



**Restorative Practices and the School to
Prison Pipeline:
Lessons from Baltimore City**

Bold Thinking Strategic Action Justice for All

OSI-BALTIMORE

2016
Impact Report

Open Society Institute-Baltimore

Most Impactful Focal Areas:

- Criminal/Juvenile Justice
- Drug Addiction Treatment
- Community Fellowships
- **Education and Youth Development**

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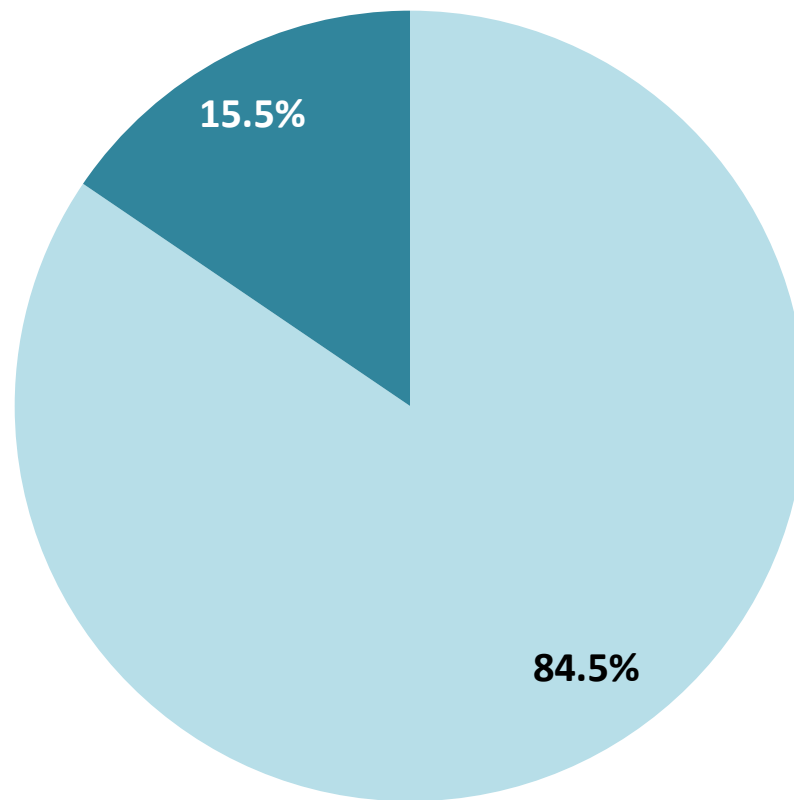
Baltimore City

Relevant Data Points

- Predominantly African American City (63%)
- Poverty level twice the national average at 24%
- Historically segregated schools and neighborhoods
- Over-policing and mass incarceration of black communities
- Criminalization of drug use and possession – especially among AAs
- Historic over-use of suspensions and expulsions in black schools = has fed the school to prison pipeline



