

**Restorative Approaches Deep Dive Initiative**  
**Creating a climate for learning and safety**

**Blueprint & Recommendations  
for funding and support for 20 DOE “Deep Dive” Schools**

**Dignity in Schools Campaign-New York  
June 2015**

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## I. Introduction

The Dignity in Schools Campaign-New York seeks to transform the climate of New York City public schools and create a system of school safety that is based on mutual respect and problem solving, not criminalization and pushout. Stakeholders in schools across the city are feeling the devastating effects of the school-to-prison pipeline on youth of color and are looking for sustainable support for a whole-school approach to discipline that relies less on punitive approaches and more on positive, restorative practices that 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.

School climate reform and restorative approaches support students feeling safe, supported, engaged and connected to schools. There is an extraordinary body of empirical educational research that shows that punitive and zero tolerance methods of discipline contribute to the shockingly high student dropout rates and the school to prison pipeline. Safe and supportive school improvement efforts need to be grounded in as many students, parents/guardians, school personnel and even community members being engaged and intrinsically motivated to be co-learners and co-leaders in the improvement process. School climate reform is an evidence based school improvement strategy that has been endorsed and/or supported by the US Department of Education and Justice, CDC, SAMPSA and the Institute for Educational Sciences as sound whole school effort that promotes school connectedness, reduces dropout rates and bullying as well as increasing academic achievement over a three to five year period. Restorative approaches have also been shown to have promise for narrowing the racial discipline gap<sup>1</sup>.

The Department of Education has included information about positive discipline practices in the Discipline Code and provides some training for educators in schools that wish to include restorative justice in their practice. The Dignity in Schools Campaign-New York sees as the logical next step in this progression to fund Restorative Coordinators in 20 Pilot Schools across the city that, as in school districts like Oakland, San Francisco, and Denver, will be fully supported in their effort to implement a school-wide approach to positive discipline. Restorative practices are already an important and growing part of school community culture at several schools across the city, and the Department of Education should fully support the whole school implementation of these Pilot Programs in ten schools city-wide.

In order for pilot schools to be successful, our experience has shown that schools must have the need, interest from a core group of staff, commitment from administration and capacity to do this. As part of a school's need and commitment to restorative practices, schools should negotiate buy-in by school safety agents, their union, and the NYPD so that restorative practices are truly a school-wide effort aimed at replacing confrontation, summonses, and arrests in our schools. To fundamentally transform the culture of a school, it takes concerted effort over a period of 3-5 years, and funding the full time position of restorative coordinator is the first step to ensuring that these school-wide initiatives are sustainable.

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<sup>1</sup><<http://www.iirp.edu/pdf/pa13-slides-gregory-davis.pdf>> Presented by Anne Gregory of Rutgers, from an evaluation of the International Institute of Restorative Practices whole school change program in urban Bethlehem Area School Districts Liberty High School (suggesting that RP closes the racial discipline disparity gap. No other program that we know of has shown this impact. Other programs have demonstrated some impact on overall discipline numbers, but not racial disparity)

**We call on the NYC Department of Education to:**

- 1. Fully fund and support implementation of the following five key elements of a school-wide approach to restorative approaches at twenty public schools**
- 2. Designate at least two district-based coordinators for the twenty schools to support implementation of restorative approaches, support data collection, and coordinate communication and skill development between the schools**
- 3. Ensure the ongoing inclusion of the Dignity in Schools Campaign-New York in planning, launching, evaluating, and sustaining pilot Restorative Practices School Communities**

In order to launch a Restorative Approaches Pilot School Initiative as soon as possible, Mayor de Blasio and Chancellor Fariña, along with a mayoral-led Leadership Team, must immediately begin a process to identify twenty pilot schools.

The initiative's near-term goal is to prove that restorative approaches to discipline can both reduce the use of out-of-school exclusion, including court involvement, and improve school climate in New York City schools. Our long-term goal is to implement restorative approaches in schools across the city, eliminate racial disparities in school discipline evident from analysis of suspension and arrest data, and end the school-to-prison pipeline in New York City. It is important that schools selected to participate in the initiative reflect the wide range of school communities within the Department of Education.

**II. Five Key Elements of A School-Wide Approach to Restorative Approaches:**

**1. A Full-time Position of Restorative Coordinator**

- This position should be funded as a full time DOE position, with the sole focus of coordinating a positive, restorative climate and approach to discipline at the school<sup>2</sup>, ensuring that this position does not have the responsibilities of a full time teacher or social worker.<sup>3</sup>
- In the case of campus schools (where multiple small schools share the same building), the budget should allow for one coordinator per school, not one per campus.
- The Coordinator will be responsible for overseeing implementation of the other four key elements below.

