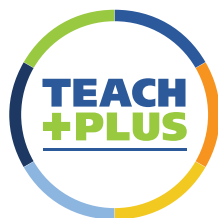


Insights Into the Successes and Shortcomings of Chicago's Restorative Approach in Public and Charter K-8 Schools



INTRODUCTION

Over the last decade, education leaders across America have sought to increase school safety without using suspensions and police referrals, working to reduce the number of disciplinary approaches that remove students from schools.¹ New policies and legislation continue to expand as compelling and well-publicized studies connect these practices directly to student harm, including increased likelihood for school dropout and involvement with the juvenile justice system.²

In 2015, the Illinois Senate passed Bill 100 in response to zero-tolerance discipline policies that disproportionately harmed Black and Brown students, with the intent to implement a system that more appropriately met the needs of the vastly diverse group of students in our state by reducing punitive, exclusionary discipline measures. In 2017, a team of Teach Plus Policy Fellows examined the impact of Senate Bill 100 on schools across Illinois. They found that across Illinois, there was “broad compliance with the bill’s provisions” but often that “systems and supports” necessary to implement the bill effectively were lacking in schools.³

It has been five years since the passing of Senate Bill 100. We are a team of Illinois Teach Plus Policy Fellows and Chicago teachers examining how the implementation of this bill has impacted school culture and climate—defined as the “heart and soul of the school”—in both charter and public elementary schools in Chicago.⁴ Chicago elementary schools typically serve students in kindergarten through 8th grade. Through studying publicly available data and conducting focus groups with teachers across Chicago, we looked at how teacher training and awareness of the tiers of restorative practices ultimately impact school learning environments, which correlate directly with student learning outcomes.

The undeniable impact of COVID-19 is that teachers and students alike have reimagined the notion of “school.” It is more important now than ever to leverage restorative practices to rebuild classroom environments and welcome students who may have experienced trauma during extended school closures. In this brief, we share findings from our research and provide recommendations for ways to better support Chicago’s teachers to appropriately and holistically implement restorative practices with fidelity across the city—potentially leading to more supportive learning environments in more Chicago schools. By prioritizing the successful implementation of restorative practices through adequate training and a teacher-driven professional learning community approach, we will be able to equip teachers to support complex student needs and build and sustain positive school climates.

Findings

1. Students and teachers at a majority of Chicago schools report feeling less safe in 2019 than in 2016.
2. While teachers feel confident in implementing Tier I strategies—those revolving around community building within the school—they believe they are ill-equipped to handle situations that require more intensive behavioral intervention.
3. Teachers want adequate training but the restorative practices training is inconsistent citywide.

Recommendations

1. Establish Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) to support schools with implementation and training around restorative practices.
2. Provide high-quality, differentiated training protocols that all school staff receive citywide, including consistent, ongoing training programs with opportunities for authentic practice and reflection.
3. Improve restorative practice usage among school staff by implementing accountability measures for network and school leaders.

METHODOLOGY

We began our research with analyzing publicly available comprehensive survey reports, termed the 5Essentials (5E) for how both teacher and student feelings of safety at school have changed from 2016 (one year prior to the implementation of SB100 in 2017) to 2019 for 422 charter and public elementary schools across Chicago. To further expand upon and contextualize our data, we conducted focus groups to provide teachers with a platform to share their experiences of school discipline in recent years. We sought to:

1. Determine how restorative practices are implemented in schools;
2. Gain insight into teacher training and professional development around restorative practices; and
3. Examine how the implementation of restorative practices affects overall school culture, including both teacher and student feelings of safety.

Based on the 5E survey results, schools in Chicago are given a rating (very strong, strong, neutral, weak, or very weak) in each area. UChicago Lab research shows that schools that present a “strong” rating or higher in at least three of the five “essentials” are ten times more likely to improve student learning than schools that are “weak” in three or more areas of the five “essentials.”⁵ We specifically examined how metrics for student and teacher feelings of safety have changed since 2016 to examine the impact that restorative practices have had on school climates across Chicago.

