North East Independent School District

Ed White Middle School Restorative Discipline Evaluation:
Implementation and Impact, 2012/2013
Sixth Grade

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Executive Summary

The purpose of this evaluation study is to assess the process and outcomes of the first-year implementation of a school-wide restorative justice intervention for discipline at Ed White Middle School in San Antonio, Texas. Restorative Discipline is proactive approach to discipline management that seeks to redress bullying and the disproportionate assignment of suspensions and Disciplinary Alternative Education Programs (DAEP) among minority students. Instead of viewing misbehavior as a violation of rules and authority, Restorative Discipline seeks to change our views of student misconduct and in doing so impacts bullying and other infractions. As such it uses a relationship perspective where the focus is on the culture of the school and the violation of people and relationships. This study examines the first year of a three-year implementation at the sixth grade level. The seventh and eighth grade levels will be added consequentially in subsequent years, e.g. seventh grade in 2013-2014; eighth grade in 2014-2015.

Evaluation questions are:
  (1) What is the change in sixth-grade student risk behaviors, e.g. suspension, absenteeism, bullying?
  (2) What are the changes in the sixth-grade school climate?
  (3) What is the experience of sixth-grade teachers who implement Restorative Discipline for learning in their classrooms and school leaders who use Restorative Discipline for student misconduct?

Methodology
The sample for this evaluation was comprised of all sixth-grade teachers, the school leadership, sixth-grade students and parents/caregivers of these students. Information was collected for three purposes. (1) Information was gathered from school records to assess change in students' behaviors. Records included offense frequencies, suspensions, student tardiness, and student performance on state-mandated tests. (2) Information was gathered from climate surveys to assess change in school climate. The surveys were administered three times to students, parents/caregivers and teachers. (3) Information was gathered from a monthly review of materials to assess the experiences of teachers and school leadership in implementing Restorative Discipline. Materials included teacher self-assessment implementation checklists, Restorative Discipline forms, transcripts from weekly teacher interviews, and transcripts from focus groups.

In compliance with The University of Texas at Austin Institutional Review Board and The Department of Research and Information Technologies for the North East Independent School District, participation in this study was voluntary. Specific steps were taken to ensure that the participants' identities were protected. Survey data were analyzed primarily using descriptive statistics. Restorative Discipline forms and interview data were organized or grouped into properties and later developed into contextual themes. The findings are grounded with the use of direct quotes from participants.

Findings
The first year of using the Restorative Discipline program shows promise in terms of student outcomes, students' response, teacher's interest and the school's commitment to implementation.

- The school had an 84 percent drop in the use of off campus suspension and a 30 percent drop in the use of in school suspension lasting 1-3 days for student misconduct.

- The school had reductions in all suspension rates including overnight suspensions and placement in the Alternative Education Program. If the Partial Day I.S.S., which is the new classification for misconduct addressed by the Restorative Discipline program is removed, the percentage change in total suspensions falls to 44 percent. These figures do not indicate a change in the frequency or nature of misconduct or more major offenses. Rather they show the success of the school's commitment not to extrude students or use punitive approaches to discipline.

- School Climate Surveys show that parents/caregivers and students had a stronger sense of procedural fairness in how decisions about discipline were made as the year progressed.

- School Climate Surveys show that students more strongly agreed, as the year progressed, with the statement that the person harmed in cases of bullying is asked to say what could be done to make things better.

- October, January and February are peak months for student tardiness and frequency of conduct offenses. These are months where more resources are needed such as time community building in the classroom or student-lead campaigns to reduce violence.

- The three top monthly offense frequencies are for minor infractions, namely disruption of the classroom, failure to follow directions, and VP-RW (tardiness which results in a disciplinary referral). Bullying is not a frequent offense at Ed White.

- Teachers' self assessments of skills in doing restorative practices show a slight but spotty increase. Teachers indicate some difficulty asking for assistance in learning new skills and using Restorative Discipline principles consistently.

- Use and acceptance of Restorative Discipline is not uniform among teachers. Teachers who used Restorative Discipline used it primarily for conduct issues. They had more difficulty using Restorative Dialogue for classroom management, and community building or using circles for delivering course content.

- Teachers used Restorative Discipline more in the first semester (September-December) than in the second semester (January –May) averaging approximately 30 administrator and teacher-facilitated Restorative Discipline conferences and circles in 2012-2013.

- Students responded enthusiastically to Restorative Discipline. They talked readily in their classes when the teacher did restorative circles. They helped develop a form called Circle-It that was adopted by the administration as an early alert system for student conflict. They made requests directly to the administration for facilitation of Restorative Discipline for peer conflict and for handling problems before they escalated into physical confrontations.

- There was limited training, limited availability of the external consultant, and a lack of clear procedures about Restorative Discipline. Although these issues impacted the transition to a Restorative Discipline approach, the school used these difficulties as learning opportunities for the next year.

- There was a delay in using agreements and monitoring plans when doing Restorative Discipline conferences and circles. Teachers responded by pairing Restorative Discipline with traditional discipline. This ad hoc solution did not result in a significantly higher use of suspensions.

- The teachers that integrated Restorative Discipline in the classroom found that they created relationships with the students that prevented class breakdown during high stress periods in the school.

Recommendations
- Ensure that teacher training in Restorative Discipline includes practical application of the approach through concrete examples and role plays.

- Provide opportunities for continuing education and discussion forums on Restorative Discipline throughout the year.

- Create a handbook for teachers that describes restorative justice, circles, elements of a circle, circle openings and closings, types of circles, questions to use with someone who has been harmed and the person responsible for that harm, and tools for making agreements and monitoring plans.

- Develop a plan for use of Restorative Discipline in transition zones such as hallways, the lunchroom and locker rooms. Many instances of misconduct in 2012-2013 took place during these unstructured and lightly supervised times. These are times when conflicts between students "across classes" are apt to flare.

- Provide greater feedback to teachers about the use of Restorative Discipline in the school.

- Engage students in Restorative Discipline through peer-facilitated circles. Select trainees who are leaders among their peers, whether in positive or negative ways, to increase interest, respect and acceptance of peer-facilitated circles and as an opportunity to instill responsibility and pro social leadership skills in these students.

- Involve parents/caregivers both in restorative conferences and circles, as appropriate, and on an advisory council.

North East Independent School District

Ed White Middle School Restorative Discipline Evaluation
Sixth Grade: 2012-2013

Background

In Spring of 2012, the administration at Ed White Middle School decided to implement Restorative Discipline (RD) as a proactive approach to discipline management.   Concerned about bullying and the disproportionate assignment of suspensions and DAEP placements among minority students for school districts across the state, as well as within their own school, Ed White contracted with the Institute for Restorative Justice and Restorative Discipline (IRJRD) to infuse RD sequentially over three years beginning with the 6th grade during school year 2012-2013. IRJRD arranged for training of administration and 6th grade teachers in restorative circle facilitation as well as for on-site consultation in the use of circles as a problem-solving measure in the classroom during the year. The goal of this project was to decrease instances of bullying, discipline referrals, assignments to a DAEP, and improve the relationship between the teachers, administrators, and their students.

Ed White is an urban school located in San Antonio, Texas.   It is part of the North East Independent School District. Out of 985 students, 331 are sixth graders. The student body is 30% African American, 53% Hispanic, 13% White and 4% Asian/Pacific Islander. Approximately 81.6% of students are economically disadvantaged. Students perform well below the state average in passing STAAR scores.   The school's teachers are 15% African American, 20% Hispanic, and 61% White. They are predominantly female (73%). The majority of teachers have 1-5 years experience (38%). The 36% of teachers with the most experience (over 11 years) fall below the percentage for highest employment longevity, which is 46% for the district. Teachers at Ed White are paid more than the state average.

In addition to coordinating the training and on-site consultation, IRJRD conducted an evaluation of both the implementation process and the impact of RD on students and teachers. Heretofore, studies had been conducted on student outcomes, but little was known about the school-wide implementation process itself. Without such information it is difficult to successfully transfer the process from one school to another. This report describes the formative and summative results from the 2012-2013 RD program for the 6th grade at Ed White Middle School.

Review of Literature

Schools are beset with complex challenges in their efforts to educate students. The get tough policies created to ensure safe learning environments appear to be increasingly ineffective. The drive to meet the standards on state or national tests have generated pressure-cooker classrooms with little time for students who need more attention or for addressing students' emotional or social needs. Much of the fallout disproportionately affects economically disadvantaged African American and Hispanic students. A growing number of sources suggest that some of these conditions have to do with the disparities between students and teachers that are exacerbated by a lack of teacher preparation in student management (Vavrus & Cole, 2002), lack of training in culturally competent practices (Ferguson, 2001; Townsend, 2000) or racial stereotypes (Bargh & Chartrand, 1999; Graham & Lowery, 2004). This review provides the context that highlights the need for restorative discipline in Texas schools, the evidence for restorative practices in schools

in the United States and abroad, and the learning from variations in implementation that impact the success of restorative practices.

Issues in Schools Today
The past 30 years has seen a paradigm shift in school disciplinary practices and an unparalleled upsurge in the criminalization of youth behaviors. Whereas student misconduct was traditionally viewed as normative, within the bounds of healthy development, and manageable via traditional school-based interventions, today's society regards school-based misbehavior as evidence of a dangerous and growing trend in out-of-control youth. This movement is best exemplified by events such as the Columbine High School shootings in 1999 that ushered in an era of zero tolerance school policies in an effort to ensure greater school safety (Brown, 2013; Texas Appleseed, 2010, p. 2). Indeed by 1997, 79 percent of the nation's schools had adopted zero tolerance polities toward alcohol, drugs, and violence (Fabelo et al., 2011, p. 3). The more recent Sandy Hook Elementary School massacre has resulted in the drafting of bills in several states to arm teachers in the classroom for greater protection (Gorman-Smith & McLaughlin, 2012).

This shift in perspective from schools as safe places for learning to schools as precarious due to dangers from within and without is reflected in the increased presence of law enforcement on school campuses. Indeed, it is common for police officers to routinely monitor pubic school hallways, lunchrooms, school grounds, and after school events as "school resource officers." Media accounts describe occasions where pepper spray, Tasers and trained canines have been used to break up fights and restore order if youth are seen as misbehaving on school property or at school functions (Texas Appleseed, 2010, p. 2). Many Texas school districts hire their own police commissions using sizable portions of their budgets for security – monies that eclipse those spent on social work services, curriculum development or food services (Texas Appleseed, 2010, p. 49). It is not surprising that campus policing is the largest and fastest growing area of law enforcement in Texas, according to its own professional association (Texas Appleseed, 2010, p. 2).

Accompanying the rise in law enforcement and public safety-centered policy is the response of police to school-related behaviors including disrupting class, disorderly conduct, disruption of transportation, truancy, and simple assault related to student fights (Texas Appleseed, 2010, p. 1). Although not mandatory or required by law, school-based police now issue large numbers of Class C misdemeanor tickets for behaviors that traditionally were handled in the school (Texas Appleseed, 2010, p. 19). This practice has widespread consequences as documented in a groundbreaking study by Texas Appleseed (2010). Among others, the issuing of tickets builds a criminal record that can be accessed by future employers and others. The ticket-related fees create financial hardships for students and their families. If fees are not paid, it establishes a potential for arrest at age 17 for noncompliance.

The assumed rise in school violence that justifies a strong police presence and stiff disciplinary practices, however, is not supported by the available data. Violent criminal behavior is quite low. Non-violent property crimes account for most juvenile criminal behavior with assaults representing approximately five percent of all reported offenses (Texas Appleseed, 2010, p. 25). Indeed polls of teachers show very little difference between the rate of assaults on teachers in

1956 and in 2003-04 (Texas Appleseed, 2010, p. 28). This is not to decry the country's increased awareness of bullying, the advent of cyber bullying and escalating adolescent suicides some of which occur in response to bullying but criminal justice arrests show low rates of exceedingly egregious offenses. Moreover, contrary to popular opinion, there is not a direct relationship between bullying and youth suicide, which has steadily declined over the last two decades and is generally associated with the presence of seven risk factors all of which must be operative at the same time to move a youth to actually attempt suicide (Lieberman and Cowan, 2011, pp. 12-15). The risk factors include history of substance abuse, conduct disorder or depression, access to such items as firearms or ropes, internal and external protective factors and vulnerabilities, hopelessness, and impulsiveness (ibid, p. 15).

Unfortunately, these realities have been hidden until recent research and publicity exposed the out-of-control system of suspensions and expulsions in Texas for low-level disciplinary infractions. Because Texas has the second largest school system in the country and two-thirds of the student population are non-white, the demographics that inform this research have particular relevance for other states as well (Fabelo et al., 2011, p. ix). In this statewide study of Texas students, over a million seventh graders were followed for six years. Researchers found that about 54 percent of students experienced in-school suspension and 31 percent experienced out-of-school suspension, which averaged two days per incident (Fabelo et al., 2011, p. ix). Moreover, only 3 percent of the disciplinary actions were for behaviors that called for mandatory suspensions and expulsions which means that 97 percent were based on the discretion of school officials (Fabelo et al., 2011, p. x). Special education students were particularly vulnerable. Approximately three-quarters of students with special emotional and physical needs were suspended or expelled at least once (Fabelo et al., 2011, p. xi). Importantly, these suspensions and expulsions at the 3900 public middle and high schools in Texas did not show a correlation with student risk factors such as economic disadvantage. Indeed, the proportion of campuses within a single school district with higher-than-expected disciplinary rates ranged from 7.7% to 46.7%. Similarly, the proportion of campuses within a district with lower-than-expected disciplinary rates were as low as 20 percent and as high as 76.9 percent (Fabelo et al., 2011, p. 82). This suggests that how student behavior was addressed depended on the officials in a particular school.

The use of unnecessarily strict school codes as the basis for discretionary actions coupled with a police presence to deal with generally low-level misconduct falls disproportionately on African American youth. Although the Texas study found that African American students were no more likely than students of other races and ethnicities to commit serious offenses that mandate removal from the campus (Fabelo et al., 2011, p. 46), African American students had a 31 percent higher likelihood of a school discretionary action than did otherwise identical white and Hispanic students (Fabelo et al., 2011, p. x). Indeed a much larger percentage of African American (26.2%) and Hispanic students (18%) were placed in out-of-school suspensions for their first violation than were Whites (9.9%) (Fabelo et al., 2011, p. 42).

The use and reuse of increasingly punitive avenues have serious repercussions. Research findings showed that 31 percent of students with one of more suspensions or expulsions repeated their grade level at least once (Fabelo et al., 2011, p. 56). Worse yet, 15 percent of students with 11 or more suspensions or expulsions dropped out of school compared to a 2 percent drop out

rate for students with no disciplinary actions. There was also evidence of a negative relationship between suspensions and expulsions and involvement in the juvenile justice system. Specifically, juvenile probation youth with one school disciplinary referral were 10 times more to become chronic offenders than juveniles with no referrals (Fabelo et al., 2011, p. 56). Indeed, each additional referral increased a youth's risk of re-offense by an added 10 percent (Fabelo et al., 2011, p. 65). In contrast, of those students who had no involvement in the school disciplinary system, only 2 percent had contact with the juvenile justice system (Fabelo et al., 2011, p. 66)

These statistics show clear relationships between suspensions and expulsions on the one hand and drop out rates and juvenile justice involvement on the other hand. The ominously trace the route popularly known as the school-to-prison pipeline. Given our reliance on suspensions and expulsions, it is fitting to ask if zero tolerance policies and other severe disciplinary measures result in the kinds of desired outcomes including better academic performance, higher rates of school completion, fewer juvenile justice contacts, deterrence of other students from misbehaving and a more positive school climate for learning.

Indeed much of the behavior that has been deemed criminal is increasingly found to be related to brain development and trauma-infused environments—areas that require interventions aimed at increasing self-regulation as well as relational and social skills. Specifically, recent advances in the field of developmental neuroscience show that development in areas of the brain related to self-regulation and impulse control happens gradually and lasts into early adulthood (Casey, Jones, & Hare, 2008). Risk-taking is seemingly associated with the temporal gap between increased reward seeking and development of self-control (Dahl, 2001).

In addition, vast numbers of youth, including 80 percent of youth involved in the juvenile justice system, have been exposed to traumatic events associated with physical abuse, sexual assault, domestic violence and community/school violence (Wasserman & McReynolds, 2011).   Many youth are themselves victims of this violence. Their exposure is associated with increased risk for delinquent behavior/arrest, learning disorders, academic difficulties, substance use, Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), and other mental health problems (Attorney General's National Task Force on Children Exposed to Violence, 2012). These rates are highest among the same groups that are disproportionately affected by zero tolerance policies, namely racial/ethnic minorities, LGBT youth, children in foster care, and those who are economically disadvantaged.