**2. A School-Wide Strategic Plan** with participation of all school stakeholders.

- a. The Strategic Plan for sustainably growing restorative practices at the school include a process of assessing practices currently in place, engaging all stakeholders in a vision of what school climate and discipline should look like, and developing concrete steps for action.
- b. The plan should integrate behavior-related strategies, such as Life Skills Crisis Intervention (LSCI), Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS), Fairness Committees, conflict resolution, peer mediation, adult-student mediation, and peer mentoring, into an integrated and restorative framework and set of values.
- c. The plan should also integrate restorative approaches and pre-existing resources related to enrichment, health, and behavior into school structures, staffing, forums and other access points, such as advisory periods, town hall meetings, after school programs, sports teams, targeted events in school, school-wide PBIS tiered intervention structures, student leadership councils, Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) Teams, counselors, social workers,

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<sup>2</sup> RJ Coordinators should either have a teaching license or have X # years of experience working with youth.

<sup>3</sup> In order to be sustainable, this position must be unionized, either within the United Federation of Teachers (UFT) or DC-37. Schools in this initiative may need to determine a School-Based Option (SBO) for staff given the opportunity to apply for this position

psychologists, the School Leadership Team and UFT Chapters.

### 3. **Ongoing Training for All Stakeholders** in School

- a. The Restorative Coordinator should receive advanced intensive training in restorative practices and other positive approaches, as well as “train-the-trainer” skills in order to train other stakeholders in the school community.
- b. All faculty, counselors and other school employees should receive basic training in restorative practices. This should include start-up training of 25 hours per teacher and one professional development day per year open to any teacher. School Safety Agents (SSAs) should receive training in de-escalation and about what restorative approaches are being used in the school and how to refer students to school staff for restorative processes.
- c. A core group of student and parent leaders should also receive training in restorative practices and the skills to train their peers.

### 4. **Youth and Parent Leadership** in the process

- a. 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 should also receive training in restorative practices and the skills to train their peers.
- b. 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, skits and other strategies to promote restorative approaches among their peers.

### 5. **Systematic Collection and Monitoring of Data**

- a. The Restorative Coordinator should collaborate with principals, faculty, and students to develop a common set of indicators and protocols for collecting and monitoring data to help understand the implementation, progress, and results of restorative practices in the pilot schools.
- b. Schools should 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 suspensions, arrests, summonses; and results of school climate surveys.

## III. **Recommendations for Choosing DOE Pilot Schools**

Because a goal of this initiative is to show the efficacy of the Restorative Approaches model, the initiative should include a diverse cohort of schools. We believe that middle schools and high schools from all over the city should be our general target population because this is where the great majority of suspensions and arrests take place. Within this broad parameter however, we feel that there are two subgroups that the city and the DOE should reach out to for inclusion in this endeavor. They are:

- A. **Schools with ‘high needs’** – schools with the highest quarter of suspensions, arrests and summons over the course of the past few years. They may or may not, have been designated an “impact school” or presently have armed police officers on post in their hallways. If they are facing such problems and have not had success in lowering the suspensions/arrests rates using ‘Zero Tolerance’ and other such traditional approaches and, are ready to commit to a process that will

change fundamentally the way behavioral issues are addressed, they should be considered prime candidates for inclusion.

- B. **Schools already implementing pilot programs in some aspects of climate change and Restorative Approaches and having initial success.** There are a number of schools around the city committed to this model who have received some initial training in restorative practices and are successfully practicing pieces of the Restorative Approaches model such as peer mediation, restorative circles, and student leadership councils to build a sense of community in their schools and reduce the use of punitive discipline. These schools have made progress ‘operating on a shoestring’ with small grants from foundations, due mainly to the herculean efforts of a core of dedicated staff and students who have taken on the extra duties necessary to make these programs run. Since they are already on the road to changing their schools’ cultures, these schools should be supported in these efforts and should be strongly considered as part of our Pilot Initiative. **Schools with organizational partnerships & support** are well positioned to be pilot schools. Many schools that have begun implementing restorative approaches have been trained and supported by these organizations, and the impact of having these organizations involved will bolster the pilot school model.
- C. All of the above does not mean that schools not falling into these two categories need not apply. Schools with no organizational affiliation or experience with restorative approaches should also be included in this initiative.