Low Income Students: Baltimore City Public Schools



■ Low Income ■ Non-Low Income

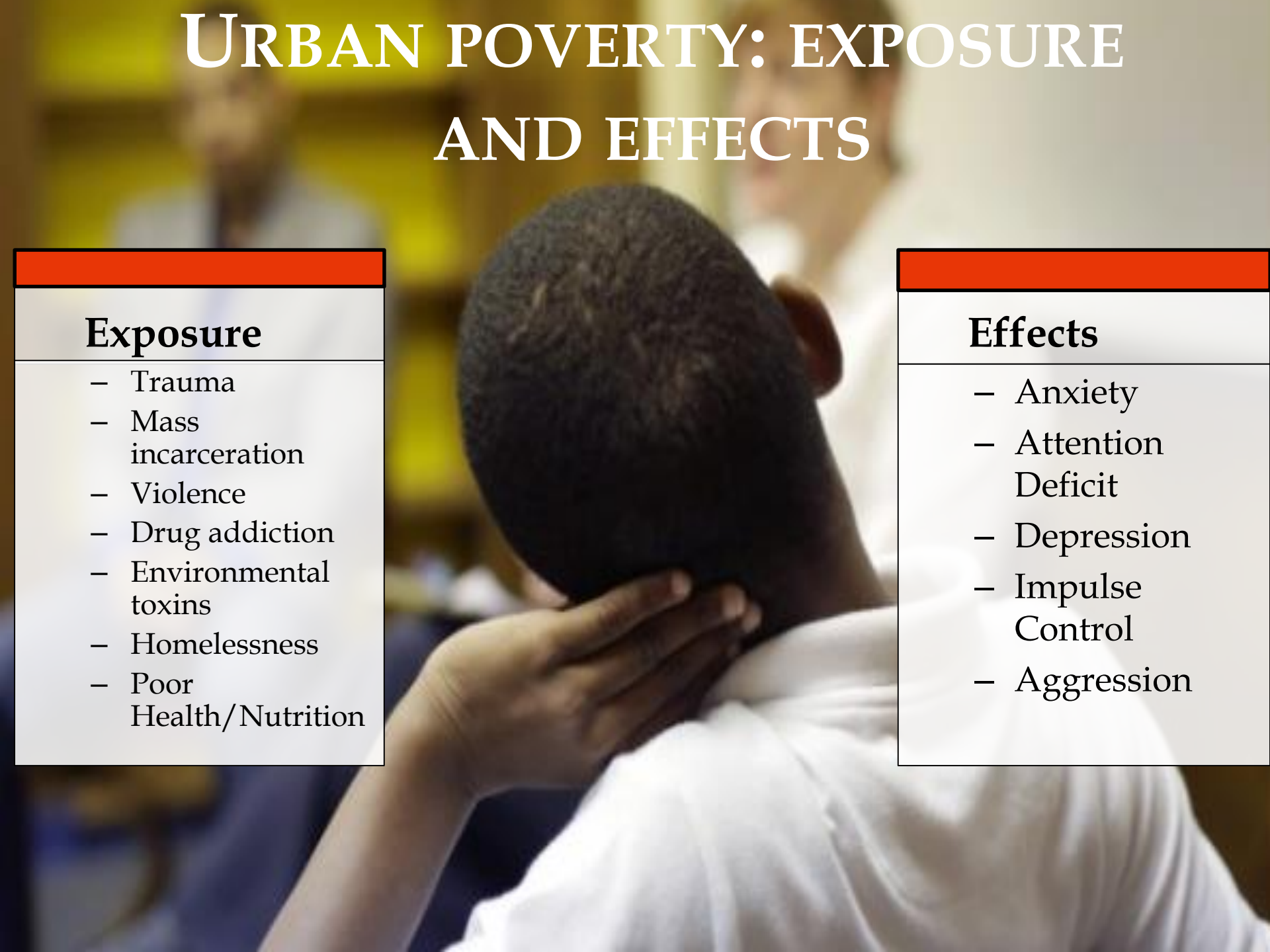
URBAN POVERTY: EXPOSURE AND EFFECTS

Exposure

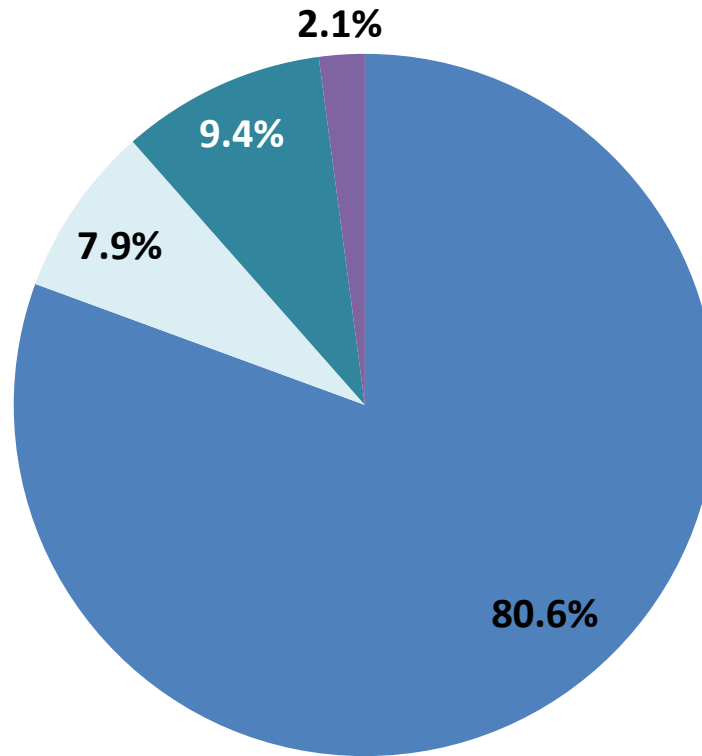
- Trauma
- Mass incarceration
- Violence
- Drug addiction
- Environmental toxins
- Homelessness
- Poor Health/Nutrition

