve students in shaping Restorative Practices within their schools and the district. Encourage student-led restorative circles, conflict-resolution dialogues, and problem-solving sessions. Giving students a voice and empowering them to take ownership of the process fosters a sense of responsibility, accountability, and agency in creating a positive culture.</p> <p>Parent and Community Engagement: Engage parents, guardians, and community members in Restorative Practices. Offer workshops, informational sessions, and forums where parents can learn about restorative approaches and how to support them at home. Encourage community partnerships to expand the Restorative Practices beyond the school walls and create a holistic, supportive environment.</p> <p>Sustainability and Scaling: Develop a plan for long-term sustainability and scaling of Restorative Practices. This involves building capacity within the district by training additional staff members as restorative practice</p>
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			<p>facilitators and ensuring the integration of restorative approaches into school policies, curricula, and practices. It becomes an enduring and transformative force by embedding Restorative Practices deeper into the district's culture.</p> <p>Restorative Systems and Policies: Implement restorative systems and policies at both the individual school and district levels. This includes incorporating Restorative Practices into discipline policies, establishing clear guidelines for implementing restorative circles and creating processes for addressing conflicts and harm in a restorative manner.</p> <p>Ensuring Restorative Practices are integrated into the district's operations and decision-making processes is essential.</p> <p>Creating Restorative Practices within a school district requires careful planning, coordination, and a phased approach. While the specific timeline and logistics will vary based on the size and context of your school district, here is a general outline to help guide you:</p> <p>Pre-Planning Phase:</p>
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			<p>Establish a Restorative Practices Committee: Form a committee consisting of key stakeholders, such as administrators, teachers, counselors, parents, and community members, to lead the implementation effort.</p> <p>Conduct Needs Assessment: Assess the current climate and culture within the district through surveys, focus groups, and data analysis to identify areas for improvement and determine the specific needs and goals for Restorative Practices.</p> <p>Research and Training: Educate the committee and key personnel about Restorative Practices through workshops, conferences, and professional development opportunities. Build a shared understanding of restorative principles and approaches.</p> <p>Planning Phase:</p> <p>Set Objectives and Goals: Define clear objectives and goals for implementing Restorative Practices. These could include reducing disciplinary incidents, improving relationships, enhancing student engagement, and fostering a positive school climate.</p>
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			<p>Develop an Implementation Plan: Create a detailed plan that outlines the strategies, actions, and timelines for introducing Restorative Practices. Determine the resources, training requirements, and potential challenges that must be addressed.</p> <p>Allocate Resources: Identify the budget, personnel, and infrastructure required to support the implementation plan. Seek funding opportunities, grants, or partnerships to secure the needed resources.</p> <p>Pilot Phase:</p> <p>Select Pilot Schools: Choose a small number of schools within the district to serve as pilot sites for implementing Restorative Practices. Consider factors such as readiness, leadership support, and willingness to embrace the change.</p> <p>Training and Capacity Building: Provide intensive training to the selected pilot schools' staff members, including administrators, teachers, counselors, and support staff, to build their knowledge and skills in Restorative Practices.</p> <p>Implement Restorative Practices: Support the pilot schools in implementing restorative circles,</p>
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			<p>conferences, and other restorative techniques. Provide ongoing coaching, support, and feedback to ensure fidelity to the restorative model.</p> <p>Monitor and Evaluate: Collect data and feedback to assess the impact of Restorative Practices on the pilot schools. This information will inform any necessary adjustments or refinements to the implementation plan.</p> <p>Expansion to Additional Schools: Based on the pilot phase's success and lessons learned, gradually expand the implementation of Restorative Practices to other schools within the district. Prioritize schools based on readiness, commitment, and capacity for implementation.</p> <p>Training and Support: Offer training sessions and ongoing professional development to the newly added schools. Provide mentoring and support from experienced restorative practitioners to ensure effective implementation.</p> <p>Data Analysis and Reflection: Continuously collect and analyze data on disciplinary incidents, student well-being, school climate, and academic outcomes. Regularly assess the impact of Restorative</p>
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			<p>Practices and make data-driven decisions to refine and improve implementation strategies.</p> <p>Policy Integration: Embed Restorative Practices into district-wide policies, including discipline policies, code of conduct, and student support frameworks.</p> <p>Capacity Building: Develop a cadre of trained restorative practice facilitators within the district who can provide ongoing support, training, and coaching to schools.</p> <p>Community Engagement: Engage parents, community members, and other stakeholders in Restorative Practices through workshops, forums, and partnerships.</p> <p>Continuous Improvement: Foster a culture of continuous improvement by regularly reviewing and refining the implementation strategies based on feedback, data analysis, and research on best practices.</p> <p>It's important to note that the timeline for implementing Restorative Practices within a school district can vary significantly based on the district's size, resources, and readiness. It may take</p>
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			<p>several years to embed Restorative Practices fully.</p> <p>Data Collection and Evaluation: Collect and analyze data to assess the impact of Restorative Practices on the culture and climate of the school district. Regularly evaluate the effectiveness of the implemented strategies, identify areas for improvement, and make adjustments accordingly. This data-driven approach will help refine the plan and ensure continuous growth and positive outcomes.</p> <p>Evaluating Restorative Practices within a district is crucial for understanding their effectiveness, identifying areas for improvement, and making data-driven decisions. Here are some key steps and considerations for evaluating Restorative Practices:</p> <p>Determine Evaluation Goals: Clearly define the evaluation goals based on the objectives set during the planning phase. These goals include reducing disciplinary incidents, improving school climate, enhancing student well-being, and promoting positive relationships.</p> <p>Select Evaluation Measures: Identify the specific measures and data</p>
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			<p>sources to assess the impact of Restorative Practices. This may include quantitative data (e.g., disciplinary incidents, attendance rates) and qualitative data (e.g., student and staff surveys, focus groups). Consider using pre- and post-implementation data to compare the outcomes.</p> <p>Collect Data: Implement the data collection methods identified in the previous step. This could involve administering surveys, conducting interviews or focus groups, reviewing disciplinary records, and analyzing relevant school climate data.</p> <p>Analyze Data: Analyze the collected data to assess the impact of Restorative Practices. Use statistical and qualitative methods to identify trends, patterns, and correlations. Compare pre- and post-implementation data to determine changes over time.</p> <p>Review Implementation Fidelity: Evaluate the fidelity of restorative practice implementation. Assess whether the practices were consistently applied and adhered to across schools and classrooms. Consider using fidelity checklists, direct observations, and interviews with staff to</p>
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			<p>gauge implementation fidelity.</p> <p>Engage Stakeholders: Involve various stakeholders, including students, staff, parents, and community members, in the evaluation process. Seek their perspectives, feedback, and experiences related to Restorative Practices. This can be done through surveys, focus groups, or individual interviews.</p> <p>Identify Strengths and Areas for Improvement: Analyze the evaluation findings to identify the strengths and areas for improvement in implementing Restorative Practices. Look for patterns and trends in the data that indicate successful outcomes and areas that need further attention.</p> <p>Report and Communicate Results: Compile the evaluation findings into a comprehensive report. Present the results to the Restorative Practices Committee, district leadership, school staff, and other relevant stakeholders. Communicate the findings, including successes and improvement areas, to ensure transparency and facilitate ongoing dialogue.</p> <p>Adjust Implementation Strategies: Use the evaluation results to inform</p>
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			<p>adjustments and refinements to the implementation strategies. Identify specific actions and interventions to address the areas for improvement and build upon the strengths identified.</p> <p>Continuous Evaluation: Implement a system of ongoing evaluation to monitor the long-term impact of Restorative Practices. Regularly collect and analyze data to assess progress, make informed decisions, and continuously improve the implementation of Restorative Practices within the district.</p> <p>Remember that the evaluation process should be ongoing and iterative. It is essential to regularly revisit and refine evaluation measures, collect new data, and assess the effectiveness of implemented changes to ensure continuous improvement in the district's Restorative Practices.</p> <p>Training and Professional Development: Ensure that school staff, including teachers, administrators, and support personnel, receive adequate training in Restorative Practices. They should understand the principles, techniques, and skills necessary to implement</p>
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			<p>these approaches effectively.</p> <p>Gain support from school leadership, including principals and superintendents. Without leadership buy-in, it can be challenging to implement Restorative Practices throughout the school district.</p> <p>Establish clear and consistent policies and procedures for implementing Restorative Practices. These should include guidelines for addressing various situations, roles and responsibilities, and the process for referring cases to restorative interventions.</p> <p>Ensure that all members of the school community—students, parents, teachers, and staff—are actively engaged in the implementation of Restorative Practices. Encourage participation from all stakeholders to create a more inclusive and collaborative school culture.</p> <p>Allocate necessary resources, such as time, space, and materials, to support the implementation of Restorative Practices. Ensure that there is adequate infrastructure, such as designated spaces</p>
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			<p>for restorative meetings or circles.</p> <p>Develop a system for collecting and analyzing data related to the impact of Restorative Practices. Regular evaluation helps assess the effectiveness of these approaches in improving school culture, reducing disciplinary issues, and enhancing relationships.</p> <p>Maintain consistency in applying Restorative Practices throughout the school district. Ensure that all staff members use the same procedures and techniques to promote a unified approach.</p> <p>Forge partnerships with community organizations and agencies that can provide support and resources for Restorative Practices. These partnerships can enhance the effectiveness of interventions and expand the reach of restorative efforts.</p> <p>Ensure that Restorative Practices are integrated into the broader school culture and not treated as a separate program. Sustainability is key to long-term success, so these approaches should become part of the everyday school environment.</p>
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			<p>Consider the cultural and contextual factors that may influence the implementation of Restorative Practices. Be sensitive to the needs and perspectives of diverse student populations and adapt practices accordingly.</p> <p>Provide students with training in conflict resolution skills and strategies. This empowers them to actively participate in the restorative process and promotes personal growth.</p> <p>Engage parents and guardians in the restorative process, especially when incidents involve their children. Encourage their active participation and support in resolving conflicts and rebuilding relationships.</p>
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<p>Condition</p>	<p>SEL time block built into building schedules. 30-minute blocks</p> <p>Curriculum resources are provided to staff and administrators based on Restorative Practices, discipline practices, SEL resources, trauma-informed resources, etc.</p> <p>Expectations and procedures in place and communicated related to SEL and practices.</p> <p>Time for problem-solving, learning, for talking about challenges is a genuine concern. We have an early release Monday, every Monday, for 1 hour. However, every Monday is spoken for, and they take time to navigate. Need help to navigate with travel time and based on the buildings. For the PLC time, frequently, not everyone can be at the same time as we have some traveling staff at more than one building.</p> <p>We don't have user-friendly data to help drive instruction. We also don't have resources to help move students in the right direction. No SEL data exists.</p> <p>Regarding agreed-upon performance standards, there is a clear focus on board goals, and MTSS structures are communicated and documented. Data is still low, and procedures still</p>	<p>Dedicated time is built into the school day for staff to practice restorative techniques.</p> <p>Create teams that look at practices within the building to assess the district's approach to school climate, discipline, and Restorative Practices.</p> <p>Voluntary Participation: Restorative Practices should be voluntary for all participants, including students, staff, and community members. Creating an inclusive, and safe environment where individuals feel comfortable participating in restorative processes without coercion or pressure is important.</p> <p>Trust and Safety: Restorative Practices thrive in an environment where trust and safety are prioritized. Establishing trust among participants and creating a safe space where open and honest communication can occur without fear of judgment or retaliation is crucial.</p> <p>Equity and Inclusion: Restorative Practices should be implemented with a commitment to equity and inclusion. This involves ensuring that all individuals have equal access to and benefit from restorative processes</p>	<p>Ensure that school staff, including teachers, administrators, and support personnel, receive adequate training in Restorative Practices. They should understand the principles, techniques, and skills necessary to implement these approaches effectively.</p> <p>Gain support from school leadership, including principals and superintendents. Without leadership buy-in, it can be challenging to implement Restorative Practices throughout the school district.</p> <p>Establish clear and consistent policies and procedures for implementing Restorative Practices. These should include guidelines for addressing various situations, roles and responsibilities, and the process for referring cases to restorative interventions.</p> <p>Ensure that all members of the school community—students, parents, teachers, and staff—are actively engaged in the implementation of Restorative Practices. Encourage participation from all stakeholders to create a more inclusive and collaborative school culture.</p>
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	<p>need to be in place/followed. There are agreed-upon standards for K-8, 9-12 and Pre-K, but there are no agreed-upon performance standards. We don't teach the SEL standards or expectations of Restorative districtwide with fidelity.</p> <p>There are clear priorities and focus for each person's work. However, only some people or departments do what was communicated to the public. For example, it was shared that we co-teach at the elementary level. We are doing push-in only. We are not doing co-teaching. We also don't have the staff to support the focus we shared. We also say we are using Ruler and Second Step, along with Restorative Practices, and there are inconsistencies and a lack of implementation in some schools.</p> <p>We have the schedules and procedures for our district- and building-level support. However, they need to be created to make the right growth needed. We need more time in the schedule for special education services, MTSS instruction, for SEL implementation. Everything is punitive with discipline. Buildings are supported, but most students are out of school suspended.</p>	<p>regardless of their background or identity. Efforts should be made to address power imbalances and foster a sense of belonging and respect among all participants.</p> <p>Clear Guidelines and Processes: Establish clear guidelines and processes for engaging in Restorative Practices. This includes defining roles and responsibilities, providing participants with a clear understanding of the purpose and expectations of restorative processes, and outlining the steps involved in resolution and healing.</p> <p>Skill Development and Training: Participants should receive adequate training and skill development to facilitate meaningful engagement in Restorative Practices. This includes educating on restorative principles, communication techniques, active listening, empathy, and conflict resolution strategies. Ongoing professional development opportunities should be available to enhance these skills.</p> <p>Collaborative Approach: Restorative Practices emphasize collaboration and shared decision-making. Creating a collaborative environment where all</p>	<p>Allocate necessary resources, such as time, space, and materials, to support the implementation of Restorative Practices. Ensure that there is adequate infrastructure, such as designated spaces for restorative meetings or circles.</p> <p>Develop a system for collecting and analyzing data related to the impact of Restorative Practices. Regular evaluation helps assess the effectiveness of these approaches in improving school culture, reducing disciplinary issues, and enhancing relationships.</p> <p>Maintain consistency in applying Restorative Practices throughout the school district. Ensure that all staff members use the same procedures and techniques to promote a unified approach.</p> <p>Forge partnerships with community organizations and agencies that can provide support and resources for Restorative Practices. These partnerships can enhance the effectiveness of interventions and expand the reach of restorative efforts.</p> <p>Ensure that Restorative Practices are integrated into the broader school culture and not treated as a</p>
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		<p>stakeholders actively participate in the process, contribute their perspectives, and work together to address harm, conflicts, or challenging situations is essential.</p> <p>Supportive Structures and Policies: Restorative Practices should be supported by appropriate structures and policies within the school or district. This includes having policies aligning with restorative principles, such as discipline policies prioritizing restoration over punishment. Supportive structures may include designated restorative spaces, trained facilitators, and consistent implementation across classrooms and schools.</p> <p>Continuous Evaluation and Improvement: Restorative Practices require ongoing and continuous improvement. Regularly assess the impact and effectiveness of restorative approaches, gather participant feedback, and make adjustments based on the findings. This iterative process ensures that Restorative Practices evolve and remain responsive to the school community's needs.</p> <p>By establishing these conditions, schools and districts can create an environment where</p>	<p>separate program. Sustainability is key to long-term success, so these approaches should become part of the everyday school environment.</p> <p>Consider the cultural and contextual factors that may influence the implementation of Restorative Practices. Be sensitive to the needs and perspectives of diverse student populations and adapt practices accordingly.</p> <p>Provide students with training in conflict resolution skills and strategies. This empowers them to actively participate in the restorative process and promotes personal growth.</p> <p>Engage parents and guardians in the restorative process, especially when incidents involve their children. Encourage their active participation and support in resolving conflicts and rebuilding relationships.</p>
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		Restorative Practices can flourish and positively impact the educational community's culture, climate, and relationships.	
Culture	<p>Traditional Punitive Discipline Practices</p> <p>Lack of shared values.</p> <p>Inconsistent behavior expectations districtwide</p> <p>Lack of trusting relationships between staff and some building administration.</p> <p>Lack of trusting relationships between staff and some district administration.</p> <p>Lack of communicated vision and mission</p> <p>Some buildings have celebrations based on positive behavior.</p> <p>Disproportionately, students of color and low-income students were sent out of their classrooms and school community. They may be suspended or sent to the principal's office, but students who are pushed out may drop out.</p> <p>Our level of expectation for students learning this year is that we have focused on Tier 1 support. Our theme is "Whatever it takes, every day, every student."</p>	<p>Processes like circles, conflict-resolution programs, and peer-led practices respond to incidents that cause harm.</p> <p>Continuous learning and professional development will be the norm.</p> <p>Restorative Practices focus on resolving conflict, repairing harm, and healing relationships. They support a positive and safe school climate, prevent bullying, and reduce disciplinary incidents.</p> <p>To foster a culture with Restorative Practices, it is essential to cultivate an environment that embodies the principles and values of restorative justice.</p> <p>Shared Values and Beliefs: Establish a shared understanding and commitment to respect, empathy, accountability, and community building. These values should be embraced and consistently promoted throughout the school or district.</p>	<p>Foster a culture of openness, trust, and psychological safety where students and staff feel comfortable expressing their thoughts, feelings, and concerns without fear of reprisal. This is essential for honest and effective communication.</p> <p>Shift the mindset from punitive discipline to viewing conflicts and behavioral issues as opportunities for learning and growth. Encourage a perspective that sees Restorative Practices as a means to address harm, repair relationships, and prevent recidivism.</p> <p>Promote empathy and respect as core values within the school culture. All members of the community should be encouraged to understand and value the experiences and perspectives of others.</p> <p>Involve students, teachers, administrators, and support staff in collaborative decision-making processes related to Restorative Practices. This includes</p>

