Restorative Practices in Chicago Schools

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Session Objectives
This session will cover ...

• Historical Context for Restorative Practices in Chicago;
• Findings derived from 5Essentials and Focus Groups;
• Recommendations created from the findings;
• Next Steps and Resources
Introduction

Foundations of Restorative Justice

- Respect
- Accountability
- Healing
- Empathy
Historical Context

Racialized Inequities in Schools Across America:
The US Department of Education Office for Civil Rights released a report in 2014 documenting the differential impact of school discipline practices across America.
Paving the Way to Change in Illinois:
SB100, which was signed into law in August 2015 and became effective the following school year, limited the conditions under which districts could suspend and expel students.

Chicago Schools Respond:
Chicago Schools, both individually and as a system, had begun working to revise its discipline approaches even prior to the SB100.
Goals for our Research

+ Determine how restorative practices are implemented in schools in CPS;

+ Gain insight into teacher training and professional development around restorative practices;

+ Examine how implementation of restorative practices affects overall school culture, including both teacher and student feelings of safety.
Using publicly available 5E data, we were able to examine trends in student and teacher ratings of safety across 422 public and charter schools in Chicago. To gain insight on whether these early successes in limiting suspensions and expulsions have actually improved positive learning environments in Chicago schools.

Teach Plus Illinois Teaching Policy Fellows facilitated focus groups across Chicago specifically with elementary educators to elicit information about their experiences with restorative practices.

48 teachers participated in the focus groups responding to seven questions.
The 5Essentials

- Effective Leaders
- Collaborative Teachers
- Ambitious Instruction
- Supportive Environment
- Involved Families

Source: https://www.5-essentials.org/illinois/5e/
“Students encounter very little crime, violence, or bullying at school”.

Source: https://www.5-essentials.org/illinois/5e/
Example: Teacher Perceptions of School Safety

“Teachers report little or no disorder in the hallways, physical conflict among students, vandalism, robbery or theft, and threats of violence against teachers”.

Source: https://www.5-essentials.org/illinois/5e/
Finding 1

+ 2 out of 5 Chicago elementary schools saw decreases in both teacher and student ratings of school safety since 2016, according to 5Essentials Survey Data. Only 1 in 5 saw increases in both measures.

41.2% of schools showed decreases in both teacher and student safety ratings from 2016-2019

38.4% of schools showed one increase and one decrease in teacher and student safety ratings from 2016-2019

20.4% of schools showed increases in both teacher and student safety ratings from 2016-2019
1. When you think about how your school addresses student behavior and discipline, what do you think is working and is having a positive impact on student behavior?

2. CPS Schools:
   - Do you agree that your school is adopting these restorative practices and discipline models?
   - Which elements of the tools or approaches do you see being used in your CPS school?

3. Charter Schools:
   Has your charter school endorsed restorative practices for proactive and reactive discipline measures?
   - Do you agree that your school is adopting these restorative practices and discipline models?
   - Which elements (if any) of the tools or approaches do you see being used in your charter school and to what degree?
4. How confident do you feel in implementing restorative practices to address discipline issues within the classroom?
5. To what degree do you agree that your school has done an adequate job of training you and your colleagues in implementing restorative practices?
6. If your school has done an adequate job of training you and your colleagues in implementing restorative practices, how? If not, what has been lacking?
7. Where did you receive the most helpful training towards implementing restorative practices?
8. What advice do you have for school and district leaders that could help improve implementation of restorative practices in Chicago schools?
Finding 2

Restorative Practices in a Multi-Tiered System of Support

Restorative Practices fit into a Multi-Tiered System of Support, proactively supporting all students and providing targeted and intensive interventions for students with higher levels of need.

**Tier 1**

**ALL STUDENTS**

**RESTORATIVE SCHOOL CLIMATE**
A restorative school climate focuses on building a strong sense of community and positive relationships among all stakeholders. In a restorative environment, all community members feel safe and welcome, and adults support students in developing social and emotional skills.

**Practices that support Tier 1:**
- Restorative Mindsets
- Restorative Language
- Talking Circles
- Restorative Conversations

**Tier 2**

**SOME STUDENTS**

**RESTORATIVE DISCIPLINE**
After harm or conflict, restorative responses address the root cause of the problem, promote healing, and ensure that students are held accountable and take ownership over the process of repairing harm.

**Practices that support Tier 2:**
- Restorative Conversations
- Peer Conference/Peer Mediation
- Peace Circles
- Skill Building Alternatives to Suspension

**Tier 3**

**FEW STUDENTS**

**RE-ENTRY AND RESTORATIVE HEALING**
In the most serious incidents of harm or conflict, restorative practices ensure that students who have been removed from the classroom/school are welcomed back to the community. When needed, intensive one-on-one interventions promote healing.

**Practices that support Tier 3:**
- Re-entry Procedures
- Restorative Conferencing

Many teachers felt that while Tier I implementation is developing within their schools and across the district, implementation of Tiers II and III is either weak or lacking entirely.

“There is no support after the teacher has exhausted their resources. We are lacking in the tier 3.”

-CPS Diverse Learner Teacher
Chicago teachers report experiencing inconsistency with training and share a desire to receive training around Restorative Practices to better meet the needs of their school communities.

“I would love to have time and space to be able to unpack ‘critical moments/incidents’ that have happened with students, and do reflection in community with other teachers about implementation of restorative practices.” - CPS Diverse Learner Teacher
Recommendation 1

+ Establish **Professional Learning Communities** to support schools with implementation and training of restorative practices.
Recommendation 2

In-person or virtual, ongoing training programs that are differentiated to best meet the individual needs of the school’s culture and climate.

This would include real-life application and opportunities for feedback, practice and reflection for all members of the staff in the building.
Recommendation #3

+ Implement **accountability measures** for network and school administration to improve restorative practice usage among school staff and leaders.

  + Current accountability measures specifically look at suspension numbers but **all stakeholders must be held accountable for implementation of RP in schools AND participate in ongoing training.**
    + Central Office
    + Network Leaders
    + School Leaders
Adapt restorative questions to the time:

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<tr>
<th>Typically Used Restorative Questions</th>
<th>Adapted Questions</th>
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<tr>
<td>What were you thinking when _____ happened?</td>
<td>How are you impacted by social distancing? Loss of income? Loss of social connections?</td>
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<tr>
<td>What impact has this incident had on you and others?</td>
<td>What has been the hardest part of this crisis?</td>
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<tr>
<td>What has been the hardest thing for you?</td>
<td>Share one thing that you are doing to move forward, to find joy, etc.</td>
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<tr>
<td>What do you think needs to happen to make this right?</td>
<td>What is something you have in your control during this time? What will you do or how will you utilize this in the coming weeks?</td>
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How to implement Restorative Practices Remotely

+ Continue to prioritize relationships with students and families by asking questions.

+ Explicitly teach effective communication skills and protocols to build a culture of respect, even virtually, in the fall.

+ Conduct virtual circles and share information with families (www.restorativejusticepartners.org)
Next Steps

+ Utilize the CPS Restorative Practices Toolkit (CPS Restorative Practices Guide and Toolkit)

+ Come up with school-wide expectations around relationship-building, circles, and responsive restorative practices during remote learning.

+ Provide resources for staff around building meaningful and responsive communities both virtually and in person.
Next Steps

+ Assess teacher confidence in implementing restorative practices within each school building.

+ Implement and advocate for training around restorative practices within your school.

+ Now is the time!
Questions?
# Contact Information

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