Effects

- Anxiety
- Attention Deficit
- Depression
- Impulse Control
- Aggression



Race: Baltimore City Public Schools



- African American
- White
- Hispanic/Latino

Influence of Race on Punishment in American Education

Racial Threat:

- Correlation between racial composition of student body and severity of discipline.
- Majority Black Schools = Harsh Discipline.

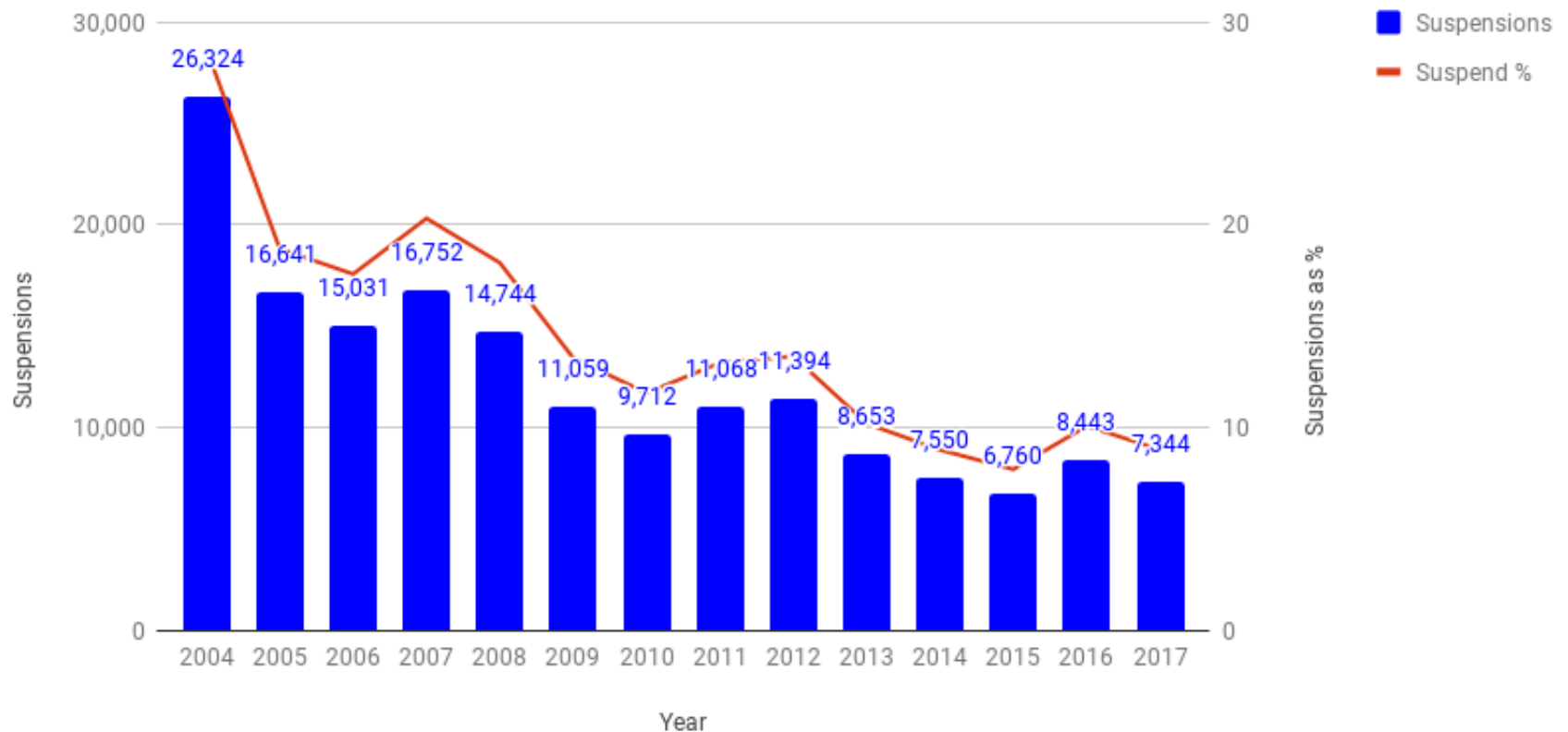
What does it look like in schools?

