



International Institute  
for Restorative Practices



# Whole-School Change Program Overview



# BUILD POSITIVE SCHOOL CLIMATE

Whole-School Change (formerly SaferSanerSchools) is a K–12 program of the International Institute for Restorative Practices (IIRP) to teach school administrators, educators, counselors and support staff how to explicitly build positive school climate and culture using restorative practices — the science of relationships and community.

The program has been implemented in schools across the U.S. from urban to rural areas. It is a multi-year program that teaches all staff to implement restorative practices with courage and competency.

Data show the program is most effective when school and district administrators work alongside faculty and staff to learn restorative practices and champion the effort.

Each school or district implementing Whole-School Change begins by developing a comprehensive service plan with an experienced IIRP team. Baseline data, including school suspension and discipline figures along with climate and culture reports, are used to target professional development needs and focus deeper level coaching throughout the program.





# POSITIVE OUTCOMES BEGIN SOON AFTER IMPLEMENTATION BEGINS

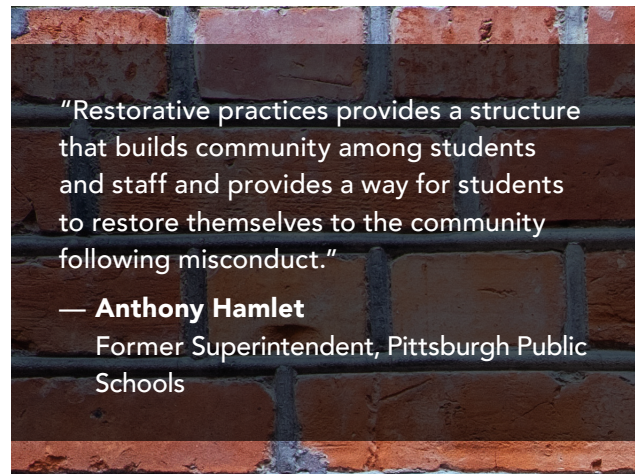
Our program takes a proactive and preventative approach to improving the quality and character of school life by focusing on relationships. Evidence shows that when students are positively connected to their school and teachers, they achieve better outcomes.

## THE IIRP WORKS WITH STAFF TO DEVELOP THEIR PROFESSIONAL CAPACITY TO ACHIEVE THE FOLLOWING OUTCOMES:

- Deepen knowledge of restorative practices and associated professional competencies
- Develop competencies through practice and relationship building
- Recognize the attitude that students are capable of growing and changing
- Be inspired and motivated to practice and continue learning
- Increase awareness of self and others in the school community

## FOR MEMBERS OF THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY, OUTCOMES INCLUDE:

- Improved relationships between school-based staff and students
- Improved student to student relationships
- Improved work climate and employee engagement
- Improved relationships between school-based staff and families



## STUDENT BENEFITS OF POSITIVE SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE

When a school community consistently and sustainably implements restorative practices, a stable, positive school climate develops with the following potential benefits for ALL students:

- Lower suspension and expulsion rates<sup>1</sup>
- Reduced discipline disproportionality for marginalized students<sup>2</sup>
- Increased positive youth development and social-emotional learning<sup>3</sup>
- Stronger sense of school connectedness<sup>4</sup>
- Improved student well-being<sup>5</sup>
- Improved behavior and absenteeism<sup>6</sup>
- Increased academic achievement<sup>7</sup>

1. Augustine, C. H., Engberg, J., Grimm, G. E., Lee, E. Wang, E. L., Christianson, K., & Joseph, A. J. (2018). *Can restorative practices improve school climate and curb suspensions? An evaluation of the impact of restorative practices in a mid-sized urban school district*. Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation. Retrieved from [https://www.rand.org/pubs/research\\_reports/RR2840.html](https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR2840.html)
2. Gregory, A., Clawson, K., Davis, A., & Gerewitz, J. (2014). The promise of restorative practices to transform teacher-student relationships and achieve equity in school discipline. *Journal of Educational and Psychological Consultation*, 26(4), 325-353. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10474412.2014.929950>
3. Kehoe, M., Bourke-Taylor, H., & Broderick, D. (2018). Developing student social skills using restorative practices: A new framework called H.E.A.R.T. *Social Psychology of Education*, 21(1), 189-207. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11218-017-9402-1>
4. Acosta, J., Chinman, M., Ebener, P., Malone, P. S., Phillips, A., & Wilks, A. (2019). Understanding the relationship between perceived school climate and bullying: A mediator analysis. *Journal of School Violence*, 18(2), 200-215. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15388220.2018.1453820>
5. Kutsyuruba, B., Klinger, D. A., & Hussain, A. (2015). Relationships between school climate, school safety, and student achievement and well-being: A review of the literature. *Review of Education*, 3(2), 103-135. <https://doi.org/10.1002/rev3.3043>
6. Hendron, M., & Kearney, C. A. (2016). School climate and student absenteeism and internalizing and externalizing behavioral problems. *Children & Schools*, 38(2), 109-116. <https://doi.org/10.1093/cs/cdw009>
7. Daily, S. M., Mann, M. J., Kristjansson, A. L., Smith, M. L., & Zullig, K. J. (2019). School climate and academic achievement in middle and high school students. *Journal of School Health*, 89(3), 173-180. <https://doi.org/10.1111/josh.12726>