	<p>However, I am finding that teachers don't know how to collect data or post learning to make learning visible to students. This is also true for social-emotional learning and expectations. I haven't seen expected or unexpected posts discussed: expectations of the growth mindset aren't discussed or posted.</p> <p>Each school's agenda is based on one team's data. I don't see how they relate to the overall system or board goals. Nothing related to SEL or restorative is being looked at currently.</p> <p>I see the communication from the district to building leaders as a directive with initiatives and received as compliance-oriented. I also see the building admin take it back to their buildings with spin-related information as compliance. No hard conversations or vulnerable data are being examined to move our system forward. The system doesn't do anything right now with no data around SEL and restorative.</p> <p>There is a history of some trust needing to be improved with some individuals.</p> <p>There are many ways to build relationships and repair harm before implementing some initiatives.</p>	<p>Inclusive Community: Foster a sense of belonging and inclusivity by creating a community that targets everyone feels valued, heard, and respected. Encourage active participation from all stakeholders, including students, staff, parents, and community members.</p> <p>Restorative Language and Communication: Promote restorative language and communication strategies that encourage open dialogue, active listening, and understanding. Encourage using "I" statements, non-violent communication, and restorative questions that promote reflection and personal responsibility.</p> <p>Consistent Modeling: School leaders, staff members, and administrators should consistently model Restorative Practices and behaviors. Demonstrate active listening, empathy, and accountability in interactions with others. Leading by example sets a positive tone for the entire school community.</p> <p>Restorative Processes and Circles: Incorporate restorative processes into daily practices, such as circles or conferences. These processes provide opportunities for dialogue,</p>	<p>developing policies, procedures, and interventions in a participatory manner.</p> <p>Commit to equity and inclusion in all aspects of the school culture. Address disparities in discipline and ensure that Restorative Practices are applied consistently and fairly to all students, regardless of their background or identity.</p> <p>Ensure that school leaders, including principals and superintendents, are strong advocates for Restorative Practices. Leadership support is essential for creating buy-in from the entire school community.</p> <p>Provide opportunities for students and staff to develop effective communication skills. This includes active listening, empathetic communication, and constructive dialogue.</p> <p>Encourage a sense of ownership and accountability for one's actions. All members of the community should understand that they are responsible for the well-being of the school and the relationships within it.</p> <p>Ensure that Restorative Practices are integrated into the everyday fabric of the school culture, rather than seen as a separate program.</p>
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	<p>I also see a need for more teacher voices within our system overall.</p> <p>There is a need for more collaboration with the Social Emotional Learning committee relating to the Restorative Practices' standards and expectations.</p> <p>The district is very much a silo district right now. I don't see the mind frame of our students and inconsistencies with adults taking ownership of this task. It is very much my students and your students. This mind shift needs to occur, and this work must come through actual PLC work.</p>	<p>conflict resolution, and relationship-building.</p> <p>Regularly schedule restorative circles in classrooms, staff meetings, and other settings to address conflicts, build community, and enhance relationships.</p> <p>Relationship Building: Prioritize relationship-building as an essential aspect of the school culture. Encourage meaningful connections among students, staff, and families. Provide opportunities for relationship-building activities, team-building exercises, and community-building initiatives.</p> <p>Whole-School Approach: Implement Restorative Practices throughout the school community, ensuring consistency across all levels. Engage all stakeholders in the implementation and decision-making processes, including administrators, teachers, support staff, and students.</p> <p>Training and Professional Development: Provide comprehensive training and professional development opportunities for staff and administrators. Equip them with the knowledge and skills needed to implement Restorative Practices</p>	<p>Consistency is key to success.</p> <p>Offer education and training in conflict resolution and Restorative Practices to all members of the community, including students, staff, and parents. This ensures that everyone understands the principles and techniques involved.</p> <p>Create a culture of continuous improvement by regularly assessing and evaluating the effectiveness of Restorative Practices and making adjustments as necessary.</p> <p>Implement systems for positive reinforcement and recognition to celebrate successes and encourage the adoption of restorative approaches. Highlight instances where conflicts were resolved and relationships repaired.</p>
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Context	<p>Unit School District PreK-12</p> <p>Four total schools</p> <p>Diverse population</p> <p>2,788 enrollment</p> <p>38% low income</p> <p>14% of IEP students</p> <p>1 % homeless</p> <p>23% of English Language Learners</p> <p>5% Dropout Rate</p> <p>A committee in place for making decisions with directors</p> <p>Understanding and working with students' families is significant.</p> <p>Translate some things into Polish and Spanish but only some things. We don't recognize the CLR within our schools or community.</p> <p>Community Newsletter to Update about Construction</p> <p>Sees the core competencies students need for work, citizenship, and continuous learning.</p> <p>As a leadership team and district, I don't see the focus on supporting our students to be ready for the real world or continuous learning.</p>	<p>Unit School District Pre K-12</p> <p>Four total schools</p> <p>Diverse population</p> <p>2,788 enrollment</p> <p>38% low income</p> <p>14% of IEP students</p> <p>1 % homeless</p> <p>23% of English Language Learners</p> <p>5% Dropout Rate</p> <p>A committee in place for making decisions with directors</p> <p>Understanding and working with students' families is significant.</p> <p>Translate all communication in Polish and Spanish.</p> <p>Community Newsletter to update the Community on everything.</p> <p>See the core competencies students need for work, citizenship, and continuous learning.</p> <p>Focus on supporting our students to prepare for the real world or continuous learning.</p> <p>Utilize and implement practices to support the</p>	
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	<p>Currently, no Strategic Plan is tied to the Board of Education's Goals.</p>	<p>culture and climate of the district and schools</p> <p>Create and implement a Strategic Plan tied to the Board of Education Goals.</p> <p>Cultural Context: Consider the community's cultural norms, values, and traditions in which the Restorative Practices will be implemented. Adapt the language, processes, and approaches to align with the cultural context, ensuring they are inclusive and respectful of diverse perspectives.</p> <p>School/District Environment: Consider the existing school or district environment, including its unique challenges, strengths, and dynamics. Assess the readiness for Restorative Practices and identify any barriers or facilitators to implementation. Understanding the specific context will inform the strategies and approaches for successful integration.</p> <p>Student Population: Recognize the students' diverse needs, backgrounds, and experiences within the school or district. Tailor Restorative Practices to meet the specific needs of the student population, ensuring accessibility and inclusivity. Consider age, developmental stage,</p>	
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		<p>language proficiency, and individual circumstances.</p> <p>Staff Readiness and Training: Assess the readiness of the staff to implement Restorative Practices. Provide comprehensive training and professional development opportunities to build staff members' capacity in restorative approaches. Consider their prior knowledge, skills, and experiences, and provide ongoing support to ensure successful implementation.</p> <p>Policy Framework: Align Restorative Practices with existing policies and regulations within the school or district. Review and revise disciplinary policies to emphasize restoration and repair rather than punitive measures. Ensure Restorative Practices are integrated into the overall policy framework to promote consistency and sustainability.</p> <p>Available Resources: Take stock of the available resources, including personnel, time, and funding, that can support the implementation of Restorative Practices. Allocate resources effectively to provide adequate training, materials, and support for staff and students.</p>	
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		<p>Community Engagement: Involve parents, families, and community members in implementing Restorative Practices. Seek their input, feedback, and collaboration to ensure the practices align with community expectations and needs. Foster strong partnerships to support the sustainability and success of restorative initiatives.</p> <p>Evaluation and Continuous Improvement: Establish an evaluation framework to monitor the effectiveness and impact of Restorative Practices within the specific context. Collect and analyze data to assess progress, identify areas for improvement, and make data-driven decisions. Regularly review and refine the implementation strategies based on the context-specific findings.</p> <p>Adapting Restorative Practices to the specific context is essential for their successful implementation and sustainability. By considering the cultural, environmental, and systemic factors within the school or district, Restorative Practices can be more effectively integrated and positively impact the community.</p>	
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Chapter Six: Strategies, Actions, Implications, Policy Recommendations

Introduction:

In the previous chapter, I discussed the As-Is and the ideal To-Be state of the impact of Restorative Practices within a school or district. In this chapter, I will present the strategies and actions seen in the chart below that school system leaders must use to move from the current (As-Is) to the ideal state (To-Be) regarding school Restorative Practices. I also discuss the implications of the change and my policy recommendations.

Figure 31: Strategies and Action Chart

Kotter's 8-Steps/Strategies	Elm District Action Steps
Step 1: Create a Sense of Urgency Strategy: Build Awareness and Understanding	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Organize awareness sessions with expert speakers on Restorative Practices.• Distribute educational materials and resources to stakeholders.• Highlight the potential positive impacts on student behavior, relationships, and overall school climate.
Step 2: Build a Guiding Coalition Strategy: Form a Dedicated Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identify and invite influential individuals, including teachers, counselors, parents, and student representatives, to join the coalition.• Hold regular meetings to define goals, roles, and responsibilities within the coalition.
Step 3: Form a Strategic Vision and Initiatives Strategy: Develop a Comprehensive Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Facilitate workshops and brainstorming sessions to define the vision and set achievable short-term and long-term goals.• Encourage feedback and input from all stakeholders to ensure a shared vision.
Step 4: Communicate the Vision Strategy: Foster Open Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Create informative brochures, newsletters, and a dedicated webpage

	<p>about Restorative Practices on the school's website.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To address concerns and queries, organize community meetings, information sessions, and Q&A sessions.
<p>Step 5: Empower Others to Act on the Vision Strategy: Foster Ownership and Involvement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Organize professional development and workshops on Restorative Practices for teachers and staff. ● Facilitate student-led initiatives, such as peer mediation programs and restorative circles.
<p>Step 6: Generate Short-Term Wins Strategy: Showcase Early Successes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Share success stories, testimonials, and data illustrating improvements in student behavior, conflict resolution, and overall school climate. ● Recognize and reward individuals or groups for their contributions to successfully adopting Restorative Practices.
<p>Step 7: Consolidate Gains and Produce More Change Strategy: Institutionalize Restorative Practices</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Revise school policies and codes of conduct to reflect restorative principles and procedures. ● Train staff on incorporating Restorative Practices into their teaching methods, classroom management, and disciplinary actions.
<p>Step 8: Anchor New Approaches in the Culture Strategy: Reinforce the Cultural Shift</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Conduct regular workshops and refresher training sessions to reinforce the principles of Restorative Practices. ● Encourage dialogue and feedback loops to ensure continuous improvement and adaptation to the evolving needs of the school community.

Implementing Restorative Practices in schools involves fostering a culture of inclusivity, empathy, and conflict resolution. Integrating this with Kotter's 8-Step Change Model provides a structured approach to ensure a smooth transition and sustainable adoption of Restorative Practices. I will outline the strategies and actions for each step of Kotter's model.

Step 1: Create a Sense of Urgency

Step one in Kotter's change plan is building awareness and understanding. "Establishing a sense of urgency is crucial to gaining needed cooperation" (Kotter, 2012, p.37). It will be imperative to conduct workshops, seminars, and training sessions to educate stakeholders (teachers, administrators, parents, and students) about Restorative Practices and its benefits. Case studies or success stories need to be shared district-wide from schools where Restorative Practices have been effectively implemented to emphasize the urgency for change. Conducting informative workshops and seminars to educate stakeholders about Restorative Practices' benefits and positive outcomes. "With urgency low, it's difficult to put together a group with enough power and credibility to guide the effort or to convince key individuals to spend the time necessary to create and communicate a change vision" (Kotter, 2012, p.38). When building awareness, presenting compelling data and evidence highlighting current challenges and demonstrating the need for change are powerful. Engaging parents and the broader community in understanding the importance of Restorative Practices would be another way to build awareness and understanding at a larger scale—using realistic scenarios to depict potential adverse outcomes if Restorative Practices are not implemented. Through storytelling, the district can share personal stories and testimonials from individuals who have experienced the positive effects of Restorative Practices. Through meetings and professional development, the district should encourage open discussions and brainstorming sessions with stakeholders to identify challenges and opportunities collectively. "When confronted with an organization that needs renewal, all competent managers take some of these actions" (Kotter, 2012, p.45). While creating a sense of urgency, actions to follow the strategies implemented need to be available. The system must organize awareness sessions with expert speakers on Restorative Practices and distribute educational materials and resources to all stakeholders. Highlighting the potential positive impacts on student behavior,

relationships, and overall school climate (that my data collection shows) proves that it matters. Creating a sense of urgency is critical to motivating stakeholders and successfully implementing Restorative Practices in a school setting.

Inviting expert speakers to share success stories and research findings on the effectiveness of Restorative Practices would be impactful—showcasing case studies from other schools where Restorative Practices have significantly impacted the learning environment would inform others to offer credible judgment. According to Kotter, “Most important, *muster up the courage to listen carefully*” (Kotter, 2012, p.52). Collecting data on disciplinary incidents, student conflicts, and school climate will be imperative to illustrate the existing issues and tell your story. Comparing the school's data with regional or national averages to emphasize the urgency for improvement will also show the reason for a sense of urgency—organizing informational sessions for parents communicating where the benefits of Restorative Practices are discussed and the reason for implementation. As a system, it would be necessary for parent-teacher associations to support integrating Restorative Practices actively. Analyzing the impact of punitive measures versus restorative responses on students and their relationships will tell why the sense of urgency for this change is so important—as a part of this, gathering testimonials from students, teachers, and staff who have benefitted from restorative approaches helps share the district’s story of implementation. Using these testimonials in presentations, newsletters, and other communication channels would be powerful to humanize the need for change. Inviting experts to review the school's context and provide recommendations regarding implementing Restorative Practices would also be a powerful statement when using their endorsements and recommendations to emphasize the urgency and credibility of the change.

By implementing these strategies and actions under Step 1 of Kotter’s 8-Step Change Process, you can effectively create a sense of urgency among stakeholders, emphasizing the need

for adopting Restorative Practices in the school community. “Change is a complex process and one that will probably fail if you do not capture the hearts and minds of your people and do not approach the implementation in a systematic way” (Thorsborne & Blood, 2013, p.70). The heightened awareness and urgency will lay the foundation for successful implementation and sustained commitment to restorative approaches.

Step 2: Build a Guiding Coalition

Building a strong coalition of stakeholders is crucial for successfully implementing Restorative Practices in Elm District. A diverse and committed coalition can provide the necessary support, expertise, and momentum needed for lasting change. “The first step in putting together the kind of team that can direct a change effort is to find the right membership” (Kotter, 2012, p.59). In this section, I will share the strategies and actions to build a coalition effectively. First, it will be ideal to identify key stakeholders. “Major transformations are often associated with one highly visible individual” (Kotter, 2012, p.53). You must identify and engage a diverse group of stakeholders who are invested in education and committed to improving school culture.