- Police in schools
- Metal detectors at entrances
- Walkie-talkies
- Overly punitive discipline
- Suspension/Expulsion



Suspensions = Push Out

Baltimore City Suspensions



Height of exclusion - 29% of student body suspended!

Reducing the School to Prison Pipeline in Baltimore City



Coalition to Reform School Discipline

- Impactful Advocacy and Legislative Reform
 - Advocacy to reform Baltimore City Schools codes of conduct as well as MSDE Discipline Guidance (OSI)
 - Education and public outreach to describe the School to Prison Pipeline
 - Reformed Baltimore City School Board Discipline Policy to include restorative language
 - Advocacy for School Police reform and creation of School Board Policy
 - K-2 Suspension Ban: prohibiting suspensions and expulsions in Pre-K – 2nd with specific exceptions
 - Advocacy for legislation to create School to Prison Pipeline and RP Commission

OSI School Police Reform Support

- Advocating for the appropriate leadership
- Partnering with School Police Chief to provide relevant, youth-related training
- Focused on Restorative Practices training for School Police
- Support for the CRSD and School Climate Collaborative



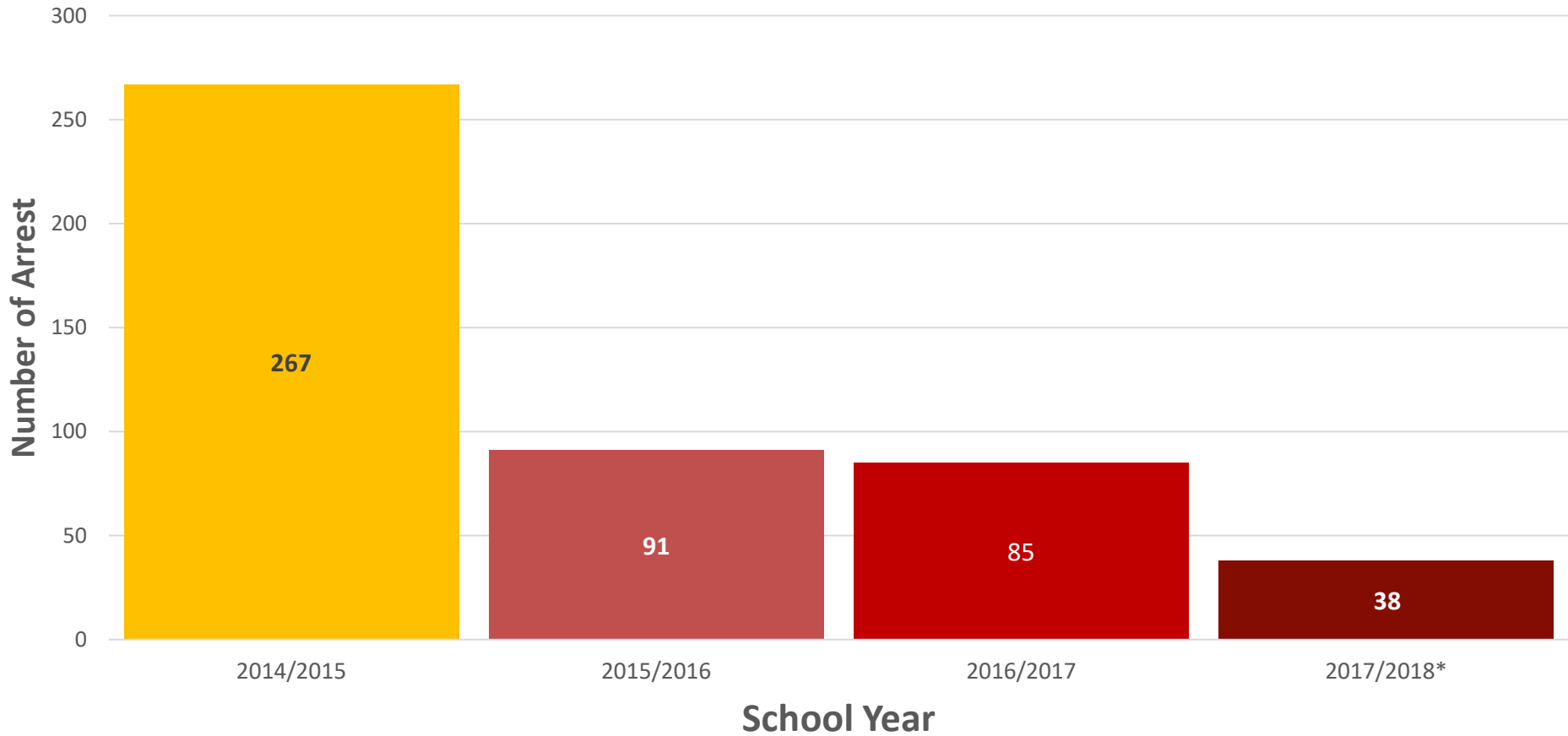
School Police Reform and Restorative Practices

