



IMPROVING SCHOOL CLIMATE

EVIDENCE FROM SCHOOLS IMPLEMENTING RESTORATIVE PRACTICES

A REPORT FROM THE

INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR
RESTORATIVE PRACTICES

As the International Institute for Restorative Practices SaferSanerSchools Whole-School Change Program is launched in more and more schools across the country, we are seeing many positive results from restorative practices implementation. The research graphs in this fact sheet show that these outcomes include significant reductions in misbehavior and punitive discipline, in grades K-12. We are also seeing improved teacher-student relationships in classrooms with a high level of restorative practices implementation, and that this improvement tends to narrow the “racial-discipline gap,” a concern in schools nationwide.

What’s more, restorative practices have truly become part of the national education conversation. With the U.S. Federal Government issuing guidelines that explicitly recommend restorative practices as an alternative to harmful, racially biased zero-tolerance policies, school districts from coast to coast have incorporated these practices into their discipline principles.

And restorative practices aren’t just for discipline; they are also essential to high-quality teaching and learning. These restorative principles apply to learners of all ages and abilities: that learning builds social capital and a sense of community; that students feel connected to the group and responsible for each other’s learning; that students feel empowered to come up with their own learning activities.

Restorative practices are the focus of current research in schools nationwide: by Johns Hopkins University and Diplomas Now, supported by the Atlantic Philanthropies; and by RAND Corporation, supported by the National Institutes of Mental Health and the U.S. Department of Justice. These projects are exploring a wide range of outcomes, including restorative practices’ effects on graduation rates, social competency, academic achievement, alcohol abuse and bullying.

Learn more at:

SaferSaner Schools
Whole-School Change Through Restorative Practices
www.saferzanerschools.org

International Institute for Restorative Practices
www.iirp.edu

Improving School Climate
A publication of the International Institute for Restorative Practices
P.O. Box 229, Bethlehem, PA 18016 USA
(610) 807-9221

3 million students are suspended each year.
(Advancement Project, July 2013)

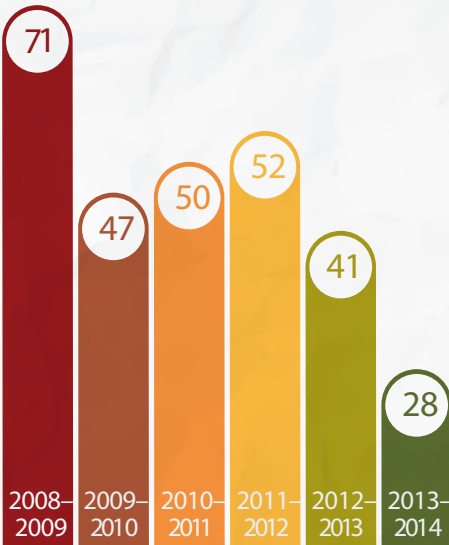


★ **IIRP** ★
**WHOLE-SCHOOL
CHANGE**

KEEPING STUDENTS IN SCHOOL WHERE THEY CAN LEARN.