Following the examination of this data and to elicit information about their experiences with restorative practices, we facilitated focus groups across Chicago in the Spring of 2020 with 48 elementary and middle school (kindergarten through 8th grade) educators. Focus group respondents answered nine questions⁶ to identify what restorative practices look like in their own classrooms/schools and ways in which these practices can be implemented more consistently and effectively across Chicago schools.

In our focus groups:

- + 85 percent of respondents work in a public district school; 15 percent work in a public charter school; 58 percent were elementary (grades K-5) educators, 29 percent were middle school educators (grades 6-8), and 13 percent of respondents held positions within a school-based staff role.
- + The average years of teaching experience was 11 years, ranging from 1 year to 34 years of experience.
- + There were 29 Chicago schools represented in this study.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Racialized Inequities in School Discipline Across America

The US Department of Education Office for Civil Rights released a report in 2014 documenting the differential impact of school discipline practices across America.⁷ This report showed that Black students were three times more likely to be suspended or expelled than white students, and the difference was even greater for Black female students, who were six times more likely to be suspended than their white peers. These findings supported guidance in a “Dear Colleague” letter of the same year on “how to identify, avoid, and remedy discriminatory discipline to... [provide] all students with equal educational opportunities.” The letter also indicated that districts found to have differential impact in their school discipline policies would be subject to investigation and correction by the Office of Civil Rights.⁸ Schools were discouraged from using law enforcement to address low-level behavior offenses at school, which has become a flashpoint for conservative legislators.⁹

Even prior to the “Dear Colleague” letter, districts had begun incorporating restorative practice (RP) or restorative justice (RJ), a subset of RP. In Oakland, CA, restorative practices had shown improvements to the number Black and Brown students receiving harmful exclusionary treatment for behavior.¹⁰ In 2007, suspension rates for Black students were 10 times that of white students. Seven years later, after Oakland’s restorative discipline measures were expanded to 36 of their schools, suspensions had declined significantly: Black students suspended for disruption/willful defiance decreased by 40 percent, from 1,050 to 630, or 420 fewer suspensions.¹¹ Early research into restorative discipline seemed promising. Developers of these programs described how its strategies to mediate student conflicts had benefits, such as decreased suspension rates and fewer missed days of school.¹² Some early adopters even claimed that student achievement improved following implementation of restorative practices in schools.¹³ But the studies showing these improved learning outcomes for groups of students tended to be limited and tracked students who participated in the program without comparing them to students outside of the programs. Ongoing studies continue to try to prove that restorative justice programs are positively affecting schools’ culture and climate with limited success.¹⁴

Paving the Way to Change in Illinois

SB100, which was signed into law in August 2015 and became effective the following school year, limited the conditions under which districts could suspend and expel students. Proponents of SB100 hoped that its impact would be far reaching and transformative, as the bill put an end to zero-tolerance discipline policies. Will Davis, the chief sponsor of SB 100 in the Illinois House, stated that “For Illinois, SB100 represents a step forward that allows schools to maintain control, while providing guidelines for schools to follow so that our students remain in school and on track to graduate. For far too long, the issue of overusing suspensions and expulsions has devastated the most vulnerable in our communities but today Illinois became a leader with SB100 serving as a common sense solution.”¹⁵ Like many other districts across the country, Chicago Public Schools (CPS) had zero-tolerance discipline policies that required long out-of-school suspensions for a variety of offenses. District officials eventually connected these policies to lower student achievement rates and an increase in a young person’s probability of dropping out and becoming involved with the criminal justice system, and replaced zero-tolerance with restorative discipline policies.¹⁶