- All School Police assigned to 37 school campuses have been trained in restorative practices.
- They also have two restorative practices trainers on staff.
- They have also received training on de-escalation; mindfulness; LGBTQ, students with disabilities, trauma and drug addiction awareness training.



School Police Arrest Data

Baltimore City School Arrests By School Year



Restorative Practices in Baltimore City Schools



Becoming a Restorative District

1997

The Practice Comes
to Baltimore

1997

Early Schoolwide
Programs

2007

A Focus on
School Climate

2012

School System
Pilot

2013

Training Increases
Systemwide

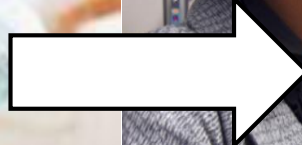
2015

Schoolwide Use
Grows

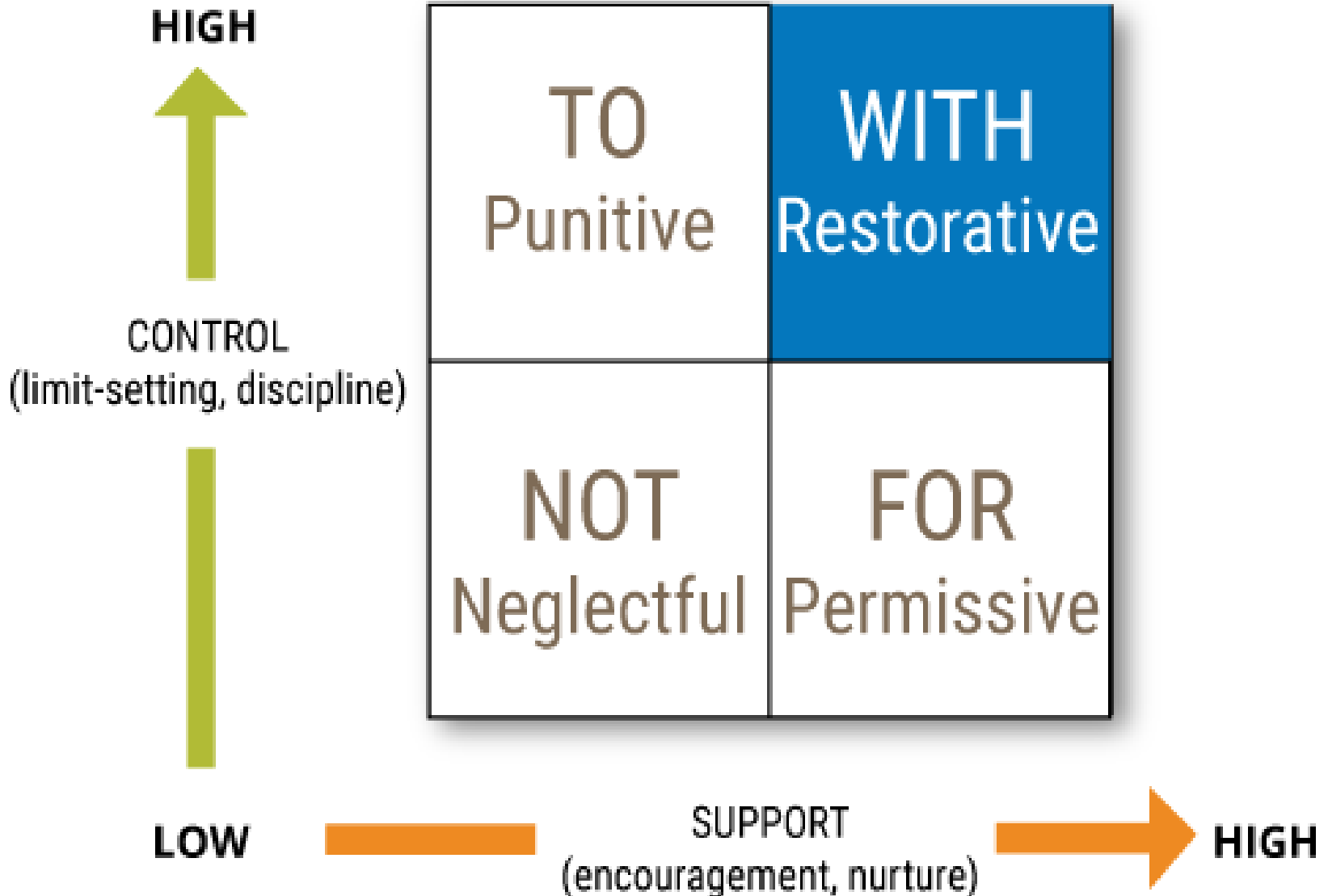
2016

2020 →

Shifting from Punitive to Restorative Approaches



SOCIAL DISCIPLINE WINDOW



Adapted by Paul McCold and Ted Wachtel

RESTORATIVE PRACTICES CONTINUUM

informal

formal




affective
statements


affective
questions


small impromptu
conference


group
process


formal
conference



Restorative Practices Overview



Build
Community



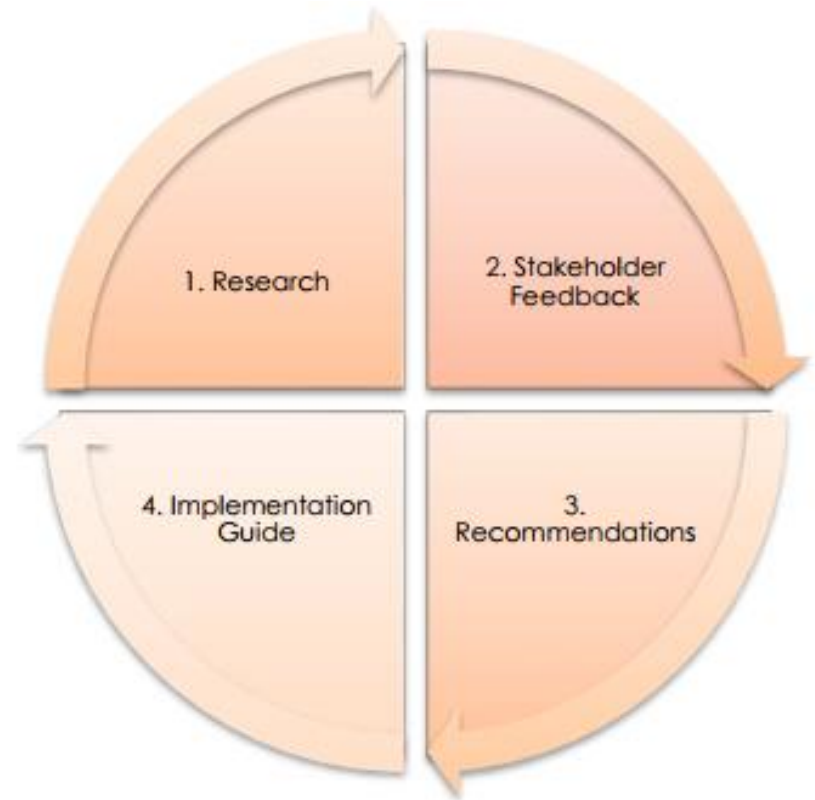
Enhance
Instruction



Resolve
Conflict

What Was Done?

