



A Comprehensive Approach for Implementing School-Based Restorative Practices
Restorative Practices Pilot Site: Upper Midwest Urban Elementary School Pre-K-5



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Background

An upper Midwest public school district and its teachers' union entered into partnership to support the implementation of Restorative Practices (RP) in six schools in the fall of 2016. The partnership was primarily developed to: (1) address the disparate number of children of color experiencing exclusionary discipline practices in schools; (2) develop positive alternatives for punitive and exclusionary practices; and (3) support the development of strength-based relationships with students, families, community and educators. After submitting an application and completing the proposal process, two elementary schools, one pre-k-8 school, two middle schools and one high school were selected as RP pilot sites. These six schools were awarded \$150,000 each to develop strategies for the implementation of RP.

In the spring of 2016, Marika Pfefferkorn, director of the Minnesota Black Male Achievement Network at the Minnesota Education Equity Partnership (MnEEP) and co-chair of the Minnesota Solutions Not Suspensions Coalition, and a building principal from one of the selected RP pilot sites, developed a relationship to support RP implementation for the 2016-2017 school year. The building principal leads an upper Midwest urban elementary school (UMUES) with a mission to develop culturally responsive leaders who are academically and socially prepared to impact change globally. The UMUES serves over 300 students of whom 2% identify as American Indian; 6% Caucasian American; 7% Asian American; 24% African American; and 61% Hispanic American as identified from the school district's website.

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MnEEP hired Koinonia Leadership Academy, LLC to lead its upper Midwest schools RP pilot. MnEEP's primary goals were to (1) support the UMUES in the implementation of schoolwide RP; (2) collaborate with RP district coordinator to support the six RP schools; and (3) connect the People of Color Restorative Practices Collective to the pilot. MnEEP's intent for connecting the People of Color Restorative Practices Collective to the pilot was to meet the growing number of requests from students, families and educators for RP practitioners who reflect the children and families who are overrepresented in exclusionary discipline practices.

Upper Midwest Urban Elementary School's (UMUES) Restorative Practices Pilot Objectives:

The UMUES identified three SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Timely) goals for their RP pilot:

- Office discipline referrals will decrease by 60% from June 2016 to June 2019 as measured in SWIS/Campus.
- Professional development attendance records will demonstrate that 100% of staff will be trained in specific PBIS, Responsive Classroom and RP by June 2019.
- A school-specific implementation checklist will be developed to measure implementation of strategies and approaches.

1. Office discipline referrals will decrease by 60% from June 2016 to June 2019 as measured in SWIS/Campus.

While the UMUES is in the process of finalizing year-end discipline data with the district, the last data review in the spring of 2017 indicates that there was more than a 60% decrease in student referrals this year. The UMUES will make data available upon receiving the final calculations from the upper Midwest school district.

2. Professional development attendance records will demonstrate that 100% of staff will be trained in specific PBIS, Responsive Classroom and RP by June 2019.

The UMUES met their RP professional development training goal in 2017. 100% of staff, including custodial, administrative, clerical, health and nutritional staff completed RP 101 training. Additionally, four staff, including the principal and RP coordinator completed a four-day RP Circle training. Dr. Talaya L. Tolefree, CEO of Koinonia Leadership Academy, LLC and Ms. Alice O. Lynch, Independent RP consultant facilitated the RP trainings.

3. A school-specific implementation checklist will be developed to measure implementation of strategies and approaches.

Tolefree developed a RP implementation checklist to support and guide the UMUES through the implementation process. The implementation checklist includes alignment of school/district missions, restorative practices trainings, data collection points, communications and the development of a Restorative Practices Implementation Team (RPIT).

Minnesota Equity Education Partnership – Solutions Not Suspension Restorative Practices Pilot Objectives:

1. Support the UMUES in the implementation of schoolwide RP.

In September 2016 regularly, scheduled coaching sessions with the school-based RP coordinator and principal were established to co-develop a vision for implementing RP at the UMUES based on student, parent and teacher input. Weekly coaching sessions empowered the newly hired and trained school-based RP coordinator to practice skills acquired from recent RP trainings. Meetings with the principal helped to inform decisions regarding administrative planning to ensure successful schoolwide RP implementation.

