

Piloting Restorative Justice in Middle School

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Background of Study

Importance of Restorative Justice

To address the high number of referrals
and suspensions

Disproportionality

To build community



Purpose of Study

- 1) To deepen understanding of the dynamics of implementing equity policies and change in schools, and
- 2) to identify challenges and possible lessons for policymakers and school leaders for future efforts to design, implement and institutionalize change that benefits students.

Theoretical Framework: Restorative Justice

Philosophical approach to wrong-doing

Rooted in diverse cultures (Native American, Maori) and Religion (Judaism, Buddhism)

Respect as RJ's core underlying value

Theoretical Framework

Restorative Justice Environment

Prevention of infractions

Emphasizes an ethos of care and
social and emotional learning



Methods



Longitudinal Case study

Methods

Population and Sample: School and District Administrators

Methods

Data collection: Interviews, observations, focus groups

Methods

Data Analysis: Apriori and inductive coding

Findings

1) Vision and careful planning



Findings

2) Common definition of RJ practices by participants



Findings

3) Starting restorative circles with students in most need

Tier II of MTSS



Findings

4) RJ circles as community building practices that allow students equal voice



Findings

5) Divergent purposes, goals, and hopes

“The Ed Specialist was disappointed after an RJ circle because she did not get to teach skills to kids.”

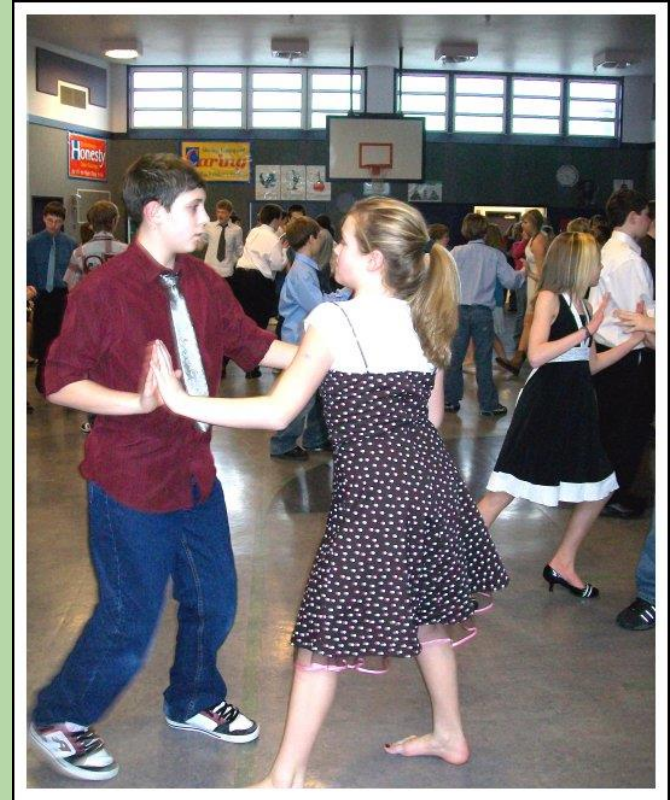
“The AP wanted to see a drop in referrals.”



Findings

6) Barriers and challenges

“The principal and I do the chacha.”



Discussion

These practices provided space for the “frequent fliers” to be included in the community, to feel supported by peers and adults, and to have a say on what matters to them.



Conclusions

Despite success and observable changes in students, barriers and challenges continue in implementing these practices.



Conclusions



Healthy environments are paramount for student learning and developing a sense of belonging in the school

Our research continues

We are in the third year of the study

Michael Bailey's dissertation will focus on student perspectives