- Intensive multi-level advocacy
- Focus groups/presentations
- Strategic central office trainings
- Practitioner Institute
- Drafted strategic plan and implementation guide



Research

- Research considers a whole-school approach most effective
- School Wide Prevention Practices:
 - Increased levels of trust, empathy and respect within schools (Morrison & Vaandering, 2012)
 - More positive school climates (Jain, Bassey, Brown, & Kalra, 2014)
- Managing Targeted Difficulties:
 - Reduction in of out of school suspensions, larger decreases occur when continuous training exists (Stinchcomb, Bazemore, & Reistenburg, 2006)
 - Narrowing of the black/white suspension gap (Gonzalez, 2015)
 - Decreased classroom behavioral disruptions (Jain et al., 2014)
- Intense Interventions:
 - Increased connection to wrap-around services (Jain et al., 2014)
 - Increased progress monitoring (Jain et al., 2014)

School-Based Impacts of Restorative Practices

- RP's impact on school discipline:
 - 84% drop in out-of-school suspensions (*Armour, 2013*)
 - 52% drop in violent acts (*Lewis, 2009*)
 - 57% drop in discipline referrals (*Ristenberg, 2003*)
- RP improves teacher and student perceptions of:
 - the school environment (*Mirsky, 2007; Mirsky & Wachtel, 2007*)
 - student connectedness (*McMorris et al., 2013*)
 - student self-efficacy (*Jain, Bassegy, Brown, & Kalra, 2014*)

City Springs Elementary/Middle

- Highest concentration of low income students in the district (99%)
- An 88% drop in suspensions after one year of RP - low rates have remained constant over 10 year period – despite dramatic growth
- Went from school of last resort – to a school in high demand with a waiting list
 - 94% student growth



Moving Forward



- 15 intensive learning sites + additional OSI supported sites
- Creation of an RP hub school
- Instructional videos
- Creation of a teacher lesson plan manual
- RP Institutes for community members and partners, summer 2018



Questions?

Research Recommendations

1. Implement whole school approaches. A whole school approach establishes common values and norms, promotes a sense of belonging to the school community and builds trusting relationships, leaving fewer students in crisis.
2. Take necessary measures to achieve student buy-in and participation in restorative practices. This influences their trust and relationship with those implementing the practice.
3. Schools implementing restorative practices should build in on-going coaching and support for teachers. Additional interventions and professional developments such as those focusing on cultural sensitivities should be incorporated into trainings to reduce racial and ethnic disparities.
4. Baltimore City Schools should continue to adopt a disciplinary code that includes restorative practices. The district should also commit to substantial professional development in how to interpret discipline policies and protocols, restorative practices, and related relationship-building approaches.

Research Recommendations Cont.

5. “Welcome Circles” should be used following sustained absence, such as incarceration or suspensions (Oakland Unified School District’s approach).
6. Shifting the attitudes and sensibilities of school personnel may take one to three years and the deep shift to a restorative oriented school climate may require three to five years. Baltimore City Schools should operate under this timeline.
7. School and district leaders need to communicate a strong vision and commitment to restorative practices.
8. Administrators and educators should conduct readiness assessments to develop a theory of change and timeline for implementation.
9. Schools should have at least one trained staff member to act as a restorative practices coordinator and trainer to offer ongoing training and support.
10. Schools should leverage community resources (e.g. local non-profits focused on community building and youth engagement) to ease the burdens of implementation.