Many of these youth who have victimized by those who are supposed to protect them are suspicious and hostile toward efforts to control their behavior (Branson, 2013, p. 9). After growing up in households marked by anger and hostility, they can be easily triggered to re-experience the sense of danger and dread and respond aggressively to protect themselves (Branson, 2013, p. 10).   Although they may behave in ways that provoke suspension or even arrest, zero tolerance policies and harsh disciplinary procedures have deleterious effects on these youth as well as the safety and learning environment for other students. The placement of law enforcement to promote safety has resulted in more youth being detained for non criminal behaviors such as emotional outbursts. As regards academic performance, the American Psychological Association Task Force on Zero Tolerance found lower scores on standardized testing for schools with zero tolerance policies (2008, p. 854). Indeed, the presence of zero tolerance policies and related practices likely has created a climate over many years that itself is

iatrogenic or resulting from the treatment, i.e. zero tolerance policies, itself. Consequently, positive interventions are needed not only to address school-related misconduct but also to change the mindset of the system itself, which is criminally oriented.

Restorative Practices in Schools in the United States and Abroad
Restorative justice is a fast-growing state, national and international movement that seeks to bring people together to address the harm caused by wrongdoing, through empowerment of those involved. As a school-based initiative, it serves as an alternative to retributive zero tolerance policies. It views violence, community decline, and fear-based responses as indicators of broken relationships (Umbreit & Armour, 2010, p. 2). Its practices are grounded in the values of showing respect, taking responsibility and strengthening relationships (Sumner, Silverman, & Frampton, 2010, p. 2). These qualities conform to the mandate from the Denver public schools: namely, that there must be a shift in school values such that developing relationships and connectedness take precedence over exclusion and separation from the school community (Gonzalez & Cairns, 2011).

The use of restorative justice for school-related discipline goes by a variety of names including Circles, Restorative Practices, Restorative Processes, Restorative Approaches and Restorative Discipline. Its parallel emergence throughout the world makes it difficult to accurately trace its historic development. Indeed, even in the United States, it materialized in the late 1990s in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, Minneapolis and St. Paul, Minnesota, and six school districts in Wisconsin at roughly the same time (Chmelynski, 2005, p. 18-20). More important, however, has been its steady expansion as concerns about the sanctioning process and its bias against lower socioeconomic status students and minorities have grown coupled with concerns over highly punitive school cultures. Currently, restorative practices in schools are in California, Colorado, Georgia, Illinois, Maine, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, New York, Texas, Connecticut and Pennsylvania (Schiff, 2013, p. 9). The organization in different states, however, is spotty. For example, The International Institute for Restorative Practices, a private restorative justice center, is implementing restorative practices in major urban districts such as New York, Detroit, Philadelphia, Baltimore and San Francisco (Wachtel, 2013). The Oakland Unified School District has implemented Circles in 20 schools (Oakland Unified School District, 2013). The Denver Public Schools has restorative justice coordinators in 7 middle schools (Baker, 2009, p. 4).

Recommendations to use restorative practices in schools are now appearing as part of state policy. In June 2012, the Michigan Department of Education recommended that zero tolerance policies be replaced with proven alternative behavior management strategies like restorative practices (Department of Education, 2012, p. 2).

The growth and adoption of restorative justice reflect the goodness-of-fit between schools and restorative justice philosophy and programs. In addressing wrongdoing, it uses a relational rather than separatist model that brings people together to collectively identify its impact and determine steps to make things right. Instead of a punitive model that asks (1) what rules or laws were broken, (2) who broke them, and (3) how should they be punished, restorative justice asks (1) what is the harm caused and to whom, (2) what are the needs and obligations that have arisen, and (3) who has the obligation to address the needs, to repair the harm, to restore relationships.

From a restorative perspective, these questions cannot be adequately answered without the involvement of those who have been most affected (Kidde & Alfred, 2011, p.8). As a realignment of justice processes, restorative justice provides a mechanism that builds true and meaningful accountability, builds resilience in youth and their capability to handle their problems, and stimulates reconnections and re-empowerment of individuals by holding them responsible.

In schools, restorative justice uses a variety of practices to achieve its ends including restorative mediation, conferences or circles, daily informal restorative meetings, restorative youth courts, and other practices (Schiff, 2013, p. 9). In the classroom, restorative circles are used to build community, problem solve, facilitate student and teacher connectivity, and provide a respectful space for establishing the values for the class based on human dignity and democratic principles (Kidde & Alfred, 2011, p. 9). Outside the classroom, practices such as circles or restorative conferencing or peer juries may be used for more intense interventions that include repairing damage, reintegrating back into the school after an absence, and resolving differences. Because the focus is on inclusion and community-based problem solving, restorative justice in schools not only addresses harm but uses processes that concurrently create a climate that promotes healthy relationships, builds community, develops social-emotional understanding and skills, increases social and human capital, and enhances teaching and learning. At the same time that it serves as an intervention, it also becomes preventative in that schools are better equipped to resolve issues early on and outside the framework of a reactionary crisis. Indeed, the methods used ensure sustainability in that students are more likely to take responsibility for harm if they have a voice in repairing the harm, if the community has to provide the necessary support for its youth, and if positive outcomes result from holding self and others accountable (Sumner et al., 2010, p. 6).

Although there has been relatively little rigorous impact evaluation on restorative measures, preliminary research suggests that restorative justice can have a significant impact on redirecting the school-to-prison pipeline (Sumner et al., 2010, p. 6).

- Minnesota Department of Education significantly reduced behavioral referrals and suspensions in two schools by 45 to 63 percent and increased academic achievement. In a state survey, 277 schools principals reported that their schools used restorative practices (Minnesota Department of Education, 2003, 2011).

- Suspensions declined 87 percent and expulsions declined to zero at Cole Middle School in Oakland, California during the implementation of restorative justice (Sumner et al., 2010, p. 6).

- West Philadelphia High School, which was on the state's "Persistently Dangerous Schools" list for six years running reduced the frequency of "violent acts and serious incidents" by 52% in 2007-2008 and an additional 40% in 2008-2009 (Lewis, 2009, p. 7).

- In a sample of students (n=331) drawn from a three-year project in 7 Denver public middle schools, 30 percent reduced the average number of out-of-school suspensions they received and there was a 90 percent reduction in office referrals and out-of-school suspensions. District level impact has been noted in cumulative reductions in out-of-school suspensions of over 40% compared with baseline rates (Baker, 2009, p. 19).

- Various schools in Pennsylvania saw marked reductions in fighting, cafeteria violations, misbehavior, detention, fighting, theft, classroom disruptions and suspensions after implementing restorative conferencing, circles and other practices (Mirsky, 2003).

- Successful implementation of restorative peer juries in Chicago, Illinois saved over 1,000 suspension days ((Dignity in Schools Fact Sheet, n.d.).

- In Palm Beach County, Florida two schools have seen reductions in suspension days of between 130-300 days (Schiff, 2012)

Although reductions in disciplinary actions are a key measure of effectiveness, restorative practices also impact the school's climate as indicated by reductions in student tardiness and better school performance.

- Cole Middle School in Oakland, California was slated to shut down due to low test scores. After four years of using restorative processes (2005-2009), standardized test scores had risen 74 points. Moreover, the school, which was known for high teacher turnover, retained all of its teachers (New America Media, 2011).

- School attendance is an indicator of school engagement. Students sampled in the Denver Public Schools projects showed a 30% improvement in school attendance and timeliness to school (Baker, 2009, p. 9). These students were also tested for changes in their social skill competencies. Half the students showed improvement on their emotional quotient scores and over 50 percent improved their stress management suggesting that students perceived improvement in their skills in managing interpersonal conflict (Baker, 2009, p. 12).

- What is missing from these evaluations are the responses from students and teachers about restorative practices. In a review of schools that used restorative practices in England, students report high levels of satisfaction with participating in restorative conferences with 89 percent reporting that they were satisfied with the outcome of the conferences and 93 percent reporting the process was fair and that justice had been done (Youth Justice Board for England and Wales, 2004, p. 19).

Implementing Successful Programs
Although there is wide latitude in how schools implement restorative practices, there is general agreement that a whole-school approach is preferred over a classroom or fragmented model. Indeed, in an evaluation by Kings College, London, the quality of the program was higher in schools using a whole-school model (Flanagan, n.d., p. 9). A whole-school approach is a systems-based intervention. It is predicated on the need for a paradigm shift in the values and practices of the school as an organism in order to develop a positive and inclusive school climate, which in turn is related to successfully managing behavior and relationships. The entrenchment of beliefs about maintaining 'discipline' in the school as well as the need to 'punish' are difficult to uproot and usually require full buy-in from the school's administration. A whole-school approach, therefore, means the inclusion of students, teachers, staff, parents and the wider community in building a model of prevention and intervention to reduce harm. Besides being a response to misbehavior this model also supports the emotional health, wellbeing and learning

potential of the youth and all adult members of the school community. That means that restorative measures will be used at different levels: the individual, the classroom, transition spaces such as hallways and the lunchroom, teacher training, etc. It also means that students will be active contributors to developing policies and practices to develop a culture of respect and care throughout the school.

Studies on the whole-school model indicate that certain pre-conditions must be present for successful implementation. These include the following:

- Readiness by the school leadership team to understand and support the approach.

- Having a vision that is supported by planning and training.

- High quality training from providers with a proven record tailored to the needs of the school.

- Engaging all school stakeholders, students, parents and staff in understanding restorative practices.

- Monitoring how restorative approaches are used and evaluating and celebrating the success (Flanagan, n.d., pp. 8-9)

The comprehensiveness of the whole-school approach is strategic. Specifically, the tension between a retributive and restorative response will be more of an obstacle if the school is not firmly committed to a different model (Karp & Breslin, 2001). Moreover, the consistency of responses by staff is more likely to increase if the majority of teachers and administrators are familiar with the same concepts (Stinchcomb, Bazemore, & Riestenberg, 2006). In its efforts to reduce possible 'tokenism" however, this model also provokes discrepancies that can be difficult to reconcile. For example, teachers who do not 'buy-in' or need a longer time to accept conceptually and behaviorally such a radical shift in values may feel that the program is forced or imposed. Restorative practices, which are built on the principle of contextualizing behavior, are not regulatory or prescriptive. Educators, therefore, may need more information about restorative justice and examples of what it could realistically look like in practice. In the end it may be important for schools to make room for variations of teacher responsive believing that attitudes will change as teachers see positive results.

Currently, the whole-school approach uses two possible methods of implementation: (1) employment of an external restorative justice coordinator and teacher/staff training and (2) development of a leadership response team internal to the school and teacher/staff training. The external restorative justice coordinator serves as a bridge, trainer and consultant to help infuse restorative practices into the school, facilitates and co-facilitates a variety of restorative practices including circles and conferences, monitors agreed-upon plans and does follow up, maintains files and progress notes on participants, etc. Leadership teams, internal to the school, do much of external coordinator's job themselves, often working with an outside implementation consultant who provides mentoring and consultation. Teams may consist of administrators, teachers, and even students who work collectively to establish mechanisms for integration of restorative practices throughout the school.

The most significant challenge to implementation is likely the limited resource of time. It takes time to run a circle, time that, in some teachers' eyes, takes away from the time needed for instruction. Restorative practices are not a quick fix, particularly if the goal is to truly change mindsets. Moreover, a larger commitment of resources is required at the beginning of a program. Uneven support administratively or naysayers can also undermine a teacher's efforts to invest time in creating new classroom structures. Additionally, restorative practices encourage far greater equality than is usually found in the classroom, which can threaten teachers' perceived authority. Indeed, teachers have to learn to manage the tension that comes from being in an authority role when teaching and becoming an equal participant when engaging in restorative practices. Given these challenges and the objective of changing the fundamental mindset that accompanies response to school misconduct, it is not surprising to learn that it can take as much as three years for a restorative approach to be institutionalized in a school (Stokes & Shaw, 2005). When considering the immense amount of time and money currently spent managing school discipline problems, the amount of time necessary to stop an out-of-control system and the damage it has done to school environments and students' futures, however, the time necessary to implement a restorative mind-set seems minimal by comparison.

Implementation of Restorative Discipline at Ed White Middle School

Ed White determined to use a whole-school approach, a four-person Leadership Response Team (LRT), and an outside consultant, Robert Rico, to implement a Restorative Discipline Program (RDP) for the sixth-grade. This decision was part of a strategic plan to implement the program at different grade levels in sequential order, e.g. 2012-2013 for the sixth grade, 2013-2014 for the seventh grade, 2014-2015 for the eighth grade. Robert Rico is a former police officer who developed a restorative justice program for police-referred youth in Boerne, Texas. He is also a Lecturer in the Department of Criminology at The University of Texas at San Antonio. His role was to provide consultation and mentoring to ensure correct and consistent application of restorative circles, identify and help overcome obstacles and communicate successes and lessons learned among participants. He would also assist with the evaluation efforts. The school assigned Kevin Curtis, Assistant Principal for the sixth grade, to administer the RD program and direct the LRT. Ed White hired the Institute for Restorative Justice and Restorative Dialogue (IRJRD) at The University of Texas at Austin to coordinate teacher training, provide consultation to the external consultant, and evaluate the first-year of implementation.

In August, 2012, sixth grade teachers and the school Principal, Assistant Principal, and staff associated with student discipline and counseling received a two–day training in restorative justice and conducting restorative circles in the classroom. The training was done by Nancy Riestenberg, School Climate Specialist with the Minnesota Department of Education and nationally recognized expert in restorative practices in schools. Riestenberg has over 20 years experience implementing restorative processes in schools and is the author of *Circle in the Square: Building Community and Repairing Harm in Schools*. Teachers who could not attend the initial training received a one-day training early in the academic year provided by the external consultant and IRJRD.

The initial plan called for teachers to normalize the use of circle processes in the school by using them to build community in the classroom. The establishment of community occurred through doing student check in and check out circles regularly, circles for problem-solving class issues, circles for teaching course material, and circles for classroom management. Teachers would refer more serious student misconduct to the LRT for three-person restorative conferences or circles if there were four or more persons. The initial plan was changed midway through the year. Teachers would continue to use circles for community-building but an opportunity was also created for them to use restorative processes for discipline. Specifically, the administration used the fourth period of class as a time when teachers who were off could conduct RD conferences and as a time when smaller classes could be combined so more teachers would be available to facilitate restorative practices. Although more serious infractions could still be referred to the LRT, teachers were expected to handle more of the issues themselves.

The external consultant visited the school two times a week and was available to meet with the LRT and teachers, visit classrooms, and even co-facilitate circles as needed. IRJRD provided resources (films, classroom exercises, etc.) to the external consultant for the teachers and consultation throughout the process. Because IRJRD was conducting a process evaluation through the academic year of the program's implementation, it created a feedback mechanism such that IRJRD could respond to problems proactively with information and suggestions.

IRJRD's role was to collect the following: (1) baseline data on social climate and disciplinary counts and outcomes; (2) implementation data on the use of restorative circles, attitudes toward punishment and restorative practices, leadership support, and changes in classroom disruption, emotional literacy, problem solving, relational skills, and social discipline; and (3) impact data on disciplinary counts and outcomes, school performance, positive indicators of successful learning environments, and effective conflict resolution among students. The intent of the evaluation was to collect information that would be helpful in the subsequent implementation of RDP at the seventh and eighth grade levels.

Methodology

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the Restorative Discipline Program for the sixth grade at Ed White Middle School. The evaluation consisted of two parts: assessing the impact of the program on students' behaviors and examining the change process for the school. The evaluation was guided by three broad questions:

(1) What is the impact of the program on sixth-grade student risk behaviors, e.g. suspension, absenteeism, bullying?
(2) What is the impact of the program on the sixth-grade school climate?
(3) What is the experience of sixth-grade teachers who implement the program in their classroom and school administrators who use the program for student misconduct?

Description of Participants
Participants represented three distinct groups: sixth grade teachers and administrative staff, sixth grade students, and parents/caregivers of sixth grade students. Sixth grade teachers consisted of

13 teachers who instruct in the core subjects, e.g. science, math, English, and social studies. Tables 1-3 provide information on the gender and race/ethnicity of each group.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics of teachers/staff

Teachers/Staff	N=31[1]	
	Frequency	Percentage
Female	22	70.9%
Male	5	16.0%
Unknown[2]	4	12.9%
Hispanic	8	25.8%
Non-Hispanic	15	48.3%
Unknown[2]	8	25.8%
Black	4	12.9%
AIAN	0	0
Pacific	0	0
White	23	74.1%
Asian	0	0
Unknown[2]	4	12.9%

[1] Includes teachers in core subjects and teachers with 6th, 7th and 8th grade students combined
[2] Unknown represents missing demographic information

Table 2. Descriptive statistics of students

Students	N=255	
	Frequency	Percentage
Female	123	48.2%
Male	127	49.8%
Unknown[1]	5	1.9%
Hispanic	120	47%
Non-Hispanic	80	31%
Unknown[1]	55	22%
Black	87	34.0%
AIAN	9	3.5%

Pacific	4	1.6%
White	110	43%
Asian	10	3.9%
Unknown[1]	35	13.7%

[1] Unknown represents missing demographic information

Table 3. Descriptive statistics of parents/caregivers

Parents	N=107	
	Frequency	Percentage
Female	69	64.4%
Male	34	31.7%
Unknown[1]	4	3.7%
Hispanic	60	56.0%
Non-Hispanic	17	15.8%
Unknown[1]	30	28.0%
Black	29	27.1%
AIAN	1	0.9%
Pacific	0	0%
White	40	37.3%
Asian	7	6.5%
Unknown[1]	30	28.0%

[1] Unknown represents missing demographic information

Data Collection

Data were obtained from a variety of sources. Some of the sources served a dual function of providing research information and helping teachers implement restorative practices. Data were collected between August 2012 and June 2013.