Weekly onsite coaching and planning with RP consultants, from the People of Color Restorative Practices Collective, was integral to the early success of the RP pilot through their delivery of RP Scholar Leadership Circles. The RP consultant coaching sessions focused on supporting the implementation of weekly RP Scholar Leadership Circles and managing the administrative tasks for teachers, scholars and families. The RP Scholar Leadership Circles are designed to teach scholars leadership skills, school values, relationship/community building, creative expression and how to facilitate Circles.

Pfefferkorn provided coaching and guidance to the Principal on leading through and communicating about change, engaging teachers as leaders, involving community, managing stakeholder expectations and navigating competing interests. Pfefferkorn's experience as board member of the Dignity in Schools Campaign provides her with a unique vantage point on national trends in school discipline, best and promising practices as alternatives to suspension and a strong network of organizations across the country, doing similar work on the ground. Pfefferkorn's expertise provided the necessary support to focus on real time planning and implementation, while developing a longer-term strategy to ensure sustainability over time, beyond any one individual, role or revenue stream.

Tolefree provided weekly coaching sessions to the RP school-based coordinator and consultants and shared with site leadership critical components of implementation that require early application and adoption beginning with building out a RPIT. The UMUES RPIT is made up of teachers, staff, one parent and community members. This team serves to champion the implementation process itself, co-develop a shared vision, articulate reasonable strategies for implementation and monitor progress. Appointing this team is an important benchmark for executing the RP implementation checklist. Over the course of several months the RPIT developed a three-year RP strategic plan. The strategic plan and the RP implementation checklist will serve as guiding documents to monitor the implementation progress for years two and three of the pilot.

2. Collaborate with the school's RP district coordinator to support the six RP pilot schools.

Pfefferkorn and Tolefree met with the school district's RP coordinator throughout the year to offer support as the district coordinator was hired into a newly created role, as well as being relatively new to the work of RP. The RP district coordinator was responsible for supporting the six RP schools including site specific RP coordinators. Pilot sites were given autonomy for their implementation process. Five out of the six schools were directed to resources, guidance and support outside of MnEEP. The school-based RP coordinators for the six pilot schools had opportunity to meet monthly. The meetings were designed primarily for RP site coordinators to (1) network with each other; (2) receive support from the RP district coordinator and (3) receive RP training and support for implementation. The network meetings were helpful in gaining a better understanding of the successes and challenges facing the RP pilot schools. The network meetings may be best served as affinity groups for RP coordinators without the presence of consultants unless consultants are present to provide training or consultation on specific topics.

3. Connect the People of Color Restorative Practices Collective to the pilot.

Connecting the People of Color Restorative Practices Collective to the pilot site aligns with the UMUES's implementation goal to gain a better understanding of the fundamental principles of RP and MnEEP's goal of ensuring that RP at pilot sites reflect the students and families they serve. Members of the People of Color Restorative Practices Collective actively engaged with the school district and pilot sites directly. Although many practitioners provided training and facilitated Circles, few were directly involved in the leadership and decision making that occurred throughout the district's pilot planning and implementation process. As members of the People of Color Restorative Practices Collective, Tolefree and Lynch provided site specific RP 101 training for 100% of UMUES's staff. Additionally, four educators from the UMUES (including the RP school-based coordinator and the principal) attended a public four-day RP Circle training facilitated by Tolefree and Lynch. Over the past year, Tolefree helped the People of Color Restorative Practices Collective with planning and connecting with the RP implementation process.

Tolefree facilitated RP trainings for the UMUES's parents. The RP school-based coordinator and principal were very accessible to families throughout this process and the principal even interpreted during trainings for Spanish speaking families to demonstrate their commitment and support. The families were receptive and appreciated the UMUES inviting them to be a part of the process. Families were interested in learning more about how they could get involved with implementation at the school and were interested in further supporting their students and the teachers. Some parents wondered if RP would take away from instruction time. Families were able to name their concerns and received prompt responses and feedback regarding their questions. During the weekly RP Scholar Leadership Circles, scholars were trained in how to keep Circles as well as how to practice using school values and leadership principles in their daily lives.