#### IV. **Budget and Funding Recommendations for Pilot Schools Initiative**

##### A. Budget:

**TOTAL Per School: \$160,000 per school**

**TOTAL BUDGET 25 Schools: \$4,000,000**

- **Salary** for DOE RJ Coordinator Position (approx. \$50,000 plus benefits)
  - Salary range could include that of: teacher, guidance counselor , social worker, resource coordinator, or parent coordinator
  
- **Ongoing and Comprehensive Training and Coaching**
  - **\$25,000** (for staff and/or cover substitute costs for educators from other schools to visit, observe, and receive training.) Per session (\$42) & training rate costs for school staff trainings and planning (\$25) Per session or training rate stipends for all staff overtime logged in order to participate in the R.P. trainings held by the P.D. organization or the R.P. coordinator.
  - **\$30,000** to cover training from certified vendor throughout the year for RJ 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.
  
- **Program costs: \$5,000** for 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.

- B. 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% 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.

## **V. Recommended Timeline for Pilot School Implementation**

- **Month 1**
  - Create Pilot School Leadership Team with Mayor's transition team, School Justice Partnership Task Force, and the Dignity in Schools Campaign-NY
  - Develop an 'Interest and Commitment Form' –for schools interested in becoming a Pilot School
  - Leadership Team reaches out to schools with highest suspension/arrest/summons rates and inquires about the possibility of their becoming a Pilot School.
  - Leadership Team reaches out to DSC schools and inquires as to their desire to participate in the program as well as organizations as to their availability and capacity
- **Month 2**
  - Principals survey all constituents in their schools – admin, teachers, SLT, PA, Student Government, School Safety Agents, etc. as to their desire/willingness to transform school climate and discipline
  - Interest & Commitment Forms submitted to DOE
- **Month 3**
  - Leadership Team chooses at least 20 Pilot Schools from among the applicants. Schools will be those who best meet our stated criteria for school wide change
- **Month 4**
  - Schools begin strategic planning process, including choosing/hiring RJ Coordinator and planning with training and coaching practitioners, if applicable
  - Get input and planning from all constituents
  - Clarify role of SSAs in this time period
- **Month 5**
  - Begin in depth training for designated school stakeholders
- **Month 6**
  - Ongoing strategic planning for the school year

## VI. Positive Discipline Practices & Organizations

### A. School Climate & Restorative Approaches Training & Coaching Organizations:

- **Creative Response to Conflict:** A global non-profit organization that educates individuals and groups to transform conflict into positive and constructive experiences that contribute to building a just and peaceful world. <crc-global.org>
- **Cross Cultural Consulting Services** (contact [cccs.mattguldin@gmail.com](mailto:cccs.mattguldin@gmail.com)): Signature 100% RESPECT! Campaign, a comprehensive social and emotional learning program.
- **International Institute for Restorative Practices** ([iirp.edu](http://iirp.edu)): Safer, Saner Schools Program: Comprehensive 2 year, school wide effort to calm schools, build positive relationships, reduce disruptive behavior and have students take responsibility for their actions.
- **The Institute for Understanding Behavior:** Consortium of United Federation of Teachers, the Department of Education, and Cornell University providing schools with a Therapeutic Crisis Intervention System, a systemic and research-based approach to understanding, assessing and supporting positive student behavior.
- **Morningside Center for Social Responsibility** ([www.morningsidecenter.org](http://www.morningsidecenter.org)): The 4Rs (Reading, Writing, Respect & Resolution), for grades preK-8, develops the academic, social and emotional skills of students by integrating SEL into language arts, and Restore360 (grades 6-12) creates a sense of community among students, builds their social and emotional skills, and provides a positive alternative to punitive discipline policies that can lead to suspension.
- **National School Climate Center** ([scrc.schoolclimate.org](http://scrc.schoolclimate.org)): Professional development (both face-to-face and on line via the School Climate Resource Center
- **New York Peace Institute** (<http://nypeace.org/>): Provides customized training and facilitation services to organizations and schools.
- **Safety with Dignity** (<http://tinyurl.com/pt8tf7d>): Since 2007 Safety with Dignity has reached over 15,000 middle and high school students with our real-life, story-telling plays created by teens for teens, and our peer-mediation and restorative practice trainings for high school students and their teachers.
- **Restorative Justice Training Institute** (Berkeley, CA) (<http://rjtica.org/home>): Offers planning, training, coaching, curriculum development, research and evaluation for schools and organizations working with youth.
- **Think:Kids** (<http://www.thinkkids.org/>): Program teaches evidence-based approach called Collaborative Problem Solving (CPS) for helping children with behavioral challenges.
- **Eric Butler** (Oakland, CA) (Contact [butlereric7@gmail.com](mailto:butlereric7@gmail.com)): Restorative Justice Trainings for Young People/Students and Allies.
- **Nancy Reistenberg** (Roseville, MN) (<http://tinyurl.com/nnc83px>): Provides technical assistance on violence and bullying prevention, school connectedness, dropout prevention, cultural relevance of prevention education, crisis prevention and recovery and restorative measures.
- **Kay Pranis** (Minnesota) (<http://tinyurl.com/o5xvs6x>): Kay worked for the MN Dept. of Corrections for nine years between 1994 and 2003 as the Restorative Justice Planner. She conducts Circle trainings and apprentices Circle trainers. She is a Circle Keeper. She also provides coaching on designing Circles and on organizing to start Circle projects.



