

# Commission on the School-to-Prison Pipeline and Restorative Practices

March 5, 2018 Minutes

University of Maryland Francis King Carey School of Law

## Attendees

- Gavin Patashnik – Maryland Department of Juvenile Services
- Michael Bunitsky – Maryland Association of Boards of Education
- Walter Sallee – Maryland State Department of Education
- Marla Posey-Moss – Maryland PTA
- Aimee Evan – Maryland PTA
- Rhonda Richetta – City Spring Elementary School
- Gail Sunderman – Maryland Equity Project
- Shantay McKinily – PSC
- Kimberly Humphrey – American Civil Liberties Union of Maryland
- Shamarla McCoy – Advocates for Children and Youth
- Lorig Charkoudian – Community Mediation Maryland
- Barb Sherrod – Community Conferencing Center
- Philip Leaf – Youth Leadership and Advocacy Network
- Craig Minor – Youth Leadership and Advocacy Network
- Barbara Grochal – C-DRUM
- Deb Eisenberg – C-DRUM

- I. Opening
  - a. Coming up with recommendations to talk about in Annapolis (Kirwin)
  - b. Recommendation possibilities: high quality teachers, youth engagement, more resources for at-risk students
- II. Plans for Engaging Youth Voice – Lorig Charkoudian
  - a. Event in Dorchester County on April 5<sup>th</sup>
  - b. Suggestions for what to ask students:
    - i. Experiences in and out of school
    - ii. Dealing with other governmental agencies
- III. Restorative Practices: What we Know in 2017 – Keith Hickman (IIRP)
  - a. Introduction: Now is a critical time for restorative practices. We need to focus on moving forward and to avoid segregation returning to schools.
  - b. IIRP Overview and Facts: refer to slideshow for statistics
  - c. IIRP Hypothesis
    - i. “To Model” and “For Model” of Discipline are not as effective as the “With” Model.
    - ii. Two goals:
      1. Repair Harm.
      2. Mend Relationships.
  - d. Primary Issues and Concerns
    - i. Push back against restorative practices is on the rise.

- ii. Increased punitive practices leads to worse situations for students, especially students of color or those with disabilities.
    - iii. Outcomes from punitive practices end up being an economic problem because these failed students cost society more.
    - iv. We are currently in a “DIRE” situation (see slide show for details)
    - v. Knowing what the “it” is: people instinctively know that restorative practices work, but we need to know what exactly “it” is that makes them work
- e. Positions and Arguments
  - i. Supporting:
    - 1. Moving away from criminal justice-based discipline policies in schools towards restorative practices will produce better outcomes for students
  - ii. Against:
    - 1. Restorative practices increases classroom disruptions, so it harms “well-behaved’ students
    - 2. Teacher safety is at risk.
    - 3. Can lead to more fights and violence within the restorative circles.
    - 4. Disproportionate suspension rates are because of high rates of misbehavior in black students.
  - iii. Commonalities between the Arguments
    - 1. Seeking a balance between orderly and welcoming school climates; supporting students with discipline challenges without interfering with the learning of others
    - 2. Safety
    - 3. Treating students equitably, but considering individual circumstances that influence behavior when warranted.
    - 4. Successful reintegration.
- f. Promising Outcomes
  - i. States are trending towards restorative practices.
  - ii. Success stories like Louisville, Pittsburgh, Maine, and Connecticut
  - iii. Expansion of network of practitioners; more teachers are becoming ready to use restorative practices in their classrooms
  - iv. Research-based studies (like Dr. Ann Gregory’s) all show reductions in suspensions; need more information on implementation, re-integration, and re-engagement in learning.
- g. Application of Restorative Practices
  - i. Being restorative and practicing restorative are two different, but connected, things