# A COMPREHENSIVE PROGRAM

Our program works with all school-based staff and ensures that all elements are in place for success. The program takes two to three years from planning to full implementation on the following approximate timeline:

## PLANNING: 3–6 MONTHS

Baseline readiness is assessed through discussions and questionnaires to gauge perceptions of the quality of relationships between faculty, students and staff. Existing policies and procedures, strategic plans and school climate data are used to develop a plan that fits the needs of the school or district to improve overall climate.

## PROGRAM LAUNCH: YEAR 1 IMPLEMENTATION

All staff first receive professional development from skilled instructors, who are also practitioners themselves. As staff begin to implement the skills learned, IIRP coaches support staff through observation and performance review and answer questions that arise. Staff also form professional learning communities (PLCs) to help foster a culture of support and ongoing professional learning.

## ANNUAL ASSESSMENT: YEAR 2 IMPLEMENTATION

At the end of Year 1, surveys may be used to assess progress made toward competency development, skill proficiency, perception of school and work climate, satisfaction with IIRP coaching and other indicators of good implementation. PLCs and coaching continue, supplemented by advanced professional development offerings throughout Year 2.

## FINAL ASSESSMENT: SUSTAINING THE PROGRAM

Post-program questionnaires for school-based staff may be used to assess culture change. Indicators include staff understanding and commitment to continue using restorative practices. The IIRP helps leaders develop a sustainability plan. Districts and schools may choose to maintain a relationship with the IIRP for additional coaching and professional development.



“Our staff has learned practical and proactive strategies to manage classroom behavior, build a positive culture and hold students accountable in a way that leads to real and lasting behavior change.”

— **Stephen Rodriguez**, Superintendent, Pottstown School District, Pennsylvania



# ALL STAFF LEARN EXPLICIT PROFESSIONAL SKILLS AND COMPETENCIES

The fundamental hypothesis of restorative practices is that people are happier, more productive and cooperative, and more likely to make positive changes when we do things with them rather than to them or for them. The essential elements and competencies taught in the Whole-School Change program help make this hypothesis a tangible reality.

## THE ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF RESTORATIVE PRACTICES

Within two years of continual implementation, staff will consistently understand and use the following essential elements of restorative practices:

- Affective Statements
- Restorative Questions
- Small Impromptu Conversations
- Proactive Circles
- Responsive Circles
- Restorative Conferences
- Fair Process
- Reintegrative Management of Shame

## KEY EDUCATIONAL COMPETENCIES

The essential elements help staff strengthen key educational competencies\* that support a restorative school climate and culture:

- Compassion — support the academic and social-emotional needs of students
- Conflict Management — quickly resolve conflicts and repair harm through a range of restorative interventions
- Courage — deal with others directly and fairly by providing honest and constructive feedback
- Integrity and Trust — engage in honest self-reflection, including vulnerability and self-awareness
- Interpersonal Skills — build positive and active relationships with students, families and colleagues
- Listening — use restorative dialogue and questions, while being an attentive, active listener, to foster student voice
- Valuing Diversity — foster a climate of inclusion, with equitable and fair treatment of all students

## INTENSIVE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT EXPERIENCES

### ALL STAFF

All staff begin by attending two one-day events:

- Restorative Practices for Educators

### SELECTED STAFF

Selected staff attend our two-day event:

- Restorative Justice Conferencing

### ADVANCED TRAININGS

We also offer advanced trainings, including:

- Putting Theory into Practice
- Restorative Responses to Adversity & Trauma
- Restorative Leadership Development: Authority with Grace
- Motivational Interviewing
- Voice, Value, and Validation: Intentional Community Building in the Workplace