In a rapidly moving world, individuals and weak committees rarely have all the information needed to make good nonroutine decisions. Nor do they seem to have the credibility or the time required to convince others to make the personal sacrifices called for in implementing changes. Only teams with the right composition and sufficient trust among members can be highly effective under these new circumstances. (Kotter, 2012, p.57)

To show that this strategy is essential, you must conduct a stakeholder analysis to identify various groups, including teachers, administrators, students, parents, community members, local organizations, and school board members. Assessing their influence, interests, and potential

contributions to implementing Restorative Practices. You must also establish a shared vision and purpose for this change (Kotter, J., 2012, p.34). Defining a clear and compelling vision for implementing Restorative Practices that resonate with all coalition members will be essential. According to Kotter there are two types of people to avoid in your coalition: (1) those whose egos leave no space for others' voices and (2) those he calls "snakes." The latter problem types create mistrust that kills teamwork (Kotter, J., 2012, p.42). Facilitating workshops and collaborative sessions to create and refine the vision and goals collectively will need to be scheduled. Through these workshops, open dialogue and brainstorming must ensure that diverse perspectives are considered in shaping the vision. Another strategy to consider is ensuring the representation of various demographics and perspectives within the coalition to foster inclusivity and diversity of thought.

Actively seeking participation from individuals representing different cultural backgrounds, socioeconomic levels, and educational roles and promoting an environment where all voices are heard and respected and decision-making is collaborative. Engaging influential individuals and leaders who can champion the cause of Restorative Practices and mobilize others is vital. To lead and promote the initiative, your school system must identify passionate advocates within the school district leadership, such as principals, superintendents, or influential teachers.

Involving these champions in communication efforts to rally support and enthusiasm among stakeholders will be powerful. Defining specific roles and responsibilities for each coalition member to ensure efficient and effective contribution will help the change process. This group must develop a comprehensive coalition charter or agreement outlining roles, expectations, and commitments. "When trust is present, you will usually be able to create teamwork. When it is missing, you won't" (Kotter, 2012, p.63). They will need to regularly

review and refine these roles based on the evolving needs of the implementation process.

Offering professional development and training opportunities to equip coalition members with the necessary knowledge and skills related to Restorative Practices. To ensure professional development is planned, the district will need to organize workshops, seminars, and webinars to educate coalition members on restorative principles, methodologies, and best practices.

Collaborating with experts in Restorative Practices to facilitate training sessions and share insights would be impactful. Another significant influence is encouraging relationship-building and collaboration among coalition members to foster community and mutual support. Organizing regular meetings, both formal and informal, to facilitate networking and collaboration would help you be successful. The team must also establish communication channels, such as a dedicated online platform or regular newsletters, as well as to share updates, resources, and success stories. It is critical to continuously engage and motivate the coalition members to sustain their commitment and enthusiasm for the initiative.

You must collectively celebrate achievements, milestones, and successes throughout the process to reinforce progress and commitment. Maintaining open communication and regularly checking in with coalition members to address concerns, encourage them, and keep momentum high will help with the implementation. Kotter states that today and more so in the immediate future, there will be attempts to transform organizations: “Yet without a powerful guiding coalition, change stalls and carnage grows” (Kotter, 2012, p.68).

By implementing these strategies and actions, you can build a robust and committed coalition that will drive the successful implementation of Restorative Practices throughout the school district. This coalition's collective efforts and collaboration will be instrumental in creating a positive and transformative school culture around Restorative Practices. “The combination of trust and a common goal shared by people with the right characteristics can make

for a powerful team. The results of the coalition will have the capacity to make needed change happen despite all of the forces of inertia” (Kotter, 2012, p.68).

Step 3: Form a Strategic Vision and Initiatives

Developing a strategic vision and initiatives is crucial when implementing Restorative Practices in a school district. A well-defined vision provides direction and purpose, guiding the actions of stakeholders toward a common goal. I will discuss in detail Step 3, regarding implementing strategies and actions to formulate a strategic vision and initiatives for implementing Restorative Practices.

“Vision refers to a picture of the future with some implicit or explicit commentary on why people should strive to create that future” (Kotter, 2012, p.71). Involving a diverse group of stakeholders to create and shape the strategic vision for Restorative Practices collectively will be crucial. Creating a good vision can help clear the decks of expensive and time-consuming clutter. “When there is clarity of direction, inappropriate projects and implementations can be terminated” (Kotter, 2012, p.71). The implementation plan must conduct focus group sessions, workshops, or surveys to gather input and insights from teachers, students, parents, administrators, and community members. This group must facilitate brainstorming sessions to encourage creative thinking and idea generation for the vision. Within this step, the group must ensure that the strategic vision for Restorative Practices aligns seamlessly with the district's core values and mission statement. Reviewing the school district's existing mission statement and values to identify areas of alignment with restorative principles might be necessary. The group might also need to modify or enhance the mission statement to incorporate restorative concepts and aspirations. Defining specific and measurable goals and objectives that support the vision and provide a roadmap for achieving the desired outcomes and collaborating with stakeholders to

identify key focus areas, such as reducing disciplinary incidents, improving student-teacher relationships, and enhancing school climate. This group must break down overarching goals into achievable, time-bound objectives with clearly defined metrics for success. Prioritizing initiatives that align with the vision and have a high potential to significantly impact the school district related to the culture and climate of each school.

To help with measurement, the group must thoroughly assess potential initiatives, considering their potential for positive change and the resources required for implementation. Within this process, they also must rank the initiatives based on their feasibility, resource availability, and potential to align with the established goals. After completing this strategy, the group must develop a clear and compelling communication strategy to articulate the strategic vision and initiatives to all stakeholders. Creating visually engaging materials, presentations, and videos effectively communicates the vision and its importance. Along with the communication plan, the district must host a district-wide event or assembly to unveil the vision and initiatives, involving key stakeholders and presenting it in an inspiring manner. Facilitating collaboration and partnership between different departments and stakeholders to integrate Restorative Practices seamlessly will have a considerable impact. To do this, the district must establish interdisciplinary task forces or working groups to foster collaboration, ensure a holistic approach to implementing initiatives, and encourage regular cross-functional meetings to align efforts, share progress, and troubleshoot challenges. Walking through these first three steps, the district must anticipate and address potential challenges. With this thinking, the district must proactively identify potential challenges and obstacles that may impede the realization of the vision and initiatives. They must conduct a risk analysis to identify possible barriers and develop mitigation strategies for each identified challenge. Involving key stakeholders in identifying solutions and alternative approaches to mitigate or overcome anticipated obstacles. Kotter discusses the

different characteristics of an effective vision. When implementing Restorative Practices, we must make sure we are being imaginable and conveying a picture of what these practices will look like. It has to be desirable to all staff. The vision has to appeal to the long-term interests of all stakeholders, so they have a stake in the process. “Effective visions are realistic. They are not pleasant fantasies that have no change or realization. Ineffective visions often have a pie-in-the-sky quality. Good visions are clear enough to motivate action but flexible enough to allow initiative. Bad visions are too vague, sometimes too specific” (Kotter, 2012, p.64).

Continuous feedback and adaptation mechanisms ensure the vision and initiatives remain relevant and practical. Implementing regular feedback surveys, focus groups, or suggestion boxes to gather stakeholder input is essential to ensure solutions to the challenges are addressed. The feedback received will need to be used to refine and adapt the vision, goals, and initiatives based on evolving needs and circumstances.

By following these strategies and actions, you can create a well-defined strategic vision and initiatives that align with Restorative Practices, effectively guiding the implementation efforts within the Elm District. The strategic vision will unify, drive positive change, and foster a restorative, inclusive school culture.

Step 4: Communicate the Vision

Communicating the vision effectively is essential for successfully implementing Restorative Practices in a school district. Clear and compelling communication helps stakeholders understand the initiative's purpose, objectives, and benefits. “The development of a transformational vision often requires those in the guiding coalition to spend a few hundred hours collecting information, digesting it, considering alternatives, eventually making choices” (Kotter, 2012, p.89).

When communicating the vision, you must craft a concise and inspiring vision statement that encapsulates the essence and aspirations of implementing Restorative Practices. “Failures to communicate vision often attributed to limited intellectual capabilities among lower-level employees or a general human resistance to change, and hence, to acceptance of change information” (Kotter, 2012, p.89). Collaborating with key stakeholders to define the vision statement and ensure it resonates with the core values and mission of the school district is a part of this process. Using plain language and avoiding jargon is essential to ensure everyone can easily understand and relate to the vision. Employing a variety of communication channels to reach all stakeholders and ensure the vision is widely disseminated. It is critical to use the school district's website, newsletters, and social media platforms to publish articles, updates, and stories related to the vision. Regular email updates, text messages, or automated calls to parents, teachers, and staff will keep them informed about the initiative.

Enhancing communication by incorporating visuals and multimedia elements to convey the vision engagingly and memorably will make it appealing: infographics, posters, and videos that depict the vision, its objectives, and expected outcomes. As stated in step 3, sharing success stories and testimonials through video interviews showcasing the positive impact of Restorative Practices will be impactful.

Another strategy in this step is to engage influential individuals within the school district to advocate for and communicate the vision to a broader audience. “One of the main reasons that vision-creating is such a challenging exercise is that most guiding coalition members have to answer all of the questions themselves, which takes time and a lot of communication” (Kotter, 2012, p.90). Encouraging other school leaders, respected teachers, and community influencers to endorse and speak about the vision during meetings, events, or interviews will help highlight the endorsement of these advocates in various communication materials to enhance credibility and

garner support. Through this communication, creating accessible and open communication channels to encourage feedback, questions, and discussions related to the vision and Restorative Practices will help with the implementation. “The time and energy required for effective vision communication are directly related to the clarity and simplicity of the message” (Kotter, 2012, p.91). Teams must set up dedicated email addresses, suggestion boxes, or online forums where stakeholders can share their thoughts, questions, or concerns. Through this process, the district must respond promptly and transparently to inquiries, demonstrating a commitment to engaging with stakeholders and valuing their input. The district must also continuously reinforce the vision through consistent and repetitive messaging to embed it in the school district's culture. Celebrating milestones and achievements related to the vision, emphasizing progress, and showcasing the positive impact of Restorative Practices will help communicate the vision around this initiative.

In conclusion, by implementing these strategies and actions around Step 4 of Kotter’s Change Model Process, you can effectively communicate the vision for implementing Restorative Practices in the Elm District, ensuring stakeholders are informed, engaged, and aligned with the initiative's goals and values.

Step 5: Empower Others to Act on the Vision

Empowering others to act on the vision of implementing Restorative Practices in a school or district involves providing the necessary resources, skills, and support to enable stakeholders to contribute effectively. This step is crucial for successful implementation. I will discuss the strategies and actions needed to empower others to act on the vision. “Guilt, political considerations, and concerns over short-term results stop people from having honest discussions” (Kotter, 2012, p.118). Kotter also discusses the unwillingness of people to confront their

supervisors. Situations like these block the process of empowering others. Providing training programs and professional development to equip stakeholders with the knowledge and skills required to understand and implement Restorative Practices will be essential and support this process.

Teacher communities produce valued outcomes by fostering the development of professional norms and promoting teacher learning. Leaving this to happen by chance is not a wise idea. What is required is what we call learning to learn, the development of knowledge and the mastery of skills that make teacher growth a reality, what Supovitz (2002) refers to as “continuous capacity building.” (Murphy, 2016, p. 92)

Organizing various workshops, seminars, and webinars led by experts in Restorative Practices provides in-depth education. Developing training modules covering the fundamentals of Restorative Practices, communication techniques, conflict resolution, and restorative circles is critical. Developing and distributing resource materials that guide stakeholders in implementing Restorative Practices effectively will be impactful for stakeholders—creating a comprehensive toolkit or handbook with practical tips, case studies, and step-by-step guides on implementing restorative practice and providing access to online resources, videos, and articles to support continuous learning and development. “Building capacity of existing staff is about bringing to life systems learning principles, adult learning principles, and community learning principles, almost always in an integrated manner” (Murphy, 2016, p. 79). As this vision is rolled out, peer-to-peer learning and mentoring will facilitate knowledge sharing and stakeholder collaboration. Establishing mentorship programs where experienced individuals guide and

support those new to implementing Restorative Practices is key. It is also imperative to arrange regular peer learning sessions where individuals can share their experiences, challenges, and successful strategies. Engaging and involving students in leadership roles enables them to contribute actively to the vision of Restorative Practices. Establishing student-led restorative practice committees is imperative to encourage students to take ownership of the initiative within their schools. Delegating decision-making authority to individuals and teams and encouraging them to take ownership of their roles in implementing Restorative Practices will also help empower others with this initiative. Helping leaders establish clear guidelines and parameters and empowering teams to make decisions within defined boundaries will also help develop action plans and initiatives based on their unique circumstances and needs. It is critical to provide a feedback-rich culture where stakeholders receive regular feedback and recognition for their efforts and contributions and implement a system for timely feedback to acknowledge progress, highlight strengths, and identify areas for improvement. The system must celebrate and publicly recognize individuals and teams for their outstanding contributions to the successful implementation of Restorative Practices. To help Restorative Practices succeed within Elm District, there must be encouragement for experimentation and innovation. Fostering a culture that encourages stakeholders to experiment with new ideas and innovative approaches related to Restorative Practices will help with the successful implementation. All stakeholders can create platforms for sharing innovative ideas and best practices to inspire creativity and continuous improvement.

By implementing these strategies and actions, you can effectively empower stakeholders to act on the vision of implementing Restorative Practices in the Elm District. Encouraging active participation, providing the necessary resources, and fostering a culture of learning and collaboration will contribute to a successful and sustainable implementation.

Step 6: Generate Short-Term Wins

Generating short-term wins is crucial to maintaining momentum and enthusiasm while implementing Restorative Practices in the Elm School District. Celebrating early successes can motivate stakeholders and demonstrate the effectiveness of the approach. Identifying achievable, impactful initiatives that can yield immediate positive outcomes and align with the vision of Restorative Practices is essential—for example, conducting an assessment to identify low-hanging fruit, such as resolving minor conflicts using restorative approaches or implementing restorative circles in a specific classroom, can build confidence and enthusiasm. Choosing initiatives that can be executed relatively quickly and have the potential to showcase the benefits of Restorative Practices are quick actions to support this step of change. Concentrating on initiatives demonstrating visible and measurable behavior, relationships, or school climate improvements is also essential. The team must track and measure reduced disciplinary incidents, improved student attendance, or increased engagement and participation in restorative circles. Highlighting these improvements through data-driven presentations and reports emphasizes the positive impact of Restorative Practices.

As stated many times, sharing success stories and testimonials showcases the positive experiences and outcomes resulting from Restorative Practices. Collecting testimonials from students, teachers, and parents who have experienced positive changes in behavior, conflict resolution, or relationships makes a huge impact. The team can showcase these testimonials in newsletters, on bulletin boards, and in staff meetings to inspire and motivate others. Celebrating small milestones and achievements related to implementing Restorative Practices to acknowledge progress goes a long way. Hosting recognition events or ceremonies to celebrate the successful implementation of Restorative Practices in specific classrooms, grade levels, or school units demonstrates successful efforts and implementation. Awarding certificates or tokens

of appreciation to individuals or teams that have made notable contributions to the initiative is powerful. Another strategy I have already identified that is essential is collecting feedback from all stakeholders to understand their experiences and perceptions of the early implementation efforts. Conducting surveys, convening focus groups, or holding informal interviews to gather feedback on the effectiveness of the initial Restorative Practices is a productive step in this change model.

You must use the feedback to make timely adjustments and improvements, demonstrating responsiveness to stakeholder input. You must also share data illustrating positive trends and improvements resulting from the early implementation of Restorative Practices. Creating visually appealing data dashboards or reports showcasing reduced disciplinary referrals, improved attendance rates, or enhanced student engagement makes a statement. Presenting this data to stakeholders—emphasizing the positive trends and outcomes that align with the strategic vision—helps with the change plan. Another short-term win is to involve students in sharing and presenting the progress and benefits of Restorative Practices to their peers and the wider school community. One way to accomplish this goal would be to organize student-led presentations or assemblies where students can share their experiences and insights on how Restorative Practices have positively impacted them. Systems must encourage students to create artwork, posters, or presentations that depict the shift towards a more inclusive and restorative school culture.

