



*Pursuing Equitable
Restorative Communities
(PERC) in Pittsburgh:
Partner Relationships and
Aligning Restorative
Practices with District
Priorities*

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Goals

- Understand PERC, its history and objectives
- Review communication structures between Pittsburgh Public Schools (PPS) and grant partners
- Discuss alignment between restorative practices and other PPS programs

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Laying the Foundation for Restorative Practices in Pittsburgh

- Strong administrative level buy-in and support of restorative practices
- Community stakeholders excited about and supportive of restorative practices
- District policies becoming more restorative (e.g. eliminating disruptions as a suspendable offense, evaluation rubric focus on building culture and student ownership in the classroom)

What is PERC?

- Pursuing **E**quitable **R**estorative **C**ommunities
- Competitive Grant from Department of Justice through *Comprehensive Safe Schools Initiative*
 - Awarded October 2014
 - \$3M over 3 years
 - 22 Pittsburgh Public Schools (PPS)
- Implementation Partner: *International Institute for Restorative Practices (IIRP)*
- Research Partner: *RAND*

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PERC Objectives

1. Improve student and staff perceptions of school safety
2. Reduce the incidents of juvenile justice involvement, violence and out-of-school suspensions
3. Reduce racial disparities in suspensions
4. Reduce gender-specific disparities in suspensions
5. Improve peer-to-peer respect and rule adherence
6. Improve student attendance

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Looking in on Year 1 Implementation

- The #WeArePPS campaign creates videos and finds media opportunities to highlight the people, places, and things that make the Public Schools the premier place for our city's youth.
- In January 2016, the Office of Communications aired a segment on restorative practices and its implementation.

[#WeArePPS Restorative Practices Segment](#)

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Year 1 Highlights

- District staff were trained in *Introduction to Restorative Practices* and *Using Circles Effectively and Leadership: Authority with Grace* Training
- Schools creating their own materials
- Decrease in usage through the school year

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Year 2 and Beyond

- Developing structures for sustainability
- Providing responsive support to schools implementing restorative practices
- Increasing communications around restorative practices
- Preparing for sustaining restorative practices through identifying and training licensed trainers

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IIRP, PPS, and RAND

- Communication Structure

 - Weekly Core Team Meetings*

 - Quarterly PERC Advisory Board Meetings*

 - Quarterly Data Review Meetings*

 - Coach's Retreat*

 - Budget Meetings*

- Consistency

- Support

Aligning PERC to District Programs

- Initiative fatigue and reluctance to implement anything new
- Aligning PERC and Equity
- Connecting PERC and evaluation rubrics (Research-Based Inclusive System of Evaluation)
- Connecting restorative practices with the District's Program for Students with Exceptionalities (PSE)

PERC and Equity

- In 2015, the District entered into a Memorandum of Understanding ([MOU](#)) with the Pennsylvania Human Rights Coalition.
- Having IIRP coaches attend Pacific Education Group's *Beyond Diversity* training
- During training, participants saw the connection between restorative practices and the District's equity work