

SUMMARY OF DEEP DIVE RESTORATIVE INITIATIVE REQUEST FOR FUNDING FOR 20 SCHOOLS

We are working to shift the approach to discipline in schools from a focus on rule breaking by students toward building relationships with them. Funds for this Initiative would give an opportunity for grades K to 12 schools to receive support for a whole-school approach to discipline that relies less on punitive approaches and more on Restorative Approaches that build community and hold students accountable for their behavior while keeping them in class and learning. Restorative Approaches emphasize building positive relationships, trust, and a sense of community. When infractions occur, schools seek to repair the harm and restore trust, with the aim of re-engaging students in the school community.

The Deep Dive Restorative Initiative includes funding for the hiring of a restorative justice coordinator, as well as funding for additional professional development and program costs for a period of five years for engaging all school stakeholders in transforming school climate and discipline practices. Specifically, this targeted effort will work to reduce the need for suspension, and will build caring communities in schools while ending disproportionality in punitive discipline for students of color, students with disabilities, and LGBTQ students. Restorative Approaches may include community building restorative practices, harm and healing restorative practices, reintegration restorative practices, mediation and peer mediation, collaborative problem solving, Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS), Life Skills Crisis Intervention (LSCI), conflict resolution, peer mediation, adult-student mediation, and peer mentoring.

ELEMENTS OF THE INITIATIVE

The DOE would fund this initiative to an estimated 20 schools. Schools will be supported to implement the following five key elements of a school-wide approach to Restorative Approaches:

1. Hire a **full time Restorative Coordinator** (UFT or DC-37) with the sole focus of coordinating a positive, restorative climate and approach to discipline at the school, ensuring that this position does not have the additional responsibilities of a full time teacher or social worker. The Coordinator will be responsible for overseeing implementation of following elements below.
2. Developing a **School-Wide Strategic Plan** with participation of all school stakeholders, including a process of assessing practices currently in place, engaging all stakeholders in a vision of what school climate and discipline will look like, and developing concrete steps for action. The plan will integrate behavior-related strategies into an integrated and restorative framework and set of values. The plan will also integrate restorative approaches and pre-existing resources related to enrichment, health, and behavior into the whole school community, including structures such as advisory periods, town hall meetings, after school programs, sports teams, targeted events in school, student leadership councils, Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) teams, Pupil Personnel Teams, and School Leadership Teams.
3. **Ongoing Training and Professional Development for School Staff.** The school will identify professional development training in restorative practices and other positive approaches.

All faculty, counselors and other school employees will receive basic professional development in restorative approaches. This will include a minimum of 25 hours of professional development per teacher and one professional development day per year open to any teacher. School Safety Agents (SSAs) will receive training in de-escalation and information about what restorative approaches are being used in the school and how to refer students to school staff for restorative processes.

4. **Youth and Parent Leadership** in the process. The Restorative Coordinator must build relationships and coordinate youth and parent leadership in the process of planning and implementing restorative practices in school. A core group of student and parent leaders will also receive training in restorative practices and the skills to train their peers in cooperative resolution of conflict. Youth leaders can and need to be supported to not only respond to disciplinary problems in constructive ways, but to proactively promote social responsibility and a climate for learning. This can include forming Student Leadership Councils, engaging students and parents to be a part of trainings for teachers, counselors, school staff and SSAs, engaging student leaders in producing videos, campaigns, and other strategies to promote restorative approaches among their peers.
5. **Systematic Collection and Monitoring of Data.** The Restorative Coordinator will collaborate with principals, faculty, and students to develop a common set of indicators and protocols for collecting and monitoring data over time to help understand the implementation, progress, and results of restorative approaches in schools. Schools will develop systems to monitor and track the use of both punitive and positive interventions, such as number of restorative practices held (i.e. mediations, circles, fairness committees); number of classroom removals, suspensions, arrests, summonses; and results of school climate surveys.

BUDGET: \$175,000/year per school for 5 years.
\$3.5 million/year for 20 schools

These funds would be used for:

- **Restorative Coordinator Position Salary**
- **Ongoing and Comprehensive Training and Coaching** for Coordinators and school stakeholders.
 - Some schools may decide to contract with an organization to conduct periodic trainings of the full staff in a wide range of restorative approaches. These professional development organizations will provide ongoing consultations with each school's R.P. coordinator and whoever else on a school's staff will step forward to take the lead in these efforts. This would also cover per session and training rate costs for school staff trainings and planning .
 - Program costs. DOE should also fund start-up expenses and ongoing maintenance of program and administrative capacity for the Coordinator to build staff, student and parent buy-in of restorative practices, including expenses related to meeting costs (e.g., refreshments, incentives, trips, celebrations outreach to parents, materials, etc.) for staff & other school stakeholders during the all day or after school trainings.

FUNDING STREAMS

The cost for covering each year of these 20 pilot schools' work can be raised through the reallocation of presently existing funds within the School Safety budget. Since 2002, the city's budget for police and security equipment in schools has increased by 65 percent to more than \$221 million. A 1-2% reallocation (without cutting jobs, other than through attrition), would easily fund the Pilot Schools Initiative. It would also signal a symbolic shift away from the over-policing of our schools and the criminalization of youth toward an approach of teaching social skills and building caring communities in schools.

SELECTION CRITERIA

Selection will be made based on the following:

- Desire by school stakeholders to change approach to discipline
- Commitment from school leadership to change approach to discipline
- Commitment from school leadership to fully engage all stakeholders in the process
- Demonstrated plan for communicating with and including School Leadership Team members, parents, and staff in the development and ongoing work of the Deep Dive Initiative. Note that *the School Leadership Team (SLT) must contribute to writing and sign off on this application.*

For schools new to Restorative Approaches, priority will be given to:

- A higher than average rate of suspension and discipline disparities with regard to race and disability;
- Demonstrated knowledge of the entire school population; current school policies, programs, and culture that address school climate; and a demonstrated commitment to a restorative approaches strategy;

Schools with past or current initiatives to implement Restorative Approaches will also be considered, and priority will be given to

- Demonstrated past initiatives to implement restorative approaches
- Demonstrated partnerships with community organizations
- Demonstrated ability to create internal structures that will ensure the long-term sustainability of the restorative approaches strategy in the school
- Proven commitment to sharing experiences that will create a restorative school climate with the purpose of reducing racial disparities in suspensions and bolstering school climate and culture with other educators, parents, business leaders, cultural institutions, and policy makers