- School records were used to collect data on student tardiness, disciplinary incidents and school performance.

- A School Climate Survey (SCS) was used to collect data on teacher, student and parent/caregiver attitudes about the school environment. The survey was administered in September 2012, December 2012, and June 2013. The parent survey was translated and available either in English or Spanish. The SCS was developed by SACRO (Safeguarding Communities Reducing Offending) in Edinburgh, Scotland (http://www.sacro.org.uk). No information is available on its psychometrics. Copies of the SCS for teachers, parents/caregivers and students can be found in the Appendix.

Climate survey-parent or caregiver. This 10 item 6-point Likert-style scale measures quality of communication, input into decision making, dignity and worth of the student, and safety and inclusivity from the perspective of the parent or caregiver.

Climate survey-teacher or staff. This 17 item 4-point Likert-style scale measures attitudes and beliefs about interpersonal harm and conflict, communication, input into decision making, dignity and worth of the individual, and inclusivity from the perspective of school personnel. It also includes two open ended questions about the RD program and its impact on the school.

Climate survey-student. This 12 item 4-point Likert-style scale measures attitudes about the student's direct experience at the school specific to how the school manages interpersonal harm and conflict, communication, input into decision making, dignity and worth of the individual, and inclusivity.

Monthly self-assessment implementation checklist. A self-assessment implementation checklist (SI) was used to collect data monthly on teachers' development of restorative justice skills. It also served as a feedback mechanism for teachers so they could assess their own progress. This 10-item checklist asks school personnel to rate on a 3-point scale (not in place, partial, in place) the status of their use of RD practices. Participants self-score and total the points earned for each answer to determine the percent of time they are applying new skills. A copy of the SI can be found in the Appendix.

Circle-it incident records. Forms developed by Ed White for recording information on behavioral incidents were used to collect data on the frequency and outcomes of restorative conferences (3 persons) and restorative circles (4+ persons) conducted by teachers and the LRT.

Teacher interviews. Weekly interviews were conducted with five teachers to collect data on teachers' experiences and needs in using restorative practices in their classrooms. The interviews lasted 15 minutes and were digitally recorded and transcribed for analysis. Robert Rico, external consultant to the RD program, did the interviews. As teachers described their challenges, the external consultant could provide suggestions to improve their classroom management. Interviews also gave IRJRD feedback throughout the year about teacher attitudes and the implementation process specific to problem solving, classroom management and community building in the classroom. A copy of the Weekly Teacher Interview Guide can be found in the Appendix.

Focus Groups. Focus groups were conducted by IRJRD with teachers and the LRT in December and June to collect data on the experiences of teachers and staff in using restorative practices in their classrooms and for student misconduct. The focus groups lasted 40 minutes and were digitally recorded and transcribed. In December, nine teachers were interviewed in four focus groups. The LRT focus group consisted of four staff and the external consultant. The data was analyzed and a report made to the principal prior to the start of the second semester with recommendations for changes based on the focus groups. In June, 7 teachers were interviewed in three focus groups. The LRT focus group consisted of 3 staff. Copies of the Focus Group Questions for the teachers and the LRT can be found in the Appendix.

Protection of human subjects. This study was reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at The University of Texas at Austin. Written informed consent was obtained for this study from teachers and staff. Parents were sent a cover letter in English and Spanish with the SCS inviting them to participate in the study. Participants were assured, when being recruited and in letters and consent forms that they were not asked for their names and no identifier code was assigned on the SCS or the Monthly Self-Assessment Implementation Checklist. Participants were told as well that they need not answer any questions that they were not comfortable answering. A separate informed consent statement was used for the teachers who participated in the weekly interviews and teachers and staff who participated in the focus groups because only their confidentiality could be assured. The individual and focus group participants were told during recruitment and prior to the beginning of the interviews that they could control the extent, timing and circumstances of what they shared in the interviews.

The Department of Research and Information Technologies for the North East Independent School District reviewed the proposal approved by the IRB at The University of Texas at Austin and approved the research as well. They also approved the administering of the SCS to the sixth grade students under the same condition of anonymity given to the teachers/staff and parents/caregivers.

Data Analysis

School records on behavior sanctions for 2012-2013 were compared to 2011-2012 and the percentage change was calculated. Student tardy records were summed by month for 2012-2013. Student scores on The State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness STAAR were recorded for 2012-2013. Responses on the SCS were summed and compared for teachers/staff, parents/caregivers and students over three time points. The percentage change was calculated for each group. There was also an analysis of survey items to ascertain progress and areas for school improvement. Scores on the SI checklist were compared by month over the academic year. There was also an analysis of checklist items to ascertain areas of difficulty for teachers. School records were used to calculate the monthly frequency of restorative conferences and circles used for student misconduct. Comments on the outcomes and agreed-upon plans to address harm were analyzed for content and recurring themes. Twenty-five percent of Incident Forms for restorative conferences and circles were reviewed for every month and analyzed for content and outcome.

Weekly individual teacher interviews were coded and analyzed for content and recurring themes by month and across the academic year. Focus groups were analyzed for contextual themes developed around the evaluation questions. Results were confirmed by reviewing them against the associated quotes from the transcripts and the findings in this report are similarly grounded by direct quotes from participants.

Limitations

Prior to 2012-2013, Ed White did not collect data on some of the risk variables such as bullying. Consequently it was not possible to compare findings in 2012-2013 with prior years. Scores on state-mandated standardized tests could not be compared between years because Texas replaced the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) test with the State of Texas Assessments

of Academic Readiness (STAAR) test in March, 2012.   Because participation in this study was voluntary, the return rate from parents/caregivers on the Climate Survey diminishes over the year. Also the return rate from teachers on the SI lessens over the year. Consequently it is difficult to ascertain the degree to which all sixth grade core teachers implemented restorative processes in their classrooms.

In many instances, therefore, school records gathered in 2012-2013 will provide baselines against which to measure change in the sixth grade in 2012-2014 and change in the seventh grade in 2013-2014 compared to 2012-2013. Because of the lack of comparison data between years, comparisons were made where possible between calendar months over the academic year.

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Findings

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Findings are organized into four groups: (1) results from school records; (2) monthly review of RD program implementation; (3) Results from SCS; and (4) themes from teacher interviews and focus groups.

Outcomes from School Records
School records were reviewed for changes in the Ed White's response to student misconduct, student tardies, and student academic performance.

   Suspension Rates North East Independent School District collects data in six-week cycles on discipline and suspension. Table 4 compares the use of suspension for conduct violations for sixth-grade students in 2011-2012 and 2012-2013.

Table 4. Comparison of suspension rates for conduct violations

	All Students		Percent Change
	2011-2012	**2012-2013**	
Partial day I.S.S.	75	167 (RD)[1]	+123%[2]
Partial suspension	12	11	.8%
In school suspension	468	329	30%
Off campus suspension	66	11	84%

[1] (RD) In 2012-2013 Restorative Discipline (RD) for misconduct conferences and circles was classified as Partial Day ISS.
[2] Partial Day ISS shows an increase because of the RD classification.

Table 4 shows an 84% drop in the use of off-campus suspension and a 30% drop in the use of in-school suspension lasting 1-3 days for student misconduct. Although these figures are the most important in terms of evaluating change in the school's handling of conduct violations, figures on the use of suspension and expulsion for all student offenses also show change. Table 5 compares the use of discipline sanctions for all offenses for 2011-2012 and 2012-2013.

Table 5. Comparison of suspension rates for all student discipline

	All Students		Percent Change
	2011-2012	**2012-2013**	
Partial Day I.S.S.	75	167 (RD)[1]	+123%[2]
In-School Suspension – 1 day	286	199	30%
In-School Suspension – 2 day	118	86	27%
In-School Suspension – 3 day	74	56	24%
Partial Day Suspension	12	11	1%
Suspensions for 1 day	41	9	78%
Suspensions for 2 day	21	1	95%
Suspensions for 3 day	7	1	86%
Overnight Suspensions	41	14	66%
Placement in AEP	18	12	33%
Total Suspensions	675	544	19%

[1] (RD) In 2012-2013 Restorative Discipline (RD) for misconduct conferences and circles was classified as Partial Day ISS.

[2] Partial Day ISS shows an increase because of the RD classification.

Table 5 shows reductions in all suspension rates including overnight suspensions and placement in the Alternative Education Program. If the Partial Day I.S.S., which is the new classification for misconduct addressed by RD is removed, the percentage change in total suspensions falls to 44 percent.

Student "Tardies" Table 6 gives frequency counts for student tardiness over the academic year, 2012-2013. Tardiness refers to occurring, arriving, acting or doing something after the usual time. A designation of being tardy is given when a student is late to school or is late to any particular class. According to school officials, "tardies" are highest during 1st period classes because students are late to school. They are also high for 7th period classes because students are tired at the end of the day.

Table 6. Sixth-grade student tardiness frequencies, 2012-2013

	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June
2012-2013	886	1449	1232	988	1210	1407	1366	1576	574	43

These frequencies show that tardiness increases during February, March and April and fall off in May when students take the STAAR test. A student's tardiness is an important measure of student engagement in school. Studies have shown relationships between tardiness and school behavior and school success. Chronic tardiness in elementary and middle school is associated with failure in high school. A national study has reported higher rates of absenteeism and tardiness for dropouts (Ekstrom, Goertz, Pollack, & Rock, 1986).

Student School Performance Table 7 gives the STAAR results for reading and math for sixth graders. Tables 8a and 8b show the breakdown of reading and math scores by race/ethnicity and economic disadvantage.

Table 7. Reading and math scores on STAAR, 2012-2013

Reading			Math		
# Tested	# Passed	**Percent**	# Tested	# Passed	**Percent**
293	157	54%	287	178	62%

Table 8a. Reading: Percent minority and economically disadvantaged students with passing STAAR scores, 2012-2013

Hispanic			**African American**			**White**			**Eco Disadvantaged**		
Test	Pass	%	Test	Pass	%	Test	Pass	%	Test	Pass	%
169	91	54%	74	38	51%	24	14	58%	242	124	51%

Table 8b. Math: Percent minority and economically disadvantaged students with passing STAAR scores, 2012-2013

Hispanic			**African American**			**White**			**Eco Disadvantaged**		
Test	Pass	%	Test	Pass	%	Test	Pass	%	Test	Pass	%
163	106	64%	74	37	50%	24	18	75%	237	144	61%

As previously noted, it is not possible to compare these scores to student performance in previous years.   However the reading and math scores for 2012-2013 give baseline data for comparison of sixth and seventh grade student scores in 2013-2014.

Summary Experts in restorative justice implementation in schools expect to see fewer behavior incidents, reductions in suspensions, better learning outcomes, and reductions in bullying behavior. They also assume that if students feel safe, there will be less absenteeism and unexcused absences. Moreover, with reduced suspensions, there should be an increase in instruction time and a concomitant increase in student performance. Ed White already shows a fairly dramatic drop in suspensions for conduct violation, (e.g. 84% drop in out-of-school suspensions) and a 19% drop in total suspensions for all student discipline. Information on absenteeism and learning outcomes are limited and provide only baseline data.

Monthly Review of RD Program Implementation
The review of RD implementation is based on monthly classification counts of student offenses, scores on the Monthly Self-Assessment Implementation Checklist (SI), frequencies of restorative conferences and circles and analysis of accompanying comments, review of Circle-It Incident Forms, and teacher interviews.

Classification of Student Offenses Tables 9a and 9b list the eight most common student offenses by month and the number of incidents for each category. These offenses were reviewed

by month to evaluate differences in frequencies or changes in classification of offense types. Totals compare the frequencies of the most common offenses to the total offenses for each month.

Table 9a. Student offense categories and frequencies: First semester

Sept	#	Oct	#	Nov	#	Dec	#
3 Strikes	63	Failure to follow directions	61	Absences Truancy	39	Disruption Class	42
Failure to follow directions	62	Disruption Class	56	Disruption Class	37	Failure to follow directions	35
Disruption Class	35	3 Strikes	35	Walked out of Class	34	3 Strikes	33
VP-RW[1]	35	Detention-No Show	25	3 Strikes	31	Absences Truancy	22
Confrontation Physical	32	Inappropriate Remarks	25	Failure to follow directions	27	Walked out of Class	20
Confrontation Verbal	21	VP-RW	25	Confrontation Verbal	15	Inappropriate Remarks	13
Walked out of Class	18	Walked out of Class	19	Profanity	14	Confrontation Physical	12
Detention-No Show	16	Profanity	19	Confrontation Physical	14	Confrontation Verbal	11
TOTALS	**279/ 396**		**265/ 401**		**211/ 289**		**188/ 267**

[1] VP-RW refers to tardies that result in an office referral.

Table 9b. Student offense categories and frequencies: Second semester[1]

Jan	#	Feb	#	March	#	April	#	May	#
VP-RW	145	VP-RW	119	Failure follow directions	49	VP-RW	42	3 Strikes	54
Disruption Class	59	Detention-No Show	55	VP-RW	39	Failure follow directions	38	Failure follow directions	48
Failure follow directions	56	Disruption Class	41	Disruption Class	35	Disruption Class	29	Absences Truancy	27
3 Strikes	31	Failure to follow directions	40	3 Strikes	22	Absences Truancy	24	Walked out of Class	26
Walked out of Class	19	3 Strikes	35	Walked out of Class	18	Walked out of Class	20	Disruption Class	17
Absences Truancy	17	Walked out of Class	23	Profanity	16	3 Strikes	19	PMB	15
Confrontation Verbal	14	Horseplay	20	Profanity to Staff	14	Horseplay	17	Confrontation Verbal	12
Inappropriate Remarks	14	Absences Truancy	17	Absences Truancy	11	Profanity	17	Detention-No Show	10
TOTALS	**366/ 453**		**350/ 495**		**204/ 275**		**206/ 334**		**209/ 321**

[1] June is not included because there were only 4 offenses

Numbers of total offenses and offenses of greatest frequency are highest in January and February. There is also a rise in October and a fall in frequencies in March through May. The three top monthly frequencies are for minor infractions, namely disruption of the classroom, failure to follow directions, and VP-RW (tardiness which results in a disciplinary referral). Confrontation-physical was a high frequency category during the first semester but was absent in the offenses of highest frequency in the second semester. Referrals for absences and truancy are an offense

of high frequency in 6 of the 9 months. Table 10 shows monthly frequencies for bullying behavior, which is not a high frequency offense category.

Table 10. Bullying behavior frequencies

Month	#	Month	#	Month	#
Sept.	9	Dec.	0	March	6
Oct.	3	Jan.	1	April	4
Nov.	6	Feb.	5	May	6

Monthly Self-Assessment Implementation Checklist (SI) Core teachers (n=12) were asked to complete the SI each month so they could track their progress in using restorative practices in the classroom. Table 11 gives the monthly scores for the teachers who returned the checklist. Because the SI is comprised of separate skills, which the teacher must employ in order to create a restorative climate in the classroom, scores for each of the items were also calculated to better analyze which skills were more difficult to use. Table 12 lists each question and the mean score over nine months for all respondents.

Table 11. Mean scores on the monthly self-assessment implementation checklist (SI)

Month	#	Mean Score: 1= In Place 2= Partial 3= In Place
September	15[1]	2.2
October	0	-
November	7	2.5
December	8	2.4
January	10	2.6
February	3	2.8
March	5	2.4
April	4	2.8
May	0	-
June	0	-

Table 12. Mean scores on individual questions by month and year (2012-2013)[1]

Month	Individual Questions (SI) (1=Not in Place; 2=Partial; 3=In Place)									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Sept	2.28	2.66	2.53	2.46	1.80	2.40	2.86	2.26	1.60	2.26
Nov	2.37	3.00	2.75	2.75	2.00	2.75	2.75	2.50	1.87	2.50
Dec	2.65	2.75	2.75	2.87	1.75	2.25	2.87	2.62	1.50	2.25
Jan	2.44	2.77	3.00	2.88	2.22	2.66	2.88	2.66	1.66	2.44
Feb	2.66	2.66	3.00	3.00	2.00	2.66	3.00	2.66	2.33	1.66
March	2.16	2.83	2.83	2.83	1.83	2.50	2.50	2.33	1.83	2.00
April	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	2.50	3.00	3.00	2.75	2.25	2.00
Mean Scores	2.51	2.81	2.83	2.82	2.01	2.60	2.83	2.54	1.86	2.15

[1] No surveys were returned in October, May and June

The questions on the SI are as follows:

1. I use restorative discipline principles in the classroom (including lessons) or in the school setting.

2. I truly listen and hear students out without interrupting so students feel listened to.

3. I talk about shared values in response to particular issues.

4. I talk personally about the impact of the situations on me.

5. I ask for someone I trust to observe my restorative discipline practice and give me honest feedback.

6. I review how I could have handled conflict concerns differently.

7. I take responsibility for any part I might have had in what went wrong and acknowledge that. I apologize as well.

8. I use restorative questions in dealing with student issues. I help students identify and express their feelings.

9. I do community building exercises/projects with students.

10. I apply restorative discipline principles consistently.

Monthly scores indicate a slight but spotty rise in teachers' self assessments of their skills and implementation of restorative practices. Because the response range was so narrow (1-3) the

checklist is more value to the teacher practitioner than to an accurate assessment of actual skill development.