Chicago Schools Respond

Chicago Public Schools, both individually and as a system, had begun working to revise its discipline approaches even prior to the Dear Colleague Letter and SB100. Individual public schools began adopting restorative approaches to discipline as early as the 1990s.¹⁷ In 2012, the district adopted a revised Student Code of Conduct to focus on the social emotional wellbeing of its students; a CPS press release noted that out-of-school suspensions were reduced by 76 percent and expulsions by 59 percent.¹⁸ In 2018, CPS proposed progressive revisions to the school code of conduct to promote equity and strengthen student safety holistically to “[build] on the district’s policies and cultural shift toward restorative practices to address inequities in discipline... and continue [to shift] focus on fostering positive learning environments.”¹⁹

Understanding Restorative Practice in CPS

Restorative practices are not new to Chicago schools; their pedagogical roots come from a much older tradition of restorative justice and, originally, from indigenous peoples who used similar practices to mediate and reconcile. Through this process, offenders were asked to accept responsibility for harm and make restitution with victims. Similarly, restorative practices are culturally responsive and developed from a philosophical belief in mutual respect, relationship-building, and relationship-repairing.²⁰ Restorative discipline, philosophically and in practice, emphasizes building relationships with and amongst students, belonging over exclusion, and reflective accountability over punishment and control.

Responding to the holistic needs of the child, restorative practice in schools is broken down into three tiers. In Tier I, the focus is on building an inclusive and culturally responsive whole-school environment, laying the groundwork for collective responsibility and respect. If students demonstrate more significant need, Tier II follows, emphasizing conflict resolution through peace circle discussions to repair any harm shared between all parties. Finally, Tier III, the most intensive intervention, will follow when only the most serious incidents of harm or conflict have occurred, and supports individual students to promote collective healing when they reenter the school community following a suspension.²¹

Following SB100 and a nationwide trend to embrace restorative practices across districts, and as more schools across Chicago incorporate restorative discipline practices into their discipline policies, it is essential to understand how these changes are working at both system, school, and individual level, as well as consider what additional supports and investments are needed for teachers to ensure the success of these drastically needed, but substantial and complex disciplinary reforms citywide.

