

I see girls like Shawna every day. Sometimes they bring themselves into my office; most often they are dragged in by an assistant principal, tired of trying to sort out who said what about who when. They glare at me as they settle into chairs, rolling their eyes at the idea of “talking it out.” I ask them to tell me about their problem. “Well!” they say, launching into long-winded, pronoun-heavy diatribes. I ask them if they want to solve the problem. “I guess,” they shrug, and we start the process.

In Shawna’s case, as in many that I saw, no lasting agreement is reached. We work and work, spend much time getting every detail of their stories... And then they realize, they don’t want to change. They are happy to be in the thick of it, in a drama. Why?

Now, you make think, as I sometimes did, that it is my skills as a facilitator that are to blame for the apparent lack of success. Before we jump to conclusions though, lets spend a little time getting to know Lansing’s Everett high school.

17% of Lansing’s population is below the poverty line, and different behaviors tend to hold true in different populations. From my observations and conversations with students, I have seen that peaceful conflict resolution is not only “uncool,” but sometimes actively discouraged by students’ parents. I have had more than one child tell me that if they are provoked it is up to them to defend themselves, and that, if they are on the losing end of a fight, they will be “punked” at home- beaten by their parents, so that next time, they will have more incentive to win.

Despite this, Everett has had a long history with peaceful conflict resolution. For over a decade, mediation programs have been welcomed into the school, have set up shop and have been successful- only to leave after a year or two, grant funding dried up. In my conversations with administrators and teachers, I came to believe that was one reason it was so hard to make a Restorative Justice program viable in that school. Accustomed to fly-by-night programs that made little lasting difference, the school was jaded, and reluctant to embrace an unproven program.

Furthermore, there is the challenge of the age-range. Many high school students are concerned with appearance- this is the age at which we strive to identify ourselves, to establish ourselves, within and without of the social norms, the norms our parents have set for us. “Drama,” being involved in a conflict that people talk about, is an indicator of social status. Though many students told me they “were tired of my name being on everyone’s lips,” being talked about meant you were someone and gave you social clout. I’m sure we can all relate to this. Think of being an adolescent yourself- wasn’t it fun to be the center of attention? Perhaps all of us did a few things that were not so virtuous in an attempt to maintain that position.

So, I've shown you a pretty dismal picture- students are taught to fight, that it's sissy to solve things peacefully. At Everett, teachers and administrators are reluctant to use a new program that may not stay around long, and high schoolers like being the center of attention. Is there any hope for Restorative Justice in the high school? Can students learn to solve things peacefully without backup from their parents?

Absolutely. I am cautiously optimistic.

Our first foray into the land of secondary education was incredibly informative, and many of the lessons gleaned from the experience have been transferred into an all-encompassing Restorative Justice in the elementary schools program that my colleague, Sarah Gruenewald, will present on in a few minutes.

Foremost: start early. If students are taught consistently throughout their k-12 education that hands are not for hitting, I believe that many more of them will carry this lesson through to high school, regardless of parental involvement. Which brings me to my next point- parents should be involved as soon as possible, another point that Sarah will elucidate on.

I found that several other factors contributed to success: teaming closely with administrators, spending longer than usual pre-conferencing and in the "tell me what happened" stage, and forming personal relationships with students.

By involving administrators in the process, I not only gave them an opportunity to see that the program actually does work, I gave the agreements students created some weight. Administrators were excited when a conference they sat in on was a success, and they became more at ease with the program, and more likely to use it. Having an administrator present and knowing that an agreement in the argument had been reached made students take it more seriously. I feel certain that many of them realized they had to stay accountable for the fight to end, but knowing that one of the principals knew what was going on- that gave them a second layer of accountability.

I spent much more time pre-conferencing with the parties than I did in actual circles or conferences. Often, things came out in pre-conference that uncovered an underlying issue that may not have been found out in the circle.

Finally, forming personal relationships was key for me. Several students that I met with began to come and talk to me about their lives on a regular basis. They were eager for a listening ear, and having the chance to talk about their problems helped them think things through and make better choices- I hope! I talked about a girl named Shawna at the beginning of my presentation. Shawna was one of these girls- we talked a lot. Though she still got into fights,

I see a glimmer of hope- by the time I left, she was bringing all of her conflicts to Restorative Justice, though she didn't always solve them!

High school is hard. Many factors were against our program's success at Everett, but I am confident that, as at the middle and elementary levels, it has gained a strong foothold and can only continue to prove itself.

Toronto Presentation Outline - Greg

Program Background History

First implemented in February 2005, became full blown pilot study in 2005-06 school year at Pattengill Middle School, Lansing. Local grants funded the pilot. TCBARJA influence. Logo.

In that year we received x referrals and completed x cases successfully. The program proved it was sound, however some of the teachers at the school had complaints about the time it takes and doubts about its effectiveness. Many of them had been trained as facilitators but found it difficult to conduct the process in the course of their teaching. The program was not recommended by the School Improvement Team for 2006-07, but the local United Way thought the program worthy of significant donations.

Other schools were interested, however, so I was brought on board in October 2006 as an Americorps worker to run the Pattengill program and to collect, evaluate and report our data as we looked into expansion. Otto Middle School, also in Lansing, used the process through their counseling office. Referrals throughout the district through the Student Services offices increased as well. As I began daily operations at Pattengill, shared the data from the previous year, and as a new school facility was completed, RJ took on a more respected place in the building. It was almost as if a new building allowed for new ideas of student discipline to be given room. That year at Pattengill we saw x students, resolved x cases, and even kept x students from criminal prosecution. (photo of old school, photo of new school) Funding from the county juvenile justice subcommittee began that year as well.