The analysis of individual check list items is likely more reflective of teachers' actual experiences. Teachers indicated more difficulty with items # 5 (I ask for someone I trust to observe my restorative discipline practice and give me honest feedback), #9 (I do community building exercises/projects with students), and #10 (I apply restorative discipline principles consistently). Teacher responses to #5 suggest that they were doing restorative practices in isolation without much feedback or assistance. Teacher responses to #9 suggest that restorative practices were either not being used or used primarily to manage discipline issues rather than for building community in the classroom as a preventative measure. Teacher responses to #10 suggest that restorative practices were not fully integrated in the classroom. It is also possible that the teachers' response to this item means that restorative practices were used for specific events such as a discipline problem rather than as a proactive and values based approach to the classroom and teaching. Teacher added some additional comments to their checklists. In September they were quite positive: "I am seeing the benefits of RD." Comments are sparse for the other months but focus principally on time: "My concern is still time. It is a big challenge to put time in place for this."

      Restorative Conferences and Circles Both teachers and administrators used restorative conferences and circles for offenses throughout the year. Restorative discipline was classified as "restorative conferences" when it involved 3 persons (usually teacher and two students). Restorative discipline was classified as "restorative circles" (might include any combination of teachers and administrators and more than two students). Restorative conferences and circles could be teacher facilitated or administrator facilitated. Table 13 gives the monthly frequencies of incidents by individual students where restorative conferences, circles or other restorative discipline practice[1] were facilitated either by teachers or administration. If three students were involved in an event of misconduct, Ed White records an RD classification for each student even though all three students may have been part of one circle held about the event.

Table 13. Monthly frequencies of individual student incidents: Restorative conferences and circles, 2012-2013

Month	Teacher Facilitated	Administration Facilitated
August	3	0
September	30	24
October	33	23
November	20	6
December	54	3
January	18	7
February	17	4
March	18	3
April	4	3
May	6	6
June	0	0
TOTAL STUDENT INCIDENTS	**203**	**79**

[1] Some individual student incident offenses were classified as "restorative discipline." No information was available about the specific practice used.

Teachers and administrators used restorative conferences and circles through the year. Although administration was heavily involved in doing these practices during September and October, there was drop off the rest of the year. Teachers used restorative conferences and circles more in the first semester than the second semester. The highest use was in December. The lowest use was in April and May. The lessening of use by administration was likely related to a decision made by administration that teachers should be doing more of the facilitation rather than referring to administration. As described earlier, the administration made creative use of the fourth class period so teachers could conduct restorative discipline conferences and circles with students. The administration or others substituted for the teacher if necessary so the teacher could do the facilitation.

Accounts of "action" taken were available for administration-facilitated restorative conferences and circles. In October the accounts suggest greater attention to student individuality and deeper concerns. However the accounts taper off in November and there are only a few accounts after January. There are no accounts of "action" associated with the teacher-facilitated restorative conferences and circles. The following is a sample of the types of action recorded in September, October and after January. Pseudonyms are used in place of real names and dates.

September. "RD Conference with both students. Both acknowledged harm by words and actions. Apologies were given and both students agreed to stay away from each other. Both students are not allowed in gym prior to school in the morning. Parents contacted."

"RD Circle with Ms. Green (teacher) Ms. Saxton and Mr. Richards (administrators), and both students. Both students acknowledged that they both play around too much in class and that it can get out of hand and interrupt the class learning. Both apologized to each other and to teacher. Next issue of running, chasing, or horseplay will result in a FGC (family group conference)."

October. "RD Conference with BG. Student acknowledged harm to Ms. Valesquez (teacher) with his remarks and actions. I attempted to create a bond with BG but was unsuccessful. I had him conference with Dr. Franklin since she had his older sister."

January. "RD Circle on 1/21/13 with Ms. Saulmon (teacher), Mr. Richards (administration) and Ms. Prospect (teacher) with all six students and MT."

Circle-it Forms In September some of the sixth-grade students suggested that the school make available a form for students so that they themselves could request a restorative circle or conference. They developed a one-pager called "Circle-It." The Circle-It form is available in the Appendix. The form consists of a large circle. Whoever was asking for a restorative conference or circle would include in the large circle the names of the people who should be involved, e.g. students involved in a conflict, teachers, etc. Then students would determine the urgency of the situation by circling one of three options at the bottom of the page: (1) right now; (2) later today; (3) tomorrow or later. Students asked for these options on the basis that often they needed immediate intervention to prevent a disagreement from becoming physical or possibly violent. Indeed, teachers and administrators were often not aware that these situations were brewing. Ed White responded by using the form for the administration-facilitated restorative conferences and circles. The form included areas for recording the reasons for the meeting and the outcomes.

Initially teachers and members of the LRT (administrators) were asked to complete an incident checklist on the back of the Circle-It Form about their behaviors during a restorative conference or circle. This checklist was confusing to participants and filled out erratically. It was not analyzed in this evaluation. In March, Ed White added a form detailing the actions that resulted from a restorative conference or circle with space for the signatures of the participants and space for a monitoring plan

Twenty-five percent of the total forms for each month were reviewed as indicators of the yearly implementation process. Table 14 shows the frequency of Circle-It Forms per month.

Table 14. Frequency of circle-it forms by month

Month	#
September	11
October	107
November	47
December	34
January	39
February	21
March	25
April	14
May	35

September. There were 11 Circle-It forms filled out in September. The forms include a description of the issue by the author. Most of restorative conferences and circles are used for behavioral problems and peer conflicts in the classroom and physical aggression in the classroom and during transition times in the hallways.   For example, two students described the conflict with name-calling they had that led to the need for a restorative conference:

> *Student 1: "He called me a bitch (and) my mom a bitch so I hit him in his face."*

> *Student 2: "Jarvan hit me in the head with a book twice. I went to him with my book and he pushed me into a desk and punched me in the face twice and all the teacher did was tell him to go back to his seat."*

> *Student 1: "I did not want to do the test and me and Randy got into a fight and Randy called me a big black nigger."*

The first very simple version of the Circle-It Form is used, in addition to Student Statement forms. Adults write the circle forms. If there is a Student Statement it is written by the student**.** Occasionally there is a resolution listed but there is no indication of accountability or apology. Typically the resolution is to move away from the distraction or limit contact with the aggressor.

October. There were 107 Circle-It Forms filled out in October. The Incident Checklist is on the back. Students' statements are used throughout the month: "A friend gave April a tube of skin cream she found on the floor by the lockers. The skin cream belonged to Kim. Kim made fun of April for using the skin cream and spread rumors about the skin cream. As a result others were picking on April about being smelly for using the skin cream." It is more common for the Circle-It Form to be written by the student but those forms lack information regarding the resolution or any accountability. There are some circle forms with handwriting from the student and staff members, which will indicate the resolution: "Both boys apologized for their behavior." Some of the forms indicate traditional discipline was used, including ISS or being sent to the Assistant Principal.

November. There are 47 Circle-It Forms filled out in November. There continues to be a variety of forms and combinations used, including variations of the circle form, with or without a student statement attached. Participant information is often not completed so it is difficult to know if teachers and other administrators besides the facilitator are included in the circle process. Student schedules continue to be attached to most of the circle forms, which may indicate staff members are conducting the majority of the circles because they are looking at the student's total schedule. There are fewer descriptions or resolutions listed. As an example here are notes taken about several forms: (1) "Circle form used. It lists an aggressor and three witnesses. There is a description of the event stating that a student was asking others if they could beat up a student for him. Those witnesses then told the student who reported it to staff. Incident checklist is completed. No participant information listed. No indication of a resolution." (2) "Circle form used listing two students' names. The form also states 'everyday' under 'when did this happen?' question. No description is given of the events."

December. There are 34 Circle-It Forms filled out in December. There are more teacher-facilitated circles occurring. There is limited participant information. Almost no resolutions are listed. There are a greater number of student statements, including witness statements, attached to the circle forms.

January. There were 39 Circle-It Forms filled out in January. There is some evidence of agreed-upon plans happening because of some hand written agreements signed by students and teachers. There are some forms indicating the student declined to complete the circle: "Desmond did not want to participate in circle." Restorative conferences and circles continue to be used primarily for peer conflicts as indicated in the following example. There is little information about resolutions.

> *"Jerome was pushing kids inside the cafeteria and I went inside and I saw him pushing my friend and he is smaller than him and I went up to him and I said, " Pick on someone your own size." He said, "Okay." And then we had troubles."*

February. There were 21 Circle-It Forms completed in February. There continue to be some examples of hand written contracts between students suggesting a formalizing of possible resolutions. These are two examples: (1) From the contract itself: "I agree to stay away from each other during 7th period and during the day to avoid conflict with each other." (2) Notes taken about the forms reads as follows: "There is a hand written contract signed by two students with a list of 4 rules, including no eye contact, no talking, and no touching. There are circle forms, which indicate the student did not want to participate."

March. There were 25 Circle-it Forms filled out in March. There is a new form being used in conjunction with the Circle-It Form called Circle/Conference Agreement Form. The new form requests information about the incident, the agreement, a monitoring plan and has a place for student and staff signatures. Staff seems to be filling out agreements so there are fewer first-hand accounts. However, this new form has not replaced the Student Statements, and sometimes all three forms (Circle-It, Incident Checklist, and Circle/Conference Agreement Form) are used together. The monitoring section is not usually completed on the new form. Notes taken from

the forms read as follows: "Circle-It Form lists two students. Two student statements are included. The first student says his coat was moved to a different place and an altercation followed. The second student states there was name calling before the coat was moved and then the fight happened." A Circle/Conference Agreement Form is also attached. Students agreed to contact an adult in the future. The aggressor also agreed to help other kids in the community if he sees an altercation. There is no monitoring plan and no signatures. However, notes from this month also report on an incident where the staff stated the following: 'A consequence will be given to the student (Internal School Suspension-ISS) if the student breaks the agreement.'"

April. There were 14 Forms completed in April. The Circle-It Form has been replaced by the Circle/Conference Agreement Form in conjunction with student statements. There is no monitoring plan filled out on the forms. There is evidence of parents being involved, though not present at circles. Agreements from reviewed forms include (1) agreement not to gossip; (2) agreement to apologize and not to make fun even in a joking manner; (3) agreement to inform teachers to move students away from each other.

May. There were 35 Forms completed in May. This month consisted primarily of Circle/Conference Agreement Forms with occasional Student Statements attached or alone. There were also several Referral Worksheets, presumably from the administration. Notes from the review indicate as follows: "This is a referral worksheet, which states there was in an incident in a class with a student chasing another and threatening him. Student would not stop after direction from the teacher and had to be escorted to the Assistant Principle's office." There continue to be more formal agreements made. For example, "Students agreed to not react so quickly and wait for an apology." "Both students apologized and agreed to stay away." "Agreed to not play rough." " Students apologized and agreed to remain friends."   Some of them indicate that traditional discipline such as ISS is being used along with restorative conferences and circles. For example, "Given the option to complete Saturday school, cafeteria duty or ISS 2 days." "Agreement to stay away and all three students were placed in ISS." "Students agreed to stay away from each other for the remainder of the school year or face suspension." There are no monitoring plans.

The Circle-It Forms and later the Circle/Conference Agreement Form are probably the best evidence that restorative conferences and circles for student misconduct were going on throughout the year. The average for the year was 30 conferences a month with a range of 107 in October down to 11 in September and 14 in April. According to the Student Statements that accompanied the Circle-it Forms, the vast majority of the restorative conferences and circles were used to manage peer conflicts. Indeed one administrative member of the LRT related that the students often requested or were receptive to restorative conferences and circles because they became a way to prevent conflicts from ending up in a full fight.

In terms of the forms themselves, there is sporadic completion and a gradual move to a more formalized process. Notes on the process of using the Circle-It Form show that there is the beginning of more official contracts in February, the change to a new form that focuses on agreements, signatures, and monitoring arrangements in March, and indication of consequences if the agreement is broken. Arrangements for monitoring of an agreement are recognized as necessary on the form but has not been instituted as yet.

There is a clear shift in December to teachers handling the misconduct that had otherwise been referred to the administration (LRT). There is a drop off in number of restorative conferences and circles and less recording of resolutions. Starting in January, there is some evidence that students are declining to participate in restorative processes. Restorative conferences and circles are, by nature, voluntary. Even if a student attends, he or she does not have to participate or behave in accordance with social pressures. It is possible that a student who is having difficulty with a teacher, or is resistant to his or her authority, might be more apt to resist the restorative process if the teacher is facilitating the circle or conference.

Weekly Teacher Interviews Brief weekly audiotaped interviews were held with five sixth grade teachers over nine months. The interviews were conducted by Robert Rico, external consultant to the school about the RD program in 2012-2013. The purpose of these interviews was twofold: (1) to assist teachers in implementing RD in their classrooms and (2) to document the teachers' experience, including challenges and successes, over the course of the academic year. Justification for weekly interviews was based on the hypothesis that close observation of teachers' experiences would assist in planning for implementation of RD for the seventh grade in 2013-2014 and provide information about the implementation process to other principals and school leaders who were considering a RD program in their institutions.

Teachers' involvement in the interviews was voluntary. Some of the teachers left during the year and were replaced with other teachers. Some of the teachers did not participate every week. The following paragraphs summarize the teachers' experiences by month. Areas that were analyzed by month include content of teacher's verbal reports, their core attitudes, challenges, evidence of attitude shifts, assists from the external consultant and others, and questions. Recurring themes are described in the next section of this report labeled "Themes From Teacher Interviews and Focus Groups."

September. In this opening month, teachers are enthused and surprised by the impact of doing circles in the classroom. Several reported using it for students who were disruptive and it resulted in an "immediate" change in behavior. Although they are anxious and uncertain about how to facilitate classroom circles, they are doing it anyway. Many of their comments are empathic: "These are good kids even though not all teachers feel that way."   One teacher described what she did to establish new norms in her classroom. She said repeatedly, "We're going to respect you do no matter what. Even if you struggle, no one is going to laugh. If you struggle that's what I'm here for, nobody's gonna laugh, I want you to feel comfortable. " And then she added, "They even volunteered to read."

Teachers also are wrestling with defining their role in the context of restorative practices. A teacher who had had a death in the family shared that "I don't want kids to see my weakness. I was crying and a kid saw it but I didn't want to acknowledge. The kids will feel they won because I'm upset." Teachers described needing support to "make" students behave differently and feeling their power removed via the circle process and with no reassurance or guarantee that a different method like RD will work. For example, if students do not honor the talking piece used to structure interaction in an orderly way, teachers theoretically cannot intervene as they might when they are teaching regular content because they are an equal member in the circle and not an authority figure.

They have lots of questions that are posed to the external consultant. "Can I do circle with kids in their regular seats?" "How can I get the kids to open up, be honest, tell the truth, and have other kids just listen without remarks?" "Can you do a circle with just 3 to 4 troublemakers and not the whole class?" Some of the suggestions made by the consultant were to do a circle on the topic of words that are offensive; to ask a kid that is a troublemaker to be a positive influence and help the teacher."

As teachers try out the circles, they are beginning to recognize after the fact some of the principles that undergird restorative practices. Comments were made such as "[A]fter RJ with kids they need you to check in with them and that takes time. If you don't check with both sides, kids feel your effort wasn't genuine." "Repetition is needed to reinforce the change."

October. In October, teachers report positive results in terms unprompted apologies and acknowledgements from students and between students suggesting greater relational empathy. Students are becoming familiar with the circle process: "I'm doing circle check-ins and students are talking and comfortable, even the ones who aren't talkative." Teachers are weighing the reality of their expectations in that there are positive results from a circle but then students will revert. "The circle makes a difference but it isn't lasting." Others recognize that they have to keep reinforcing the changes. "I think… it's something you have to keep up with. Kids are very in the moment." Others are appreciating that doing restorative processes takes patience and builds step by step. "You have to baby step it. It's a process. So now I really want us to go to the next step where we start to get kids to be more involved in the circle process and I think we're heading there. It's definitely hard because you want to start sprinting before you start walking but if you do that you just fall on you face and we don't want to do that.