These strategies and actions can effectively generate short-term wins while implementing Restorative Practices in a school district. Celebrating these early successes will energize stakeholders, reinforce the benefits of Restorative Practices, and sustain momentum for ongoing and future initiatives.

Step 7: Consolidate Gains and Produce More Change

Consolidating and producing more change in a school district regarding Restorative Practices involves reinforcing progress and leveraging that momentum for further enhancements. It is essential to deepen the integration of Restorative Practices into the school district's culture and systems. “Whenever you let up before the job is done, critical momentum can be lost and regression may follow” (Kotter, 2012, p.139). Institutionalizing Restorative Practices ensures that these practices become a permanent part of the school district's policies, procedures, and daily operations. Teams must revise and update the district's code of conduct to incorporate restorative principles and processes for conflict resolution and behavior management. Integrating Restorative Practices into administrative protocols ensures restorative approaches are considered in decision-making and disciplinary actions. Extending training and professional development opportunities helps to build the capacity of all stakeholders to utilize and promote Restorative Practices.

To deepen their understanding and application, leaders must provide advanced training sessions on Restorative Practices for teachers, administrators, support staff, and parents. Ongoing professional development cultivates a cadre of restorative practice champions within the district. “Promoting teacher learning is one of the most, if not *the* most, powerful leverage points in the portfolio leaders have to promote school improvement and increase student learning” (Murphy, 2016, p. 83). Integrating restorative principles into the curriculum and instructional strategies to promote social-emotional learning and conflict-resolution skills is a quick win. It helps ensure a productive change within the system. Collaborating with educators to develop lesson plans and activities incorporating restorative concepts, empathy, active listening, and communication skills is also key. Encouraging teachers to use restorative approaches during classroom discussions, conflict resolution sessions, and collaborative group activities is another quick win.

Integrating restorative justice practices within the school district to address conflicts and misconduct in a reparative and inclusive manner is necessary. Developing a formal restorative justice program within the district that provides an alternative to punitive disciplinary actions, focusing on resolution, reconciliation, and learning, is imperative. It is a mind shift, but training staff members and designated individuals to facilitate restorative justice conferences and dialogues for conflict resolution involving students, staff, and stakeholders helps change a school and district's overall culture and climate. “If you experience a situation when little is accomplished, you need to slow down at first to build up the capacity of your staff to deal successfully with the situation” (Kotter, 2012, p.144). It is crucial for a district to continuously monitor and evaluate the progress of Restorative Practices to identify areas for improvement and adaptation. Districts must establish a system for collecting data and feedback on implementing Restorative Practices, including feedback from students, parents, and educators. Using this data to conduct regular evaluations and assessments to measure the impact of Restorative Practices on various metrics, such as disciplinary incidents, school climate, and academic performance, is essential.

By implementing these strategies and action steps, you can consolidate and produce more change in the school district regarding Restorative Practices. Building a sustainable culture of Restorative Practices requires a deliberate and systematic approach involving all stakeholders and embedding restorative principles into the fabric of the whole educational environment.

Step 8: Anchor New Approaches in the Culture

Anchoring approaches in a school district culture around Restorative Practices involves ensuring that restorative principles become profoundly ingrained and sustained over the long term. This necessitates a strategic and cultural shift that reflects the core values and norms of the

district. The district needs to align with its core values and mission statement. The values and mission statement need to align so the district can make necessary revisions or updates to incorporate Restorative Practices in their district.

Communicating the alignment of Restorative Practices with these foundational aspects to all stakeholders is crucial. “The communication of the vision, the reinforcement by management, the altered performance appraisal, and other influences strongly supported the new practices” (Kotter, 2012, p.155). District leaders, administrators, and influential staff need to be encouraged to model restorative behaviors and actively promote their adoption in everything they do. To inspire others, leaders must provide opportunities to share their experiences and successes with Restorative Practices. The district leaders must embed Restorative Practices into the district's policies and procedures to ensure consistent application and adherence. The Board of Education and Administrative Team must revise and update behavior, discipline, and conflict resolution policies to explicitly incorporate restorative approaches and reap the benefits of these practices. Using Restorative Practices during important events, such as parent-teacher conferences, to promote collaborative problem-solving and understanding is another example of modeling these practices. Offering continuous professional development and improvement around Restorative Practices ensures that all staff members have the knowledge and skills needed for effective Restorative Practices. “When no one confronts the problem, little if any effort is made to help the new practice grow deep roots, one that sinks down into the core culture or is strong enough to replace it. Shallow roots require constant watering” (Kotter, 2012, p.155).

Integrating restorative approaches into classroom management strategies creates a positive and supportive learning environment. Using Restorative Practices helps teachers instruct conflict resolution, address behavioral issues, and build positive relationships with their students.

When building and district administrators encourage teachers to use restorative circles, discussions, and restorative language, they build community within classrooms.

By implementing these strategies and actions, you can anchor Restorative Practices deeply into the school district's culture. A sustained effort and a holistic approach involving all stakeholders will ensure that Restorative Practices become a fundamental aspect of the district's culture, ultimately leading to a more inclusive, empathetic, and effective educational environment for all students, staff, and administrators.

In conclusion, by merging the above strategies and actions discussed for implementing Restorative Practices with Kotter's change model, Elm School District can effectively navigate the transition towards a more restorative and inclusive educational environment, benefiting students and the broader school community.

Policy Statement

I will outline this policy for Elm School District's commitment to fostering a safe, inclusive, and respectful learning environment through the intentional and widespread implementation of Restorative Practices.

Traditional policy analysis, while viewed to be an objective scientific process, has faced growing criticism. Its emphasis on a planned, linear, and incremental policy process of (1) issue or problem definition, (2) consultation and adoption, (3) implementation, and (4) monitoring and evaluation fails to account for unequal distributions of power, resources, opportunities, and how they inform which policies work, for whom, and to what end. (Horsford & Anderson, 2019, p.21)

Restorative Practices aim to build positive relationships, address harm, and strengthen the school community. This policy underscores the importance of restorative approaches in the district's conflict resolution, discipline, and community building.

Elm District is committed to promoting Restorative Practices as a cornerstone of our educational culture. We envision a learning community where all stakeholders engage in respectful, accountable, and empathetic interactions to nurture a sense of belonging, understanding, and trust. Restorative Practices emphasize repairing harm, building relationships, and fostering a sense of responsibility within our educational community. These practices prioritize dialogue, understanding, and reconciliation to create a conducive and positive school climate. The below bullets are the core policy of what I am recommending:

- Restorative Practices will be used to address conflicts, misunderstandings, and disputes among students, staff, and other stakeholders within the school district. Circles, conferencing, and other restorative approaches will facilitate open dialogue and collaborative problem-solving.
- Restorative Practices will guide the disciplinary process, emphasizing repairing relationships and addressing the harm caused by behavioral incidents. Consequences will be designed to be restorative, educational, and proportionate to the nature and impact of the behavior.
- Restorative Practices will be integrated into the school's routines, rituals, and activities to strengthen relationships and enhance community and belonging.

Elm District will provide ongoing professional development opportunities to ensure all staff are proficient in Restorative Practices. The professional development will include conflict resolution strategies, communication skills, restorative language, and other relevant aspects to implement Restorative Practices effectively.

Elm District will also actively involve students, parents, staff, and community members in implementing Restorative Practices, encouraging their active participation and feedback. We will regularly collect data to evaluate the impact of Restorative Practices on various aspects, including student behavior, school climate, and overall community satisfaction. Data analysis will inform adjustments and improvements to ensure continuous effectiveness and alignment with our vision. The policy will be reviewed periodically to assess its implementation, effectiveness, and relevance and to make necessary amendments to align with the evolving needs and goals of the school district. This policy reflects Elm District's dedication to cultivating a restorative and compassionate learning environment, promoting understanding, empathy, and accountability among all school community members.

Considerations for Decision Makers

Earlier in this chapter, I explained John Kotter's eight steps for the change process. Restorative Practices in a school district involve a shift from punitive approaches to a more inclusive and relationship-centered approach aimed at repairing harm and fostering a sense of belonging and accountability. Below, I discuss some considerations for decision-makers when implementing Restorative Practices. My policy statement indicates changes in the district's commitment to fostering a safe, inclusive, and respectful learning environment through the intentional and widespread implementation of Restorative Practices. Restorative Practices aim to build positive relationships, address harm, and strengthen the school community. In the following paragraphs, I analyze my policy statement through the lenses of economic, political, legal, moral, and ethical impact.

Economic Analysis

When conducting an economic analysis for implementing Restorative Practices in a school district, it is essential to consider the financial implications and involve all relevant stakeholders. The district must conduct a thorough cost-benefit analysis to assess the financial impact of implementing Restorative Practices. “Schools can’t continue to cut programs without changes in compensation levels for educators. District’s can’t continue to cut across the board with no plan for moving forward” (Odden, 2012, p.3). They must evaluate the costs associated with training, program development, personnel, and ongoing maintenance against the potential benefits, including reduced disciplinary actions, improved school climate, and enhanced academic performance. The district must also determine the budget allocation required for implementing Restorative Practices, including initial investments and ongoing operational expenses. The district must allocate resources judiciously to ensure effective program implementation and sustainability over time. “A strategic approach to using the education dollar means aligning the use of resources to a solid, powerful, and comprehensive education-improvement strategy” (Odden, 2012, p.4). It will also be necessary to explore potential funding sources, grants, and partnerships that can support the implementation of Restorative Practices. Collaborations with local organizations, governmental agencies, and foundations may provide financial assistance or grants for restorative initiatives. An estimate of the potential cost savings resulting from reducing disciplinary actions and their associated expenses must be estimated. The district must consider reduced suspension and expulsion rates, legal costs, and resources needed for traditional disciplinary approaches. The cost of training staff, including teachers, administrators, and support staff to effectively implement Restorative Practices will also need to be considered. Expenses related to workshops, materials, professional development, and ongoing training needs must also be in the budget. There will need to be an

allocation of funds to evaluate the Restorative Practices program. Then, assessing the program's effectiveness will be essential by measuring its impact on disciplinary incidents, academic outcomes, attendance rates, and overall school climate.

As a part of this analysis, the district will need to involve stakeholders in the economic analysis process and ensure their support for the financial aspects of implementing Restorative Practices, addressing their concerns, and communicating the anticipated benefits of the program to gain their endorsement. “Often, districts and schools must take a hard look at their existing talent pool and decide if it is up to the task and, if it is not, decide what human capital strategies are needed to provide the requisite talent” (Odden, 2012, p.26). The district will also need to develop a sustainable funding model that outlines how the school district plans to fund the Restorative Practices program over the long term. They must consider incorporating it into the regular budgeting process to ensure continued support. They will also need to explore opportunities for revenue generation within the school district to support the implementation of Restorative Practices. “Recognizing the cost pressures is one thing, moving forward in a strategic manner is another” (Odden, 2012, p.50). This could include partnerships with local businesses, fundraising initiatives, or community events to generate additional funds. To ensure that the economic analysis considers the equitable distribution of resources to all schools and student populations within the district, the district needs to aim to address disparities and promote inclusion and fairness in resource allocation. The district leadership must engage with the broader community to build support for Restorative Practices. Communicating the economic analysis findings and potential benefits to parents, community members, and local organizations will be essential to garner their support and involvement. It will also be necessary to build flexibility into the financial plan to adapt to changing circumstances, unexpected costs, or the need for program adjustments. Ensuring that the economic analysis accounts for potential

changes and allows for adjustments as needed is crucial. Another view is that students may have a better economic outcome if they miss less school, and they are less likely to drop out.

By considering these economic analysis considerations and involving all stakeholders, decision-makers can ensure a more informed and collaborative approach to implementing Restorative Practices in a school district while effectively managing financial resources.

Political Analysis

When conducting a political analysis on implementing Restorative Practices in a school district, understanding the political landscape, engaging with stakeholders, and aligning strategies with political realities is crucial. I will outline some considerations for decision-makers in this political analysis section. The school district must identify and analyze the critical stakeholders in the political landscape, including school board members, local government officials, community leaders, parents' associations, and relevant advocacy groups. “Growing concerns exist over the extent to which local community knowledge, perspectives, and interests are making their way into the education policy arena as nongovernmental actors have shifted education policy priorities while limiting authentic community input and democratic participation” (Horsford & Anderson, 2019, p. 90). Understanding their interests, power dynamics, and positions regarding Restorative Practices is essential in the analysis process. The district will need to evaluate the existing policy and legal framework at the local, state, and national levels to determine how it supports or hinders the implementation of Restorative Practices within the district. Advocating for necessary policy changes or reforms to create an enabling environment will also need to be examined. Through this process, a strategic advocacy plan will need to be developed to communicate the benefits of Restorative Practices to stakeholders and the wider community. It is important to utilize various communication

channels, such as public meetings, media, and social platforms, to generate support and awareness. Partnerships must be established with advocacy groups, non-profits, or community organizations with experience with Restorative Practices. Collaborating to advocate for policy changes and garner political support through practical lobbying efforts is impactful. Engaging directly with elected officials, such as school board members, city councilors, or legislators, to educate them about Restorative Practices is also influential. When a district provides evidence-based information and case studies demonstrating the effectiveness of restorative approaches, that helps with their analysis of the need for this initiative.

The professional regime, which shares the Administrative Regime's characteristics in terms of essential actors (i.e., teachers, administrators, school board members, etc.) and buffering the system from political interference and some bureaucratic mandates, assumes a very different agenda, given its focus on changing the pedagogy and culture of schools. (Horsford & Anderson, 2019, p. 93)

Through this process, it is critical to conduct surveys or public opinion polls to gauge community support for Restorative Practices. Using the findings from these surveys will help tailor communication strategies and political messaging that resonates with the community's sentiments.

Building coalitions with other educational institutions, community organizations, and like-minded stakeholders to present a unified voice supporting Restorative Practices will also be vital. Conducting a politically feasible analysis to assess the likelihood of policy changes related to Restorative Practices would be required in this process. The district will also need to consider the political climate, competing priorities, and historical support for similar initiatives to gauge the potential success of advocacy efforts.

Proposing and advocating for pilot programs or demonstrations of Restorative Practices in a controlled environment, demonstrating their success and potential positive outcomes should also be considered.

Using data from these pilots to advocate for broader policy changes is something that should be taken into consideration. It would be vital that the district demonstrate how Restorative Practices align with broader educational goals, such as improving school climate, reducing dropout rates, and enhancing academic achievement. Highlighting the potential positive impact on educational outcomes will also go a long way. The district will also need to consider involving a diverse set of stakeholders in the decision-making process related to Restorative Practices. “The Empowerment Regime is the one that is responsive to particular interest groups or organized communities. Responsiveness within the Empowerment Regime may be to low-income parents in gentrifying communities, or finding ways to engage them in authentic forms of participation in school decision making” (Horsford & Anderson, 2019, p. 95). It would be impactful to seek their input, feedback, and perspectives to build a more inclusive and collaborative approach to policy development and implementation. The district will need to anticipate potential opposition, obstacles, or resistance to Restorative Practices from all stakeholders. With this anticipation, strategies need to be developed to mitigate risks and address concerns, emphasizing the benefits and aligning with the values and priorities of key political stakeholders.

By considering these political analysis considerations and engaging with all stakeholders effectively, decision-makers can navigate the political landscape and advocate for the successful implementation of Restorative Practices within the Elm District.

Legal Analysis

When conducting a legal analysis on implementing Restorative Practices in a school district, ensuring compliance with relevant laws and regulations while involving all stakeholders is essential. When looking at the legal compliance assessment, you will want to conduct a comprehensive review of federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and policies related to education, discipline, student rights, and school safety. This will ensure Restorative Practices align with and comply with these legal frameworks. When consulting legal experts, you will want to engage with them, including education law attorneys, to provide guidance and expertise on the legal aspects of implementing Restorative Practices. “The 2014 Guidance provided valuable tools and information to school administrators on achieving an equitable and safe classroom environment without students enduring unfair and unnecessary harm through exclusionary discipline” (Illinois Attorney General, 2014, p. 2). Seeking advice on potential legal challenges, liabilities, and best practices to mitigate risks would be worth considering. When reviewing school policies and codes of conduct, you will want to evaluate existing school policies, codes of conduct, and disciplinary procedures to ensure they support implementing Restorative Practices. Your team might need to amend or revise policies incorporating restorative principles and approaches. You will want to remember the legal safeguards for students and staff. “Disparities cause real harms for vulnerable students; exclusionary discipline is correlated with decreased academic achievement, increased likelihood of students dropping out of school, and increased involvement with the juvenile justice system” (Illinois Attorney General, 2014, p. 3). You will want to confirm that the rights and privacy of students and staff are protected throughout the implementation of Restorative Practices. They are establishing clear legal guidelines to safeguard confidentiality, consent, and due process for all involved parties. This is for the protection and confidentiality of all stakeholders.