In the fall of 2007 the program expanded to include three middle schools in Lansing, one in East Lansing and one in the neighboring community of Holt. We also operated in two Lansing High Schools. I continued working at Pattengill after completing my service hours with Americorps and taking up regular employment with the Dispute Resolution Center, now Resolution Services Center of Central Michigan. With more Americorps members serving in more places, our programs and processes were able to take root in the Lansing area. That year, x students used RJ x times to resolve their conflicts. Also, x staff members and x parents were involved in interventions. For the first time, the Lansing School District gave hard dollars from their budget to the program. In the spring we expanded into the neighboring county and have a program in place at Grand Ledge High School with hopes of moving into their middle schools as well. (slides showing expansion and increase in referrals)

This year our connection to AmeriCorps members dissolved, but we have been able to find qualified, trained professionals to work at the Lansing, East Lansing, Grand Ledge and Holt schools. We also benefit from service learners from Michigan State University who get credit for assisting us in our programs. Already we have facilitated over x interventions and helped x people resolve conflict peacefully.

Lansing area demographics – Let Sarah F do this part

Ethnic and poverty breakdown for community

Ethnic and poverty breakdown for Lansing schools

Ethnic and poverty breakdown for surrounding communities

Middle School efforts and effectiveness

This year marked my third year at Pattengill Middle School and I have been better received than ever before, even earning my own classroom to use for the process. Previously I had office space and a share group room to use (or whatever other empty space I could find). Referrals, which at one time only came from administrators, now come from teachers, public safety, and the students themselves when they need help. My relationship with the public safety officers, who are the eyes and ears of the building, is so strong that sometimes I get to work with students who thought no one knew about their conflict. We are also coordinating with Gateway Community Services to offer after school violence prevention programs to students referred to our program or who volunteer.

Data

We conduct surveys twice for each intervention. The first one is done immediately after a peacemaking circle or conference and includes questions on how the participants were prepared for the meeting, how they were treated during the meeting and what they expected the following outcomes might be. The second one is collected a month or more after the intervention and asks if the agreement was kept, if the students learned anything new about conflict resolution, and if the student has used these techniques to resolve or avoid other conflicts. At the middle school level, we have seen these responses do(evaluate middle school responses for 05-06, 06-07 and 07-08)

Quotes and reflections

Story of two 7th grade girls, the fight they've had since 3rd grade, and the life similarities that made them friends instead of enemies. (picture of friends)

A tougher environment than I had ever imagined. The level of violence, even casual violence is appalling. Fights are like a highlight of the day. The administration keeps a strong hold on that kind of activity and suspensions are common, although I often get to work with students recently back from suspension as they reintegrate into school. One incident involved a 6th grade girl who completely set up to fight a former friend because her other friends wanted to see it. Last year I also had a fist fight break out between two students during RJ. As restorative practices take root in the building, and students learn the skills needed to resolve conflict themselves, my referrals seem more difficult to resolve.

Still, the process is working for many students. According to the data we collected system-wide in 2007-08 x%, x%, x% (show slide)

Elementary Initiative:

- Lansing, MI elementary schools
 - 4 magnet schools, 1 general public school
 - Urban area
- Stems from Middle and High School Restorative Justice Success and Findings
 - Research finds Restorative Justice is more effective with younger students
 - Goal to build empathy and skills to communicate feelings and thoughts effectively at younger age
 - Provide proactive tools for community building in elementary classrooms; students begin to see themselves as part of a larger community and realize actions effect others
- Restorative Justice Whole-school approach
 - Reach whole school community
 - Administration
 - Teachers and school staff
 - Parents
 - Students
 - Extracurricular and after-school activity leaders
- Accountability/Data Collection
 - School Climate Surveys and beliefs about conflict give pre/post program
 - Parents, Students, School Staff
 - Restorative circles/conferences data collection
 - Post, short-term, long-term follow up
 - Teachers record when:
 - Use community circles
 - Ask restorative questions to resolve conflict or misbehavior
 - Facilitate restorative circle
 - Use restorative thinking form
 - Lead community building activity

- Attend monthly assembly based on restorative principles
- Follow monthly thematic lesson plan based on restorative principles
- A Whole-School Approach to Restorative Justice Plan
 - School Staff trained in Restorative Circles and Restorative Discipline Questions
 - Community Building Activities
 - Community/Classroom Circles
 - Restorative Discipline Questions
 - Curriculum Integration
 - Restorative Justice Monthly Thematic Lesson Plans based on restorative principles:
 - Monthly Assembly
 - Whole-School Challenge creating school-wide mural
 - Classroom Circle Discussion for Reflection of monthly theme
 - Individual Reflection and Goal-Setting Activity
 - Cooperative Learning Activity integrating Academic Standards and specific conflict resolution skills
 - Peer Teaching Activity
 - Themes:
 - Respect and Community
 - Empathy and Perspective
 - Communication
 - Diversity Awareness and Bullying Prevention
 - Anger Management
 - Peaceful Conflict Resolution
 - Restorative Justice Practitioner in each school one day a week
 - Facilitating circles/conferences for referred cases
 - Modeling community circles

- Teachers sign up for practitioner to come into classroom every other week for 30 minutes
 - Leading community building activities
 - Teaching conflict resolution skills through discussion and activity, using circle with talking piece
 - Addressing classroom problems through circles
 - Leading Restorative Justice after-school program focusing conflict resolution and leadership, through community circles, discussion, cooperative games, arts activities
 - Checking in with teachers and asking how can support
- Community Breakfasts
 - Parents
 - Meet and eat with other parents in the community
 - Connect with community support organizations
 - Learn about restorative practices and how to use it in the home
 - Children
 - Connect with others in the community
 - Learn about Restorative Justice and specific conflict resolution skills
 - Cooperative game opportunities
- Struggles and Successes
 - Buy in
 - Time
 - Primary Level (K-3) Language of Restorative Circles and Conferences, must be adapted
 - Primary Level has much shorter attention span
 - Family culture supports resolving conflict through fighting