Teachers are noting the time it takes to do restorative processes. "To do it right with a kid who has many problems will take the whole period." They are using the Assistant Principal for referrals but also to substitute for them if they need to deal with several students from the class. They are also calculating the impact on the students if they have to interrupt the circle process because of time. "I want to do the whole thing with the centerpiece. [But] it will do more harm to get half way through and quit due to time and I want everyone to speak because of the need for reflection. If I hear others talk it helps me reflect on what I am thinking." One teacher described his decision to use a whole period for a circle and how students responded in making up for the time they had lost in keeping up with the academic expectations.

> *The problem was that [doing the circle] put us a day behind everybody else. But I told them at the end of the class that we were a day behind so tomorrow we really gotta come in and really bust butt. And so they came in today and they were supposed to look up two different sources and most of them did four or five. They recognized what they needed to do. I told them at the end of the day how proud I was of them. I don't know if it matters to them but it mattered to me, that I was proud that they made an effort.*

Teachers are also beginning to understand and appreciate the shift from a punitive to relational model and what is involved in building a relational base in the classroom. One teacher shared how he interrelated with a student.

> I said, "Well honey, this is what you need to understand. Not everybody knows you as well as myself and the Assistant Principal do so you gotta understand that sometimes your come off a little edgy. Especially when you're mad." It was just nice that she trusted me enough to talk to me and tell me. And so that was good and I think that's a relationship I think we've built that will last by taking those steps.

The same teacher explained the association between restorative processes and relationships. "If there's no relationship the circle in my opinion in pointless because they don't care if they hurt your feelings. They don't care how it affected you because they don't like you. If people I don't like tell me I hurt their feelings I don't really care."

November. Teachers are using circles and restorative practices more flexibly based on need. Some are using it more frequently with their more difficult classes or to set goals in a particular class. As there are fewer instances of misconduct there is renewed interest in using it to build community in the classroom. "I think the community building aspect has caused some of the kids who are a little bit harder to have to open up a little bit and show that they're not as hard as they want you to think they are. But I've been trying to keep the check-ins [in circle] real loose, just real simple."

In addition, teachers are noting new challenges that impact the progress they feel they've made in their classrooms. It's particularly difficult, for example, to use circles in large classes. Yet these are the classes that may be more difficult to manage. Several mentioned getting new students who upset the status quo and have to be integrated into the existing class. There is difficulty with transition zones in the school such as hallways. A recent fire drill had created problem with transitions. Finally teachers were dreading Thanksgiving because all the classroom norms would have to be re-established.

There is a range of response in terms of evaluating progress. When students revert or do not keep their word about commitments made in a group, teachers question if their responses to restorative practices are genuine or not. One teacher shared that the following:

> [It was] hard to stick with RD when kids slide back. Two of my boys somehow got out of 1st period with the substitute and they got into our little kitchen here and into the fridge and were stealing things and so you know… [I] kind of feel like we were making progress and then everything just rewinds and we're starting from the beginning. It's getting frustrating.

Part of teachers' disappointment may be related to the fact that a student had stolen a talking piece used in circles and the cell phone of a teacher with pictures of her child who had died. No one came forth to claim responsibility, which bothered many of the teachers who were working to put in place new practices that build relational trust.

Others assessed RD's relative advantages. One teacher said, "I think it's working, it's working better than with me screaming at them for an hour." Another reflected that "It's not gonna work for every situation. It's not gonna work for every kid and that's been said from the get go. But I think compared to what I've done in the past it at least gives me some hope."

December. This month is marked by disillusionment and confusion. Teachers are reporting that there is disruption throughout the school. Also there are two core teachers (out of twelve) who are leaving at the end of the semester. There is lots of anger from the students about other students and teachers and some sense that particular students are inciting the misconduct. The students are behaving unpredictably in the restorative circles as well. As one example, a teacher related about a student that "the kids got frustrated so we talked about it and [an incident] got brought up and she says, 'I don't care. I don't care about this." She was just very…and she's been in a million circles." Another teacher complained that "[t]hey'll flat out apologize but then the next day they're right back to what they were doing. Some teachers are suggesting that students are taking advantage of the RD process. "It used to be that it was okay if they needed time to chill but now it's 'I need to chill every single day.'"

Some teachers are offering explanations for the breakdown. They suggest that the students do not want to be out of school for two weeks and are not looking forward to the semester break. "The kids are angry they can't have their holiday like other kids. They are not looking forward to it." Their parent(s) may be in jail or they may have particular sensitivity to the holidays and what they bring. The teachers contemplate how to handle the students' and their own disappointment when they cannot change the circumstances. One the teachers reminds himself that it's important to let the students have their attitudes and to not personalize their behavior.

> *You guys have to be able to take it. Like if a kid says, "I just don't like you," I got to be okay with that. I can't be like "I can't stand you. How dare you not like me. I'm not gonna like you either." Its like you just gotta take it and be like not everybody's gonna like you.*

January. There are some new teachers and new class configurations after the holidays with student who are troublesome. There are also changes this month based on the administration's decision that teachers do more of the RD directly with students rather than referring cases to the LRT (administration). There isn't much reaction except for the comment that "having the LRT (administration) do all of the circles without the teachers being involved I thought took away the relational part." In addition, RD is being combined with traditional discipline. The school administration and teachers recognize that RD has been implemented with little attention to agreed upon plans to lock in and actualize restorative conference and circle outcomes. Now there are "last chance" circles meaning that students get three circles (three chances) before they are disciplined. This newly created strategy turns restorative processes into an early warning system that is necessary because "sixth graders have short memories."

Teachers have also received input from IRJRD about using classroom circles to establish agreed upon values as a collectively derived base to help manage class conduct. Consequently, they are using circles to establish "expectations" for the class and for themselves. In one class the teacher

did an expectations circle with the rule that students could generate expectations for the class and themselves but other students could veto any of them if they had good reason to do so. In her reflection on this process she states:

> *We had some good discussions going on. Some of my kids that don't say anything,*
> *that never say anything, they just sit there. They come in they do their work,*
> *they're quiet, they keep to themselves. When these conversations were happening*
> *they were getting passionate about it because they were like, "This is mine. This*
> *is what I need. And if you object to that I'm not gonna get what I need." And they*
> *were speaking up and we had some really good conversations today. It's been*
> *really good.*

In some instances teachers had students sign the "expectations" document the class created or showed the lists different classes had created to other classes. A typical list could include the following values: responsibility, positivity, helping, caring manners, sharing, respect and fairness. A teacher who particularly liked the idea of values circles said:

> *I knew this year we were gonna be guinea pigs. I knew we were gonna make*
> *mistakes and we were gonna grow and whatever. But man, this would have been a*
> *really good thing to kick off the year with. Maybe not the first day because you*
> *just don't really know [the students] yet but definitely within the first three weeks,*
> *to have that structure.*

Teachers also are concerned about the negative stigma that is being given to RD by the rest of the school. Their reactions mimic, on a broader school level, the injustices that students feel when other students pick them on unfairly.

February. Teachers have begun to use a contract after a restorative conference or circle. The contract has four sections to be completed about repair of the harm: (1) How will harm be repaired? (2) How will harm be avoided in the future? (3) How will the person who did the harm give back to the community? (4) What support will be given to the person who was harmed? Teachers continue to question the sustainability of what happens in a restorative process. "Kids respond to the value's reminder and then they fade." They also wonder if students truly understand and appreciate what they are agreeing to when they say, "I'm sorry" or "Leave me alone."

There continues to be experimentation with ways circles can be used. A teacher used it in the classroom to manage students' reactions to a girl who was leaving the school.
We did a circle for a student who was leaving and students who don't speak spoke. They expressed gratitude and sadness. A couple of them even shed a few tear. One of them told her she didn't want to hear her call herself bad names or put herself down. Really bringing her up and that for me was a very empowering thing for one peer to do.

The Assistant Principal met with seven boys who are leaders in the sixth grade after their "play" fighting in the gym led to one of them needing medical attention. The boys themselves decided to do a panel in the lunchroom with the sixth grade teachers and students. The asked to talk

about what had happened, apologize to the students and teachers for having created a dangerous situation and share what they had learned. One of the teachers described her reaction to the restorative justice assembly.

> *That was great. I loved it. I thought it was the perfect restitution for the fight that those kids had. The things that they said, it just… the connection that they made with the other kids, I mean I think RD is probably at its strongest when its being lead by kids and kids are saying, "I'm trying to turn over this new leaf. We know we're the leaders. We know we need to do better. I'm sorry that we haven't. I'm sorry that we've been the cause of all this." Those were great things to hear. And I don't know how long to expect that leaf to stay turned over but to me it's just about creating that….opportunity. Its not gonna happen over night. I think that just more of those types of things, more of those situations is the direction we need to be headed.*

Teachers also expressed concerns about some of the impediments they saw to the successful implementation of RD. For example, a teacher commented on the amount of turnover during the year among sixth grade teachers. "Too much change in teachers this year has been disruptive to the RD process." A teacher also felt there was a lack of support from administration. "My supervisor is kind of nasty about this. Every time I'm doing RD she rolls her eyes or gives me the look… The teachers are split on doing [RD] and support for RD because the message from the top is not consistent." A number of the teachers described that the sixth graders were particularly difficult this year and that the seventh and eighth grades were blaming RD. A teacher stated:

> *[W]e're running into the problem that bugs me more than anything else here. It's the sixth grade verses everybody else with RD. Because they all say the sixth grade is so horrible and this is a rough class. No doubt about it. But that has no reflection on RD. This is just a rough class. They're not afraid of us. Traditional disciple on these kids would be a waste.*

March. The number of teachers doing weekly interviews has dropped off substantially. The remaining teachers continue to talk about the impact of the restorative justice assembly: "I was really impressed. I don't know if I could get up there at that age and talk to so many kids and really speak."

There is continued experimentation with ways to use circles. For example, one teacher used a classroom circle to introduce material and discussion on race relations. Two teachers decided to move outside the boundaries of their own classrooms and the students they knew and tried out sitting with new students in the lunchroom and doing an informal circle. A teacher who had struggled all year with a particular class used a circle format to talk about the values the students had agreed to and their low test scores. In the circle, she gave them the responsibility as a class for how to deal with this reality and reset goals for the last nine weeks of school.

Teachers also keep referencing their awareness that the essence of RD is building relationships with students. "Teachers who are open to building relationships and having that communication between themselves and the students, their classes run so much more differently."

April. The number of teachers doing teacher interviews continues to be low. Teachers are focused on the restorative conferences and circles they are doing for student misconduct. A teacher shared that she plans to do a class circle with a student when he returns from I.S.S. and discusses with the external consultant the speaking order to use when students share their thoughts and feelings with the student who caused the harm. In their descriptions, teachers are discovering how the circle process can illuminate the reasons students are misbehaving. "So it's interesting when you sit down and actually discuss what is causing these problems."

May. There is only one teacher interview this month. The focus is on how to help students take seriously their language and how it impacts others. The teacher remarks that students would have taken using the word "faggot" seriously at the beginning of the year but now excuse it by saying that they are just "playing."

Summary The teacher interviews give an important glimpse into how the teachers were using restorative processes in the classroom both to build community and for student discipline. The teachers who were interviewed started the year enthusiastically and, for the most part, continued to be strong advocates for restorative processes throughout the year. Many of them experimented with a variety of ways restorative circles could be used and were open to trying approaches without a guaranteed outcome. There were numerous changes throughout the year including procedures for who, when and how RD would happen. For the most part, these teachers responded proactively to the shifts. They seemed to form strong, even close, partnerships with their students as they discovered the various ways restorative processes could work.

The monthly review suggests that after a strong start, there were numerous stressors in November and December related to teacher leavings, changes in classroom composition, and holiday and break transitions. Students who initially responded well to RD took some advantage of the process likely because no actions were taken to sustain the changes introduced during the conference or circle. At the beginning of the second semester, teachers held values/expectation circles in their classrooms. These seemed to help lay a foundation and shared meaning about desired behaviors and a language to use when those values/expectations were not upheld. There is little information in the interviews about the combining of RD and traditional discipline, which also happened in the second semester. It also seems that, apart from using the external consultant for some suggestions and guidance, most of these teachers worked alone receiving limited support and feedback from others. Their reactions to the negative responses coming from the rest of the school about the use of RD does not seem to have impacted them strongly. Indeed, they seem buoyed by the freedom to experiment and the positive results they saw in the students. Their consternation over limited time, lack of consistency in student's upward movement, and concerns about students' sincerity are approached as issues that they must contended with rather than as evidence of the failure of RD.

School Climate Surveys (SCS)
Teachers, parents/caregivers, and students filled out climate surveys to assess changes in the school's culture as RD was implemented. Although RD takes between 3-6 years before major shifts are made in how the whole school operates proactively and in response to student misconduct, it was important to establish a baseline and evaluate which areas were more resistant to change.

The three stakeholder groups were assessed in September at the beginning of the 2012-2013 academic year, in December before the holiday break, and in June at the end of the second semester. The numbers of persons responding to the surveys varied because this was a voluntary process. Individuals completed the surveys without identification by name or code. Their individual scores, therefore, could not be compared over time. Rather each group's scores were summed and averaged and each group's scores in September were compared to their scores in December and June. Table 15 shows the teachers' scores. Table 16 shows the parents/caregivers' scores. Table 17 shows the students' scores. The demographics of each group for the September. December and June surveys are included since the size and composition varied considerably at different time points.

Table 15. Teacher SCS scores for September, December and June

September	#	%	December	#	%	June	#	%
Mean = 39.5			Mean = 46.6			Mean = 42.0		
N=31			N=10			N=10		
Female	22	70.9	Female	5	50.0	Female	7	63.6
Male	5	16.0	Male	0	0	Male	0	0
Unknown	4	12.9	Unknown	5	50.0	Unknown	4	36.3
Hispanic	8	25.8	Hispanic	3	30.0	Hispanic	2	18.1
Non-Hispanic	15	48.3	Non-Hispanic	4	40.0	Non-Hispanic	4	36.3
Unknown	8	25.8	Unknown	3	30.0	Unknown	5	45.4
Black	4	12.9	Black	2	20.0	Black	1	9.0
AIAN	0	0	AIAN	0	0	AIAN	0	0
Pacific	0	0	Pacific	0	0	Pacific	0	0
White	23	74.0	White	6	60.0	White	6	5.4
Asian	0	0	Asian	0		Asian	0	0
Unknown	4	12.9	Unknown	2	20.0	Unknown	4	36.3

Table 16. Parent/caregiver SCS Scores for September, December and June

September	#	%	December	#	%	June	#	%
Mean = 24.4			**Mean = 25.3**			**Mean = 27.5**		
N=107			**N=64**			**N=22**		
Female	69	64.4	Female	43	67.1	Female	12	54.5
Male	34	31.7	Male	19	29.6	Male	10	45.4
Unknown	4	3.7	Unknown	2	3.1	Unknown	0	0
Hispanic	60	56.0	Hispanic	34	53.1	Hispanic	9	40.9
Non-Hispanic	17	15.8	Non-Hispanic	16	25.0	Non-Hispanic	6	27.2
Unknown	30	28.0	Unknown	14	21.8	Unknown	7	31.8
Black	29	27.1	Black	20	31.2	Black	7	31.8
AIAN	1	.9	AIAN	2	3.1	AIAN	0	0
Pacific	0	0	Pacific	1	1.5	Pacific	0	0
White	40	37.3	White	23	35.9	White	4	18.1
Asian	7	6.5	Asian	5	7.8	Asian	4	18.1
Unknown	30	28.0	Unknown	13	20.3	Unknown	7	31.8

Table 17. Student SCS scores for September, December and June

September	#	%	December	#	%	June	#	%
Mean=31.9			**Mean= 21.8**			**Mean = 30.3**		
N=255			**N=253**			**N=215**		
Female	123	48.2	Female	120	47.6	Female	90	36.1
Male	127	49.8	Male	125	49.6	Male	119	47.2
Unknown	5	1.9	Unknown	8	3.1	Unknown	5	1.9
Hispanic	120	47.0	Hispanic	144	55.1	Hispanic	117	46.4
Non-Hispanic	80	31.3	Non-Hispanic	55	21.8	Non-Hispanic	56	22.2
Unknown	55	21.5	Unknown	54	21.4	Unknown	42	16.6
Black	87	34.1	Black	83	32.9	Black	77	30.5
AIAN	9	3.5	AIAN	3	1.1	AIAN	0	0
Pacific	4	1.5	Pacific	1	0.3	Pacific	2	0.7
White	110	43.1	White	74	29.3	White	68	26.9
Asian	10	3.9	Asian	13	5.1	Asian	8	3.1
Unknown	35	13.7	Unknown	79	31.3	Unknown	60	23.8

The mean scores for teachers, parents/caregivers and students differed in terms of the trajectory over the year. Teacher scores moved up from September to December and then down in June. Parent/caregiver scores moved up slightly each time they completed the survey. Student scores moved down considerably from September to December and then jumped back up again in June. Overall teachers rated the climate of the school more highly than parents and students.