1 Hampstead Hill (Pre-K–8), Baltimore, MD

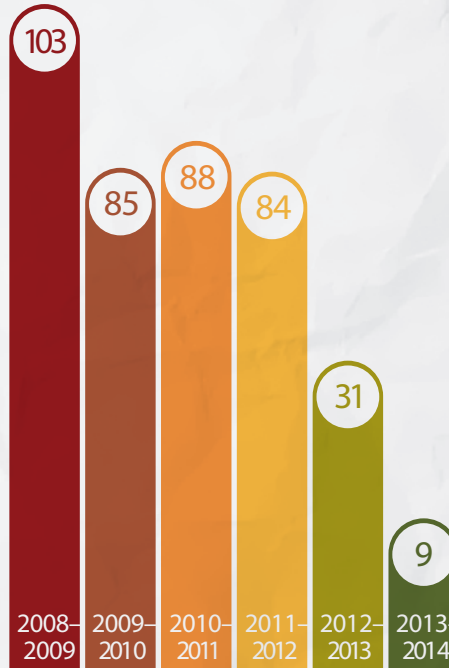
Reduced Suspensions



61%

Overall decrease from 2008

Reduced Office Referrals



91%

Overall decrease from 2008

2 Freedom High School, Bethlehem, PA

69%

Reduced Serious Infractions

2010–2011: 29
2012–2013: 9

64%

Reduced Number of Students with Multiple Suspensions

2010–2011: 330
2012–2013: 120

3 Glenmount School (K–8), Baltimore, MD

67%

Reduced Suspensions

2012–2013: 76
2013–2014: 25

77%

Reduced Number of Students with Multiple Suspensions

2012–2013: 13
2013–2014: 3

CHANGING BEHAVIORS

The restorative environment at CSF Buxmont (IIRP model schools for at-risk youth) enhances the effectiveness of Aggression Replacement Training®, a cognitive-behavioral intervention program. Outcomes data compiled by the EPISCenter at Penn State University, collected from 67 at-risk youth at CSF Buxmont who completed the Aggression Replacement Training® program from January 2012 through April 2014, showed higher rates of reductions in aggression and cognitive distortions, as well as improvements in social skills, when compared with that of youth at other Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD)-funded Aggression Replacement Training® sites.

26%

Reduced Aggression

11 pts higher than average outcomes

20%

Improved Social Skills

4 pts higher than average outcomes

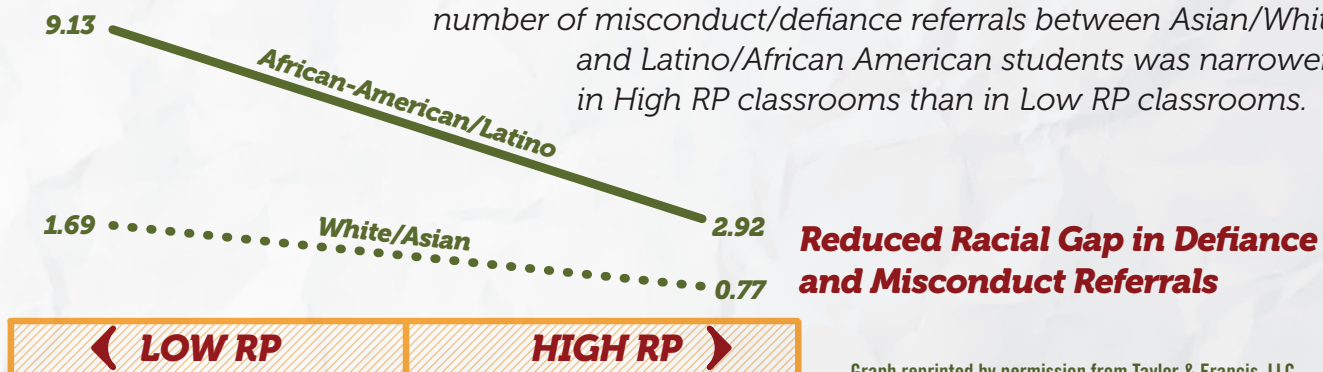
NARROWING THE RACIAL GAP

- African-American students are 3 times more likely to be suspended than white students.
- Just 1 suspension doubles a student's risk of dropping out.

(Advancement Project, July 2013)

Restorative practices offer the promise to transform teacher-student relationships and achieve equity in school discipline, thereby narrowing the racial discipline gap, according to a study led by Anne Gregory of Rutgers University. Classrooms with a high level of restorative practices implementation (High RP) had fewer disciplinary referrals for defiance and misconduct compared to classrooms with a low level of implementation (Low RP), over the 2011–2012 school year.

In addition, as shown in the graph below, the gap in the average number of misconduct/defiance referrals between Asian/White and Latino/African American students was narrower in High RP classrooms than in Low RP classrooms.



NEW SCHOOL POLICIES

Coast to coast, more and more districts are adopting restorative policies.

The U.S. Federal Government issued new guidelines recommending that schools revise their discipline policies to move away from zero tolerance policies, which exclude large numbers of students with suspensions and expulsions, often for minor infractions. Instead the guidelines recommend the use of methods such as restorative practices, which foster positive school climates.