Through this process, you will want to pay attention to equity and non-discrimination.

Recognizing the harms and the racially disparate impact that exclusionary discipline imposes on Illinois youth, the Illinois General Assembly has also amended the Illinois School Code ... to reduce overreliance on suspensions and expulsions. In 2016, Public Act 99-456 (commonly known as SB 100) laid a new foundation for public and charter school discipline in Illinois. (Illinois Attorney General, 2014, p. 3)

The school district must assess the legal implications of Restorative Practices on equity and non-discrimination. The school district should confirm that Restorative Practices are applied fairly and do not disproportionately impact any particular student group based on race, gender, socioeconomic status, or other protected characteristics. You will also want to account for legal requirements related to special education students, including Individualized Education Programs (IEPs), 504 Plans, and accommodations. They ensure that Restorative Practices are consistent with the needs and rights of students with disabilities.

Schools must exhaust all appropriate and available behavioral and disciplinary interventions before seeking an out-of-school suspension or expulsion of more than three days, and that such measures be reserved only for situations where a student's continuing presence in school would pose threats to "the safety of other students, staff or members of the school community" or "substantially disrupt, impede, or interfere with the operation of the school. (Illinois Attorney General, 2014, p. 4)

With the implementation, schools will want informed consent and parental involvement. Make sure to define the legal parameters for obtaining informed consent from parents or legal guardians regarding the participation of students in restorative processes. It is imperative to

ensure that parents are adequately informed and have the opportunity to be involved in the decision-making process.

Establishing legal guidelines for documenting restorative processes, agreements, and outcomes would also be in the best interest of all stakeholders. Maintaining proper records and meeting legal requirements for transparency, accountability, and potential legal disputes is essential. A school district must communicate the legal mechanisms for resolving conflicts and disputes that may arise while implementing Restorative Practices. Defining the procedures and process for addressing disagreements, appeals, and grievances fairly and lawfully.

By incorporating these legal analysis considerations and involving all stakeholders, decision-makers can ensure that implementing Restorative Practices in a school district is legally sound and aligns with the rights and protections of all individuals involved.

Moral and Ethical Analysis

Incorporating moral and ethical considerations into implementing Restorative Practices in a school district is essential for creating an environment that upholds values of justice, empathy, and respect for all. Decision-makers should focus on fostering a culture that promotes ethical behavior and moral growth. Below, I will discuss some considerations when implementing Restorative Practices in your district.

A school district must define and communicate ethical principles. They clearly define the ethical principles and values underpinning the implementation of Restorative Practices. It is also critical that the district communicates these principles to all stakeholders, emphasizing the importance of honesty, respect, fairness, and accountability. It is crucial to promote inclusivity and equity when implementing Restorative Practices. Staff need to ensure that Restorative Practices are implemented to promote inclusivity and equity among all students and

stakeholders. “Educational leaders face dilemmas requiring ethical decisions on a daily basis and are often called to make difficult choices between competing ethical demands and values” (Chitpin & Evers, 2012, p. 165). Teachers and administrators must strive to eliminate discrimination, biases, and disparities to create a fair educational environment. There is also a level of respect for human dignity. Staff must prioritize respect for human dignity in all interactions and interventions related to Restorative Practices.

Administrators must encourage stakeholders to treat each other with respect and empathy, valuing each person's worth and potential for growth. In addition to those considerations, another would be for staff to encourage moral reflection and growth within the system. Creating opportunities for all stakeholders to engage in moral reflection and dialogue about the ethical dimensions of Restorative Practices is beneficial in this process. It would also be beneficial to encourage individuals to consider the impact of their actions and choices on others and the community. When implementing Restorative Practices within the district, integrating ethical education and character development into the school curriculum is also a part of this implementation. It is crucial to incorporate discussions, activities, and case studies that explore ethical dilemmas and encourage critical thinking and ethical decision-making with students, staff, and administrators. “Ethical dilemmas require the educational leader to question his or her moral beliefs and theories, and to search for an understanding of what is going on below the surface” (Chitpin & Evers, 2012, p. 166). Another essential consideration is consent and autonomy with the stakeholders. They will want to uphold the ethical principles of informed consent and autonomy, particularly when involving students in restorative processes. Respecting the autonomy of individuals and seeking their consent when engaging them in dialogue or conflict resolution ensures a successful restorative process. It is also important to emphasize the importance of maintaining confidentiality and privacy throughout the restorative process.

Safeguarding all stakeholders' personal information and experiences during discussions, circles, and discipline measures fosters trust and safety. Therefore, all stakeholders need to be held accountable for their actions and decisions, reinforcing the principle of personal responsibility. There must be acknowledgment of mistakes, restitution, and learning from experiences to promote ethical growth with these practices. “Moral literacy, in consideration of what it means to be a moral leader, relates to the conceptual and practical capacity of the school leader to make and encourage morally grounded decisions, decisions that take into consideration values and beliefs within the cultural setting of the school or district” (Chitpin & Evers, 2012, p. 172). District staff and leaders need to demonstrate ethical behavior and values as leaders. Setting positive examples for all stakeholders happens when you consistently adhere to moral and ethical standards in decision-making and actions.

By incorporating these moral and ethical analysis considerations, decision-makers can help ensure that Restorative Practices are implemented within the school district with a strong foundation of values and principles that promote fairness, empathy, and ethical growth for all involved.

Conclusion

Restorative Practices refer to various strategies and approaches to promote a sense of community, empathy, and accountability, often within educational, judicial, or organizational settings. The evaluation of Restorative Practices serves several purposes.

Effectiveness Assessment: Evaluations aim to determine how effective Restorative Practices are in achieving their goals. This includes assessing their impact on reducing conflict, improving relationships, enhancing communication, and fostering a sense of accountability and responsibility. The evaluations often compare Restorative Practices with more traditional

punitive approaches to understand the relative effectiveness of each in achieving desired outcomes, such as reducing disciplinary incidents or recidivism rates. Evaluations measure outcomes from implementing Restorative Practices, such as decreased suspension or expulsion rates, improved student engagement, increased academic achievement, and reduced behavioral problems. Evaluations aim to understand the long-term effects of implementing Restorative Practices, including any sustained positive impacts on individuals and the broader community. Understanding how various stakeholders (e.g., students, teachers, parents, and community members) perceive and experience Restorative Practices is essential. Evaluations often include gathering qualitative data to gauge perceptions and attitudes toward these approaches.

Assessing the cost-effectiveness and economic benefits of implementing Restorative Practices is essential for decision-makers, enabling them to allocate resources appropriately and make informed decisions about their adoption. Evaluations help identify areas for improvement in implementing Restorative Practices, allowing for adjustments, refinements, and further development of the approach to enhance its effectiveness.

Insights gained from evaluations can inform policy decisions at organizational, educational, or governmental levels, guiding the development or refinement of programs and policies related to Restorative Practices. Evaluations contribute to the broader field of research on Restorative Practices, generating knowledge that can be shared with practitioners, researchers, and policymakers to advance the understanding and implementation of these approaches.

Overall, evaluating Restorative Practices aims to inform decision-making, improve practice, and ensure that these approaches align with the desired goals of promoting a more just, empathetic, and inclusive society.

The change process in implementing Restorative Practices addresses the intended purpose by facilitating a structured and strategic approach to adoption, implementation, and

evaluation. I will share how the change process aligns with the purpose of Restorative Practices. The change process starts with an assessment of the current state of the organization or system. This helps understand the need for adopting Restorative Practices and ensures that the purpose aligns with addressing existing community challenges, conflicts, and issues. During the change process, clear objectives and goals are set, aligning with the purpose of Restorative Practices. These goals include reducing disciplinary actions, improving relationships, fostering empathy, and creating a more inclusive and accountable environment. Involving stakeholders, including students, teachers, administrators, and community members, ensures that all understand, accept, and embrace the purpose of Restorative Practices. Their engagement helps shape the implementation process to achieve the intended goals better.

The change process involves training stakeholders to implement Restorative Practices effectively. This enhances their capabilities to align with the purpose, enabling them to conduct restorative circles, dialogues, and interventions skillfully and confidently. The change process guides the implementation and integration of Restorative Practices into daily routines and policies. This ensures that the purpose is not just theoretical but is applied in practical situations, promoting community building, conflict resolution, and accountability. The change process emphasizes data collection and evaluation to measure the effectiveness of Restorative Practices. This includes assessing outcomes against the defined goals, thereby addressing the purpose of understanding the impact and effectiveness of these practices. Based on the evaluation findings, the change process encourages feedback and iterative improvements. This allows for continuous refinement and adaptation of Restorative Practices to better align with the intended purpose and enhance their effectiveness. As displayed by data from surveys and interviews, implementation of Restorative Practices and building of relationships is needed in Elm District.

The change process aims at ensuring the sustainability and institutionalization of Restorative Practices. This is vital to maintain the alignment with the purpose in the long term, making Restorative Practices an integral and enduring part of the organizational or educational culture.

By employing a well-structured change process, organizations and communities can effectively align their implementation of Restorative Practices with their intended purpose, maximizing the benefits and achieving the desired goals of promoting a restorative and empathetic community by employing a well-structured change process.

Implementing Restorative Practices in a school or district can significantly impact the overall culture and climate. Here's how my goals related to Restorative Practices are addressed and how they lead to a positive shift in culture and climate. Restorative Practices encourage dialogue and understanding, resulting in a reduction of disciplinary incidents. Addressing conflicts through restorative processes fosters a more peaceful and harmonious environment.

Restorative Practices prioritize relationship-building, empathy, and understanding. Through practices like restorative circles and meetings, relationships among students, staff, and stakeholders are strengthened, creating a sense of community and belonging. Restorative Practices promote empathy by encouraging individuals to understand others' perspectives, feelings, and experiences. This cultivates a culture of empathy, where individuals are more considerate and compassionate towards one another. Restorative Practices emphasize open communication and meaningful dialogue. This improved communication fosters a culture of trust, openness, and effective collaboration within the school or district. Restorative Practices value inclusivity by giving everyone a voice and ensuring that all perspectives are heard and respected. This promotes a sense of equality and inclusivity within the school or district. Restorative Practices hold individuals accountable for their actions in a constructive manner.

This cultivates a culture of responsibility and ownership, where individuals take responsibility for their behaviors and contribute positively to the community. A positive culture and climate from Restorative Practices often correlate with improved academic engagement and achievement. When students feel supported, respected, and connected, they are more likely to be engaged in learning and perform better academically. A restorative culture focuses on holistic well-being, including mental health. By addressing conflicts and building supportive relationships, Restorative Practices contribute to a healthier, less stressful, and more positive school environment. Through continuous training, feedback, and evaluation, Restorative Practices become ingrained in the school or district's culture. This sustainability ensures that the positive impact on culture and climate remains consistent and continues to evolve over time.

Restorative Practices positively influence the culture and climate of a school or district by fostering a sense of community, improving relationships, enhancing communication, promoting empathy, and nurturing a culture of accountability and inclusivity. These shifts contribute to a more conducive and supportive learning, growth, and well-being environment.

To illustrate how my organizational change plan in this paper addressed the issues raised by the evaluation, I wrap up those highlights in the following paragraphs:

With the lack of consistent implementation and understanding of Restorative Practices, inadequate training and support for educators and staff, and limited involvement of students, staff, and parents in the restorative process, the organizational plan discussed addressed many concerns.

Forming a team comprising administrators, teachers, parents, and community members to lead the change initiative ensures diverse perspectives and expertise. As discussed, creating objectives and goals around this plan is essential. Standardizing and enhancing the

implementation of Restorative Practices across all schools within the district, providing a comprehensive training and support for all staff to ensure a consistent understanding and application of Restorative Practices, and involving students, parents, and the community as shaping and participating in the Restorative Practices program with the district helps resolve the issues around this topic. Conducting focus group discussions and surveys to gather feedback from stakeholders regarding their concerns, suggestions, and expectations related to Restorative Practices helps address the concerns based on the data. Developing and delivering workshops and professional development sessions for educators and staff on Restorative Practices helps with conflict resolution and effective communication when working with students. Establishing student-led restorative practice committees within schools helps to involve students in the program's design and implementation of Restorative Practices. It was discussed in the plan how organizing regular parent forums to educate parents about Restorative Practices and seek their input and involvement will help the implementation be successful. As discussed in this paper, it will be imperative to create detailed implementation guidelines and resources for schools, providing step-by-step approaches to integrate Restorative Practices into the daily routines and disciplinary procedures for all. The plan discussed how the district needs to hold regular meetings with the Change Leadership Team to review progress, identify challenges, and make necessary adjustments to the change plan. Recognizing and celebrating schools, educators, and students who demonstrate exceptional commitment and success in implementing Restorative Practices must be highlighted throughout the district. Integrating Restorative Practices into the district's policies and procedures will ensure these practices become a fundamental aspect of the organizational culture.

By following this change plan, the district aims to address the identified issues, enhance the implementation of Restorative Practices, and ultimately create a more inclusive, empathetic,

and accountable educational environment for all. The plan emphasizes engagement, training, involvement of stakeholders, and continuous improvement to achieve these desired outcomes. Creating a policy for Restorative Practices within a school district involves aligning the policy with the issues identified in the program evaluation and the organizational change plan.

As stated above, with the need for consistent implementation and understanding of Restorative Practices, inadequate training and support for educators and staff, and limited involvement of students, staff, and parents in the restorative process, the organizational plan discussed addresses many concerns.

Having a policy emphasizes the need for consistent and widespread implementation of Restorative Practices across all schools within the district. The policy mandates clear implementation guidelines outlining the step-by-step process for integrating Restorative Practices into daily routines, disciplinary procedures, and conflict resolution processes. It underscores the importance of training and professional development to ensure all educators and staff understand Restorative Practices and how to apply them effectively. It stipulates specific training requirements, frequency, and content to ensure that all educators and staff are adequately trained in Restorative Practices. The policy stresses the engagement of students, parents, and the community in the Restorative Practices program. It sets guidelines for involving students in shaping the Restorative Practices approach within their schools and encourages parents to participate in informational sessions and events related to Restorative Practices. The policy mandates regular monitoring and evaluation of the Restorative Practices program to ensure its effectiveness and address any identified issues promptly while reporting requirements, specifying the frequency and nature of reporting to district leadership and stakeholders, allowing for informed decision-making and adaptation of the program. The policy promotes a culture of continuous improvement by encouraging schools to analyze data, collect feedback, and make

data-driven adjustments to improve the implementation of Restorative Practices. It also outlines mechanisms to collect feedback from various stakeholders, such as surveys, focus groups, and regular review meetings, to inform ongoing improvements. As discussed, this policy emphasizes the importance of a robust communication strategy to inform stakeholders about the Restorative Practices program and its progress. The policy encourages recognizing and celebrating achievements in implementing Restorative Practices to motivate and sustain engagement for all involved.

By incorporating these elements into the policy for Restorative Practices, the district will aim to directly address the issues identified in the evaluation and the organization change plan, promoting consistent implementation, comprehensive training, stakeholder involvement, continuous improvement, effective communication, and a culture of recognition and accountability.

The research I read on Restorative Practices in schools provides valuable insights and inspiration for shaping the future of education. I will discuss some critical points that the research I found informs and inspires. The research consistently showed that Restorative Practices enhance relationships among students, teachers, and the wider school community. A positive school climate, characterized by trust, respect, and empathy, is linked to improved student academic and social outcomes. “The field of Restorative Practices offers a framework for implementing schoolwide change while at the same time engaging all of the stakeholders” (Wachtel & Wachtel, 2022, p. 79).

Restorative Practices offer effective alternatives to traditional disciplinary approaches. Research suggests that restorative approaches for addressing conflicts and behavioral issues can reduce suspension rates, expulsions, and disciplinary referrals, promoting a more inclusive and equitable school environment. Studies demonstrate a positive correlation between Restorative

Practices and increased academic engagement and achievement. When students feel a sense of belonging and are emotionally supported, they are more likely to engage in their learning and perform better academically.