In terms of the individual survey items, parents moved strongly upward in assessing that their children's possessions are safe at school (#10). They also moved upward from December to June in their perception that when a student does something wrong, they are given a chance to put things right (#7). Teachers moved upward from September to December in their belief that students are given opportunities to make amends if they are responsible for causing harm (#7) and when a student causes harm the main response by the school is a sanction or punishment (#8). Both teachers and students moved upward in their feelings that in cases of bullying, the person harmed is asked to say what could be done to make things better.

Themes from Teacher Interviews and Focus Groups
Focus groups with teachers and members of the LRT were held at the end of both semesters and led by IRJRD. The timing of these groups allowed for a critical review of the RD program and its implementation. Because of this monitoring and comments from the focus groups held in December, 2012, IRJRD was able to ascertain certain problems that could be addressed immediately and prior to the start of the second semester. For example, teachers needed more specific suggestions and examples about how to use classroom circles to teach course content. IRJRD sent the external consultant materials on a regular basis for distribution to the teachers. IRDRD also realized through the December focus groups that the external consultant needed assistance in how to work with the teachers, the school structure, and the administration. IRJRD provided that consultation during the second semester. IRJRD also discovered that restorative conferences and circles were being held but little attention was given to action plans to ensure that what happened in these meetings had carry over and that agreed-upon plans were being monitored. IRJRD spoke to the national trainer about this problem and she furnished a model form and guidelines about how to implement it. IRJRD also furnished the principal, Philip Carney, with a report from the December focus groups and recommendations to institute during the second semester.

The focus groups held in June, 2013 will be used to guide the implementation of RD during 2013-2014. For example, the administration and teachers feel that a handbook on RD with specific procedures will help develop greater consistency in how restorative processes are used. IRJRD will produce that handbook before the start of the 2012-2014 school year. Other issues raised in the June focus groups include the following:

- Need for more training beyond the beginning of the year.

- Need for more feedback to teachers about use of RD and success stories.

- Availability of the external consultant consistently and during the day.

- Scheduling difficulties for teachers to use RD during class time.

- Potential misuse of circles to gather information on teachers.

- Need to change student and teacher perceptions about manifestations of strength and personal power.

- Need for more logistics and greater clarity about doing RD.

- Greater attention to action steps and follow through on agreements.

The June focus groups made evident that after January, many if not most teachers abandoned doing RD. There was high turnover with the loss of three English, two math and two special education teachers. Also, in the second semester the priority went to preparing for the STAAR test. An administrator noted that there was a "[h]uge push [initially]because it was new, then staff turnover and then teacher involvement, it just dropped. It picked up a little when they came back [after the break]. The real issue though is teacher involvement on a regular basis. Teachers have not yet determined RD is a priority." Another one said, "Kids change easier than adults. We have to get teachers to understand RD and have a model to go by. They don't want grey. They want steps. The teacher's role is more valuable than mine but I need teachers to realize that they are the most powerful piece of the puzzle and they don't get that yet."

The individual teacher interviews and focus groups were analyzed for content and recurring themes. There were four core themes: realistic expectations, student response, relationship building, and necessary supports.

Realistic Expectations RD is not just a new bunch of skills to learn. Rather it is a change in mindset that challenges much of the social conditioning that guides how schools operate and how students, teachers, staff and administration treat each other at all levels. Although it is simple to embrace RD's goals ideologically, it is extremely challenging to implement RD because it means questioning and changing so much of what is embedded in the system. At Ed White, teachers, students and the administration confronted many unknowns including questions about what are appropriate expectations given the change in the system. These questions applied both to what was realistic to expect of students and what was realistic to expect of teachers.

What did an apology mean? What kind of behavior was appropriate to expect? How often should teachers be doing classroom circles? Given the focus on building relationships, what was appropriate to share about oneself with students and what should be withheld? Teachers had consternation, for example, over the lasting effects of a restorative conference or circle with students. They tended to remain focused on the outcome rather than the process of change. Consequently they felt discouraged and questioned the credibility of RD when the results from a circle did not last. One teacher expressed, "I think they mean it when they say. They seem to mean it when then say it. But then I kind of feel like 2 to 3 hours later they kind of forget that they said it…" Although teachers might go round and round trying to assess the credibility of a student's remorse or agreement to stay away from another student, they also realized, often at the

same moment, that this was a learning process and would take time. A teacher remarked, "So it's a baby step and I'm gonna have to go back and probably in a week or two, maybe a week, do something like that again. Where I just basically walk them through a few things." Indeed, a recent study of restorative practices in Denver schools found that students who had been involved in many circles showed greater improvement in their social skills (Baker, 2009, pp. 9-13). Sometimes teachers were surprised at the reasons behind students' lack of follow through. A teacher shared his experience after being in a circle led by a member of the LRT (administration). "I think everyone did apologize, except one. He waited... Ms. Nelson went to him because she was surprised he didn't apologize and so she went to him and goes, 'Last time you were here with Denzel you apologized. This time your didn't.' He was crying and he says, 'I couldn't apologize because I was gonna cry and I didn't want anybody to see me cry.'"

Teachers and administrators also questioned who was responsible for the implementation of RD. Initially the LRT did most of the restorative conferences and circles for discipline. However, as a member of the team observed about the teachers, "Teachers didn't know how to start it so they wanted one of us with them when they did it. I thought that once they did it they would do it themselves but they didn't. Many were only observing from the sidelines." Indeed, teachers were familiar with referring students to administration for discipline and just continued in the same vein. The only difference was that students were getting circles rather than I.S.S. Some of the teachers recognized that they were the ones building relationships with the students and they actually had more influence. However, when the decision was made by administration for the teachers to be more involved in the disciplining, little activity occurred. There were also questions about who was responsible for building skills and confidence among the teachers so they could better implement RD. Teachers had received a two-day initial training but there were difficulties with the external consultant's availability, few teachers asked for his direct assistance, there was little time given to RD in staff meetings because of a packed agenda, and no specific blueprint to follow. A teacher made these comments:

> *I think it was a lot to put on teachers to ask them to help implement the system. It should have been rolled out. I feel like I'm not doing it exactly the right way but I don't know what it is. It should have been more organized. There's no clear cut vision what's been asked for. There's a mixed message about how it should be utilized with traditional discipline measures. No one has a clear cut idea of what this is supposed to look like. It's not fair to throw something at us and say, "Here, you figure out how to do it."*

RD challenged teachers and administrators to re-conceptualize their ideas about power and how it gets expressed. Ed White was used to consequences for misconduct that had "thump" in them. Without the "thump" the restorative conference or circle looked weak. An apology or agreement to not gossip held little weight next to suspension. But RD also raises issues about power for the students in terms of how they address their differences and conflicts. One teacher said, "If they confront they don't look weak. What we're looking for is a third alternative to walk away without being weak…before you loose face. Then you're not put into that situation where you have to respond." Similarly, said an administrator, "For teachers, the traditional response is to exercise your power by removing the student. The kids are trained to keep their strength and so

are the teachers. He added, "Data and logic don't prevail in an emotional situation. The teachers need to feel is if they've gained something from this."

Part of the school's struggle about new ways to use power was due to a lack of information about making reparations for harm done. The initial training did not include information on doing agreements as part of restorative conferences and circles and monitoring afterwards. Moreover, the external consultant evidently did not realize this was an essential component for teachers to understand. Consequently, assistance on how to use agreements and an agreement form did not occur until after IRJRD learned about this vital issue during the focus group in December. Although these tools will be better implemented in 2013-2014, they do not resolve the ongoing challenge that is a part of RD practices about reformulating power so that schools are helped to move from a focus on personal power to a recognition of the strength, however elusive, of relational power.

There were debates over what was realistic to expect in terms of buy-in. Teachers could readily ascertain which students had responded positively to RD and which students remained aloof or took advantage of the process. Teachers did not know how to read non buy-in students' behaviors. Were they incapable of empathy? Were they part of a subculture where being bad is good? There were similar questions about buy-in from teachers. Did it need to be 100% for RD to be effective? Did the perception that only a handful of teachers were actively using RD in their classrooms mean that nothing was really happening? If teachers used only parts of RD or felt they were already relating to their students and managing their classrooms in a proactive way, were they not team players? Although these questions are important, they reflect the common difficulties encountered in learning to read and value process—that skill that involves reading cues as part of a change process, knowing the distance a journey like this takes, and interpreting behaviors in non dichotomous and judgmental ways.

Finally there were uncertainties about appropriate outcomes for restorative conferences and circles. Many of the restorative conferences and circles initially concluded with acknowledgment of harm done, apology, and agreements between students to steer clear of each other, let an adult know when trouble was brewing, not to gossip, etc. As staff realized that these outcomes were insufficient to sustain change or that students were not taking them seriously, they began adding on traditional punishment. Indeed, some teachers suggested that it might make more sense to use restorative practices *after* traditional suspension so that students were helped to return to the classroom, make amends and begin anew. Part of the return to traditional discipline might have been abated if staff had been sufficiently educated about agreements and monitoring plans. Indeed, the administration has asked IRJRD to help in developing a list of possible consequences for teachers to use that will make accountability and reparations for harm done more meaningful.

The administration recognizes that consequences that are tailored to each situation take time to develop. Moreover, Ed White does not have enough longevity as yet in operating within an RD culture such that developing proactive consequences comes naturally. In many schools, the participants in a restorative practice work together along with the

student to devise acceptable consequences that are custom designed, based on understanding the underlying dynamics contributing to the student's misconduct, and develop new skills in the student. However, the debate over consequences is ongoing and likely reflects the shift from a punitive to a pro-social mindset. Indeed, as yet, there is little evidence of monitoring plans, which are essential to ensuring that agreements that occur at the end of a restorative conference or circle are upheld.

Student Experiences The following analysis is based solely on teacher and administrator reports about student responses to RD and do not include information from the students themselves. Students had an exceedingly positive response to RD. Indeed, administrators frequently acknowledged that it likely was easier to change the students' mindsets than the teachers' conditioning. Teachers and administrators commonly told stories of successes. Students seemed to take readily to restorative processes. They often asked for circles or conferences themselves. They were forthcoming with their thoughts and feelings frequently disclosing personal information that helped their teachers and classmates understand them better. The following stories serve as illustrations of the types of interactions that happened when a restorative process was used and students felt safe.

Classroom management. "I have a pretty good size class. There's just a lot of kids that are talkative and its very disruptive. It gets to the point where they want to get up out of their seats and go talk with the person they're having a conversation with. It got to a point where I just felt I couldn't teach. So I stopped the class. I literally had them get in an actual circle. I moved the desks real quick and got in a circle and I said, "I'm gonna start." I explained that I was very frustrated. I felt disrespected. I felt hurt because I had prepared this lesson and I felt as if it wasn't important. And I said, "I don't feel like this class is going as well as I hoped. So I'd like to hear how you feel about it." So we went around, and I was kind of nervous. I wasn't sure if they would actually speak up and say "I'm frustrated." I thought they would be intimidated. But they weren't. They said, "I'm very frustrated. I'm frustrated because I can't learn and I have a hard time learning." One of them actually said, "I have a hard time learning, anyway, but when it's noisy I really can't concentrate." And so it really… I could see the faces on the kids, looking around the circle, looking at their faces and their reactions towards these comments. They were shocked that people were actually saying… And a couple of them the disruptors said, "I feel fine about the class." And I said, "Okay." I mean, what am I gonna say? The other kids were like, "You gotta be joking." But they did respect the talking piece. They weren't talking out of turn but afterwards one of the kids came up to me and said, "I can't believe that so and so said they were fine with the class when they're the ones causing the mess. I said, "Honey, you know they're entitled to their feelings. We can't tell them how to feel. They might not even be aware that they're doing it." So we continued to talk about that."

Peer conflict. A student filled out a Circle-It Form and told me he didn't want to be here any more because kids were picking on him. I pulled the two boys in the following day. Both of them are Special Ed. This student is Special Ed because of his speech problem but the other one can't read very well at all. So we sat there and I said, "Ramon, can you please explain to him why you brought him in here and what harm he's doing?" So he told him. At first, the boy was not really getting what he was saying. He said, "Yeah he said a word wrong." The student

answered back saying, "Yes but I already don't talk because I know I can't… that I have a problem. But every time I walk into a class that's the first thing you guys tell me and it's making me feel really uncomfortable and I don't even want to speak in class anymore. I just want to put my head down because I'm embarrassed." He told him, "You and the other guys are cool and you have a lot of friends but I don't and it's even harder for me to do that. I've been working on my speech and I been doing it since elementary but it's still hard for me. I just want y'all to understand that every time y'all say that, it hurts me." Then the other boy started crying and I asked, "Why are you crying?" He said, "Because I don't know how to read and if somebody made fun of me… and that's why when you ask me to read Ms. Carpenter, I never do. I'll just sit there and I won't read because I don't want anybody to make fun of me. And now I just realized that I'm doing the same thing to him but I have a fault too." So he started crying and said, "I'm sorry I didn't know. The other kids were doing it so I just went in and I never thought about how it was making you feel. I just thought it was funny so I joined in. But now that I see it… I'm sorry because I don't know how to read and if the kids found out I would be embarrassed if they made fun of me because I don't know how to read." The student who was picked on said, "Okay, that's all I want. Y'all don't have to be my friend. You don't even have to be nice. Just don't say anything at all because I'm here to learn but when you guys do that, it makes its really hard."

Teachers even discovered that students were doing circles on their own without teacher involvement. The following account is about a girls' volleyball team.

> *These girl players were bickering amongst each other on the floor during the game. When the game was over they all went to the bathroom and so one of our coaches went to go check of them and said "Okay, where are all the girls" So she went and checked on them in the bathroom. And she walked in there. These are 8th grade girls. Mind you, at the beginning of the school year, 8th grade has not been exposed to RD but they were in a circle, apologized for saying this and saying that so she (the coach) backed off a while and just told them, "When you're all through come on back to the stands and sit down and stuff. But the coach came back with tears in her eyes. She said, "Oh my gosh, it's contagious."*

And this was early September.

In observing how students responded to restorative processes, teachers remarked that students were not afraid to share their feelings. They suggested that students do not have people at home who are interested in what students want to talk about. They felt that students value the talking piece because someone is listening to them. Teachers commented that students could discern which teachers were genuine and safe in terms of students' comfort levels and their willingness to expose themselves in a restorative conference or circle. Teachers were surprised by the students' ready acceptance of RD. "I didn't think they'd take to it so quickly but they really have grabbed hold of it." Indeed, an administrator said, "Kids get to talk and say exactly what they feel. We tell them, 'Don't hold it back.'" He then described an altercation between a student and teacher during a conference. The student said:

> *"I try to ask a question and you don't answer me." I wait for the teacher and she is kind of shocked that the student is saying, "I ask and you don't answer me." I*

told the teacher to answer his question. She didn't know what to do. I'm looking at the student and he's thinking, "But you still didn't answer my question." We were getting ready to wrap up and he said, "You still aren't answering me."

Both teachers and administrators felt that the students' positive responses to restorative conferences and circles served a number of functions, some of which prevented escalation of feelings and conflicts. For example, restorative processes gave students a chance to express themselves verbally rather than physically. RD taught students how to listen and develop empathy. Importantly, RD was seen as an early intervention measure against bullying. An administrator observed that "[A} lot of the conferences were that '[W]e had a fight two days ago and it's still going on.' It was more about they're just not getting along. The circles resolve things *before* they become bullying. Another administrator shared his opinion about bullying at Ed White. He felt that it started as a difference between students before morphing into supposed bullying. "I'm in conflict with another or they are stronger, faster, wittier, etc. but it's really mutual. As circles have helped to resolve conflict its allowed behaviors not to become claims of bullying." The students' use of restorative processes preventatively was similarly echoed by an administrator who remarked on the differences between boys and girls who asked for help. "Boys wanted to do circles and they came to us and asked, 'I need to do a circle with so and so' and I was really surprised about that. For the most part boys want you to stop a fight and I think that's why a lot of boys were receptive to the program. The boys were good at apologizing right off the bat and being truthful." Administrators commented that restorative processes give students an alternative so they are not put into a space where they have to respond, as in feeling they have to answer to a challenge.

Although students responded positively, some teachers felt that students took advantage of restorative processes. They relayed that students began using circles as an excuse to leave the classroom. The felt that circles were seen as an easy option. "Am I in trouble or do I just have to do a circle which meant I could get off without consequences." Some students misused the circle. For example, they wanted to do a circle about the teachers. Or they knew if they got upset at another student they could have a circle so there was little to stop them from lashing out at the student. Some short -circuited the circle process. "I've had students who will want to stay to say their piece and then just leave. They don't want to stay to resolve the whole thing"

It is difficult to assess these realities. Clearly this was the first year and teachers were struggling with implementation and what was okay to do and not do within the guidelines of a circle or conference. There were numerous comments about the sixth graders and how difficult this particular cohort was to manage. The lack of meaningful action plans created in response to the specific misconduct event and close monitoring likely contributed to students' testing. The question could also be raised about whether or not students' pushing the envelope isn't a part of normal development. Importantly, both teachers and students were affronted by efforts to denigrate and undermine the genuineness of the restorative endeavor and the value many people at Ed White attached RD. In seeking to protect it, Ed White began pairing it with traditional consequences.