## **B. New York City Community Based Organizations:**

*The following organizations have partnered with schools to support the implementation of Restorative Approaches:*

- **Community Connections for Youth: (cc-fy.org)** Effective partnerships between system and community stakeholders are the key to sustaining juvenile justice reforms. CCFY provides training and technical assistance to system and community stakeholders for the purpose of reducing reliance on incarceration and building community capacity to serve youth. <<http://cc-fy.org/>>
- **Cypress Hills Local Development Corporation / Future of Tomorrow** (<http://www.cypresshills.org/chw/student-and-parent-organizing/>)
- **DRUM—South Asian Organizing Center** <<http://www.drumnyc.org/>>
- **Make the Road New York** (<http://www.maketheroad.org/>): MRNY has played an integral role in supporting restorative justice initiatives at the Bushwick Campus by recruiting staff and students, facilitating committee meetings, running workshops for staff, staffing the mediation center, and supporting communication across campus.
- **Sistas and Brothas United** (<http://tinyurl.com/pyshlr7>)
- **Teachers Unite** ([www.teachersunite.net](http://www.teachersunite.net)): Teachers Unite members—NYC public school educators—work in partnership with schools to support the development of a sustainable, collaborative leadership team among staff, parents and teachers that is committed to transforming its school’s culture through the adoption of restorative justice practices.

## **D. Glossary for Positive Approaches to Prevention & Discipline:**

### **1. Restorative Approaches:**

- **Restorative Circles:** Highly structured process to create a safe space where people can share feelings and experiences. Guided by a series of community agreements (or guidelines) developed by the students themselves, Circles use story-telling as a way to create a connection between participants. Circle processes have been used in schools across the country to encourage and practice group communication, relationship-building, empathy, democratic decision-making, conflict resolution, and problem-solving.
- **Fairness Committees:** Based on a restorative justice model of discipline in which all members of the school community come together to determine a response to an incident in reflection of a school’s Core Values
- **Collaborative Problem Solving:** Provides a common philosophy, language, and structured process for understanding the helping challenging kids and building thinking skills. Two major tenets: challenges are best understood as the byproduct of lagging thinking skills (rather than, for example, as attention-seeking, manipulative, limit-testing, or a sign of poor motivation); and that these challenges are best addressed by teaching children the skills they lack (rather than through reward and punishment programs and intensive imposition of adult will).

- **Student leadership Councils:** Student leadership development is the process of involving students in meaningful ways both in and beyond the classroom. It is providing opportunities for students to demonstrate their talents, skills, and interests while continuing to develop new skills. It is also about giving students more ownership of the programs they attend.
- **Engaging all stakeholders:** Schools can only be transformed when school staff, students, and parents work in collaboration and engage in democratic processes to make decisions about school climate, discipline, and funding.

## 2. Other Positive Approaches:

- **Positive Behavior Intervention and Support (PBIS):** A three-tiered continuum of behavioral support systems approach to creating and maintaining positive school climate. Emphasizes preventing school discipline problems & provides ideas to support teaching, modeling and recognizing positive and appropriate behavior in schools. Frameworks enable schools to sustain a safe and supportive learning environment.
- **Life Space Crisis Intervention:** therapeutic, verbal strategy to be used with students who have chronic patterns of self-defeating behavior.
- **Therapeutic Crisis Intervention for Schools:** Goals include preventing crises from occurring, de-escalating potential crises, managing acute physical behavior, and reducing potential and actual injury to young people and staff. This model gives organizations a framework for implementing a crisis prevention and management system that reduces the need to rely on high-risk interventions.
- **Peer Mediation:** program and process where students of the same age-group facilitate resolving disputes between two people or small groups. This process has proven effective in schools around the United States, changing the way students understand and resolve conflict in their lives. Changes include improved self-esteem, listening and critical thinking skills, and school climate for learning, as well as reduced disciplinary actions and less fights. These skills are transferable outside of the classroom.
- **Conflict Resolution:** helps young people learn and practice skills and strategies to respond effectively to conflicts with peers and adults; manage their emotions in ways that help them keep their cool, their power, and their self-respect; handle differences and diversity more constructively; make good decisions by becoming better problem solvers; and develop healthy relationships and become better allies with other students.