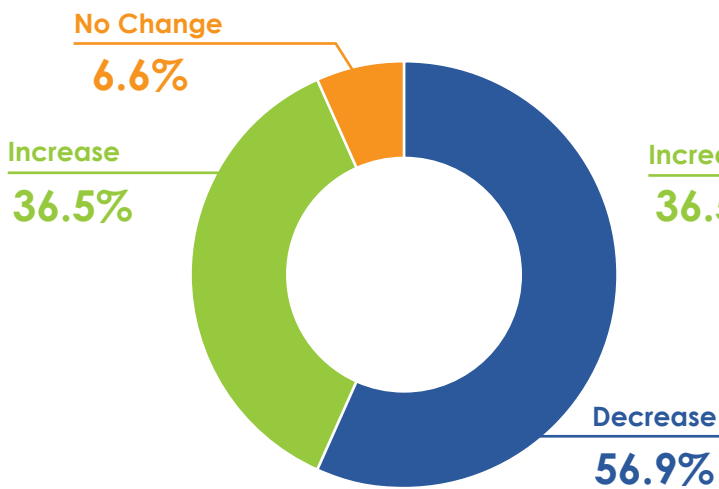
FINDINGS

1. Students and teachers at a majority of Chicago schools report feeling less safe today than in 2016.

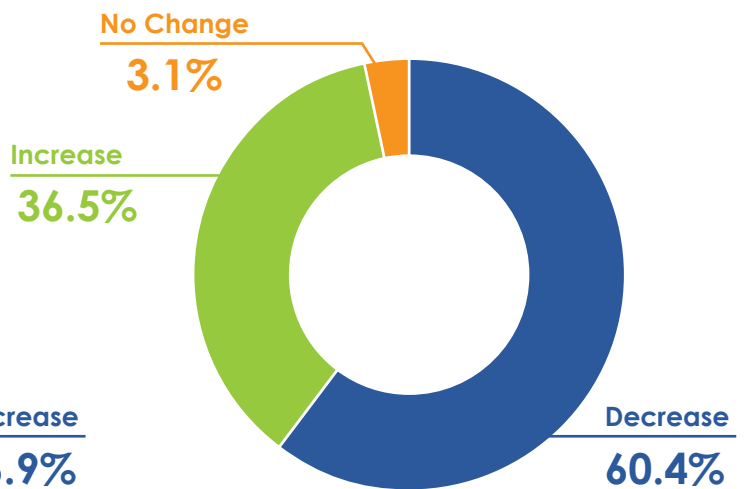
Each year, students in grades 4-8 take the 5Essentials Survey developed by UChicago Lab subsidiary of the University of Chicago. We examined the publicly available data specifically related to teacher and student feelings of safety for every Chicago public and charter elementary school, 422 schools in all, comparing perceptions of safety in 2016, the year before SB100 was implemented, with 2019. For students, we used the supplemental “School Safety” measure which is a rating comprised of students’ level of agreement with several statements, (i.e. “I worry about crime and violence at school”, “I get teased or picked on,” “I feel threatened or bullied”). For teachers, we used the supplemental “Teacher Safety” measure, in which teachers rank the extent to which they consider a variety of problems to have impacted their school including “disorder in the hallways, physical conflict among students, vandalism, robbery or theft, and threats of violence against teachers.”²²

At 57 percent of Chicago’s elementary schools, students reported feeling less safe in 2019 than they did in 2016. By contrast, at 36 percent of Chicago’s elementary schools, students felt more safe than in 2016. Teacher perceptions of safety followed a similar pattern. At 60 percent of Chicago’s elementary schools, teachers reported feeling less safe in 2019 than they did in 2016. By contrast, at 36 percent of elementary schools, teachers reported feeling more safe. This alarming data indicates that limiting suspensions and expulsions is not necessarily leading to improved learning environments in Chicago schools.²³

Student Perception of Safety at School from 2016-2019



Teacher Perception of Safety at School from 2016-2019



Recognizing that there are many factors that influence these teacher and student safety metrics, we see that these measures include a wide array of components related to the school climate and culture. Restorative practices, with the intent of holistically meeting students' needs by determining root causes of behaviors and how to repair harm when it occurs, can have a significant impact on the learning environment and feelings of safety within school buildings. This alarming trend in decreasing feelings of safety in school buildings is an indicator that students' needs are not being appropriately met in order to create productive learning environments across Chicago.

2. While teachers feel confident in implementing Tier I strategies—those revolving around community building within the school—they believe they are ill-equipped to handle situations that require more intensive behavioral intervention.

CPS developed a comprehensive 148-page handbook that articulates how to successfully implement restorative practices and includes best practices across multiple tiers of support.²⁴ We asked focus group participants to look at how the toolkit divides the practices amongst the tiers to try to understand where they feel they are successful in implementing restorative practices and why, as well as where they need additional support.

A majority of focus group participants reported that they had no knowledge of this CPS restorative practices handbook. With such a detailed plan, it is unclear why the implementation is so inconsistent. As one CPS teacher stated, *“at the central level, Network level, and school level ... we all need to be held to the same expectations and be accountable.”*

Furthermore, the majority of respondents stated that they feel confident implementing the first tier of restorative practices (particularly talking circles), but there is a breakdown in the later tiers. A 1st grade teacher at CPS put it simply: *“I think we do a great job until a student needs to move to a higher tier.”* A middle school teacher at a Chicago charter school said: *“we have a well-built-out MTSS system for behavior, with supports for all tiers, although Tiers I and II are more fully engaged than Tier III.”*

With a lack of clear implementation of Tiers II and III, Chicago teachers are struggling to find the “logical consequences” needed when student misbehavior reaches more “extreme levels,” as stated by a 5th-6th grade teacher in CPS: *“I see a lot of confusion in relation to restorative practices. What warrants a detention or discipline according to the student code of conduct?”* A CPS diverse learner teacher stated that, *“there is no support after the teacher has exhausted their resources. We are lacking in the tier III.”* Without the structure of Tier II--and especially Tier III--support, Chicago teachers are left unable to address major behavioral issues, consequently leading to feeling uneasy about the safety at their school site. This is particularly evident among teachers who feel that their administrators believe that student misbehavior can be solved with “just a discussion with the classroom teacher,” as a 1st grade CPS teacher stated. When the onus is placed on teachers without the physical presence of support staff or appropriate time for intervention, behaviors escalate or go unaddressed.