Restorative Practices contribute to a decrease in bullying and other negative behaviors by addressing the underlying causes of such actions. Wachtel discusses in his Restorative Practices handbook how fostering understanding, empathy, and accountability, creates an environment where negative behaviors are less likely to occur (Wachtel, 2022). Restorative Practices are aligned with principles of equity and inclusion. The research highlighted how restorative approaches can address disparities and inequities, ensuring that all students have an equal opportunity to voice their concerns and contribute to a fair and just school community. These practices also provide a platform for developing students' essential social and emotional skills. Research indicated that these practices enhance communication, active listening, conflict resolution, emotional regulation, and empathy, which are crucial for success in school and life. These practices also aim to prevent retraumatization and reoffending, especially in students who have faced challenging life circumstances or experienced trauma. These practices break the cycle of punitive responses by addressing harm in a healing and supportive manner. Being restorative encourages involvement and collaboration with the broader community and families. The research highlights the importance of including families in the restorative process to create a cohesive support system and promote a more holistic educational experience. Implementing Restorative Practices positively impacts teacher well-being and job satisfaction. Research suggests that when teachers feel supported in addressing conflicts and maintaining a positive classroom climate, their overall job satisfaction and enthusiasm for teaching improve. The studies I read underscored the need for systemic integration of Restorative Practices involving school, district, and state policy changes. This integration ensures sustained implementation,

adequate resources, and long-term commitment to the principles of restorative justice in education.

In summary, the research on Restorative Practices highlighted the potential to transform educational environments by fostering positive relationships, improving discipline, enhancing academic outcomes, promoting equity and inclusion, and cultivating essential social and emotional skills in students. These findings inspire the education community to prioritize Restorative Practices and integrate them as a fundamental component of educational policies and practices.

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Appendix A: As Is Framework

As Is Framework

4 C's	As Is
Competencies:	<p>Professional Development on Restorative 5 + years ago.</p> <p>Service level districtwide and building practices.</p> <p>SEL is not being monitored, inconsistent, or done with fidelity.</p> <p>Need for building leadership in some buildings.</p> <p>The system overall is punitive, and practices are traditional.</p> <p>Lack of systems in place for classroom-managed practices.</p> <p>When thinking strategically, as a district, there are board goals. However, I don't see the system thinking strategically across the board with timelines and focused specific SMART goals. I also don't see building the capacity of their people across the board. Communication around restorative or building relationships within the system is missing.</p> <p>When identifying student learning needs, there needs to be more teacher knowledge of how to look at learning needs or differentiate them. Regarding gathering and interpreting data, Teams are starting to work with PLCs in the schools. Teachers are looking at AimsWeb Plus data for K-8 and STAR data for 9-12 for academic data. There needs to be data on the effectiveness of relationship building or the implementation of SEL programs or standards.</p> <p>The district is just starting to focus on Professional Learning Community work and hold principals accountable as instructional data leaders with the PLC work. This is a shift in how teams collaborate. They are asking the building principals to be a part of this work. Staff is embarking on collaborating around student data. Based on outside consultants coming in to assess our Tier 1, building principals don't appear to receive critiques well and don't know how to deliver messages to their staff for growth opportunities.</p> <p>Everyone I have talked to wants Restorative Practices to be fully implemented within the district. They don't know how to implement it, or they don't have the people and other resources to "not be punitive." I see some sweeping under the rug or avoiding. A lot of punitive decisions are made. Currently, I haven't seen reflection or teams making mid-course corrections.</p>

Condition	<p>SEL time block built into building schedules. 30-minute blocks</p> <p>Curriculum resources are provided to staff and administrators based on Restorative Practices, discipline practices, SEL resources, trauma-informed resources, etc.</p> <p>Expectations and procedures in place and communicated related to SEL and practices.</p> <p>Time for problem-solving, learning, for talking about challenges is a genuine concern. We have an early release on Monday, every Monday, for 1 hour. However, every Monday is spoken for, and they take time to navigate. Need help to navigate with travel time and based on the buildings. For the PLC time, frequently, not everyone can be at the same time as we have some traveling staff at more than one building.</p> <p>We don't have user-friendly data to help drive instruction. We also don't have resources to help move students in the right direction. No SEL data exists.</p> <p>Regarding agreed-upon performance standards, there is a clear focus on board goals, and MTSS structures are communicated and documented. Data is still low, and procedures still need to be in place/followed. There are agreed-upon standards for K-8. For 9-12 and Pre-K, there are no agreed-upon performance standards. We don't teach the SEL standards or expectations of Restorative districtwide with fidelity.</p> <p>There are clear priorities and focus for each person's work. However, only some people or departments do what was communicated to the public. For example, it was shared that we co-teach at the elementary level. We are doing push-in only. We are not co-teaching. We also don't have the staff to support the focus we shared. We also say we are using Ruler and Second Step, along with Restorative Practices, and there are inconsistencies and a lack of implementation in some schools.</p> <p>We have the schedules and procedures for our district- and building-level support. However, they need to be created to make the right growth needed. We need more time in the schedule for special education services, MTSS instruction, for SEL implementation. Everything is punitive with discipline. Buildings are supported, but most students are out of school suspended.</p>
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Culture	<p>Traditional Punitive Discipline Practices</p> <p>Lack of shared values.</p> <p>Inconsistent behavior expectations districtwide</p> <p>Lack of trusting relationships between staff and some building administration.</p> <p>Lack of trusting relationships between staff and some district administration.</p> <p>Lack of communicated vision and mission</p> <p>Some buildings have celebrations based on positive behavior.</p> <p>Disproportionately, students of color and low-income students were sent out of their classrooms and school community. They may be suspended or sent to the principal's office, but students who are pushed out may drop out.</p> <p>Our level of expectation for students learning this year is that we have focused on Tier 1 support. Our theme is "Whatever it takes, every day, every student." However, I find that teachers don't know how to collect data or post-learning to make learning visible to students. This is also true for social-emotional learning and expectations. I haven't seen expected or unexpected posts discussed, or expectations of the growth mindset aren't discussed or posted.</p> <p>Each school's agenda is based on one team's data. I don't see how they relate to the overall system or board goals. Nothing related to SEL or restorative is being looked at currently.</p> <p>I see the communication from the district to building leaders as a directive with initiatives and received as compliance-oriented. I also see the building admin take it back to their buildings with spin-related information as compliance. No hard conversations or vulnerable data are being examined to move our system forward. The system doesn't do anything right now with no data around SEL and restorative.</p> <p>There is a history of some trust needing to be improved with some individuals.</p> <p>There are many ways to build relationships and repair harm before implementing some initiatives.</p> <p>I also see a need for more teacher voices within our system overall.</p> <p>There is a need for more collaboration with the SEL to meet Restorative Practices' standards and expectations.</p> <p>The district is very much a silo district right now. I don't see the mind frame of our students and inconsistencies with adults taking ownership of this task. It is very much</p>
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	my students and your students. This mind shift needs to occur, and this work must come through actual PLC work.
Context	<p>Unit School District PreK-12</p> <p>Four total schools</p> <p>Diverse population</p> <p>2,788 enrollment</p> <p>38% low income</p> <p>14% of IEP students</p> <p>1 % homeless</p> <p>23% of English Language Learners</p> <p>5% Dropout Rate</p> <p>A committee in place for making decisions with directors</p> <p>Understanding and working with students' families is significant.</p> <p>Translate some things into Polish and Spanish but only some things. We don't recognize the CLR within our schools or community.</p> <p>Community Newsletter to Update about Construction</p> <p>Sees the core competencies students need for work, citizenship, and continuous learning.</p> <p>As a leadership team and district, I don't see the focus on supporting our students to be ready for the real world or continuous learning.</p> <p>Currently, no Strategic Plan is tied to the Board of Education's Goals.</p>

Appendix B: To Be Framework

To Be Framework

4 C's	To Be
Competencies:	<p>Purposeful professional development in Restorative Practices.</p> <p>Practices being embedded in the district system.</p> <p>SEL is monitored, consistent, and done with fidelity.</p> <p>Having instructional leaders in each building to help build the capacity of all staff.</p> <p>Proactive school-wide strategies to create community and build healthy relationships, developing conflict resolution skills, a sense of belonging, and agency.</p> <p>To effectively engage in Restorative Practices, individuals involved should possess specific competencies. These competencies enable them to engage in meaningful dialogue, facilitate healing, and promote accountability.</p> <p>Active Listening: Listening attentively and empathetically to others, seeking to understand their perspectives and experiences without judgment. Active listening allows for deeper connections and understanding during restorative processes.</p> <p>Effective Communication: The skill to communicate respectfully and assertively. Restorative practitioners should be able to express themselves effectively and encourage open and honest communication among participants.</p> <p>Empathy: The capacity to understand and share the feelings, experiences, and perspectives of others. Empathy helps foster compassion, build trust, and promote healing within restorative interactions.</p> <p>Conflict Resolution: Facilitating constructive dialogue and guiding participants towards mutually agreeable resolutions. Restorative practitioners should be skilled in identifying underlying needs, managing emotions, and helping parties find common ground.</p> <p>Cultural Competence: A deep understanding and appreciation of cultural differences and the ability to work effectively with individuals from diverse backgrounds. Restorative practitioners should be sensitive to cultural nuances and ensure that processes are inclusive and respectful of diverse identities and experiences.</p> <p>Trauma-Informed Practice: Knowledge and understanding of trauma and its impacts. Restorative practitioners should be aware of trauma triggers, create a safe and supportive</p>

	<p>environment, and adapt practices to meet the needs of individuals who have experienced trauma.</p> <p>Facilitation Skills: The capacity to facilitate restorative processes, such as circles, conferences, or dialogues. This includes skills in managing group dynamics, guiding discussions, and ensuring equal participation.</p> <p>Conflict Transformation: The ability to reframe conflicts as opportunities for growth, learning, and transformation. Restorative practitioners should help participants move beyond blame and encourage dialogue to promote understanding, empathy, and accountability.</p> <p>Self-Reflection and Self-Awareness: Regularly reflecting on one's biases, values, and assumptions. Restorative practitioners should continuously examine their perspectives and be aware of how they may impact their interactions with others.</p> <p>Ethical Practice: A commitment to upholding ethical principles, such as confidentiality, neutrality, and fairness. Restorative practitioners should adhere to professional standards and promote a sense of trust and integrity within restorative processes.</p> <p>These competencies can be developed through training, professional development, and practical experience. They enable individuals to engage effectively in Restorative Practices, creating a supportive and healing environment for all participants.</p>
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Condition	<p>Dedicated time is built into the school day for staff to practice restorative techniques.</p> <p>Create teams that look at practices within the building to assess the district's approach to school climate, discipline, and Restorative Practices.</p> <p>Voluntary Participation: Restorative Practices should be voluntary for all participants, including students, staff, and community members. Creating an inclusive, and safe environment where individuals feel comfortable participating in restorative processes without coercion or pressure is important.</p> <p>Trust and Safety: Restorative Practices thrive in an environment where trust and safety are prioritized. Establishing trust among participants and creating a safe space where open and honest communication can occur without fear of judgment or retaliation is crucial.</p> <p>Equity and Inclusion: Restorative Practices should be implemented with a commitment to equity and inclusion. This involves ensuring that all individuals have equal access to and benefit from restorative processes regardless of their background or identity. Efforts should be made to address power imbalances and foster a sense of belonging and respect among all participants.</p> <p>Clear Guidelines and Processes: Establish clear guidelines and processes for engaging in Restorative Practices. This includes defining roles and responsibilities, providing participants with a clear understanding of the purpose and expectations of restorative processes, and outlining the steps involved in resolution and healing.</p> <p>Skill Development and Training: Participants should receive adequate training and skill development to facilitate meaningful engagement in Restorative Practices. This includes educating on restorative principles, communication techniques, active listening, empathy, and conflict resolution strategies. Ongoing professional development opportunities should be available to enhance these skills.</p> <p>Collaborative Approach: Restorative Practices emphasize collaboration and shared decision-making. It is essential to create a collaborative environment where all stakeholders actively participate in the process, contribute their perspectives, and work together to address harm, conflicts, or challenging situations.</p> <p>Supportive Structures and Policies: Restorative Practices should be supported by appropriate structures and policies within the school or district. This includes having policies aligning with restorative principles, such as discipline policies prioritizing restoration over punishment. Supportive structures may include designated restorative spaces, trained facilitators, and consistent implementation across classrooms and schools.</p> <p>Continuous Evaluation and Improvement: Restorative Practices require ongoing and continuous improvement. Regularly assess the impact and effectiveness of restorative approaches, gather participant feedback, and make adjustments based on the findings.</p>
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	<p>This iterative process ensures that Restorative Practices evolve and remain responsive to the school community's needs.</p> <p>By establishing these conditions, schools and districts can create an environment where Restorative Practices can flourish and positively impact the educational community's culture, climate, and relationships.</p>
Culture	<p>Processes like circles, conflict-resolution programs, and peer-led practices respond to incidents that cause harm.</p> <p>Continuous learning and professional development will be the norm.</p> <p>Restorative Practices focus on resolving conflict, repairing harm, and healing relationships. They support a positive and safe school climate, prevent bullying, and reduce disciplinary incidents.</p> <p>To foster a culture with Restorative Practices, it is essential to cultivate an environment that embodies the principles and values of restorative justice.</p> <p>Shared Values and Beliefs: Establish a shared understanding and commitment to respect, empathy, accountability, and community building. These values should be embraced and consistently promoted throughout the school or district.</p> <p>Inclusive Community: Foster a sense of belonging and inclusivity by creating a community that targets everyone who feels valued, heard, and respected. Encourage active participation from all stakeholders, including students, staff, parents, and community members.</p> <p>Restorative Language and Communication: Promote restorative language and communication strategies that encourage open dialogue, active listening, and understanding. Encourage using "I" statements, non-violent communication, and restorative questions that promote reflection and personal responsibility.</p> <p>Consistent Modeling: School leaders, staff members, and administrators should consistently model Restorative Practices and behaviors. Demonstrate active listening, empathy, and accountability in interactions with others. Leading by example sets a positive tone for the entire school community.</p> <p>Restorative Processes and Circles: Incorporate restorative processes into daily practices, such as circles or conferences. These processes provide opportunities for dialogue, conflict resolution, and relationship-building.</p> <p>Regularly schedule restorative circles in classrooms, staff meetings, and other settings to address conflicts, build community, and enhance relationships.</p> <p>Relationship Building: Prioritize relationship-building as an essential aspect of the school culture. Encourage meaningful connections among students, staff, and families.</p>

	<p>Provide opportunities for relationship-building activities, team-building exercises, and community-building initiatives.</p> <p>Whole-School Approach: Implement Restorative Practices throughout the school community, ensuring consistency across all levels. Engage all stakeholders in the implementation and decision-making processes, including administrators, teachers, support staff, and students.</p> <p>Training and Professional Development: Provide comprehensive training and professional development opportunities for staff and administrators. Equip them with the knowledge and skills needed to implement Restorative Practices effectively. Offer ongoing support and coaching to sustain their growth and development.</p> <p>Addressing Harm and Conflict: Foster a culture that views harm and conflict as opportunities for growth, repair, and learning. Encourage restorative responses to conflicts, focusing on repairing harm, restoring relationships, and promoting accountability rather than punishment.</p> <p>Continuous Improvement and Evaluation: Regularly evaluate the implementation and impact of Restorative Practices within the school or district. Seek stakeholder feedback, analyze data, and adjust based on the findings. Continuously strive for improvement and refinement in the application of Restorative Practices.</p> <p>Climate and culture with Restorative Practices require a systemic and committed approach. It involves intentionally shifting mindsets, establishing supportive structures, and cultivating positive relationships within the school community.</p>
Context	<p>Unit School District Pre K-12</p> <p>Four total schools</p> <p>Diverse population</p> <p>2,788 enrollment</p> <p>38% low income</p> <p>14% of IEP students</p> <p>1 % homeless</p> <p>23% of English Language Learners</p> <p>5% Dropout Rate</p>