Relationship Building RD is built on the values that undergird healthy and respectful relationships, namely honesty, trust, humility, sharing, inclusivity, empathy, courage, forgiveness

and love (Pranis, et al., 2003). These values are interdependent and reinforce one another. Values grow out of the question, "If we had a good process in the community to resolve conflict, what would you want to be the characteristics of that process?" They also grow out of the question, "What do I need to do to act out of my best self?" In their interviews and focus groups, teachers and administrators were, in effect, always commenting on the nature of the relationships they had with students and each other and the impact RD was having on building relationships or making them better.

The relationship-building aspects of RD were seen principally as preventative. A teacher commented on how the relationships he has built with his students has kept them out of trouble. There's about 7 or 8 kids that would have labeled extremely difficult and just a pain in the butt. They would have been in the office daily if not three times a week and it's just not happening now. Not to that extent. These kids have relationships with somebody. My one girl Tasha--if she has trouble in a class instead of them kicking her out she comes talk to me. And by no means is she an angel. Yeah she still ends up in the office when she's doing things like fighting every once in a while. But if I had to guess, knowing this girl the way I do, she would have been in fifteen fights by now and she's been in three.

Part of building relationships is the use of RD in the classroom for more than disciplinary issues. Teachers described how they built that community. Some of them did check-in and check-out circles for students to share what was happening in their lives. A teacher did a circle when a student was leaving so that everyone could say good-bye. Sometimes they used circles for developing shared expectations about how people needed to treat each other in the class. Others used it for problem solving. One of them did a class circle at Halloween asking what students were planning to do and also asking them how they felt class was going. He noted how differently the class behaved because of the bonds built between them. "They usually just come in loud and crazy and they came in today and they weren't perfect by any stretch but there were people saying, 'Shhh' and 'Calm down. Sit down.' Not just me saying, 'SIT DOWN!'"

Some teachers were careful to always expand issues to help students remember that what was happening affected everyone, a strategy that strengthened the sense of belonging to the community that was being built in the classroom and at Ed White. After talking about herself in a circle, a teacher exclaimed, "Its important for them to understand how passionate I am. My daughters have been bullied and it affects me. You're not just hurting one person you're hurting their entire family. I've always been passionate but now with these tools I can really impact the entire school." When introducing the idea of values to the class, she later referred to the concept of family and belonging again stating, "I think we should have *family* expectations."

Besides community, the building of relationships helps increase trust between students and teachers, countering to some extent the cynicism that otherwise is used to prevent disappointment but can also kill hope. Although teachers did not talk about this issue directly it was clear from the teachers who used RD and were building relationships that they were responding differently to their students. Instead of frustration there appeared to be greater tolerance and the sharing of responsibility for what happened in class.

The focus on relationships also seemed to humanize people, their motives, proclivities and struggles. For example, a teacher who shared about herself in a circle said, "My statements made it less me against them. More community. They understood that it's not just that they hurt but that I hurt. Now they know I have feelings and they can make me feel bad. Once they identify you're feeling pain, things change." The result of greater humanization was evident in teachers' responses to students. With empathy, they were more likely to respond to student's misconduct with compassion. A student who had to repeat the grade from the previous year was acting out. Realizing that his acting out was connected to feeling shame about being the oldest in the class, she asked him, as part of a consequence for his behavior, if he would develop content from a student's perspective that she could use for teaching her class because he already knew it from the previous year. A teacher who was interceding between two boys stated that the issue was not really the conflict. Rather kids picked on each other, in part, because they wanted to make friends but they went about it poorly.

As healthier pro-social relationships got built, students and teachers experienced each other up close rather than from a distance. Indeed RD brings people close-up to each other. As evidence of less distance, teachers commented on being able to read the cues better from students because they listened. They could see the power in making "I" statements or sharing their feelings. They were more willing to give a student a second chance. They saw new ways they could matter to students. For example, one teacher offered to translate from Spanish to English if a student in a circle felt more comfortable expressing herself in her native language. This sense of partnering that comes from closer engagement was reflected in a teacher's story about dealing with the class after they had treated a substitute teacher poorly. "I have a large 5th period class and when I was absent the substitute had problems so they asked me to do a circle. There was a lot of trust and they let a lot of things out. They talked about coming here after Katrina, domestic violence, a jailed father. They bonded. They cried. It was very powerful. Ever since then, they still have their issues, but they have a base level of respect."

The power of RD to build relationships had payoff toward the end of spring semester when many classes breakdown due, in part, to the stress over the STAAR testing. Those teachers who had built the relationships early on and throughout the year were able to draw up them so that they went through this period with much less frustration and without the same difficulties that other teachers experienced.

Necessary Supports Teachers and administrators commented frequently on what was missing in 2012-2013 that made it more difficult to implement RD and what was necessary for its success in the future. Comments about time and how it was spent were made repeatedly suggesting that this issue stood out among all others. Teachers, for example, described problems in team meetings that ultimately undermine time and attention to RD. "We need to be on board as a team but I see a lot of fracturing. Team meetings don't have a plan. They're not productive and there's a lot of negativity." Teachers also complained about how difficult it was to do RD because of scheduling problems. If they needed to do restorative conferences with a handful of students from the class they had to find time in their schedule to do it and time could not interfere with other classes the students were taking. The attention given to STAAR and the time devoted to

student readiness for testing took precedence over the time needed for successful implementation of RD.

Another necessary support was attention to matters related to accountability. Although RD was a commitment Ed White made to proactively addressing discipline issues, there was no mechanism to ensure that teachers were using it in the classroom. Indeed, there was division in the school and between teachers about its viability with some teachers using it consistently, others intermittently and still others not at all. RD processes are to be done on a voluntary basis rather than imposed so there are important philosophical issues to work through. The lack of clear direction in the beginning about implementation certainly contributed to difficulties in how and when teachers used it. However, the divisions between teachers were exacerbated by persons in other grades who criticized the sixth grade for doing less traditional discipline suggesting that the sixth grade adoption of RD was responsible for the school's greater difficulties with this year's cohort of sixth grade students. Indeed several teachers commented that the administration as a whole was factionalized in its response to RD, which built dissension and helped feed the naysayers. In connection with the perceived divisions, teachers commented that they needed more from administration than the Assistant Principal talking about RD. They shared that this development, as it occurred in 2012-2013, "makes it his thing rather than something expected and supported more broadly."

Part of accountability is providing feedback to teachers about RD. Staff felt that it would have helped considerably to have had information on how many restorative conferences and circles were happening and what were some of the outcomes. Besides having knowledge about whether or not RD was working, the feedback might also have included stronger recognition of those teachers who were trying it out as a way to encourage and empower them. Without this attention, teachers who were using it were quite isolated and implementing RD with little support. Indeed it remains unclear, outside of the official sixth grade offense reports, which teachers were using it, how often, in what ways, and the nature of their experience.

The issue of accountability is most evident in examining the outcomes of restorative circles and conferences. The absence of agreements and monitoring plans likely contributed strongly to problems of sustainability, attitudes that RD was "soft," and perhaps even to students' proclivities, in some cases, to take advantage of its lack of consequences. This support is critical to RD's successful implementation. Without it teachers understandably look to traditional modes of discipline for their support. Skills for developing agreements likely need to be focused on in future staff meetings provided time is allocated for RD. An administrator who started to use agreements commented, "[W]e had a higher percentage of people coming back to us when we had them write and design the action plan to comply. This follow through piece made a huge difference in breaking it down." Likewise when a non discipline-related but emotionally intense circle or conference is held in the classroom, students need teachers to check back in with them about their experience about how they are doing instead of leaving them without a sense of support and follow up.

The external consultant is a necessary support to the whole process of developing and implementing RD at Ed White. Schools increasingly hire full-time restorative justice coordinators to do the work that was spread between administration, the teachers and the external

consultant. This is not always the best plan because, while expedient, it does not allow for full integration and is less apt to used for classroom management and community building. Because this is a new program and is being implemented gradually for the entire school, the function and availability of the external consultant, therefore, is critical to its success. This individual needed to take on many roles including mentoring to administration and teachers, conducting or co-facilitating restorative conferences and circles, supplying materials and resources so that staff have tools to draw on as they encounter new challenges, giving short in service tutorials or meetings about RD issues coupled with taking initiative and a proactive position about RD. The central goal of the external consultant is to build confidence in the school about its ability to take on a challenging but revolutionary approach to student misconduct and the school climate for learning.

Discussion

In is first year of implementation, Ed White showed substantial gains in its decision to proactively approach discipline instead of continuing to use a basically punitive model. During 2012-2013, the school introduced RD to sixth-grade teachers, parents/caregivers and students and used the year as a pilot both to test out and refine the use of RD with the strategy being to introduce it in subsequent years to the seventh and eighth grades. The administration at Ed White elected to use a whole-school approach, which means a commitment both to creating a different response to student misconduct but also to weave a restorative justice culture into the school, which help change punitive mindsets and conditioning among teachers, establish pro-social community values in the classroom and the school as a whole, and generate a safe and calm environment for learning.

This was an ambitious decision because any effort to change a system usually means more unrest and challenge initially. School cultures have established norms about how to conduct their business and new models, however promising, threaten what is familiar and safe. Moreover the change process can be bumpy and frustrating. The trajectory is rarely a straight line but rather is defined by false starts, reversions and small gains. IRJRD's intent was to study the implementation so that the results could inform the school about necessary changes and times in the calendar year when added effort was necessary to shore up the use of RD or other measures devised to prevent slippage.

Ed White's ability to reduce its use of out-of-school suspension in its first year of operation is impressive. Indeed, it reduced the use of all traditional suspension and expulsion including in school suspension and student placement in Alternative Education Placement (AEP). This finding clearly demonstrates the school's commitment to using non punitive approaches to student misconduct and its ability to accomplish that objective. It's important to bear in mind that this decrease in the use of punitive measures for misbehavior did not necessarily mean a reduction in the behaviors themselves.   Indeed, teachers commonly asserted that the 2012-2013 sixth-grade cohort was unusually difficult and recalcitrant compared to earlier cohorts. Rather, even in the face of unusual challenge the sixth grade was able to absorb and address the issues rather than extrude the students from the classroom or school. These improvements are reflected in student and parent item responses on the SCS, which suggest that there was a sense of

procedural fairness in how decisions about discipline were made this year.   Parents moved forward in their perception that their children are given a chance to put things right.   Students moved forward in their feelings that in cases of bullying, the person harmed is asked to say what could be done to make things better.

Moreover, Ed White decided to implement RD at a time of other upheaval. The sixth-grade lost almost half its core teachers during the year so the school was contending with substitute teachers, reassignment of teachers to different classrooms, increasing class sizes due to lack of resources, and the initiative of teachers new to Ed White to name just some of issues. Also the school is in the midst of changing from using the TAKS to the STAAR test to ensure that students are meeting the state's performance standards. Although these issues interplayed with and impacted the implementation of RD at different points throughout the year, the school still managed to keep its commitment to a new approach to discipline.

Clearly there were inconsistencies in how RD was implemented. The initial design called for the teachers to use RD for building community in the classroom, teaching content using circles and for problem solving using a consensus model of decision making. Disciplinary issues were to be referred to the LRT for restorative conferences and circles. The number of referrals coming both from teachers but also student themselves quickly overwhelmed the LRT. The LRT had hoped to help teachers learn how to use circles in the classroom so they would become comfortable doing some of the discipline themselves. Once the LRT realized that few teachers were using RD in their classrooms, the administration determined to have teachers do much more of the disciplinary work and worked with the schedule and arranging of classes so that teachers could do more restorative conferences and circles during the school's fourth class period. This left the LRT with less of a defined role. It is unclear how many teachers actually facilitated true disciplinary restorative conferences and circles. It appears there were many restorative "dialogues" where teachers spoke with students individually about their concerns. Teachers also paired what they did with traditional (punitive) discipline and this practice was accepted by the administration. There is little in the school records about any agreements made with students by teachers or the LRT after January. The Circle-It forms, however, suggest that there was a gradual use of agreement forms but with no monitoring.

In contrast, it appears that the teachers who were interviewed weekly used RD in the classroom in a variety of ways, established strong relationships with their students, and rode through the stress in the spring fairly well. It is not known if the weekly interviews helped them keep RD uppermost in their minds or if having a structured and timely way to use the external consultant contributed to their greater use of RD. These teachers were well aware that others did not necessarily share their experience with RD. They were able to perform, however, independent of some of the negativity around them and realized they were having a substantially different experience than their peers.

The inconsistencies noted here both in implementation and in an accurate assessment of who was doing what were exacerbated both by a foundational principles in restorative justice of voluntary participation and also by the lack of a clear procedures including agreements and monitoring plans. However, some of the inconsistencies were related to the school's shifts based on

realizations during the year about teacher utilization, criticism from teachers in other grades, and concerns about student misuse of restorative processes.

Students responded easily and well to RD. They were forthcoming in their stories and comments, able to use the talking piece to structure their interaction, and realized that a conference or circle could stave off a possible fight. Although student behaviors did not change instantly and new attitudes and improved conduct were often not sustained, these realities likely reflect normal growth patterns and are not indicative of a failure in RD. Rather teachers need help in reading cues about change processes so that outcomes are not so central and defining of success. Certainly the use of agreements and monitoring plans that are tailored to the social and emotional learning needs of the student will give teachers additional tools for effective implementation of RD.

It should be noted, however, that agreements and monitoring plans are not a quick solution to enhance sustainability of behavior change. Indeed, learning to use them well is a skill that also requires time and experience. For example, developing an agreement takes a clear and self-critical commitment in attitude to a non-punitive response. Moreover, the best agreements require an analysis of the underlying dynamics behind a particular behavior or interpersonal interaction so that the plan can be aimed at impacting those dynamics. Then the facilitator/participants in a restorative process need to be creative in constructing such a plan, often with the targeted student(s), so that it is tailored to the student's particular needs. There needs to be a focus not just on apology but on amends making, a giving back to the person or entity harmed including the classroom or school community. Finally, the monitoring plan is essential to ensure that what has been decided for the student(s) to do actually occurs. Moreover the monitoring plan ideally provides for a temperature read on how the student(s) is doing and if something more is needed so the student can be successful. Although this outline sounds involved and extensive, experience and efforts to develop skills in a supportive and mutual climate of shared learning greatly expedites the process.

Part of RD's challenge is that teachers and administrators have to come to terms with the issue of their power and how they use it. The criminalizing of student misconduct, in part, reflects the decision to "get tough" on students who disobey a school's policies and procedures. This "get tough" mindset is based on wielding power "over" a student, an act that has "thump" value in that through punishment the teacher or administrator feels they have made a difference, an impress on the student's mind. Part of the difficulty in teachers adopting RD likely reflects the fact that RD will not provide the same assurance of impact provided by traditional discipline. For this reason teachers clearly had trouble assessing whether or not adopting a new method with intransigent behaviors made any difference particularly when the results were not immediate or permanent. Teachers were surprised that making affective statements were effective in getting students' attention. They were more surprised that being vulnerable themselves and expressing personal feelings were not perceived as weakness but rather were valued by students and established real bonds and more disclosure from the students in return. This capacity to attach is critical both because it helps treat trauma but also because it is more difficult to violate relationships when people matter to each other.   Having laid the base for a relational model, Ed White now has the challenge of incentivizing and rewarding its use by both teachers and students

so that it is gradually elevated to a new status where the "thump" is measured by what is meaningful rather than by hurting others.

The core challenge to using RD is time. It takes time and seems to steal time away from instructional demands and expectations.   The issue of time is arguably the main criticism expressed against restorative practices. Indeed, it is difficult to convince teachers that investing in restorative processes throughout the year will have payoff both in students' learning and performance and when there are disruptive and stressful events. The teachers who participated in the weekly interviews and had used RD during the year corroborated this reality when events in the second semester were dismantling to some of the other teachers. Similar to notions about power, it is important for teachers to think differently about time so they feel less anxious about the time RD can take. A teacher described how he calculates time.

> Yes it takes time away from class. There's no denying that. But that rowdy class, I put that thing on the board and within two minutes they were calmed down. [Before] it would have taken me twenty minutes and I would have been mad. And when you're mad and you're teaching, you're barking at that point and you don't really give a crap if they're learning or not. I do know that I get the time back. I can't put it on paper and show you where I get the time back but I do. If nothing more than it's just five minutes of peace and quiet that's five minutes more than we had before. You do the math. That's twenty-five minutes that I got back when I spent probably sixty minutes in the circle all totaled and that was three weeks ago. So I got my sixty minutes back plus some change.

Conclusions

Because this study is part of a three-year implementation plan, the conclusions consist of recommendations to put into action in 2013-2014. In particular, the monthly analysis provides a timetable for extra RD support when the school is in the middle of additional pressures, some of which are predictable. The application of these recommendations should reduce some of the inconsistencies that were evident in 2012-2013 and increase the possibility for greater adoption by teachers in the classroom.