3. Teachers want adequate training but the restorative practices training is inconsistent citywide.

With teachers reporting feeling less confident in the implementation of tier II and tier III restorative practices per the CPS handbook, we asked focus group participants to speak to the training systems within their schools. When asked if they had received adequate training in restorative practices, responses varied. Forty-five percent of respondents did not feel they were adequately trained, while 29.5 percent thought they were adequately trained, and 27.5 percent were neutral. This shows the inconsistency in training among the teachers in our focus groups.

Responses also varied on how often restorative practices trainings are offered or provided to school staff. Some focus group participants shared that they have not received any formal training on restorative practices. A Chicago Public Schools 6th-8th grade ELA and social studies teacher stated, *"I have no idea what a restorative justice system looks like at our school. We discussed behaviors that are handled by teachers and behaviors that should be handled by the office. Other than that, we have received no training or coaching around this as a school."*

Other respondents shared that they have received limited training or some training. These teachers reported receiving training on professional development days, during teacher-institute week at the beginning of the school year, or sporadically throughout the year. There was a general consensus among respondents that they needed more training beyond the initial professional development, and training needed to be ongoing throughout the year. A CPS 5th grade diverse learner

teacher stated, *"We have had teacher-led restorative practices and culturally responsive teaching professional development (which have been great), but it would be wonderful if we could have ongoing, more in-depth professional development. I would love to have time and space to be able to unpack 'critical moments/incidents' that have happened with students, and do reflection in community with other teachers about implementation of restorative practices."* Respondents believe that trainings should be held regularly for all staff members.

"I would love to have time and space to be able to unpack 'critical moments/incidents' that have happened with students, and do reflection in community with other teachers about implementation of restorative practices."

In each focus group, there was a recurrent idea that adequate and ongoing training would support cohesive, consistent schoolwide expectations and the usage of common strategies. A CPS 3rd grade teacher stated that *"we need to have continuous training (even if it's just a fifteen minute update/reminder) to keep everyone involved and practicing and building those skills,"* which would help to improve a school's culture and climate.

Respondents across the board reported that their understanding of restorative practices is limited, and although the relationship-focused practices have increased the sense of community, they are unsure of how to connect the practices to the disciplinary process when necessary. Beyond the attributes listed as "Tier I" that all students receive, teachers felt that the next steps in school discipline were unclear, particularly when more significant disruptive behavior arose. While Chicago teachers want to implement restorative practices as they have seen the initial positive impact, most believe that they are inadequately trained to do so beyond Tier I measures.

A CPS middle school teacher pointedly stated, *“Without adequate training in restorative practices, common language and meaning of terms, expectations and common strategies are lacking.”*

To achieve this, focus group participants repeatedly stressed the desire for more training. A middle school teacher at a Chicago charter school said, *“we had a one-day lesson for about an hour on it. I think this would need a ton more working hands on training. I’d want to see real life examples of this being [sic] using in real life experiences.”* A 5th-6th grade CPS teacher simply said that they wanted *“mandated formal restorative practices trainings for teachers multiple times a year.”*

Focus group participants expressed that the early implementation of restorative practices were encouraging, but the training stopped and teachers now feel ill-prepared to address conflict in the classroom. What could be perceived as a lack of teacher buy-in into restorative practices is simply confusion on how to implement the restorative approach where many are so used to using a punitive consequence. A 3rd-5th grade CPS teacher summed this up by saying, *“In order for staff to buy into the effective but long-term work of restorative practices, staff needs time to learn, practice, hear stories/examples, and share resources.”*