Additionally, the district RP coordinator connected with other members of the Restorative Practices People of Color Collective to provide trainings, and guidance throughout this year, including participating in the planning of the new application process for the RP pilots.

Restorative Practices Pilot Year 1 Outcomes:

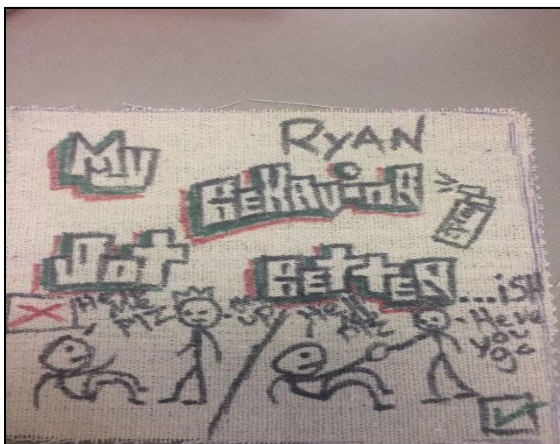
The UMUES is a mission-driven community whose mission is to develop culturally responsive leaders who are academically and socially prepared to impact change globally. This first year of RP has been vital in impacting change at the UMUES.

While RP is a paradigm shift away from punitive school practices to strength-based relationship practices, the UMUES is embracing the RP paradigm shift daily. The motto for this year was “go slow to move fast.” The UMUES values the fact that RP aligns with its mission and provides its community the framework it needs to live their mission daily.

“I have been working in _ public schools for over 30 years and I have been hoping for a change like this and it has finally come.”

As a result, the UMUES has experienced a collaborative effort among students, families, teachers, support teams, community members, building and district leadership in creating a more productive and positive school climate. One teacher said, “I have been working in _public schools for over 30 years and I have been hoping for a change like this and it has finally come.” Scholars, parents and school staff have become more relationship-focused as RP strategies and tools have equipped the UMUES community to gradually transform from the traditional approach of schooling to a restorative approach.

The UMUES decided to focus on using RP Circles this year as its main strategy for RP



implementation. Circles are a shared space for people to come together to build community and repair harm. A Circle keeper prepares the space with a meaningful centerpiece and other items that relate to those in the Circle. A Circle starts with a meaningful opening and ends with a meaningful closing. During the Circle, a talking piece is passed to each person. The talking piece is powerful as it gives each participant an opportunity to speak as well as to be heard.

When the UMUES’s custodian discovered that scholars littered the restroom, he and the RP school-based coordinator held a Circle with the scholars who made choices that did not align with UMUES’s values. Instead of the scholars being excluded from school they were held accountable for their actions, and participated in repairing the harm they caused to their school community. When asked about how the 5th Grade RP Scholar Leadership Circles helped, one 5th grade boy drew a picture of a before and after – essentially noting the paradigm shift that took place in his own thinking and behavior. He entitled it “My Behavior Got Better...ish.”

Scholars who participated in the RP Scholar Leadership Circles, led Circles to build community around common values as well as Circles to repair harm between their peers who had disagreements. Staff and community members supported students as they led the process.

The UMUES staff and students were greatly impacted by the 2016 presidential election. Many scholars were feeling vulnerable as immigrants and as undocumented families, scholars in general were concerned about their own safety and the stability of their families. Staff used this opportunity to have Talking Circles with scholars to help them begin to express and process their feelings. The principal witnessed multiple staff and students sharing with vulnerability and courage; many students felt comfortable crying and expressing their concerns with peers and teachers. This experience helped teachers to better understand the variety of ways RP can be used in schools. RP goes far beyond addressing discipline as the UMUES experienced, teachers used Talking Circles as a proactive approach for responding to the social climate.