	<p>Put a committee in place for making decisions with directors.</p> <p>Understanding and working with students' families is significant.</p> <p>Translate all communication into Polish and Spanish.</p> <p>Community Newsletter to update the Community on everything.</p> <p>See the core competencies students need for work, citizenship, and continuous learning.</p> <p>Focus on supporting our students to prepare for the real world or continuous learning.</p> <p>Utilize and implement practices to support the culture and climate of the district and schools.</p> <p>Create and implement a Strategic Plan tied to the Board of Education Goals.</p> <p>Cultural Context: Consider the community's cultural norms, values, and traditions in which the Restorative Practices will be implemented. Adapt the language, processes, and approaches to align with the cultural context, ensuring they are inclusive and respectful of diverse perspectives.</p> <p>School/District Environment: Consider the existing school or district environment, including its unique challenges, strengths, and dynamics. Assess the readiness for Restorative Practices and identify any barriers or facilitators to implementation. Understanding the specific context will inform the strategies and approaches for successful integration.</p> <p>Student Population: Recognize the students' diverse needs, backgrounds, and experiences within the school or district. Tailor Restorative Practices to meet the specific needs of the student population, ensuring accessibility and inclusivity. Consider age, developmental stage, language proficiency, and individual circumstances.</p> <p>Staff Readiness and Training: Assess the readiness of the staff to implement Restorative Practices. Provide comprehensive training and professional development opportunities to build staff members' capacity in restorative approaches. Consider their prior knowledge, skills, and experiences, and provide ongoing support to ensure successful implementation.</p> <p>Policy Framework: Align Restorative Practices with existing policies and regulations within the school or district. Review and revise disciplinary policies to emphasize restoration and repair rather than punitive measures. Ensure Restorative Practices are integrated into the overall policy framework to promote consistency and sustainability.</p> <p>Available Resources: Take stock of the available resources, including personnel, time, and funding, that can support the implementation of Restorative Practices. Allocate resources effectively to provide adequate training, materials, and support for staff and students.</p>
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	<p>Community Engagement: Involve parents, families, and community members in implementing Restorative Practices. Seek their input, feedback, and collaboration to ensure the practices align with community expectations and needs. Foster strong partnerships to support the sustainability and success of restorative initiatives.</p> <p>Evaluation and Continuous Improvement: Establish an evaluation framework to monitor the effectiveness and impact of Restorative Practices within the specific context. Collect and analyze data to assess progress, identify areas for improvement, and make data-driven decisions. Regularly review and refine the implementation strategies based on the context-specific findings.</p> <p>Adapting Restorative Practices to the specific context is essential for their successful implementation and sustainability. By considering the cultural, environmental, and systemic factors within the school or district, Restorative Practices can be more effectively integrated and positively impact the community.</p>
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Appendix C: Change Plan

Change Plan Framework

4 C's	Change Plan
Competencies	<p>Creating a change plan for implementing Restorative Practices in my school district so the effect on culture and climate is impacted; some things need to be considered.</p> <p>Comprehensive Implementation: Ensure that Restorative Practices are implemented comprehensively throughout the school district, not limited to specific schools or classrooms. This will create a consistent and unified approach to cultivating a positive culture and climate district-wide.</p> <p>Here's an example of how you could organize the agendas and timelines for a change plan to implement Restorative Practices within a school district:</p> <p>Agenda 1: Pre-Planning Phase (Month 1)</p> <p>Establish Restorative Practices Committee</p> <p>Identify critical stakeholders and invite them to join the committee.</p> <p>Schedule an initial meeting to introduce the objectives and roles of the committee.</p> <p>Conduct Needs Assessment</p> <p>Determine the data collection methods (surveys, focus groups, etc.) and distribute them to relevant stakeholders.</p> <p>Set a deadline for data collection and analysis.</p> <p>Schedule a meeting to review the assessment results and identify priority areas for Restorative Practices.</p> <p>Research and Training</p> <p>Compile resources and materials on Restorative Practices.</p> <p>Schedule professional development sessions or workshops for the committee members to enhance their understanding of restorative approaches.</p> <p>Agenda 2: Planning Phase (Months 2-3)</p> <p>Set Objectives and Goals</p>

	<p>Schedule a meeting with the committee to define specific objectives and goals for implementing Restorative Practices.</p> <p>Document the objectives and goals for reference throughout the implementation process.</p> <p>Develop an Implementation Plan</p> <p>Assign tasks and responsibilities to committee members.</p> <p>Create a timeline with key milestones and deadlines.</p> <p>Determine the necessary resources (budget, personnel, etc.) and identify potential funding sources.</p> <p>Agenda 3: Pilot Phase (Months 4-6)</p> <p>Select Pilot Schools</p> <p>Develop criteria for selecting pilot schools (e.g., size, readiness, diversity).</p> <p>Review potential schools and finalize the selection process.</p> <p>Training and Capacity Building</p> <p>Organize intensive training sessions for selected pilot schools' staff members.</p> <p>Schedule coaching and mentoring sessions to provide ongoing support.</p> <p>Implement Restorative Practices</p> <p>Collaborate with pilot schools to develop implementation plans tailored to their specific needs and context.</p> <p>Schedule regular check-ins and observations to monitor progress and offer guidance.</p> <p>Monitor and Evaluate</p> <p>Establish a data collection and analysis system, including disciplinary incidents, student surveys, and observation notes.</p> <p>Schedule regular meetings to review data and discuss lessons learned.</p> <p>Agenda 4: Scaling Phase (Months 7-12)</p> <p>Expansion to Additional Schools</p> <p>Develop criteria for selecting different schools for implementation.</p> <p>Create a timeline for scaling up Restorative Practices.</p>
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	<p>Training and Support</p> <p>Schedule training sessions for staff members in newly added schools.</p> <p>Establish mentoring partnerships between experienced restorative practitioners and staff members in the new schools.</p> <p>Data Analysis and Reflection</p> <p>Continuously collect and analyze data on school climate, disciplinary incidents, and student outcomes.</p> <p>Schedule meetings to review data and make data-driven decisions for improvement.</p> <p>Agenda 5: Sustaining and Scaling Up (Months 13+)</p> <p>Policy Integration</p> <p>Schedule meetings with district leaders and policymakers to discuss integrating Restorative Practices into district-wide policies.</p> <p>Capacity Building</p> <p>Identify potential candidates for becoming trained restorative practice facilitators within the district.</p> <p>Schedule training sessions and provide ongoing support for capacity building.</p> <p>Community Engagement</p> <p>Schedule workshops or forums to engage parents, community members, and stakeholders in Restorative Practices.</p> <p>Explore partnerships with local organizations to support restorative initiatives.</p> <p>Continuous Improvement</p> <p>Schedule regular meetings with the Restorative Practices Committee to review progress and challenges and adjust implementation strategies.</p> <p>It's important to note that the timelines provided are illustrative and can be adjusted based on your school district's specific context and needs. Additionally, it may be beneficial to create a project management tool, such as a Gantt chart or project management software, to track progress, deadlines, and responsibilities throughout the implementation process.</p> <p>Professional Development: Provide ongoing and extensive professional development opportunities for teachers, administrators, and staff members. This training should cover the principles and techniques of Restorative Practices and effective communication, conflict resolution, and community-building skills. By equipping educators with the</p>
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	<p>necessary tools, they can effectively implement Restorative Practices in their interactions with students and colleagues.</p> <p>Student Empowerment: Actively involve students in shaping Restorative Practices within their schools and the district. Encourage student-led restorative circles, conflict-resolution dialogues, and problem-solving sessions. Giving students a voice and empowering them to take ownership of the process fosters a sense of responsibility, accountability, and agency in creating a positive culture.</p> <p>Parent and Community Engagement: Engage parents, guardians, and community members in Restorative Practices. Offer workshops, informational sessions, and forums where parents can learn about restorative approaches and how to support them at home. Encourage community partnerships to expand the Restorative Practices beyond the school walls and create a holistic, supportive environment.</p> <p>Sustainability and Scaling: Develop a plan for long-term sustainability and scaling of Restorative Practices. This involves building capacity within the district by training additional staff members as restorative practice facilitators and ensuring the integration of restorative approaches into school policies, curricula, and practices. It becomes an enduring and transformative force by embedding Restorative Practices deeper into the district's culture.</p> <p>Restorative Systems and Policies: Implement restorative systems and policies at both the individual school and district levels. This includes incorporating Restorative Practices into discipline policies, establishing clear guidelines for implementing restorative circles and creating processes for addressing conflicts and harm in a restorative manner. Ensuring Restorative Practices are integrated into the district's operations and decision-making processes is essential.</p> <p>Creating Restorative Practices within a school district requires careful planning, coordination, and a phased approach. While the specific timeline and logistics will vary based on the size and context of your school district, here is a general outline to help guide you:</p> <p>Pre-Planning Phase:</p> <p>Establish a Restorative Practices Committee: Form a committee consisting of key stakeholders, such as administrators, teachers, counselors, parents, and community members, to lead the implementation effort.</p> <p>Conduct Needs Assessment: Assess the current climate and culture within the district through surveys, focus groups, and data analysis to identify areas for improvement and determine the specific needs and goals for Restorative Practices.</p> <p>Research and Training: Educate the committee and key personnel about Restorative Practices through workshops, conferences, and professional development opportunities. Build a shared understanding of restorative principles and approaches.</p>
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	<p>Planning Phase:</p> <p>Set Objectives and Goals: Define clear objectives and goals for implementing Restorative Practices. These could include reducing disciplinary incidents, improving relationships, enhancing student engagement, and fostering a positive school climate.</p> <p>Develop an Implementation Plan: Create a detailed plan that outlines the strategies, actions, and timelines for introducing Restorative Practices. Determine the resources, training requirements, and potential challenges that must be addressed.</p> <p>Allocate Resources: Identify the budget, personnel, and infrastructure required to support the implementation plan. Seek funding opportunities, grants, or partnerships to secure the needed resources.</p> <p>Pilot Phase:</p> <p>Select Pilot Schools: Choose a small number of schools within the district to serve as pilot sites for implementing Restorative Practices. Consider factors such as readiness, leadership support, and willingness to embrace the change.</p> <p>Training and Capacity Building: Provide intensive training to the selected pilot schools' staff members, including administrators, teachers, counselors, and support staff, to build their knowledge and skills in Restorative Practices.</p> <p>Implement Restorative Practices: Support the pilot schools in implementing restorative circles, conferences, and other restorative techniques. Provide ongoing coaching, support, and feedback to ensure fidelity to the restorative model.</p> <p>Monitor and Evaluate: Collect data and feedback to assess the impact of Restorative Practices on the pilot schools. This information will inform any necessary adjustments or refinements to the implementation plan.</p> <p>Expansion to Additional Schools: Based on the pilot phase's success and lessons learned, gradually expand the implementation of Restorative Practices to other schools within the district. Prioritize schools based on readiness, commitment, and capacity for implementation.</p> <p>Training and Support: Offer training sessions and ongoing professional development to the newly added schools. Provide mentoring and support from experienced restorative practitioners to ensure effective implementation.</p> <p>Data Analysis and Reflection: Continuously collect and analyze data on disciplinary incidents, student well-being, school climate, and academic outcomes. Regularly assess the impact of Restorative Practices and make data-driven decisions to refine and improve implementation strategies.</p> <p>Policy Integration: Embed Restorative Practices into district-wide policies, including discipline policies, code of conduct, and student support frameworks.</p>
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	<p>Capacity Building: Develop a cadre of trained restorative practice facilitators within the district who can provide ongoing support, training, and coaching to schools.</p> <p>Community Engagement: Engage parents, community members, and other stakeholders in Restorative Practices through workshops, forums, and partnerships.</p> <p>Continuous Improvement: Foster a culture of continuous improvement by regularly reviewing and refining the implementation strategies based on feedback, data analysis, and research on best practices.</p> <p>It's important to note that the timeline for implementing Restorative Practices within a school district can vary significantly based on the district's size, resources, and readiness. It may take several years to embed Restorative Practices fully.</p> <p>Data Collection and Evaluation: Collect and analyze data to assess the impact of Restorative Practices on the culture and climate of the school district. Regularly evaluate the effectiveness of the implemented strategies, identify areas for improvement, and make adjustments accordingly. This data-driven approach will help refine the plan and ensure continuous growth and positive outcomes.</p> <p>Evaluating Restorative Practices within a district is crucial for understanding their effectiveness, identifying areas for improvement, and making data-driven decisions. Here are some key steps and considerations for evaluating Restorative Practices:</p> <p>Determine Evaluation Goals: Clearly define the evaluation goals based on the objectives set during the planning phase. These goals include reducing disciplinary incidents, improving school climate, enhancing student well-being, and promoting positive relationships.</p> <p>Select Evaluation Measures: Identify the specific measures and data sources to assess the impact of Restorative Practices. This may include quantitative data (e.g., disciplinary incidents, attendance rates) and qualitative data (e.g., student and staff surveys, focus groups). Consider using pre- and post-implementation data to compare the outcomes.</p> <p>Collect Data: Implement the data collection methods identified in the previous step. This could involve administering surveys, conducting interviews or focus groups, reviewing disciplinary records, and analyzing relevant school climate data.</p> <p>Analyze Data: Analyze the collected data to assess the impact of Restorative Practices. Use statistical and qualitative methods to identify trends, patterns, and correlations. Compare pre- and post-implementation data to determine changes over time.</p> <p>Review Implementation Fidelity: Evaluate the fidelity of restorative practice implementation. Assess whether the practices were consistently applied and adhered to across schools and classrooms. Consider using fidelity checklists, direct observations, and interviews with staff to gauge implementation fidelity.</p> <p>Engage Stakeholders: Involve various stakeholders, including students, staff, parents, and community members, in the evaluation process. Seek their perspectives, feedback,</p>
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	<p>and experiences related to Restorative Practices. This can be done through surveys, focus groups, or individual interviews.</p> <p>Identify Strengths and Areas for Improvement: Analyze the evaluation findings to identify the strengths and areas for improvement in implementing Restorative Practices. Look for patterns and trends in the data that indicate successful outcomes and areas that need further attention.</p> <p>Report and Communicate Results: Compile the evaluation findings into a comprehensive report. Present the results to the Restorative Practices Committee, district leadership, school staff, and other relevant stakeholders. Communicate the findings, including successes and improvement areas, to ensure transparency and facilitate ongoing dialogue.</p> <p>Adjust Implementation Strategies: Use the evaluation results to inform adjustments and refinements to the implementation strategies. Identify specific actions and interventions to address the areas for improvement and build upon the strengths identified.</p> <p>Continuous Evaluation: Implement a system of ongoing evaluation to monitor the long-term impact of Restorative Practices. Regularly collect and analyze data to assess progress, make informed decisions, and continuously improve the implementation of Restorative Practices within the district.</p> <p>Remember that the evaluation process should be ongoing and iterative. It is essential to regularly revisit and refine evaluation measures, collect new data, and assess the effectiveness of implemented changes to ensure continuous improvement in the district's Restorative Practices.</p> <p>Training and Professional Development:</p> <p>Ensure that school staff, including teachers, administrators, and support personnel, receive adequate training in Restorative Practices. They should understand the principles, techniques, and skills necessary to implement these approaches effectively.</p> <p>Gain support from school leadership, including principals and superintendents. Implementing Restorative Practices throughout the school district can be challenging without leadership buy-in.</p> <p>Establish clear and consistent policies and procedures for implementing Restorative Practices. These should include guidelines for addressing various situations, roles, and responsibilities, and the process for referring cases to restorative interventions.</p> <p>Ensure that all members of the school community—students, parents, teachers, and staff—are actively engaged in implementing Restorative Practices. Encourage participation from all stakeholders to create a more inclusive and collaborative school culture.</p> <p>Allocate necessary resources, such as time, space, and materials, to support the implementation of Restorative Practices. Ensure adequate infrastructure, such as designated spaces for restorative meetings or circles.</p>
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	<p>Develop a system for collecting and analyzing data related to the impact of Restorative Practices. Regular evaluation helps assess the effectiveness of these approaches in improving school culture, reducing disciplinary issues, and enhancing relationships.</p> <p>Maintain consistency in applying Restorative Practices throughout the school district. Ensure all staff members use the same procedures and techniques to promote a unified approach.</p> <p>Forge partnerships with community organizations and agencies that can provide support and resources for Restorative Practices. These partnerships can enhance the effectiveness of interventions and expand the reach of restorative efforts.</p> <p>Ensure that Restorative Practices are integrated into the broader school culture and not treated as a separate program. Sustainability is key to long-term success, so these approaches should become part of the school environment.</p> <p>Consider the cultural and contextual factors that may influence the implementation of Restorative Practices. Be sensitive to the needs and perspectives of diverse student populations and adapt practices accordingly.</p> <p>Provide students with training in conflict resolution skills and strategies. This empowers them to participate in the restorative process actively and promotes personal growth.</p> <p>Engage parents and guardians in the restorative process, especially when incidents involve their children. Encourage their active participation and support in resolving conflicts and rebuilding relationships.</p>
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Condition	<p>Ensure that school staff, including teachers, administrators, and support personnel, receive adequate training in Restorative Practices. They should understand the principles, techniques, and skills necessary to implement these approaches effectively.</p> <p>Gain support from school leadership, including principals and superintendents. Implementing Restorative Practices throughout the school district can be challenging without leadership buy-in.</p> <p>Establish clear and consistent policies and procedures for implementing Restorative Practices. These should include guidelines for addressing various situations, roles, and responsibilities, and the process for referring cases to restorative interventions.</p> <p>Ensure that all members of the school community—students, parents, teachers, and staff—are actively engaged in implementing Restorative Practices. Encourage participation from all stakeholders to create a more inclusive and collaborative school culture.</p> <p>Allocate necessary resources, such as time, space, and materials, to support the implementation of Restorative Practices. Ensure adequate infrastructure, such as designated spaces for restorative meetings or circles.</p> <p>Develop a system for collecting and analyzing data related to the impact of Restorative Practices. Regular evaluation helps assess the effectiveness of these approaches in improving school culture, reducing disciplinary issues, and enhancing relationships.</p> <p>Maintain consistency in applying Restorative Practices throughout the school district. Ensure all staff members use the same procedures and techniques to promote a unified approach.</p> <p>Forge partnerships with community organizations and agencies that can provide support and resources for Restorative Practices. These partnerships can enhance the effectiveness of interventions and expand the reach of restorative efforts.</p> <p>Ensure that Restorative Practices are integrated into the broader school culture and not treated as a separate program. Sustainability is key to long-term success, so these approaches should become part of the everyday school environment.</p> <p>Consider the cultural and contextual factors that may influence the implementation of Restorative Practices. Be sensitive to the needs and perspectives of diverse student populations and adapt practices accordingly.</p> <p>Provide students with training in conflict resolution skills and strategies. This empowers them to participate in the restorative process actively and promotes personal growth.</p> <p>Engage parents and guardians in the restorative process, especially when incidents involve their children. Encourage their active participation and support in resolving conflicts and rebuilding relationships.</p>
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Culture	<p>Foster a culture of openness, trust, and psychological safety where students and staff feel comfortable expressing their thoughts, feelings, and concerns without fear of reprisal. This is essential for honest and effective communication.</p> <p>Shift the mindset from punitive discipline to viewing conflicts and behavioral issues as opportunities for learning and growth. Encourage a perspective that sees Restorative Practices as a means to address harm, repair relationships, and prevent recidivism.</p> <p>Promote empathy and respect as core values within the school culture. All community members should be encouraged to understand and value the experiences and perspectives of others.</p> <p>Involve students, teachers, administrators, and support staff in collaborative decision-making processes related to Restorative Practices. This includes developing policies, procedures, and interventions in a participatory manner.</p> <p>Commit to equity and inclusion in all aspects of the school culture. Address disparities in discipline and ensure that Restorative Practices are applied consistently and fairly to all students, regardless of their background or identity.</p> <p>Ensure that school leaders, including principals and superintendents, strongly advocate for Restorative Practices. Leadership support is essential for creating buy-in from the entire school community.</p> <p>Provide opportunities for students and staff to develop effective communication skills. This includes active listening, empathetic communication, and constructive dialogue.</p> <p>Encourage a sense of ownership and accountability for one's actions. All community members should understand that they are responsible for the well-being of the school and the relationships within it.</p> <p>Ensure that Restorative Practices are integrated into the everyday fabric of the school culture rather than seen as a separate program. Consistency is key to success.</p> <p>Offer education and training in conflict resolution and Restorative Practices to all community members, including students, staff, and parents. This ensures that everyone understands the principles and techniques involved.</p> <p>Create a culture of continuous improvement by regularly assessing and evaluating the effectiveness of Restorative Practices and making adjustments as necessary.</p> <p>Implement positive reinforcement and recognition systems to celebrate successes and encourage the adoption of restorative approaches. Highlight instances where conflicts were resolved, and relationships were repaired.</p>
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Appendix D: Strategies and Action Chart