Central Michigan Restorative Justice Initiative



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Central Michigan Restorative Justice Initiative



- Greg Lawton, RJ Practitioner, Pattengill Middle School
- Sarah Fuhrman, RJ Practitioner, Everett High School, former AmeriCorps member
- Sarah Gruenewald, RJ Elementary Initiative Coordinator, Lansing School District, AmeriCorps member
- Amanda Stapula, RJ Practitioner, Eastern High School, AmeriCorps Member

Central Michigan Restorative Justice Initiative



Vision: Restorative practices
and principles are fully
integrated into the
community

Central Michigan Restorative Justice Initiative



Mission: We build positive, respectful relationships, based on recognizing the worth of every person. We accomplish this by:

Fostering a sense of connectedness

Providing opportunities to resolve conflicts peacefully

Educating and empowering all in restorative principles

Lansing, MI, USA



Michigan



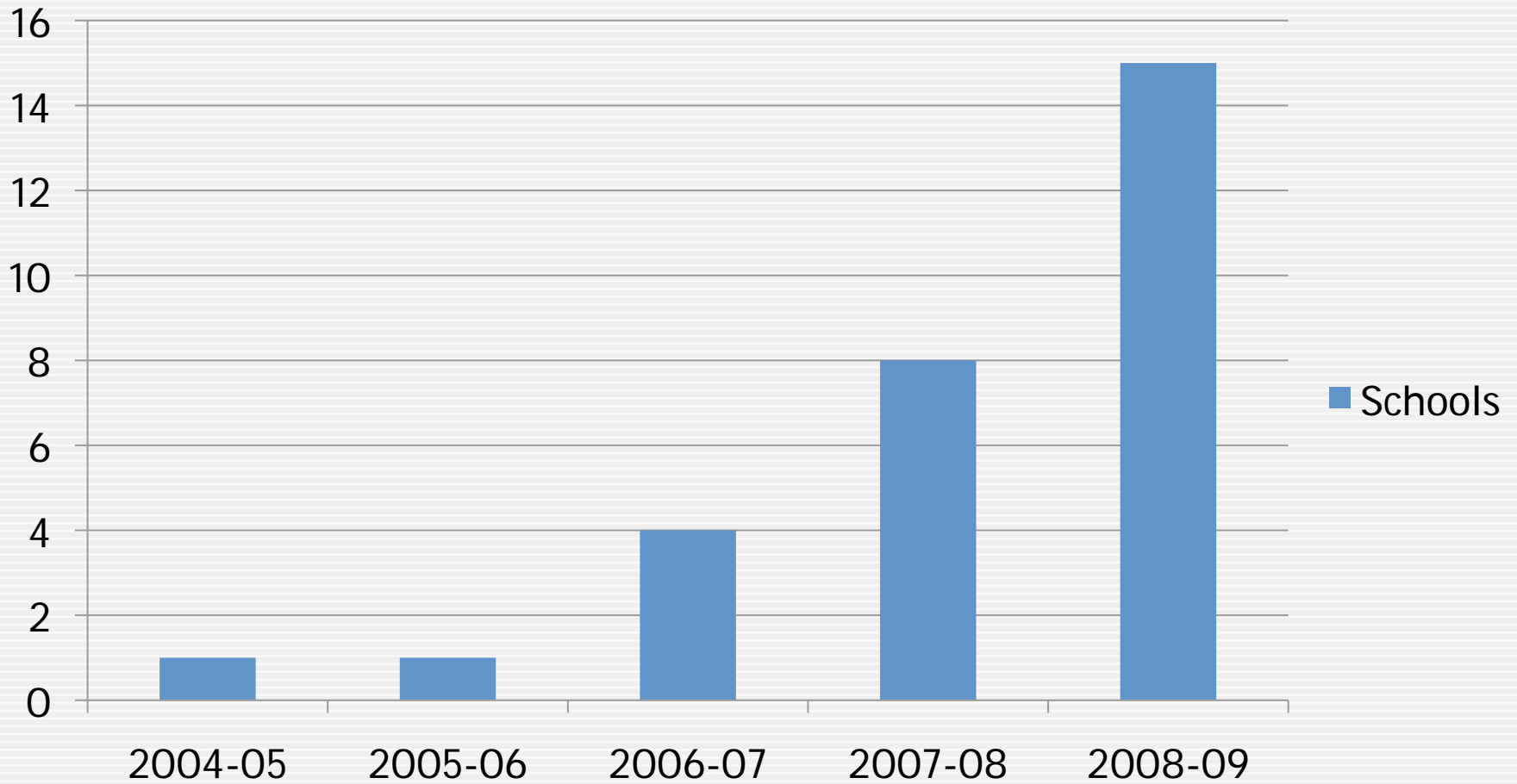
"Old" Pattengill



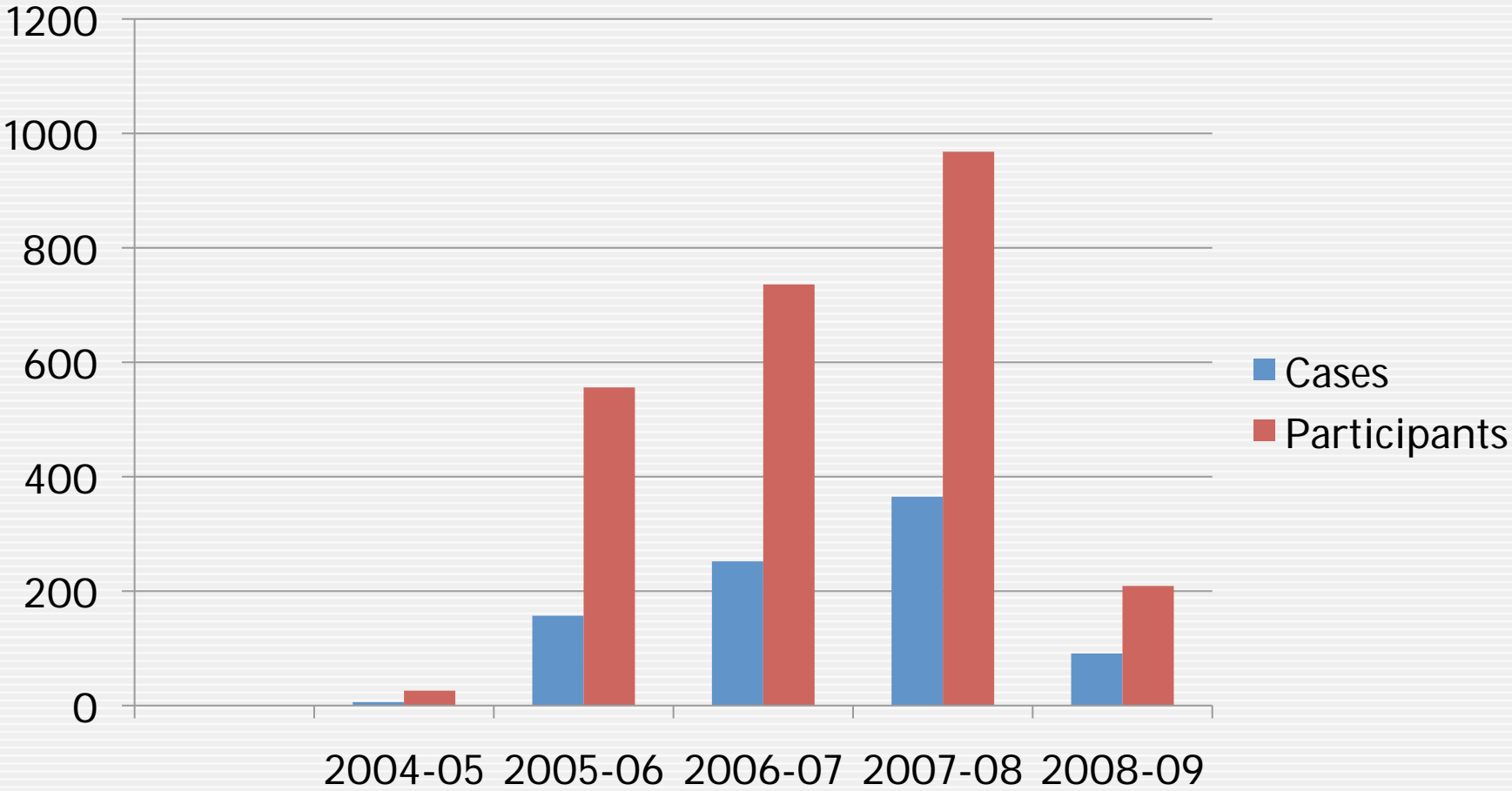
"New" Pattengill



Expansion of Use



Program Growth





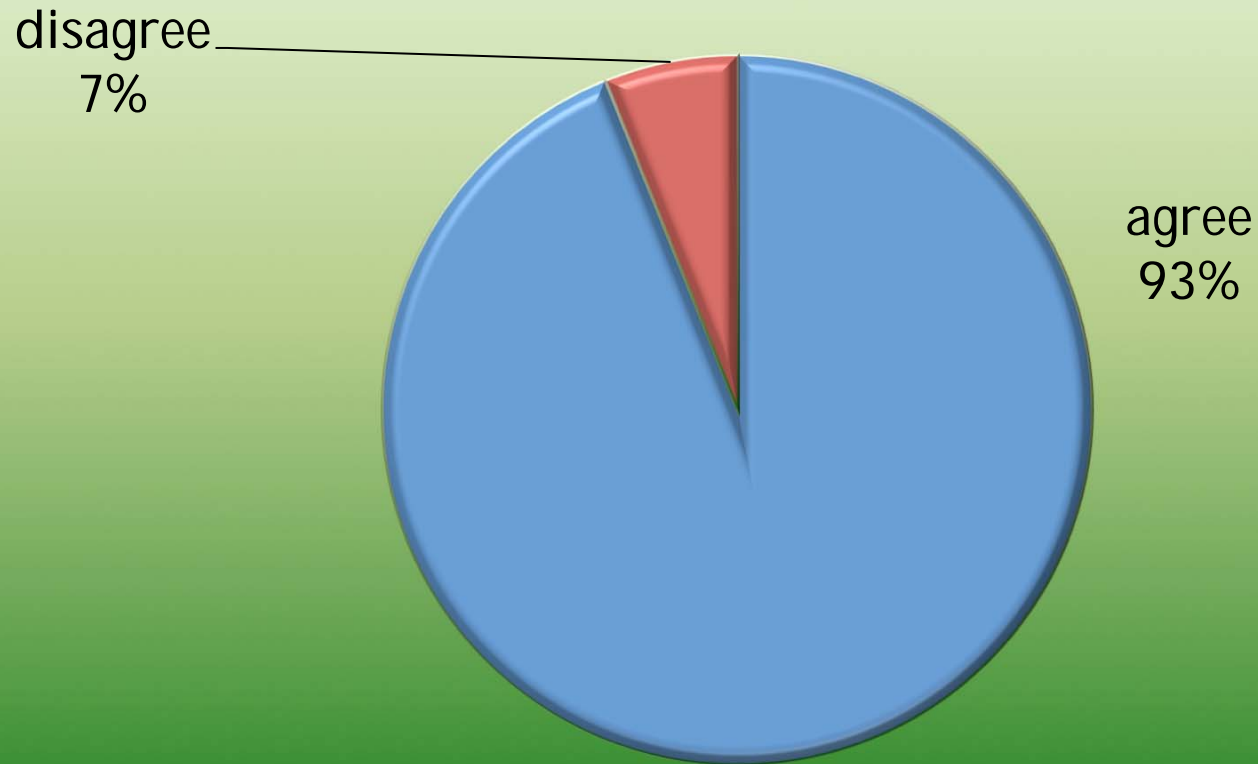
How it Works



Long-term Survey Results: Resolving Conflict (2008 data set)