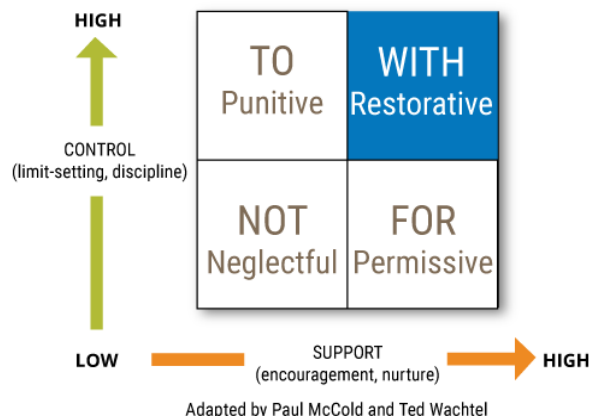
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It is important to the UMUES to implement RP with fidelity on every level. To value scholar voice about RP, the UMUES surveyed scholars to gain a better understanding of their experience with Circles. 98.4 % of pre-kindergarten to second grade scholars report that they use Circles in their classroom and 76.7% report that they have used Circles to fix a problem. 100% of third through fifth grade scholars report that they use Circles in their classrooms and 83.6% report that Circles have made their school better. Subsequently, the RP approach has already resulted in fewer discipline issues, increased class time, the development of healthier relationships, and greater willingness to take responsibility and repair harm.



Restorative Practices Implementation Successes:

The UMUES can attribute its success this year to several strategies, including using this first year of implementation to invest time in developing a better understanding of RP and how it can be



embedded in its culture. RP core objectives are to build strength-based relationships, include the voice and narratives of all and to repair harm by valuing humanity and doing things with them, rather than to them or for them. The Social Discipline Window from the International Institute of Restorative Practices provides a framework for leadership and relationship-building as it relates to the four quadrants.

According to a staff survey conducted in the spring of 2016, 100% of staff supported the

school moving forward to implement RP which afforded them the leverage of having staff and administrator buy-in at the beginning of the 2016-2017 school year. The UMUES principal supported the work administratively, participated in trainings, and provided direct services. Forming a partnership with community members and community organizations created a level of transparency and support for the UMUES's growth and development as a RP school.

As with any training or implementation, ongoing coaching is imperative for successful outcomes. The weekly onsite coaching sessions and regular access to coaching throughout this year gave the UMUES the support and confidence they needed to learn, practice and develop as a RP school. Implementing RP schoolwide is a huge undertaking. However, the development of the RPIT supported the WITH quadrant for implementation. The RPIT has specific roles to ensure fair process and equity in voice and practices. Inclusiveness is a primary goal for the RPIT as its focus is to include scholar, parent, community, educator, support staff and administrative voice and expertise for schoolwide success. RPIT members include the principal, RP school-based coordinator, school social worker, mixed grade level teachers, teacher/union steward, teaching assistant, family school liaison; and RP consultant. One of the RPIT members is a parent, during the 2017-18 school year the RPIT will focus on recruiting more parents and community members to join the team. The RPIT decided that it was important for them to gain a better understanding of RP before inviting more parents and community members to the team.

One of the core benefits of RP is that scholars, parents and school staff incorporate their personal values and voice to build community and relationships as they work together to solve problems. During the first year of RP implementation the UMUES accomplished the following goals:

- Recognized teacher voice from 2016 teacher surveys and responded to their requests to implement RP
- Developed the Restorative Practices Implementation Team
- RP School-based Coordinator, Principal and Teachers from the RPIT completed a four-day Circle training

- 100% of staff completed RP 101 Training
- Parents were trained on RP 101
- RPIT attended the International Institute for Restorative Practices Conference
- RP Scholar Leadership Circles were implemented for 5th grade students
- Community Building Circles for scholars were implemented
- Community Building Circles for staff were implemented
- Teachers used Circles to facilitate parent/teacher conferences
- Problem Solving Circles were implemented
- Circles of Support for parents were implemented
- UMUES collaborated with Educators for Excellence to host a RP Community Celebration
- UMUES provided RP resources, books, question cards and posters for educators and students
- RPIT developed a 3 Year RP strategic plan
- RPIT constructed and submitted the Year Two RP grant proposal to the district
- RPIT developed and administered student and teacher surveys

Data Collection:

The UMUES collected data to gain student and teacher voice regarding the first-year implementation of RP. The following tables show the results. Note: Student referral and discipline data will be made available upon receipt from the district.