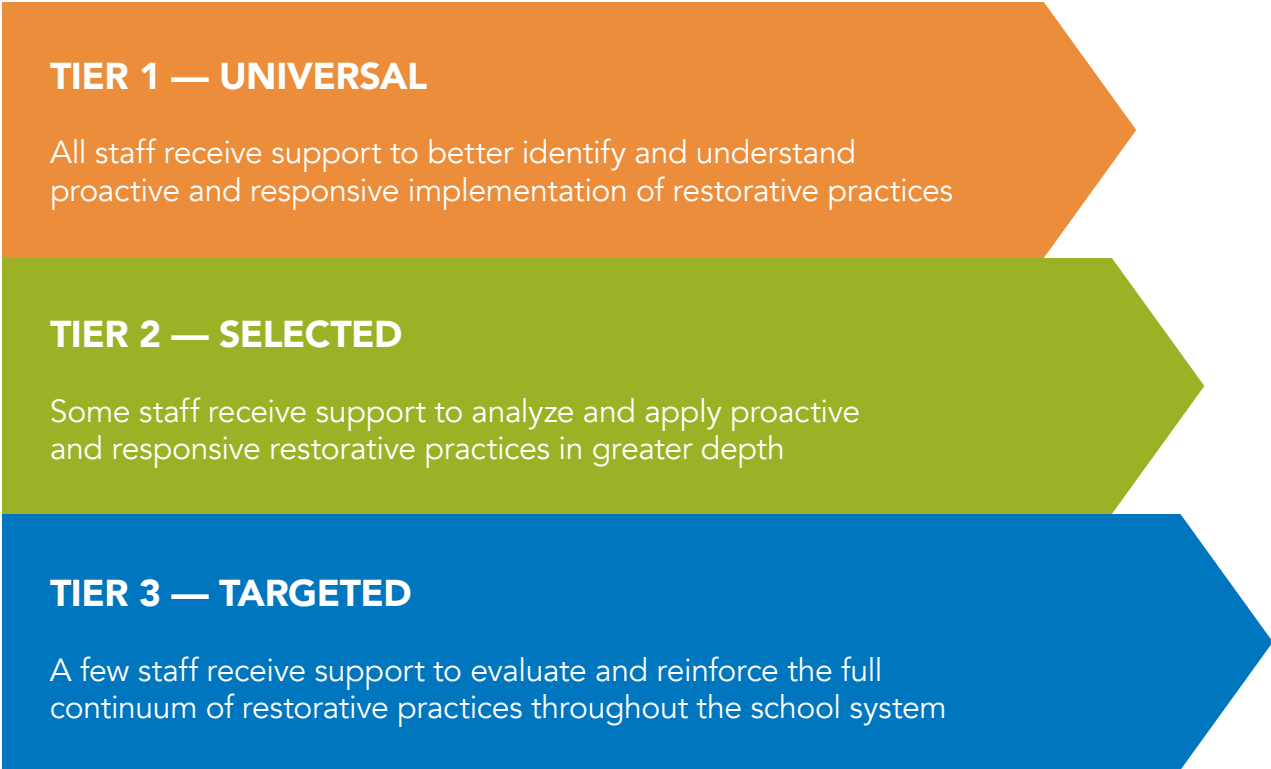
\* Selected from educational competencies compiled by Microsoft Education. <https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/education/training-and-events/education-competencies>



# A SUSTAINABLE IMPLEMENTATION MODEL

## COACHING

Our experienced IIRP coaches provide on-site learning experiences in each school according to a customized coaching plan. Each coaching day includes lesson plans with activities designed to fit within a class schedule. Our coaching model is based upon a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) framework, which differentiates staff by their roles with students.



The Whole-School Change program includes a minimum of one day of coaching per month per school site. We recommend two days per month during the first year for optimal implementation.

## PROFESSIONAL LEARNING COMMUNITIES

Restorative practices involves participatory learning. Staff will use a group learning process, supported by IIRP coaches, to share their own experiences with one another. Through feedback, staff will make restorative practices their own, suited to their environment, and establish culture change throughout the school.

## INTERNAL TRAINERS

As part of the Whole-School Change program, the IIRP provides a cost-effective way to implement and sustain the use of restorative practices in your school or district. Through our Training of Trainers events, designated members of your staff will receive additional in-depth instruction and be equipped to deliver Basic Restorative Practices professional development training.



# EVIDENCE THAT WHOLE-SCHOOL CHANGE AND RESTORATIVE PRACTICES WORK

Data and research have established restorative practices as a promising practice.