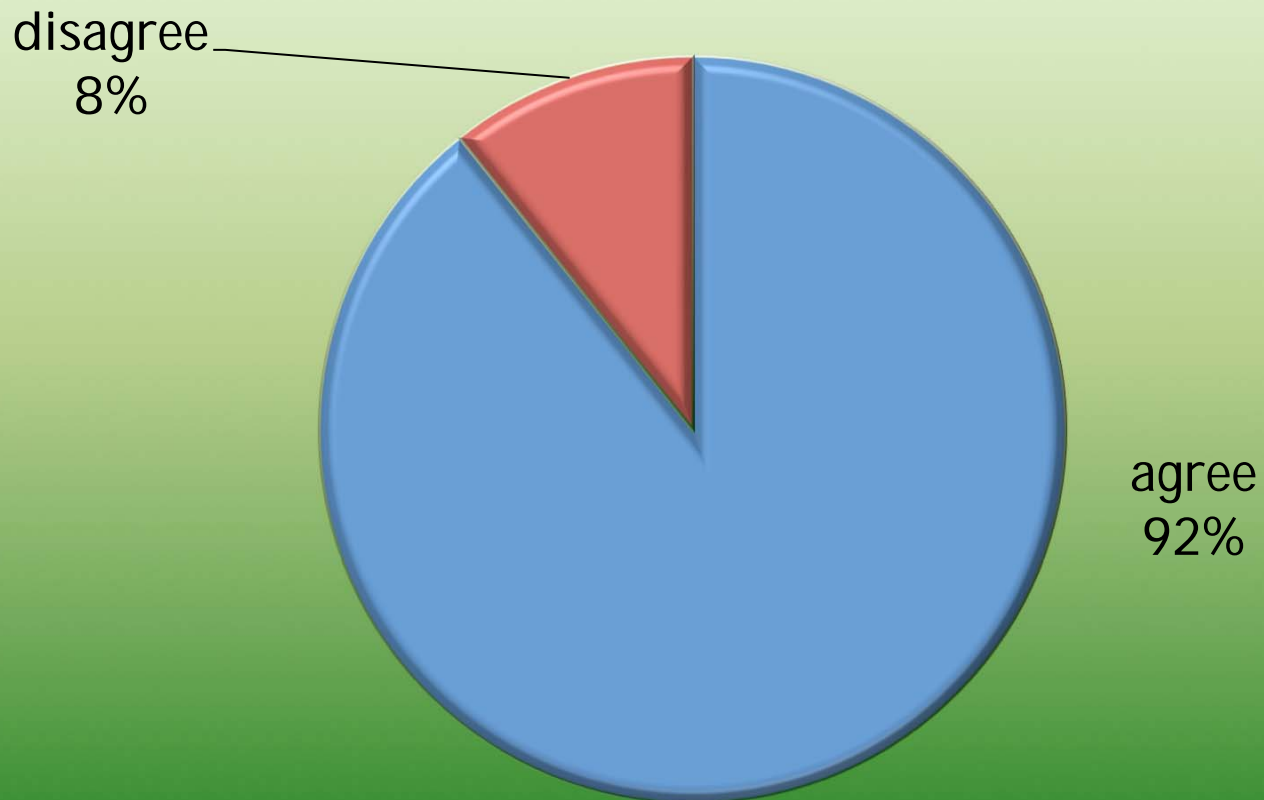
Was the Agreement Kept? (602 responses)



Long-term Survey Results: Learning New Skills (2008 data set)



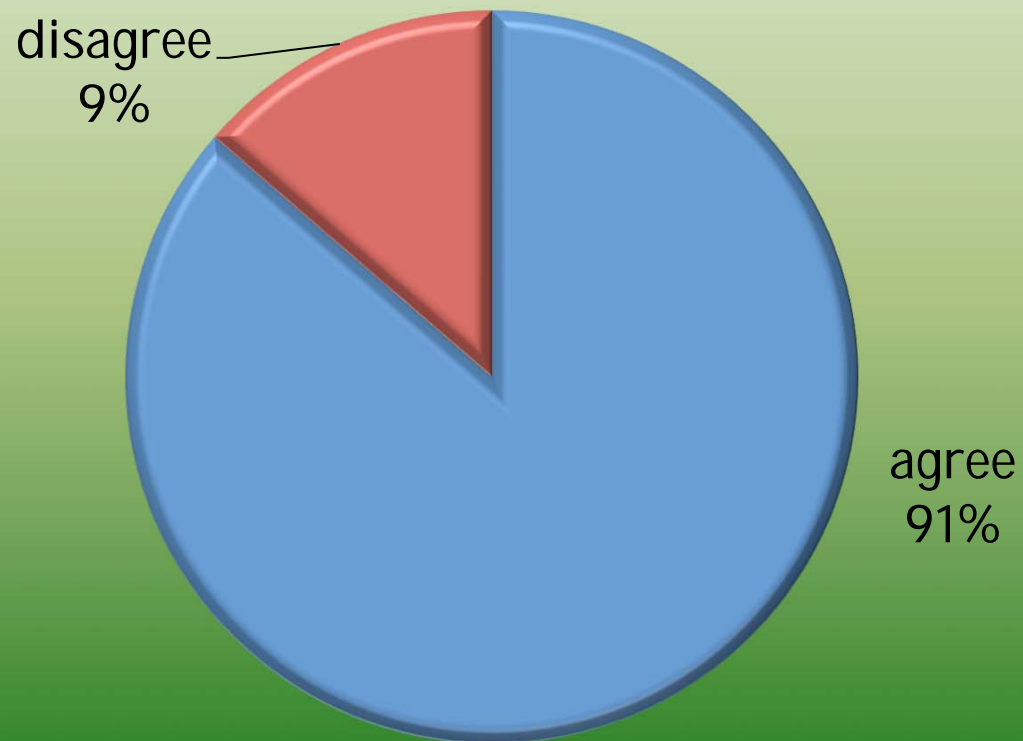
Did You Learn New Conflict Resolution Skills? (598 Responses)