Pre-Kindergarten – Second Grade

Survey Question	Number of Respondents	Responses
Have you used Circles in your classroom?	245	98.4 Yes and 1.6 No
Have you used a Circle to fix a problem?	193	76.7 Yes and 23.3 No
Do Circles help you learn about friends?	185	88.1% Yes and 11.9% No

Third – Fifth Grade

Survey Question	Number of Respondents	Responses
Have you used Circles in your classroom?	128	100% Yes and 0% No
Do you like Circles?	128	89.1% Yes and 10.9% No
Do Circles help you to get to know your teachers and friends better?	128	79.9% Yes and 21.1% No
Have Circles made our school better?	128	83.% Yes and 16.4% No

How Restorative Am I – Teacher Survey

(Adapted from Margaret Thorsborne and Associates, 2009)

Survey Question	Number of Respondents	Responses
Do I remain calm during the conversation?	23	17.4% Always 78.3% Usually 0% Not Often 4.3% No
Do I really listen, without interrupting?	23	4.3% Always 91.3% Usually 4.3% Not Often 0% No
Does the student understand why they are having restorative conversations?	23	26.1% Always 47.8% Usually 21.7% Not Often 4.3% No
Would the student feel I am a good listener?	23	17.4% Always 69.6% Usually 13% Not Often 0% No
Does the student understand the harm they've caused, who has been affected, and how?	23	13% Always 60.9% Usually 26.1% Not Often 0% No
Do I talk about how the incident affects me?	23	13% Always 39.1% Usually 39.1% Not Often 8.7% No
Do I take responsibility for any part I might have played when things went wrong, acknowledge it and apologize?	23	56.5% Always 34.8% Usually 8.7% Not Often 0% No
Do I consider how my relationship with the student affects our interaction?	23	65.2% Always 34.8% Usually 0% Not Often 0% No
If the student apologizes to me, do I accept the apology respectfully?	23	73.9% Always 21.7% Usually 4.3% Not Often 0% No
Do I collaborate with the student to formulate a plan?	23	30.4% Always 60.9% Usually 8.7% Not Often 0% No

Survey Question	Number of Respondents	Responses
Have I at any stage asked someone I trust to observe my practice and give me honest feedback?	23	13% Always 39.1% Usually 17.4% Not Often 30.4% No
Do I try to use all intervention strategies before I call for behavior support?	23	60.9% Always 39.1% Usually 0% Not Often 0% No
Do I seek support when issues get tricky for me?	23	43.5% Always 47.8% Usually 8.7% Not Often 0% No
Do I follow the school's system when looking for more support?	23	47.8% Always 52.2% Usually 0% Not Often 0% No
Is the relationship with the student repaired after an incident?	23	39.1% Always 60.9 % Usually 0% Not Often 0% No

Restorative Practices Scholar Leadership Circles

Focus Group Question	5 th Grade Girls Response	5 th Grade Boys Response
Do you like your RP Leadership Circle?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes, helps you express and control your feelings • Sometimes • Yes • Yes • Yes • Yes • YES! • Yes, it helps us control our feelings and speak from the heart • Most of the time • Yes • Can ask questions from our heart • Yes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • Yes, I like it a lot • Yes, cause we share how we feel • I like it • I like it a lot • I do like it • I like it • Like it • I like that we can talk to each other • I like it that we share