In a randomized controlled study by the RAND Corporation (2018), researchers evaluated the IIRP Whole-School Change program in a large urban school district. They found that restorative practices improved school climate, reduced student suspensions and decreased discipline disparities in Pittsburgh Public Schools. Further, the study supported the importance of developing strong leadership to positively influence school climate.<sup>1</sup>

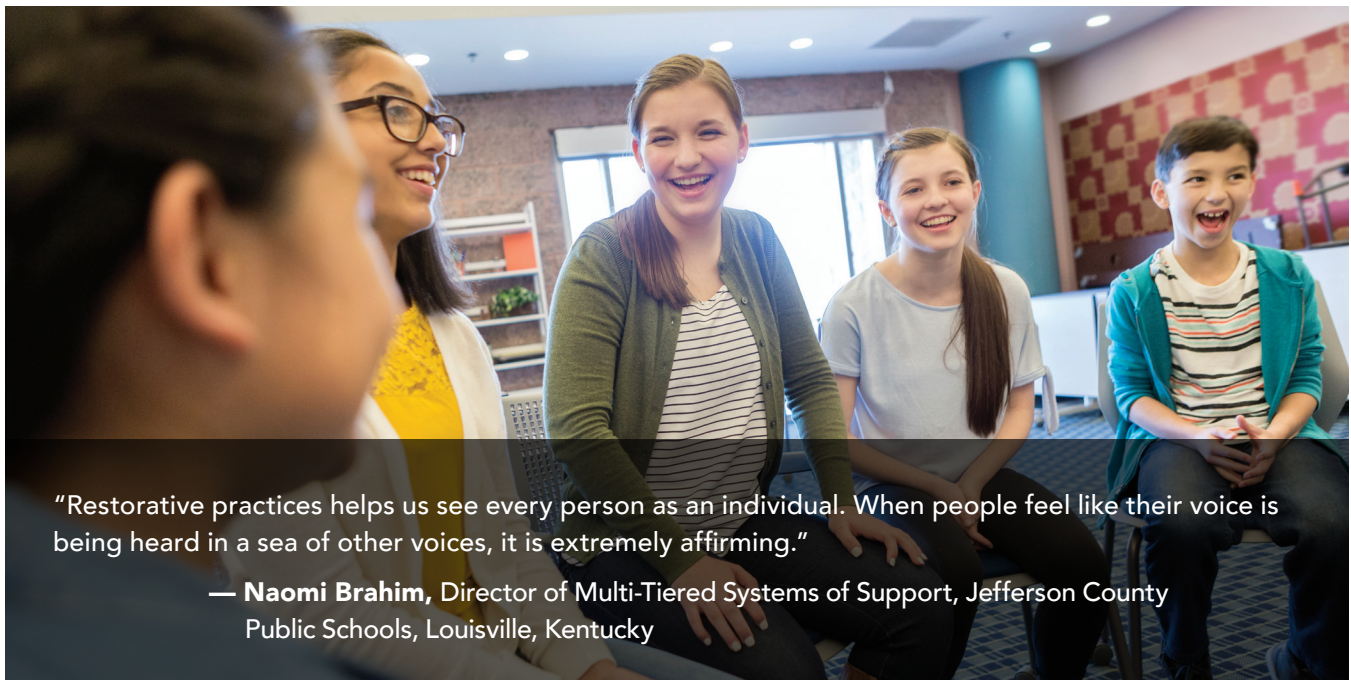
In other important studies:

- Gregory et al. (2014) at Rutgers University demonstrated that restorative practices holds promise for reducing discipline disparities.<sup>2</sup>

- A randomized controlled trial by Bonnell et al. (2018) in the UK showed that restorative practices reduced bullying and could have a public health benefit for children and young people.<sup>3</sup>

Data and surveys from countless schools and districts demonstrate positive benefits, including: reduced suspensions and expulsions; reduced overall behavior referrals; improved sense of community and safety; and reduced absenteeism for students and staff.

Further, research studies and reports show the importance of improved school climate and social-emotional learning for supporting student well-being. Numerous government and national reports recommend restorative practices to support these goals.<sup>4</sup>



“Restorative practices helps us see every person as an individual. When people feel like their voice is being heard in a sea of other voices, it is extremely affirming.”

