

Date: February 1, 2019

For ACTION

For INFORMATION

Board Agenda: Yes

No

FROM: Julie A. Crawford, Ed.D., Chief Student Services Officer

THROUGH: Gregory C. Hutchings, Jr. Ed.D., Superintendent of Schools

TO: The Honorable Cynthia Anderson, Chair, and
Members of the Alexandria City School Board

TOPIC: Update on Restorative Practices

SUMMARY:

ACPS utilizes Restorative Practices (RP) as a part of positive behavioral support programming within our Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS). This brief provides a review of RP and updates of RP activities for this school year.

BACKGROUND:

In an effort to support the academic, social-emotional and behavioral needs of all students, ACPS utilizes a Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS). The social-emotional and behavioral component of MTSS is also referred to as Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports (PBIS), a framework that includes consistent school-wide practices and intervention strategies to encourage positive student behavior. PBIS also serves to create and maintain positive learning environments for students and staff. Restorative Practices are a part of this framework. Restorative Practices are based on the principles of Restorative Justice that emphasize the importance of positive relationships as central to building community and involve processes that restore relationships when harm has occurred.

Restorative Practices utilize Community Circles as a Tier 1 practice to build strong positive relationships among all students and staff. Community Circles also teach and model pro-social skills like sharing, listening, empathizing and problem solving which help to create emotionally and physically safe learning environments through respect, trust and accountability. This social skills instruction is aligned with the schoolwide expectations promoted by PBIS and the student competencies put forth by the ASCA National School Counseling Model.

Restorative Circles are a support used to respond to wrongdoing, conflicts or problems by allowing those affected by the behavior to share their perspectives on how they were impacted and thoughts on how the situation can be “made right” so the relationship(s) can be restored.

Together PBIS and RP practices help to build an inclusive school culture which encourages connectedness among students and staff and a shared ownership of the learning environment.

A major area of focus is the training of staff and administrators who are using RP in schools; therefore, professional development occurs all school year and throughout the summer. The professional development for ACPS staff (including students, teachers, administrators and Student Support Teams) is at tiered levels: the implementation of Community Circles (Tier 1), Responsive and Restorative Circles (Tier 2) and Restorative Conferences (Tier 3). Schools implementing RP were provided with Tier 1 RP training, and individuals that completed Tier 1 RP training were provided an opportunity to complete Tier 2 RP training during the summer. Staff at Minnie Howard, George Washington, Francis C. Hammond and Jefferson-Houston, Samuel Tucker, Chance for Change, Douglas MacArthur, In-School Suspension staff, LINK Club, NVJDCS, Parent Liaisons and School Security Officers have received RP training this year. Upcoming training will be held for James K. Polk, Lyles-Crouch, Department of Parks and Recreation (follow up to 2017-18 training), MSAN students, School Resource Officers and Transportation staff. Student Services works with school administration to identify any new staff members throughout the year to provide them with RP training.

Quarterly collection and analysis of RP data will assist in ensuring that RP is being implemented with fidelity. Progress monitoring is accomplished through school climate visits, walk-throughs and reviews of data collected by surveys of students and staff. The School Climate and Culture Specialist continues to implement the logic model developed last year in collaboration with the Department of Accountability and selected school RP leaders. This is in addition to the five year Restorative Practices Implementation Plan. In accordance with the district-wide RP Implementation Plan and the RP Logic Model, we will continue to increase awareness of RP within the Alexandria community, increase and strengthen RP used within the school and school community, expand RP K-12, and engage in continuous program improvement.

A critical aspect to the implementation and expansion of RP is the alignment with the division's equity work. The team consisting of the Director of Alternative Programs and Equity, the PBIS, Cultural Competence and School Climate and Culture Coordinators collaborate regularly and use MTSS as the framework that guides culturally responsive behavior support, culturally responsive pedagogy and ways to engage students with the curriculum. When embedded with fidelity in all three tiers of the MTSS framework, RP and PBIS should be considered culturally responsive processes that create caring, student-focused learning communities and reduces disparities in responses to behavior and academic achievement.

We are excited to share that our work with RP has been recognized by the International Institute for Restorative Practices (IIRP), one of the world's leading organizations in the field of RP. Department of Student Services' staff member, Mr. Gregory Baldwin, have been featured in IIRP's, Restorative Works Magazine, and Mr. Baldwin and Ms. Tara Newtown were invited to present at the IIRP 2018 World Conference in Detroit, Michigan. Additionally, Mr. Baldwin was invited to attend Harvard University's Restorative Justice at the Intersections of Indigeneity, Spirituality, and Race Workshop. This week Mr. Baldwin and Ms. Newton were invited to present at the June conference for the National Association of Community and Restorative Justice.

RECOMMENDATION:

The Superintendent recommends that the School Board review the updated RP information in preparation for the upcoming School Board presentation in April by the Department of Student Services, Alternative Programs and Equity staff.

IMPACT:

By reviewing updated information, the School Board continues its commitment to ensuring the wellness of ACPS students by providing an inclusive and supportive environment through the use of RP.

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