1. Being restorative is about culture; need adaptive leadership, not just technical leadership → this distinction makes leaders more resistant to the change
2. Restorative practice is about climate
- ii. School districts need to know their:
  1. Strategic Plan
  2. Goals
- iii. Duration and Dose: both are necessary to create change
- iv. Areas for Improvement:
  1. Working as a group to reach collective outcomes; coordinating amongst silos within a school district
  2. Dealing better with dissent and group dynamics; when group members want to do their own thing, nothing gets done
  3. Finding a consistent model to relate research to
  4. Getting stakeholder buy-in at the top so the initiative can outlast transition and change in staff at schools
  5. Building climate and culture
- v. Good Practices:
  1. Having a plan
  2. Providing support and feedback
  3. Being reflective
  4. Develop competencies, for example, empathetic communication can be developed in circles; skills need to be modeled and practiced
- h. Implementation
  - i. Difference between “letting it happen, helping it happen, and making it happen”
    1. Most people are at the “helping it happen” stage
    2. “Making it happen” requires active use of strategies to support the adoption of innovation
  - ii. SMART Implementation:
    1. Baltimore trained without a plan – wrong way to approach implementation
    2. Inputs needed include: staff time, resources, instructors, quality assurance with trainers
    3. Outputs include: professional development and coaching
  - iii. Debate over the effectiveness of putting restorative practice training in teachers’ curriculum in college
    1. IIRP offers a Master’s Course in it
    2. Issue with not all Maryland education students teaching in Maryland, but there is no harm in them bringing that information to a different state
    3. Barbara mentioned that this idea was floated in 2008 but that they needed more research

- i. Conclusion
  - i. Moving forward: putting restorative practice training in teacher curriculum in Maryland universities
- IV. Restorative Practices and the School to Prison Pipeline: Lessons from Baltimore City – Karen Webber
  - a. Statistics on Baltimore City Schools
    - i. Students are predominantly low income, students of color, and they bring their home life into the classroom in the form of anxiety, depression, ADHD, etc. and teachers are not trained to handle it
    - ii. Too many schools look like prisons and discipline in the same patterns as prisons; need to improve school climate and culture
    - iii. More detail in slides
  - b. OSI School Police Reform Support:
    - i. OSI wants police to be a part of the school community
    - ii. Chief Ham’s new vision is encouraging; new outlook on how his officers should treat students
      - 1. Two restorative practices trainers on staff
      - 2. All new officers are trained in restorative practices
    - iii. School arrests have gone down drastically
  - c. Moving forward with restorative practices in BCPS:
    - i. Goal is to become a restorative district
    - ii. Shift from punitive to restorative approaches: need to change the mindset that if a student is unpunished, they will act out again
    - iii. Best practice: working *with* the students, instead of doing things *to* them; helps the students and allows teachers to retain control
    - iv. Continuum of Restorative Practices: restorative practices are not just about circles, it’s a new way of thinking
      - 1. Methods: Small impromptu conference, affective questions, affective statements, group process, formal conference.
      - 2. Affective question: if a student is acting out, say “I worked hard on this lesson, what is happening?” Rather than telling the student what to do. This is a de-escalation technique; it doesn’t mean the teacher is giving up control
      - 3. Group Process: Schools need to address what will be done differently when a child is being reintegrated so they can be successful.
      - 4. Restorative practices become more effective as more people become comfortable with the idea
        - a. Need consistency and repetitiveness so students have context when a circle is conducted

- b. The focus should be community building, rather than discipline
    - v. Overall:
      - 1. Need more teachers and other staff trained in restorative practices to “grow the field”
      - 2. Need an increased level of trust in the process
      - 3. Need to develop a community
  - d. Plans:
    - i. 15 intensive learning sites named by the school district, with OSI funding four additional sites; will be starting with traditional public schools
    - ii. Create a “hub” school, so that other teachers and principals can see restorative practices in action and can get tips on what is and is not working
    - iii. Teachers Democracy Project is creating a library of instructional videos
    - iv. By mid-April, create a teacher manual with lesson plans for how to use restorative practices in their classrooms
    - v. Start training program for ESL teachers, special education teachers, etc.
    - vi. Ways to scale these plans city-wide and state-wide:
      - 1. Get perspectives from people in the community because every community will have different barriers
      - 2. Try to train people at the top (like central office-members, principals, etc.), then get them focused about school-wide trainings
- V. Next Steps
  - i. Next meeting on April 23<sup>rd</sup>: Department of Education and Skyping in author