Positive and Inclusive School Climates Make a Difference

Proven Benefits:

- Improved Student achievement
- Improved Graduation rates
- Reduced suspensions
- Increased attendance



“School climate is not a kid question – kids are just showing the chaos the adults are modeling.” (Community Member)

References and Resources

- **Restorative Practices in Schools:**
 - International Institute for Restorative Practices: <https://www.iirp.edu/>
 - www.Osibaltimore.org/restorativepractices
 - http://law.ubalt.edu/centers/cfcc/publications/CFCC_Sum16_Vol17_Web.pdf
 - <https://www.iirp.edu/eforum-archive/4363-restorative-practices-in-schools-research-reveals-power-of-restorative-approach-part-i>
- **School Climate:**
 - Durham, R. E., Bettencourt, A., & Connolly, F. (2014). Measuring School Climate: Using Existing Data Tools on Climate and Effectiveness to Inform School Organizational Health . *Baltimore Research Education Consortium- Johns Hopkins University*.
 - Shindler, J., Jones, A., Williams, A. D., Taylor, C., & Cadenas, H. (2009). Exploring Below the Surface: School Climate Assessment and Improvement as the Key to Bridging the Achievement Gap. *Alliance for the Study of School Climate- CSU*.
- **School to Prison Pipeline:**
 - <http://www.justicepolicy.org/mobile/news/8775>
- **Zero Tolerance:**
 - <https://www.justice4all.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/A-Generation-Later-What-Weve-Learned-about-Zero-Tolerance-in-Schools-Copy.pdf>
 - <http://www.newsobserver.com/opinion/op-ed/article95801302.html>
- **Suspension and Racial Discipline Gap:**
 - Payne, A. A., & Welch, K. (2013). Restorative Justice in Schools: The Influence of Race on Restorative Discipline. *Youth & Society* , 1-26.
 - <https://daily.jstor.org/school-suspensions-racial-discipline-gap/>
 - <http://www.baltimoresun.com/news/maryland/education/bs-md-ci-school-suspension-increase-20161031-story.html>
- **Urban Schools that Work**
 - Reeves, D. B. (2003). High Performance in High Poverty Schools: 90/90/90 and Beyond. *Center for Performance Assessment*.
- **Mindfulness:**
 - Seaman, A. (2015). School-based mindfulness training may reduce stress, trauma. *Reuters*.
- **Baltimore:**
 - <https://qz.com/393128/white-flight-decimated-baltimore-businesses-long-before-rioters-showed-up/>
- **Additional Resources**
 - https://books.google.com/books/about/The_New_Jim_Crow.html?id=_SKbzXqmawoC
 - <https://www.law.umaryland.edu/programs/cdrum/mcstpprp/readings.html>

Video References

- Restorative Circles: <https://vimeo.com/205263529>
- Second Chances: School Profiles: <https://vimeo.com/125481122>
- Principal on eight years of restorative practices: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bqyqNZq4gas>
- The Transformation of West Philadelphia High School: a story of hope: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HatS11lu PM>
- Restorative Welcome and Re-entry Circle: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uSJ2GPiptvc>
- Les Pràctiques Restauratives (Restorative Practices in Spain): <https://vimeo.com/66637863>
- Practicing mindfulness at Patterson High School and Coleman Elementary School: <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/show/faced-outsized-stresses-baltimore-students-learn-take-deep-breath>

Restorative Practices Timeline

- **1990's** Community Conferencing comes to Baltimore (Lauren Abramson ,OSI Fellow)
- **Mid-2000's** Baltimore Curriculum Project began RP in several schools (City Springs, Hampstead Hill)
- **2011** Office of Student Support and Safety begins initiative on school climate
- School climate trainings commence **2012/2013**; Community Conferencing Center and IIRP are presenters, school climate tools develop

Restorative Practices Timeline, Cont.

- **2013** Office of Intervention and Prevention pilot RP in several schools and the initiative continues to date
- **2014** City Springs pilots RP and mindfulness
- **2015** OSI and school partners form school climate collaborative and begin strong advocacy for BCPSS to become a restorative practices district
- **2016** City Schools School Board and CEO declare restorative practices district
- **2017** RP Report is Developed, City Schools Releases Blueprint Highlighting RP
- **2018** Intensive School Sites Launch