Focus Group Question	5 th Grade Girls Response	5 th Grade Boys Response
Has your RP Leadership Circle helped you be a better leader?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes, it helps me better control myself and show better examples • Yes, a good way to show self-control • Yes, it helps me to control myself and be a good example • Yes, it has helped me to express my feelings, taught me to be prepared for what is coming next • Yes, it helps me to express my feelings, speak from heart, learn not to be afraid • Yes, I used to have a bad attitude, the Circles have helped me to express my feelings • Yes, because it helps me to show my siblings and cousins what are the right things to do • Yes, it has helped me to learn, I can be a better example for the younger kids and my younger siblings • Yes, I learn from it • Yes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes, the last time they talked about thinking twice before doing something • Yes, we talk about how you have to have self-awareness • Yes, now I get to do more things on my own • Yes, I know how to fix problems • Sort of • Yes, it helped me a lot because he tells us a lot that we are the future leaders, the next leaders • Yes, it helped me a lot • Yes • Yes, I think twice before I act



Focus Group Question	5 th Grade Girls Response	5 th Grade Boys Response
What is the best thing you learned from the RP Leadership Circle?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To be prepared and always watch your back • Be prepared • Be prepared for everything • Be prepared. Like when 6th grade comes, are we ready for classes, for getting up early? • Be prepared for what is coming next • Be prepared, express your feelings • Express internal; and external feelings • Being prepared, showing your feelings, getting ready for what is coming next • Be prepared • Be ready for what is coming next • Be prepared for what is coming next, like 6th grade • To be prepared for what is coming next 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self- awareness and to think twice • We are the next generation the next adults the future • To be more open, to express more of what I am thinking • How to solve a problem, learn more about think that will affect my future • How to be more prepared and organized and have better behavior • About behavior • Everything • How to behave • Prepared for stuff, self - awareness • Before I was a bystander if someone was getting bullied, now I know how to express myself, use my voice also self- awareness



Focus Group Question	5 th Grade Girls Response	5 th Grade Boys Response
How can you share what you learned in your RP Leadership Circle?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Show them by being an example • Not display bad behavior • Share an activity they did with others • By showing better behavior, tell others to be ready, be prepared for what is coming next • By expressing your feelings • To show them example of how to do something 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remind others to think twice and ask what they could do different or better • Show by example • Help others that need help by sharing what I have learned • Teach others what our teacher has taught us like how to solve problems • Teach the little ones what was taught to us • Tell others about Leadership Circles • I would lead a Circle when I am our teacher's age, be a Circle keeper • Help others to get prepared for things and help them when needed • Help to tell others to get prepared • You can make a lot of friends



Focus Group Question	5 th Grade Girls Response	5 th Grade Boys Response
What do you think about your RP Leadership teacher?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ms._ is nice, has respect, gives love, teaches us good lessons to prepare us • She is nice like the other teachers here, she actually has patience • Is nice, not pressuring us • She is nice and friendly and gives respect • She is a good teacher and gives us respect • Ms._ is really nice, lots of respect, has lots of patience, she stops talking when we need to • One of my favorite teachers after Ms. _ • Best Circle teacher ever • Nice, she teaches us for next year, teach us be who we are and be us, she is caring, when we are bad, she waits for us • She is a really good teacher and a really good Circle leader, she has really good patience, she has never yelled at us. She is very kind, she is like a really, really, good Circle leader. Our lesson today was not to lie, she is basically a very good leader. • She is nice, kind and patient. We have fun in here when she is here. • She is patient, if we start talking a lot, she doesn't put us out of the Circle, she gives us chances. She doesn't make us depressed about it • Nice, kind and very patient • She comes up with many activities • She comes up with many activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nice, by giving us second chances • Is an example to us, a role model for us all to follow • A great teacher, he makes us laugh • Cool guy, teaches us stuff, and teaches us how not to give up • He is a really cool guy and awesome! • He is a nice man; cool dude and he doesn't play! • He is funny and he teaches us lots of things teaches us lessons • He is cool • He doesn't give up, he helps us where we are • Cool, awesome a leader to us