Long-term Survey Results: Using New Skills (2008 data set)



**Have You Used New Conflict Resolution Skills?
(578 responses)**





Program Results





Full Disclosure: It doesn't always work...



“The circle suck! I never want to be in another circle again.”

- *High school female*

“I didn't apologize.”

- *Middle school female*

- 6.5% of participants believe either they or the other participants will likely repeat their actions which caused the conflict.
- Only 81% of students surveyed said they felt safer at school because of the RJ program.

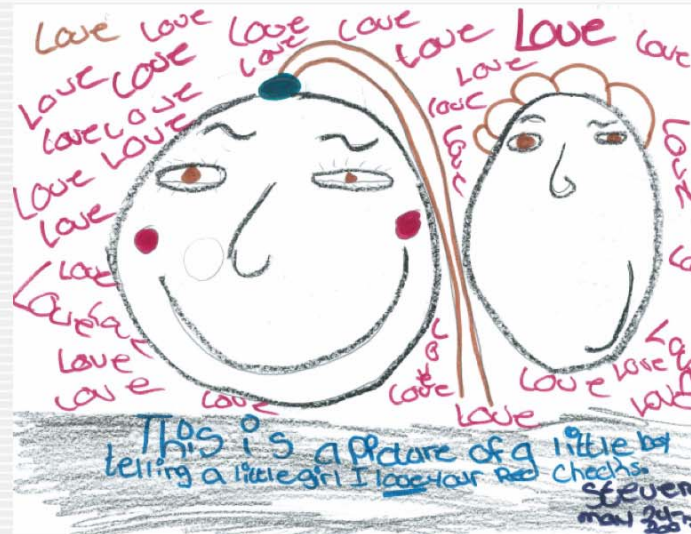


Administrative Support



“A focus of our school improvement strategy calls for the creation of a culture of belongingness and connection. We teach respect, responsibility and empathy as characteristics of empowerment. Restorative justice enhances what we have identified as a better path to serve our students.”

- Dean Manikas, Principal, Hope School, Holt





Educator Support



"Seeing the victim and accused meet at middle ground in an attempt to make things right was very rewarding."

- Middle School Teacher





Parental Support



“I’m glad I came to this meeting and met with the victim’s mother. Everyone had a chance to talk about what happened. I did learn a lot about me and the kids and respecting each other. The outcome was just great.”

- Father of a middle school student

- In 2008, 100% of parents surveyed reported that they would recommend the process to others.



Participant Reactions



“The restorative justice program really helps you express your feelings to others and feel better about yourself leaving knowing that you don’t have to fight to prove your point.”

- *Middle school female*





Strong Impact



- 98% of restorative justice participants surveyed said they were treated with respect by the RJ staff.
- 95% of those also said that the meeting was helpful to them.
- 91% of those said they would use the process again. As illustrated by one 6th grade female:

**“Thanks Store of Justice guy. See you later.
I’ll be back.”**

In High School...