- Create a RD handbook for all teachers that describes restorative justice, circles, elements of a circle, circle openings and closings, types of circles including check-in (or check-out), teaching circles, repairing-harm circles, welcome-back circles, decision-making circles, etc. with examples of how to do them, the five questions to use with someone who has been harmed and the person responsible for that harm, "I" statements, affective statements, and agreements and monitoring plans with agreements.

- Emphasize application through role play and other mechanisms to move RD from theoretical to practical in the two-day teacher training that occurs before the school year begins. Give many examples and have teachers facilitate both standard and difficult RD conversations in the training. Do continuing education throughout the year either in staff meetings or elective sessions to reinforce knowledge and provide a mechanism for more comprehensive

discussion and knowledge. Include a one-day "booster session" before the start of the Second Semester with a possible focus on greater student initiation and engagement in RD.

- Create a team for generating RD and restorative values in the school, i.e. posters, contests, skits, etc. The team could be comprised of administration, teachers, students and staff. The intent behind the recommendation is to increase shared responsibility for implementation of RD throughout the school, generate creative ideas, and be a way to get student leaders (formal or informal) to be part of the process, and recognize those teachers who have a strong commitment to using RD.

- Develop a plan for use of RD in transition zones such as hallways, the lunchroom and locker rooms. Many instances of misconduct in 2012-2013 took place during these unstructured and lightly supervised times. These are times when conflicts between students across classes are apt to flare.

- Provide a mechanism for greater feedback to teachers about the use of RD in the school. There could be reports made on the number of disciplinary restorative circles and conferences done each month or progress in the reduction of traditional disciplinary practices like suspension and expulsion. Teachers could be assigned different months so there is no overload and asked to make a brief report through an e-letter or at a staff meeting about how they have used circles in the classroom. Teachers who are strong advocates for RD and are using circles consistently in the classroom should be rewarded either through public recognition or selected for special activities related to RD. This practice would reduce some of the isolation that occurred in 2012-2013 but would also give teachers more models to follow.

- Engage students in RD through peer-facilitated circles. Provide a mechanism for training that is initially led by a teacher or co-facilitated with a teacher who can serve as an advisor. Select trainees who are leaders among their peers, whether in positive or negative ways, to increase interest, respect and acceptance of peer-facilitated circles and as an opportunity to instill responsibility and pro social leadership skills in these students.

- Involve parents/caregivers both in restorative conferences and circles, as appropriate, and also on an advisory council. Parents/caregivers could establish networks for informing other parents about RD at Ed White and might participate in some of the efforts to advertise RD and its success at Ed White. Developing pride in parents about Ed White's accomplishment would reinforce some of the changes in mindsets and provide additional support for the school's effort.

- Make better use of the external consultant. In 2013-2014 Stephanie Frogge, Associate Director of IRJRD will serve as the external consultant. She will be on campus two days a week consistently. She should visit all teachers' classes so she is familiar with the teacher, subject matter, and culture of the class. She should supply resources as needed. For example, she can send emails to teachers suggesting videos to watch, new community building exercises to try, or share information about new findings on RD. She can help coordinate

drives to promote RD, anti bullying campaigns, ways to creatively manage conflict, etc. Her presence will also allow a stronger link with IRJRD so that issues can be addressed readily.

These recommendations can be modified and expanded for better application. 2013-2014 will be an important year because of the expansion of RD to the seventh grade. Indeed many seventh-grade teachers observed the inauguration of the program, its inconsistencies, and the difficulties with its implementation. However, they watched from a distance without the opportunity themselves for first-hand experience. Because of the high turnover in the sixth grade, there will also be a large number of new sixth-grade teachers who will also need to be trained. Most important, the program will now increase in size because it will include over 300 seventh-graders who experienced the program as sixth-graders as well as the new entering sixth-grade class. For the first time there will be a threshold effect in that two-thirds of the school will be using the RD program. Even with a host of difficult issues surrounding the sixth grade, Ed White made sturdy and noteworthy progress in its first year. It changed course as necessary to make the implementation stronger and as a school, the principal and school district are solidly behind continuing the effort into the seventh grade. The lessons learned in the first year will be invaluable in institutionalizing RD in 2013-2014.

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Appendices

CLIMATE SURVEY FOR PARENTS AND CAREGIVERS

Thank you for agreeing to complete this survey. Your answers will be used to help find out how effectively Restorative Discipline is being used at Ed White Middle School.

Date:

Gender:　　M ☐　　　F ☐

Ethnicity:　Hispanic/ Latino Yes ☐ No ☐　　**Race:**　Black ☐　　AIAN ☐　　White ☐　　Asian ☐　　Pac Is ☐

	Please check one box for each statement	Nearly always	Mostly	Sometimes	Rarely/ never	Unsure
1	Students and teachers/staff communicate to each other in a respectful way.					
2	Teachers and staff communicate to me in a respectful way.					
3	The students are invited to contribute to resolving problems that affect them.					
4	I am allowed to contribute to solving problems that affect my child/children					
5	When students, teachers/staff and/or parents are in conflict, everyone's views are listened to.					
6	Disagreements are normally resolved effectively.					
7	When a student does something wrong they are given a chance to put things right.					
8	In cases of bullying, the person harmed is asked what could be done to make things better.					
9	When someone does something harmful, everyone involved helps decide how it can be avoided in the future.					
10	A student's possessions are safe at this school.					

Please add any further comments below.

CLIMATE SURVEY FOR STAFF

Thank you for agreeing to complete this survey. Your answers will be used to help find out how effectively Restorative Discipline is being used at Ed White Middle School.

Date:

Position   Teacher ☐   Staff ☐   School Leader ☐   **Gender**   M ☐   F ☐

Ethnicity   Hispanic/ Latino Yes ☐ No ☐   **Race**   Black ☐   AIAN ☐   White ☐   Asian ☐   Pac Is ☐

Your Attitudes and Beliefs

	Please check one box for each statement	Strongly agree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly disagree	Unsure
1	There is no place in meetings with students for emotions and feelings.					
2	The people involved in a conflict need to agree on a way forward.					
3	When someone causes harm you loose respect for that person.					
4	It is best that people who are harmed do not meet the person who harmed them.					
5	People who cause harm should be punished.					
6	It is important that the person who has caused harm is given support to change their behavior.					
7	When someone causes harm they should be allowed to make amends.					

	Please check one box for each statement	Strongly agree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly disagree	Unsure
1	Students and staff communicate to each other in a respectful way.					
2	The parents/caregivers of students relate to me in a respectful way.					
3	The students and their parents/caregivers are invited to contribute to resolving school problems that affect them.					
4	I am allowed to contribute to solving school-based problems that affect me.					
5	Within this school, disagreements are normally resolved effectively					
6	When students, staff and/or parents are in conflict, everyone's views are listened to.					
7	Students are given opportunities to make amends if they are responsible for causing harm.					
8	When a student causes harm the main response by the school is a sanction or punishment.					
9	In cases of bullying, the person harmed is asked to say what could be done to make things better.					
10	When someone does something harmful, those involved help to decide how similar incidents could be avoided in the future.					

Please indicate what level of staff development you have had in Restorative Discipline Practice. Check all that apply.

A. ☐ None
B. ☐ Awareness-raising session(s) and/or conferences
C. ☐ Training in specific Restorative Interventions, e.g. circles, mediation, family group conferencing

Only if you have checked box C above, please complete the first two questions below.
If you checked A or B, go to the last question.

How, if at all, has your experience of Restorative Discipline changed your practice?

How, if at all, has Restorative Discipline changed the atmosphere and in the school as a whole?

CLIMATE SURVEY FOR STUDENTS

Thank you for agreeing to complete this survey. Your answers will be used to help find out how effectively Restorative Discipline is being used at Ed White Middle School.

Date:

Gender: M ☐   F ☐

Ethnicity: Hispanic/ Latino Yes ☐ No ☐   **Race:** Black ☐   AIAN ☐   White ☐   Asian ☐   Pac Is ☐

	Please check one box for each statement	Nearly always	Mostly	Sometimes	Rarely/ never	Unsure
1	I show respect for the teachers and staff in this school.					
2	The teachers and staff show me respect in this school.					
3	The school asks my parents/caregivers to help sort out my problems at school.					
4	In school I am encouraged to help sort out my own problems.					
5	Disagreements are normally sorted out.					
6	When people (students or adults) are in disagreement in this school, everyone is listened to.					
7	If I harm (e.g., upset), bully or assault someone at this school, I get a chance to change my behavior and put things right.					
8	If someone harms me at this school, I am able to say how things can be made better.					
9	At this school, when someone does something wrong or harms others, all involved help decide how things can be made better.					
10	In cases of bullying, the person harmed is asked to say what could be done to make things better.					
11	When someone does something harmful, those involved help to decide how similar incidents could be avoided in the future.					
12	When a student causes harm the main response by the school is a sanction or punishment.					
13	My possessions are safe at school.					

Please add any further comments below.
Ed White Middle School Restorative Discipline Project

APPENDIX B. Self-Assessment Implementation Checklist
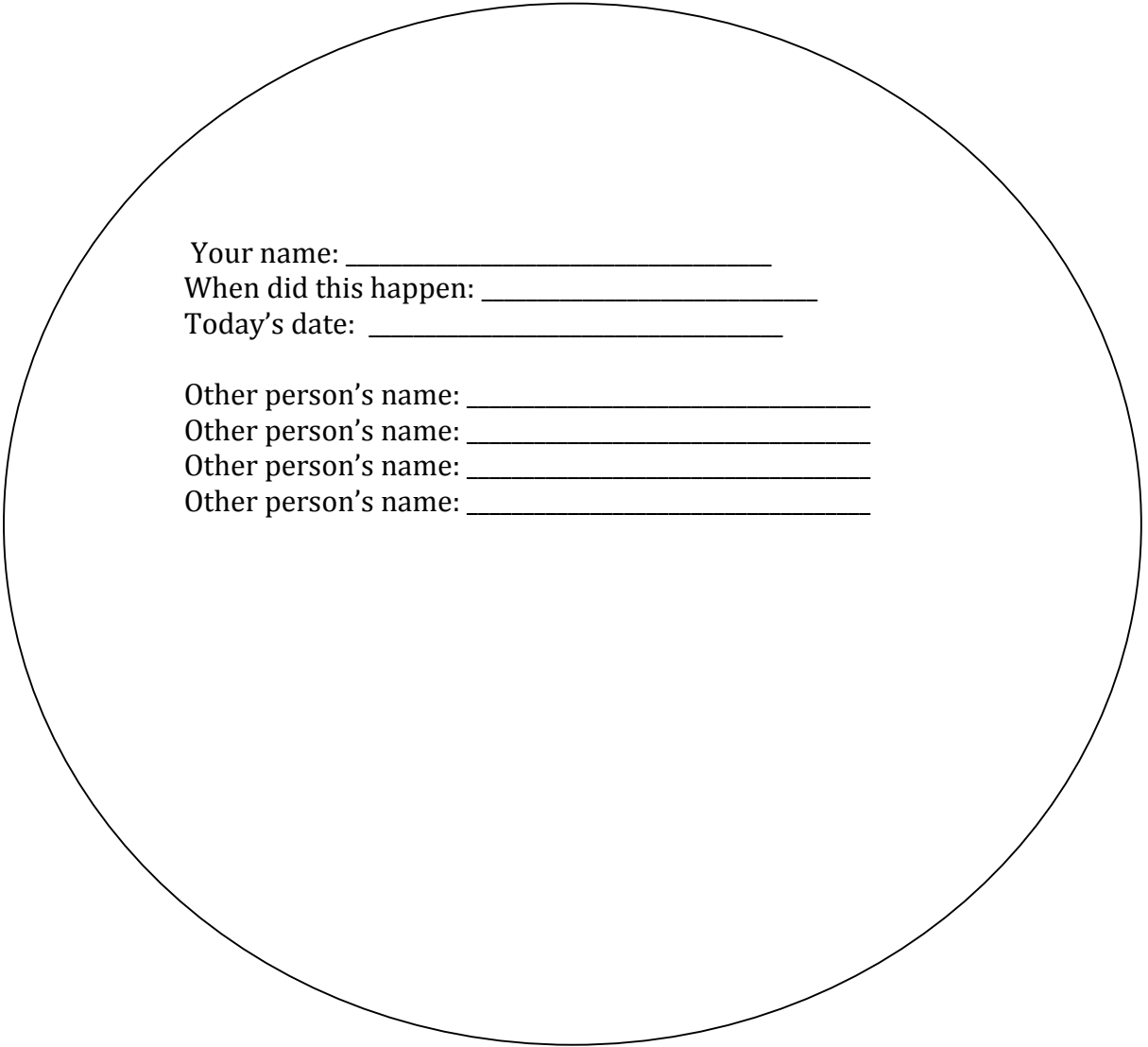
MONTHLY SELF-ASSESSMENT IMPLEMENTATION CHECKLIST

Date						
Position	Teacher ☐	Staff ☐	School Leader ☐	**Gender**	M ☐	F ☐
Ethnicity	Hispanic/ Latino Yes ☐ No ☐	**Race**	Black ☐ AIAN ☐	White ☐	Asian ☐	Pac Is ☐

Please check one box for each statement		**Current Status**		
		Not In Pl **0**	**Partial** **1**	**In Place** **2**
1	I use restorative discipline principles in the classroom (including lessons) or in he school setting?			
2	I truly listen and hear students out without interrupting so students feel listened to.			
3	I talk about shared values in response to particular issues.			
4	I talk personally about the impact of situations on me?			
5	I ask for someone I trust to observe my restorative discipline practice and give me honest feedback.			
6	I review how I could have handled conflict concerns differently.			
7	I take responsibility for any part I might have had in what went wrong and acknowledge that. I apologize as well.			
8	I use restorative questions in dealing with student issues. I help students identify and express their feelings.			
9	I do community building exercises/projects with students.			
10	I apply restorative discipline principles consistently			
		Total Points = _____ X 100% = % 20		

Please add any further comments below.

Ed White Middle School Restorative Discipline Project

Circle it!

Your name: _____

When did this happen: _____

Today's date: _____

Other person's name: _____

Other person's name: _____

Other person's name: _____

Other person's name: _____

Today   Tomorrow

Circle / Conference Agreement Form
(To be filled out during each circle / conference as agreement is reached.)

1. Background Information

Date:

Participants: (name and grade)

2. Incident or Concern:

3. Agreement Details:

How the harm will be repaired:

How the harm will be avoided in the future:

How the person who did the harm will give back to the community:

What support will be give to the person who was harmed:

4. Monitoring Plan
Tasks (include final check-in as last task) By Who? By When?

5. Additional Notes:

6. Signatures:
I have read the above agreement and understand and agree to all of the terms. I intend to fulfill any obligations detailed above for which I am responsible.

_____/_____
Signature of Person who did the Harm and Signature of Person Harmed

_____/_____
Signature of Circle / Conference Facilitator and Signature of Other Participant

_____/_____
Signature of Other Participants

Individual Weekly Teacher Interview Questions

1. Please describe how you used Restorative Discipline practices in your classroom this week?

2. What did you use this week from the last conversation we had? How did it go?

3. How did you build respectful conversations between yourself and students?

4. Were there times when you talked about shared values; took responsibility for something that went wrong; talked about the impact of something on you; truly listened without interrupting?

5. What community building exercises and/or projects did you do with students?

Focus Group Questions-Teachers

1. Please describe your learning process from (a) the time of the training to the present (b) this Spring semester.*

2. Describe the climate in your classroom? How has it changed? What are critical events that occurred during the semester?

3. What has been the most challenging situations for you? What part of the Restorative Discipline Program has been the hardest to implement? What part has been the most rewarding?

4. Have you used the consultant Robert Rico and if so, how? Are there ways you could use him more? What stands in your way?

5. What support, if any, have you received from the school leadership? How has it helped of hindered your implementation of Restorative Disciplines?

6. If you were advising a seventh grade teacher about implementing Restorative Discipline practices in his/her classroom, what would you tell them?

- (a) to be asked in December; (b) to be asked in May

Focus Group Questions-Leadership Response Team

1. Please describe your learning process from (a) the time of the training to the present (b) this Spring semester.*

2. Describe the range of misconduct incidents you have dealt with this semester using Restorative Discipline practices? What has been the pattern of referrals?

3. What have been the most challenging situations for you? What part of the Restorative Discipline Program has been the hardest to implement? What part has been the most rewarding?

4. Describe the consequences and outcomes of the Restorative Discipline Interventions? How are they monitored?

5. Describe what you have done with the student and what you have done with teachers to give students "a way back" to the classroom? How is it working and what changes have you considered making?

6. How have you used the consultant Robert Rico and if so, how? Are there ways you could use him more? What stands in your way?

7. What support, if any, have you received from upper administration? How has it helped of hindered your implementation of Restorative Disciplines?

8. If you were advising a leadership response tram in a different middle school about implementing Restorative Discipline interventions, what would you tell them?

* (a) to be asked in December; (b) to be asked in May