Kotter's 8-Steps/Strategies	Elm District Action Steps
<p>Step 1: Create a Sense of Urgency Strategy: Build Awareness and Understanding</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Organize awareness sessions with expert speakers on Restorative Practices. ● Distribute educational materials and resources to stakeholders. ● Highlight the potential positive impacts on student behavior, relationships, and overall school climate.
<p>Step 2: Build a Guiding Coalition Strategy: Form a Dedicated Team</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Identify and invite influential individuals, including teachers, counselors, parents, and student representatives, to join the coalition. ● Hold regular meetings to define goals, roles, and responsibilities within the coalition.
<p>Step 3: Form a Strategic Vision and Initiatives Strategy: Develop a Comprehensive Plan</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Facilitate workshops and brainstorming sessions to define the vision and set achievable short-term and long-term goals. ● Encourage feedback and input from all stakeholders to ensure a shared vision.
<p>Step 4: Communicate the Vision Strategy: Foster Open Communication</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Create informative brochures, newsletters, and a dedicated webpage about Restorative Practices on the school's website. ● To address concerns and queries, organize community meetings, information sessions, and Q&A sessions.
<p>Step 5: Empower Others to Act on the Vision Strategy: Foster Ownership and Involvement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Organize professional development and workshops on Restorative Practices for teachers and staff. ● Facilitate student-led initiatives, such as peer mediation programs and restorative circles.
<p>Step 6: Generate Short-Term Wins Strategy: Showcase Early Successes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Share success stories, testimonials, and data illustrating improvements in student behavior, conflict resolution, and overall school climate. ● Recognize and reward individuals or groups for their contributions to successfully adopting Restorative Practices.
<p>Step 7: Consolidate Gains and Produce More Change Strategy: Institutionalize Restorative Practices</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Revise school policies and codes of conduct to reflect restorative principles and procedures.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Train staff on incorporating Restorative Practices, classroom management, and disciplinary actions into their teaching methods.
<p>Step 8: Anchor New Approaches in the Culture</p> <p>Strategy: Reinforce the Cultural Shift</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Conduct regular workshops and refresher training sessions to reinforce the principles of Restorative Practices. ● Encourage dialogue and feedback loops to ensure continuous improvement and adaptation to the evolving needs of the school community.

Appendix E: Student Interview

1. What grade are you in?
2. How does your teacher invite/include you in learning?
3. How does your school celebrate achievement and good behavior?
4. What does discipline/misbehavior look like in your classroom? What does the teacher do if students aren't paying attention in class?
5. What does discipline/misbehavior look like in your school? Can you tell me what it looks like if a student isn't making a good choice?
6. What do model/positive behaviors look like in your classroom? What does the teacher do if students pay attention in class and make good choices?
7. How does your teacher greet you as you enter your classroom?
 - a. How would you like your teacher to greet you in the morning or as you enter your classroom?
 - b. How should teachers greet their students?
 - c. What feelings does this give students daily?
8. How would you describe your relationship with your teachers?
9. How would you describe your relationship with your classmates and peers?
10. How does your teacher help resolve conflict/misunderstandings within your classroom?
11. How does your teacher gather feedback about your view of your learning?
12. Is there anything else you want to share related to this topic?

Appendix F: Admin/Teacher Interview Questions

1. What grade do you teach, and how long have you been at this school?
2. How do you invite students into learning?
3. How does your school celebrate achievement and good behavior?
4. What does discipline look like in your classroom?
5. What does discipline look like in your school?
6. What do model behaviors look like in your classroom?
7. How would you describe your relationship with your students?
8. How would you describe the students' relationship with one another?
9. How do you help students resolve conflict?
10. Do you have any evidence or data to support your thinking?
11. How do you gather feedback from your students about their view of their learning environment?
12. When students offer their opinions and ideas, how does that change how you lead or what you do as an educator?
13. Is there anything else you would like to share related to this topic?

Appendix G: Student Survey Questions

Student Survey Questions Google Form

Please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statements.

Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Agree, Strongly Agree

My teacher knows my name.

My teacher brings the right attitude to school daily.

I feel comfortable sharing personal information with my teacher about what is happening at home or in my personal life.

Your teacher knows about your interests, hobbies, aspirations, and family life.

My teacher or other staff I work with attends extracurricular activities I am in outside of school.

Your teachers hand out student interest surveys.

How often does your teacher update the student interest survey?

0-1 times a year

2-3 times a year

4+ times a year

Rate the statements below.

Not at all, Sometimes, Often, Always

My teacher knows my hopes and dreams.

My teacher and/or principal talked to me about my future.

My teacher gives me feedback on my work besides just grades.

I am provided opportunities to use my imagination.

When my parent(s) and teachers meet, I am included.

My teachers have high expectations for me.

Learning is relevant to me.

Please indicate if these Restorative Practices are used in your school.

Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Agree, Strongly Agree

Students use affective statements when interacting with others.

Students have an understanding of the impact of their actions on others.

Students express how other students have hurt them.

Students seem to understand the goal and purpose of Restorative Practices.

Students seem to respect Restorative Practices.

Please indicate the frequency of the following statements as they apply to the affective statements. Affective statements are personal expressions of how a positive or negative behavior has affected you.

Not at all, Rarely, Sometimes, Often, Always

I use affective statements informally throughout the day.

I use “I” statements to express my feelings.

I actively encourage students to express their feelings.

When providing positive or negative feedback, I identify specific and concrete behaviors.

I deliver feedback in a personalized way directly to the student who impacted others.

Affective statements are a part of “how we do things” at our school.

Circles are a part of “how we do things” at our school.

Not at all

Rarely

Sometimes

Often

Always

Please indicate the frequency of the following statements as they apply.

Not at all, Rarely, Sometimes, Often, Always

Your teacher provides opportunities for those harmed to be heard and to have and say what needs to happen to make things right.

When facilitating a small impromptu conference, your teacher encourages students to do most of the talking.

Your teacher asks the wrongdoer to identify who was harmed and what was done.

Your teacher asks students to take specific actions to repair the harm.

Your teacher should use a respectful tone and avoid lecturing or yelling.

How many restorative circles have you done with students on average per week this school year?

Please indicate the frequency of the following statements as they apply to restorative circles.

Not at all, Rarely, Sometimes, Often, Always

Your teacher uses circles as a response to an incident/problem.

Students feel safe to take risks in your classroom.

Students are encouraged in the circle to confront each other when necessary.

Students take responsibility for their own behavior.

Restorative circles are a part of how we do things in this school.

When using the best practices for supporting student self-worth, rate the statements below on how you feel your teachers and principals support you.

Not at all, Sometimes, Often, Always

You are treated like individuals who have unique skills and talents.

Your teachers and principals welcome and solicit divergent opinions and ideas.

Your teachers and principals know your strengths and challenges.

Your teacher greets you as you enter your classroom.

Your principals greet you as you enter the building.

You are respected as an individual.

Your teachers and principals are your role models in your school or classroom.

You create portfolios to represent your best work.

Your hard work and persistence are valued.

Appendix H: Admin/Teacher Survey Questions

Which of the following best describes your current primary role at your school?

Classroom teacher

Administrator

You indicated that you are a classroom teacher. Please select all the grades you currently work with below. (Check all that apply). Pre-K - 12

Please provide your total years as a teacher, irrespective of location:

0-4

4-8

8-10

11-15

16-20

21+

How many years have you been in your current school?

0-4

4-8

8-10

11-15

16-20

21+

Thinking back over the entire school year, please indicate how often the following items apply to your school.

Never, Rarely, Sometimes, Often, Always

1. The environment is conducive to learning
2. The staff treat other staff with respect.
3. The staff treat students with respect.
4. Students treat staff with respect.
5. Parent treat staff with respect.
6. Students are threatened by other students in my school.
7. Students are bullied by other students in my school.
8. Students physically fight with one another in my school.
9. Gang activity is a problem in my school.

When using the best practices for supporting students, rate the statements below.

Not at all, Sometimes, Often, Always

I know my students' hopes and dreams.

I regularly talk with my students about their future.

I assess and evaluate student progress using more than just grades.
I share my professional journey with my students.
I provide opportunities for students to use their imaginations.
I involve my students in conferences with their parents.
As a principal, I encourage my staff to hold student-led conferences school-wide.
I hold high expectations for all of my students.
I make learning relevant for all of my students.

Please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statements.

Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Agree, Strongly Agree

1. I believe that Restorative Practices can help to improve student behavior.
2. The majority of staff in this school believes that Restorative Practices can help improve student behavior.
3. Learning Restorative Practices is worth my time.
4. Adopting Restorative Practices is worthwhile for my school.
5. I am confident that I know the restorative practice methods.
6. I am confident in my ability to use Restorative Practices with the majority of students in my class/school.
7. Student behavior in my school has generally improved this year.
8. Student behavior in my school has improved as a result of Restorative Practices.
9. The school culture and climate have generally improved this year.
10. The school culture and climate have improved as a result of Restorative Practices.
11. The way that students handle conflict with adults has improved as a result of Restorative Practices.
12. The way that students handle conflicts with other students has improved as a result of Restorative Practices.
13. The way that adults handle conflicts with other adults has improved as a result of Restorative Practices.

Please indicate the extent to which you feel you understand the elements of Restorative Practices.

- ☐ I do not understand Restorative Practices.
- ☐ I know what some of the elements are, but I could not define them
- ☐ I know 7 elements we learned this year
- ☐ I know 7 elements and could explain them to a peer
- ☐ I could train another person to use the 7 elements I have learned this year

Please indicate the frequency of the following statements as they apply to the affective statements. Affective statements are personal expressions of how a positive or negative behavior has affected you.

Not at all, Rarely, Sometimes, Often, Always

I use affective statements informally throughout the day.

I use “I” statements to express my feelings.

I actively encourage students to express their feelings.

When providing positive or negative feedback, I identify specific and concrete behaviors.

I deliver feedback in a personalized way directly to the student who impacted others.

I distinguish the deed from the do-er.

Affective statements are a part of “how we do things” at our school.

Please indicate the frequency of the following statement as they apply to proactive circles.

Not at all, Rarely, Sometimes, Often, Always

I use circles to provide opportunities for students to share feelings, ideas, and experiences.

In the circles, one person speaks at a time.

In the circles, participants are focused on the explicit topic

I model desired behaviors and responses for the participants within the circle

I set a positive tone when I begin a circle.

I am ready with a response to participants who ask to “pass.”

I sit *in* the circle.

I pick topics that encourage risk-taking.

How many content/instructional circles have you done with students on average per week this school year?

How many impromptu circles have you done with students on average per week this school year?

Please indicate the frequency of the following statements as they apply to impromptu circles.

Not at all, Rarely, Sometimes, Often, Always

I provide opportunities for those harmed to be heard and have a say in what needs to happen to make things right.

When facilitating a small impromptu conference, I encourage students to do most of the talking.

I distinguish the deed from the do-er.

I ask the wrongdoer to identify who has been harmed and what harm was done.

I ask students to take specific actions to repair the harm.

I use a respectful tone and avoid lecturing.

How many restorative circles have you done with students on average per week this school year?

Please indicate the frequency of the following statements as they apply to restorative circles.

Not at all, Rarely, Sometimes, Often, Always

I use circles as a response to an incident/problem.

Students feel safe taking risks.

I encourage students in the circle to confront each other when necessary.

I encourage students to take responsibility for their own behavior.

Restorative circles are a part of how we do things in this school.

Rate the statements below when using the best practices for supporting student self-worth.

Not at all, Sometimes, Often, Always

I treat students as individuals who have unique skills and talents.

I welcome and solicit divergent opinions and ideas.

I know my students' strengths and challenges.

I greet my students as they enter the building or classroom.

My students know I respect them as individuals.

I am a positive role model for my students in my school or classroom.

My students within my school and/or classroom create portfolios to represent their best work.

Students know that I, their teacher and/or principal, value their hard work and persistence.

When using the best practices for supporting students and guiding aspirations, rate the statements below.

Not at all, Sometimes, Often, Always

I ask students regularly about their hopes and dreams.

I incorporate student interest in my teaching and/or leading.

I ride the school bus at least twice a year to understand my students' journey.

I greet students when they enter my classroom or building.