## VI. APPENDIX A. Recommendations for Pilot School Application

### Introduction to Application

Explains the decision that the Mayor and the Chancellor have made about moving NYC schools from punitive/Zero Tolerance discipline policies to a Restorative Approaches model (cite successes in other cities and racial disparities/context). What we're looking for: schools ready to fully change their approach to student misbehavior.

Broad outline of what a transformed school might look like – e.g., build community building activities, teaching social skills, using Tier I and 2 circles, repairing the harm activities, public apologies, etc.

### **Call for Schools: Prerequisites:**

Mayor and Chancellor looking for 20 schools to actualize this bold plan and demonstrate the efficacy of this model. If you'd like your school to participate, you want to transform your school's tone and culture on a fundamental level. This means to change the nature of people's interactions from adversarial to cooperative. Your school community must be fully committed to putting into practice the following 5 Elements for school transformation: [List DSC's 5 Elements.]

### **Target Categories of Schools/ Priority schools:**

- High Needs (define)
- Fledgling Practitioners (describe DSC-NY pilots 'making progress on a shoe string'—working with community based organizations)
- Not ruling out other schools, as we want to choose a wide variety of schools, so as to prove that this approach can work in any community throughout the city.
- Campus schools prioritized??

### **Funding:**

- \$175,000 will be issued to each RP Pilot School for each of 3-5 years.
- Funding will cover the hiring of an RJ coordinator to facilitate the process of school wide cultural change. Coordinator will work on your staff full time and help all school stakeholders participate fully in the process. (more here on coordinator—experience, example of job description)
- Funding can also cover any per session training costs as well as program costs, in addition to outside training and coaching in School Climate Change / Restorative Approaches (see attached list of organizations / practitioners)

### **Timeline:**

The following timeline is provided to give you and your school community an overview of our expectations for the preparatory phases of this cultural transformation process

### **Application Process – schools that apply to the Initiative must:**

- Complete the following formal application form to be completed by your School Leadership Team
- You must include a narrative to delineate your school's history with punitive and/or zero tolerance discipline procedures and explain why you are eager to move toward a restorative approach to student behavior and school climate

### **Restorative Practices Pilot Schools Application**

#### Part 1: Demographic information:

- Number of students, grade levels, year school founded, ethnic breakdown, Title I and ELL students percentages, # of suspensions and arrests/summonses, SSAs, metal detectors, etc.

Part 2: Narrative: (need to create outline, organize questions into sections, & number.)

Please have your SLT address the following questions in as much detail as possible. Please make sure that the parent and student representatives on the SLT take direct part in its writing.

- Describe your school's discipline issues/problems
- What is your understanding of why this is happening?
- What piece of the problem lies with a) the students, b) the teaching staff, c) the support staff, d) the school leaders/administration, e) the SSAs
- What discipline approaches/policies have you been using during these last few years which have not been able to resolve these problems?
- What does anyone on your team know about RP, RJ or PBIS? Please tell us of your/their experiences with these alternative approaches to dealing with student and staff misbehaviors. Please be specific and in depth.
- Through what vehicles are staff, students and parents involved in decision making in your school? Please explain in detail.
- Is your school partnered with a CBO or corporation? If yes, what programs/services do they provide?
- Why do you want to fully transform the culture of your school?
- How will you get buy in from the rest of your staff and the student body to be part of this effort to give up the traditional, punitive ZTP approach and transition towards a positive discipline and Restorative Justice model?
- How will you present this change to parents in order to get their support and participation?
- What is your vision of how your school will look once this transformation is in place?

**Campus School caveat** – If you are a campus school, remember that all schools on a particular campus must be committed to the above process of fundamentally changing the tone and culture of relationships in all of your schools. Each small school will be fully funded for the RJ Coordinator's position and training expenses, etc. Each small school must, as well, fill out a separate application and jointly you must answer the following questions:

- Something about present levels of communication, collaboration and coordination
- How conflict is dealt with between campuses on student and staff levels

**D. Any Programmatic requirements? Reporting requirements?**

Will schools be required to convene and exchange best practices?

**E. Decision Process**

How schools are being selected.