

Resources

Restorative Justice Organizing Committee of the BTU

A learning community open to all that also advocates, and provides access to resources, for RJ practices across the BPS district. Meetings are monthly. If you would like to participate, receive updates, or a more extensive list of resources, contact: Jessica Tang at Jtang@btu.org or Shanika Houlder-White at shoulder@btu.org, 617-288-2000

Institute for Restorative Initiatives (IRIS)

In partnership with Suffolk University, IRIS provides training, research, and consultation to assist schools in the development, implementation and evaluation of restorative practices. Contact: Carolyn Boyes-Watson crj@suffolk.edu, 617-305-1991

Living Justice Press

livingjusticepress.org

A non-profit publisher for restorative justice, including the invaluable guidebook manual for schools, "Circle Forward: Building a Restorative School Community" by Carolyn Boyes-Watson and Kay Pranis. Contact: ljpress@aol.com

COCAC (Code of Conduct Advisory Council)

Quarterly meetings are open to all stakeholders to collaboratively improve disciplinary policies and positive school climates. Contact: Monica Roberts BPS Office of Engagement, 617-635-9660

BPS Office of Social Emotional Learning & Wellness

bostonpublicschools.org/Domain/2141

Supports schools to implement the Whole Child, Whole School, Whole Community Approach. Contact: Assistant Superintendent Amalio Nieves anieves2@bostonpublicschools.org, 617-635-9698

Boston's Comprehensive Behavioral Health Model

cbhmboston.com

Integrates tiered supports and services. Currently 50 schools, 10 more added each year. Contact: Andria Amador at aamador@bostonpublicschools.org, 617-635-9676

Social-Emotional Learning Alliance for Massachusetts

SEL4MA.org

There are many urban Restorative Justice programs developing: San Francisco, Denver, Minneapolis, Houston, Detroit, Chicago.....Google them. Three examples:

Oakland Schools

ousd.org/restorativejustice

Extensive lists and pages of user-ready resources.

restorativejustice.nyc

Excellent source of resource material and weekly newsletter.

Los Angeles Unified School District

Extensive pages of Restorative Justice program resources, achieve.lausd.net/Page/4754

Impact of Restorative Justice Practices

There has been substantial growth in the number of schools practicing RJ in the Oakland Unified School District in the past decade, growing from 1 in 2005 to 24 in 2013-14 school year. Here are some key findings from an "Implementation and Impacts" report OUSD released January, 2015. Restorative Practices:

Reduced Referrals for Disruptive Behaviors

At schools with RJ, more than 88% of teachers reported that restorative practices were somewhat or very helpful in managing difficult student behaviors in the classroom.

Reduced Suspension Rates of African American Students

Suspensions for disruption/willful defiance among African American students were reduced by a rate of 37%.

Increased Graduation Rates

Four year graduation in RJ schools increased significantly over 3 years - a cumulative increase of 60%, compared to just 7% in non-RJ schools.

Reduced Overall Suspension Rates

In Whole School Restorative Justice schools, the suspension rate dropped from 34% to 14% over 3 years.

Increased Attendance

While in non-RJ schools there was a staggering 62% increase in absenteeism, middle schools with an RJ program demonstrated a 24% reduction in absenteeism.

Source: <http://www.ousd.org/cms/lib07/CA01001176/Centricity/Domain/134/OUSD-RJ%20Report%20revised%20Final.pdf>



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What are Restorative Justice Practices?

Restorative Practices involve community building, empowerment and intervention *before and after* harm has happened while preventing future conflict by creating a sense of belonging, safety and social responsibility.

Restorative Practices work best as a whole school model, used to enhance teaching and learning, and to develop school self-governance, culture and positive school climate. The practices build healthy relationships and develop social, and emotional skills.

Harm affects everyone in a community. Only together can it be repaired, and trust must be rebuilt. When used in disciplinary interventions, Restorative Justice Practices employ standardized protocols to reconcile relationships, increasing trust and safety for the future.



Restorative Justice Practices are based on the belief that every person is good in their core being and that every person's talents are needed by the community.

Restorative Justice Practices Triangle Whole School Approach



Adapted from *Implementing Restorative Practices in Schools* by Margaret Thorsborne and Peta Blood

Why Restorative Justice Practices?

- RJ Practices defuse rather than escalate sensitive situations.
- RJ Practices foster empathy.
- RJ Practices create peaceful resolutions.
- RJ Practices teach social emotional skills essential for school, work and life.

The Restorative Approach Restorative Justice requires a paradigm shift

School Discipline Asks...	Restorative Justice Asks...
1. What rule was broken?	1. Who was hurt/affected?
2. Who broke it?	2. What are their needs?
3. What punishment is warranted?	3. How do all affected parties together address needs and repair harm? Who is obligated to repair those needs?

Benefits of Restorative Justice Practices

1. **BUILD** empathy and problem solving skills for positive relationships.
2. **PROVIDE** safe, supportive and caring learning environments.
3. **REDUCE** disciplinary problems and interrupt the school to prison pipeline.
4. **MODEL** fair practices of responsibility, ownership, accountability and respect.

Testimonies



"Circles at the school have helped my theater class grow as a whole and resolve issues. Circles have also helped me improve myself mentally and in an educational sense to really accept what is being said to me on how to process and resolve any issue and or events."

Shaynia, Boston Arts Academy student

"Circle Practice is a MUST for BPS. It helped me get to know myself better as a speaker, leader and thinker, while simultaneously letting me get to know my community better as individuals and a larger entity. I looked forward to the prompts that would push my own thinking, but also the answers of my peers which would highlight conclusions I may not have come to on my own. Circles are important to prevent problems from occurring in the first place as well as simply to check in on the climate of a community."



Daniel, Boston Arts Academy student

"After two of us at my school went to the Restorative Justice trainings, we started conducting the community building circles with a few classes, and from there we tried to use Restorative Justice circles when there was conflict between students. We have had a lot of success with the circles when there is student conflict. Restorative Justice has given our students the language they need to talk out issues and come up with solutions."

Vikki K., Hennigan K-8 School teacher