— **Naomi Brahim**, Director of Multi-Tiered Systems of Support, Jefferson County Public Schools, Louisville, Kentucky

1. Augustine et al. (2018). See page 1 for full reference.

2. Gregory et al. (2014). See page 1 for full reference.

3. Bonell, C., Allen, E., Warren, E., McGowan, J., Bevilacqua, L., Jamal, F., ... Viner, R.M. (2018), Effects of the Learning Together intervention on bullying and aggression in English secondary schools (INCLUSIVE): A cluster randomized controlled trial. *Lancet*, 392(10163), 2452-2464. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(18\)31782-3](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(18)31782-3)

4. Visit [www.iirp.edu/schoolresources](http://www.iirp.edu/schoolresources) for additional information and links.



# QUALIFICATIONS OF THE IIRP

Since its founding in 2000, the IIRP has been coaching schools to implement restorative practices school-wide. With that foundation and recognizing the need for even deeper levels of restorative practices education, the IIRP became an accredited graduate school in 2011, offering a Master of Science degree and a Graduate Certificate. Our Whole-School Change and professional development learners have built upon their initial IIRP training experiences with graduate level offerings and further strengthened their ability to create positive change within the schools they serve.

## NATIONAL RECOGNITION AND PARTNERSHIPS

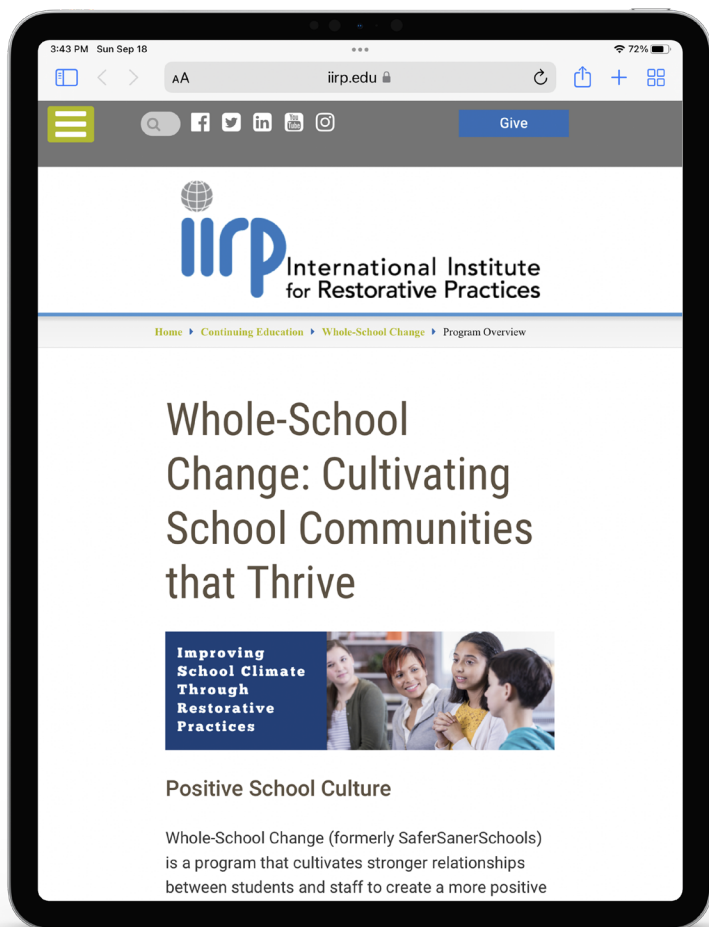
Most national education associations, agencies and membership organizations, including the National Education Association (NEA), American Federation of Teachers (AFT), National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), International Bullying Prevention Association (IBPA) and the National Association of Community and Restorative Justice (NACRJ), recognize restorative practices as a promising approach to building positive school climate.

Since 2015, the IIRP has conducted pilot projects to align best practices in K-12 with national educators in Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS), The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL), Center for Safe Schools (Olweus Bullying Prevention Program), National School Climate Center (NSCC) and Committee for Children (CFC).

## SCHOOL DISTRICTS THE IIRP HAS WORKED WITH INCLUDE:

Baltimore City Schools, MD  
Canton City Schools, OH  
Cleveland Metropolitan School District, OH  
Columbus City School District, OH  
District 49, Colorado Springs, CO  
Durham Public Schools, NC  
Fontana Unified School District, CA  
Forest Hills Public School District, MI  
Jefferson County Public Schools, KY  
Heartland Lakeside School District, WI  
Miami-Dade County Public Schools, FL  
Philadelphia Public Schools, PA  
Pinellas School District, FL  
Pittsburgh Public Schools, PA  
Wichita Public Schools, KS

We also work with public, parochial, independent and charter schools across the U.S. Call for references.



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Visit <https://www.iirp.edu/continuing-education/whole-school-change> to schedule a time to talk.