Restorative Justice Blooms
Like A Flower

Mackenzie Meyer

Happiness

Growth

LOVE

empathy

Peace

Friendship

Communication

Community

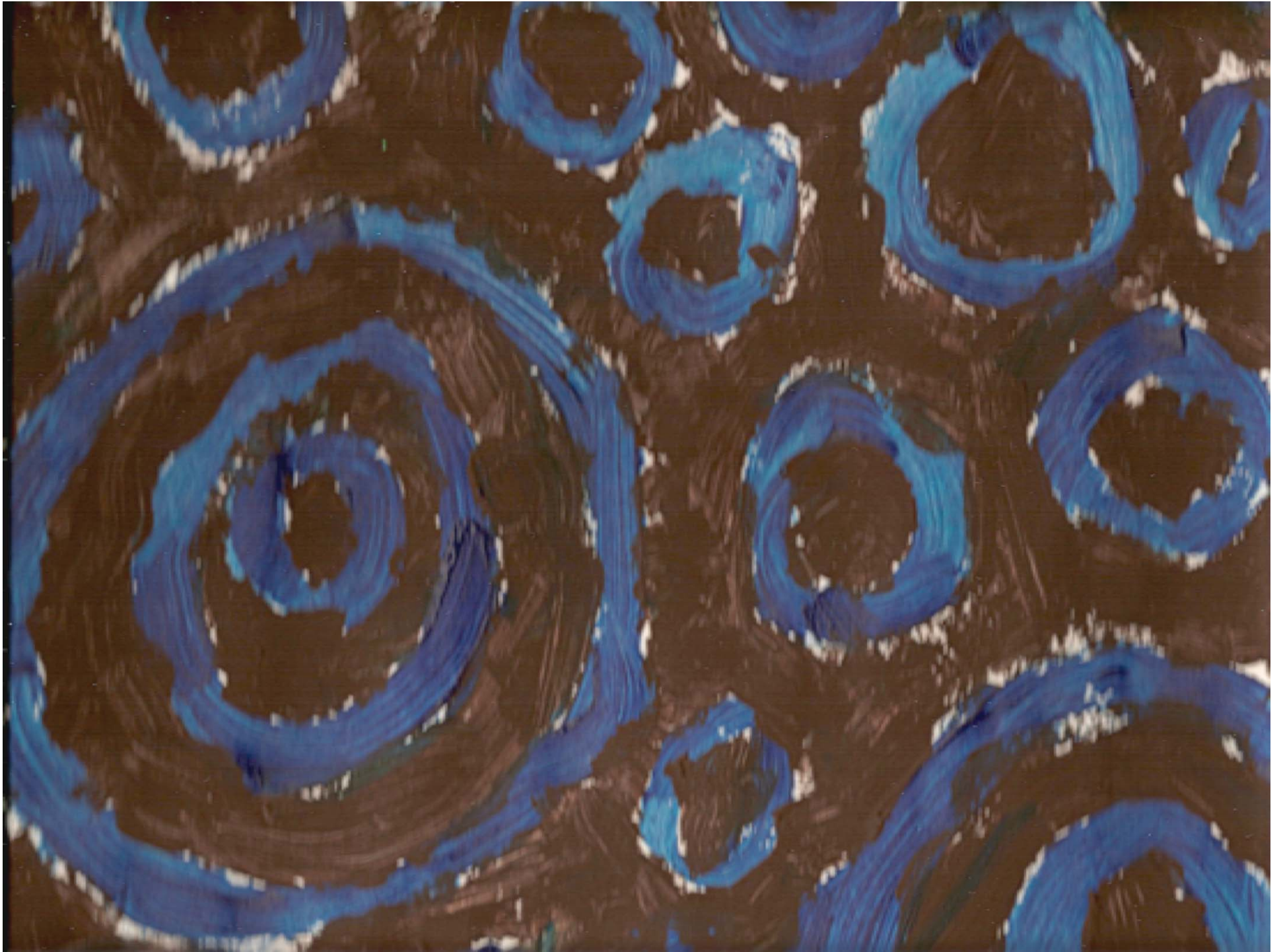


A child's drawing on a red background. The drawing features several vertical stripes of color: a wide green stripe on the right, a narrower blue stripe in the middle, and a yellow stripe on the left. There are some dark, smudged areas at the bottom of the stripes. In the upper right corner, there is some faint, red, handwritten text that appears to be '2nd' or '3rd'.

“I think of
Restorative Justice
as making
people feel better.”

-5th grade student







Elementary Initiative

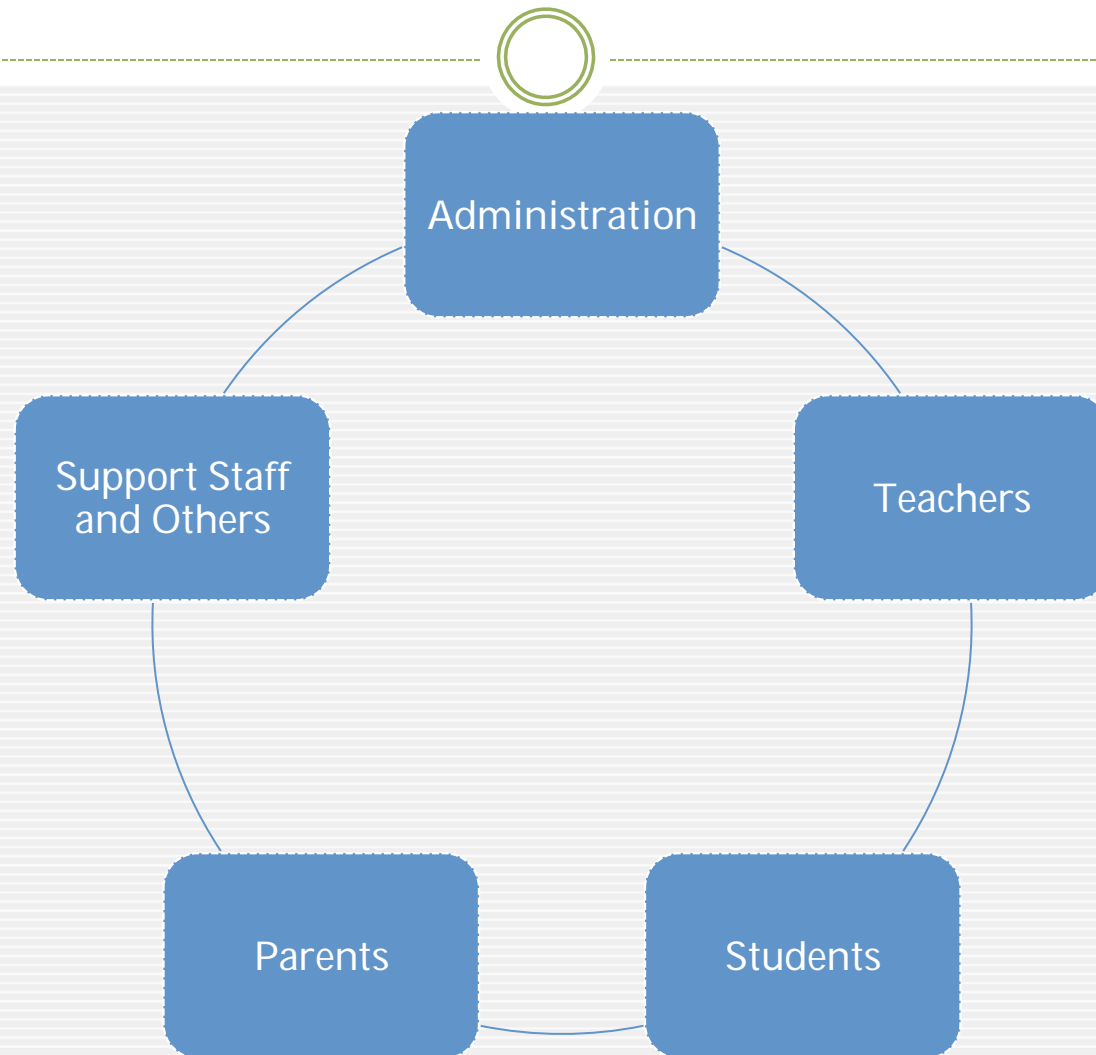


Reasoning and Purpose



- Based on the success of the middle school and high school initiatives, we have grown to the elementary level.
- Research and data analysis completed revealed the process is most effective with younger students (Norris 2008).
- Goals to build empathy, community, and familiarity to peaceful conflict resolution skills at an earlier age, through Restorative Practices.