Focus Group Question	5 th Grade Girls Response	5 th Grade Boys Response
<p>What would you like other students to know about Leadership Circle?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You have to control your voice and listen when others are talking • You have to actually pay attention and not just talk • Share what we do in Leadership Circle and how you can be a good leader • Be punctual, so you will have time to do the activities • It's really fun, you can be yourself • Let them know that you could express your feelings and you can be a role model for the youngsters like we are • I would want to tell them that they could learn how to be patient and to not shout out, to respect the talking piece, sometimes they have to be flexible • Respect the talking piece • To listen and to wait their turn 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The leadership group is very helpful, you can be YOU! Teachers of leadership groups are really cool. You can make new friends and discover other things about other people. • To not waste the opportunity and be in the group because it teaches you things • Not to be scared to have things you have not told others • Not to waste this opportunity • Mr. _ is awesome, they are really lucky they don't have to be scared to share anything. • Mr. _ is a cool guy and he teaches us to be responsible and teaches us how to treat people with kindness • Don't be afraid to join • How to become leaders • To feel confident and courageous about the Circle

Restorative Practices Implementation Lessons Learned:

The UMUES demonstrated tremendous courage in launching this first year of implementation. There were several valuable lessons learned during this process.

- RP professional development should begin during the summer in preparation for the school year
- Partnership with community is a valuable support
- Weekly coaching sessions with a seasoned community RP practitioner familiar with school wide processes is integral for the implementation process
- Principal leadership and engagement for trainings and direct services is crucial to the implementation process
- Developing a RPIT is imperative for role modeling and supporting the paradigm shift towards RP
- Having a RP coordinator onsite who can focus primarily on RP implementation rather than numerous other duties
- Using the RP implementation checklist to guide the process for focus and clarity
- Implementing RP Community Building Circles for staff helped staff to strengthen their relationships as a team and reinforced the concept that RP is a way of being

Restorative Practices Implementation Opportunities for Improvement:

- Gain more clarity from the school district around the structure and expectations for implementation
- Gain more clarity from the school district around the RP stakeholders and their roles and responsibilities
- Clarify roles and responsibilities for RP School-based Coordinator immediately
- Implement regularly scheduled data reviews and collection points
- Identify RP Professional Development days prior to the start of school



Conclusion

The UMUES has made notable progress in the first year of its RP implementation. The personal values, voices and support of stakeholders created the space and opportunity for the UMUES to thrive this year. A number of factors can be attributed to the school's success. Using the Restorative Practices Engagement Circle framework (Tolefree, 2015) to guide the process ensured engagement on every level. As a first step toward transforming school-based exclusionary discipline practices into restorative practices, stakeholders must have a Growth Mindset (Growth Mindset adapted from Dweck, 2008). Stakeholders who have a Growth Mindset toward national race-based exclusionary practices that exist in the educational system, may be more likely to take proactive measures in seeking RP as an alternative to discipline. The UMUES began working on developing a race-equity lens prior to applying for the RP grant. The race conscious climate at the UMUES attributed greatly to the RP implementation process. Their race-equity work prepared the UMUES to embrace the idea of developing a Restorative Mindset – a mindset that believes that every human being is valuable enough for others to invest time into; develop strength-based relationships; possess the ability to be restored and to be supported with strategies to succeed academically, socially and emotionally. As a collective, stakeholders can use RP as a strategy to transform the educational system as indicated by the growing number of national research studies being conducted.



Restorative Practices Engagement Circle®

Dr. Talaya L. Tolefree, 2015
Growth Mindset Adapted from Dr. Carol S. Dweck

The UMUES's 2016 Teacher Survey and RP proposal demonstrated that educators and support staff are in the process of developing a Growth Mindset as educators acknowledge the inequities in exclusionary practices and desire to proactively improve their school climate by using RP. The UMUES spent this first year investing in RP and engaging students, families, community, teachers, support teams, building and district leadership in the Restorative Practices Engagement Circle framework and process. Although the UMUES acknowledges they are in the beginning stages and there is room to develop, they are proceeding with greater depth and focus with RP and race-equity in year two.