Whole-School Community



Restorative Justice Whole-School Approach Plan

School Community Group

Administration

Teachers/Staff

Students

Parents

Opportunities for Learning

Restorative Circles and
Conferencing

Restorative Circles, Restorative Discipline,
Community Building Activities,
Community Circle Starters
Assemblies, Curriculum Integrated Monthly Thematic Lesson Plans,
Modeling and Support

Community Circles, Conflict Resolution Skill Lessons,
After-School Programs,
Restorative Circles/Conferences, Assemblies, Lessons,
Peer-Teaching Opportunities, Individual Reflection,
School-Wide Challenge

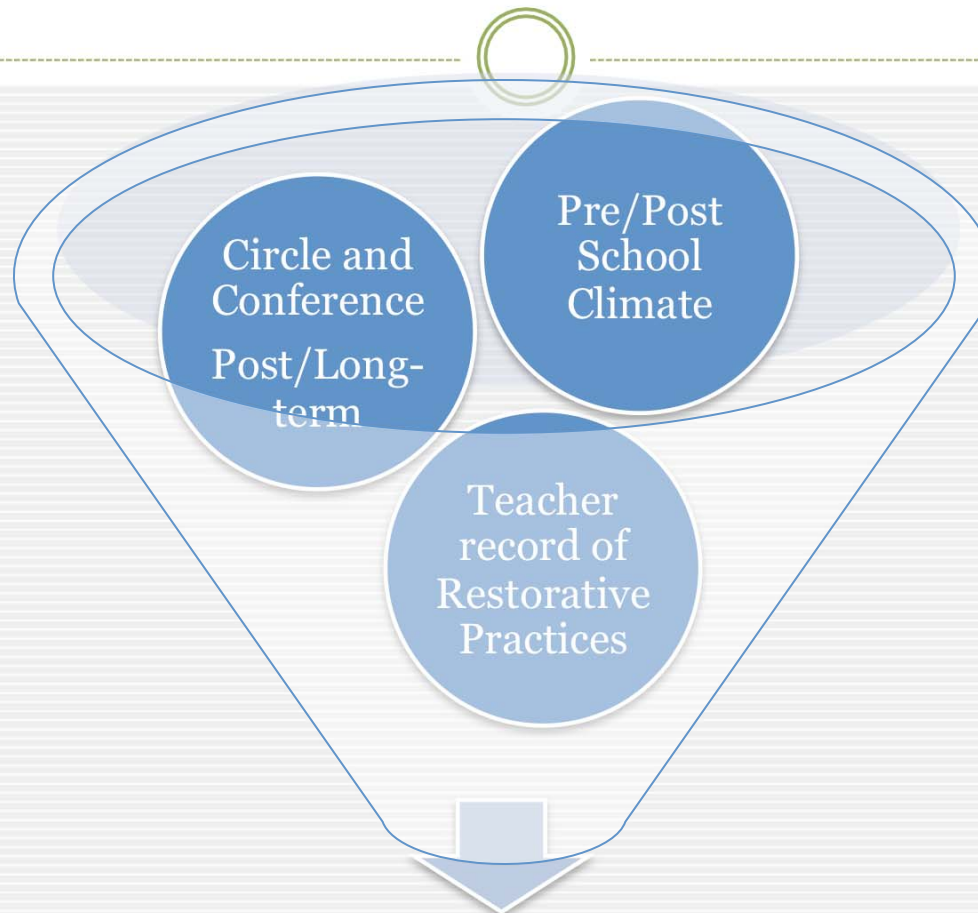
Community Breakfasts,
Restorative Circles, Restorative
Discipline

Monthly Thematic Lesson Plan Themes



- Based on Restorative Principles:
 1. RESPECT AND COMMUNITY
 2. PERSPECTIVE AND EMPATHY
 3. COMMUNICATION
 4. DIVERSITY AWARENESS AND BULLYING PREVENTION
 5. ANGER MANAGEMENT
 6. PEACEFUL CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Accountability and Data Collection



Effect of Restorative Practices on school-climate

Effect of Restorative Practices on beliefs about conflict

Effectiveness of restorative circles and conferences with elementary age students

Teacher application of Restorative Practices in the classroom, and relationship to data outcome

The Value



“Doing RJ weekly we have an open, friendly way of solving problems. My students mentioned they would like a discussion how we can get students not to break the rules. I thought this was great for only doing circles for 6 weeks and being in first grade.”

-Ms. J. Clark, 1st Grade Teacher



The Value



“Over the past year and a half I have seen significant progress in providing our students with an alternative to violence as a means of problem solving...”

- *Jim Davis,*
Associate Superintendent for Quality Assurance,
Lansing School District



The Challenge



“However, our work has only just begun, and if we are to really bring about a change of climate and culture that will last, we must continue with even more purpose.”

- *Jim Davis,*
Associate Superintendent for Quality Assurance,
Lansing School District

Future



Vision:

Restorative practices and principles are fully integrated into the community



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