Based on the data from focus group participants, exposure to high-quality training is limited, and current training does not consistently provide teachers with adequate support to implement restorative practices in individual schools or across educational systems with confidence and efficacy. Many teachers noted considerable inconsistencies in restorative practices training across Chicago schools. A 3rd grade CPS teacher shared that she *“see[s] a lot of confusion in relation to restorative practices. What warrants a detention or discipline according to the student code of conduct?”* and another stated that there is *“no consistency on how teachers and administration respond to students violating expectations. There needs to be formal training.”*

“In order for staff to buy into the effective but long term work of restorative practices, staff needs time to learn, practice, hear stories/examples, and share resources.”

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Establish Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) to support schools with implementation and training of restorative practices.

Improving implementation and usage of restorative practices must include creating a safe environment to discuss and solve a broad range of issues schools may encounter with this shift from punitive to restorative discipline.

According to Learning Forward, PLCs help to “develop a collaborative culture with peer accountability, foster professionalism, and support transfer of the learning to practice.”²⁵ PLCs provide educators with a safe environment to “share ideas to enhance their teaching practice and create a learning environment where all students can reach their fullest potential.”²⁶ PLCs allow educators to collaborate and share best practices around restorative practice implementation and can provide school leaders with guidance and ideas. In addition, they can help with providing the regular and consistent training that teachers are seeking.

In a large district such as CPS, implementing effective PLCs at the school and network level may be the only way to effectively change teacher practice across the system. At a school level, individual schools can review and discuss implementation of restorative practices in grade level teams. CPS middle school teacher and Teach Plus Change Agent Jacklyn Scarsella, who implemented Restorative Justice PLCs within her school community, shows how PLCs can be successful. The PLCs at her school were broken into grade level bands (K-2, 3-5, 6-8) and allowed for gradual implementation of restorative practices throughout the year. Scarsella's school provided time for grade-level PLCs to collaborate to address any implementation concerns. Allotting time for regularly scheduled meetings is essential and necessary for effective school-level PLCs. Scarsella cites her school-level PLCs as the reason why her school has such strong restorative practices.²⁷ This school-level approach empowers educators to change their practice.

This work should be supported by network-led PLCs in which school level PLC facilitators could participate. In CPS, schools are grouped into 17 networks. The network system allows schools to receive support and the sharing of best practices. For example, CPS and charter schools within Network 1 would all be members of a Network 1 Restorative Practice PLC. Individual schools would send their school-level PLC facilitator or team to attend and to participate in the network-PLCs. Sessions should be held monthly for schools to share information, collaborate, and receive additional training around restorative practices. PLCs have the potential to maximize restorative practices usage by teachers and administration by empowering teachers to share best practices, ask questions, consider ideas in a safe space, and receive training. This process would also highlight teacher leaders within CPS who primarily rely on messaging from principals to inform teachers of additional learning opportunities on restorative practices. Teacher leaders would be able to take ownership of the implementation of restorative practice in grade level teams, grade bands, and school wide. This approach could have a positive effect on individual school culture and climate and on the efficacy of the implementation of restorative practice citywide.

2. Provide high-quality, differentiated training protocols that all school staff receive citywide, including consistent, ongoing training programs with opportunities for authentic practice and reflection.

Although restorative discipline usage may look different from school to school based on students' diverse behavioral needs, Chicago schools must authentically uphold their ambitious vision to maintain equity as a moral imperative and improve school climate through restorative practices, related interventions, and consideration of trauma-informed supports.²⁸ In order to do so effectively, CPS will need to develop a training protocol that simultaneously deepens the culture of buy-in and also adequately supports all members of the staff to contribute to a more effective systemwide approach. These differentiated trainings will complement the work of the PLCs, and can provide both the opportunity for ongoing, job-embedded training and the ability to include opportunity to meaningfully differentiate for staff and student needs.

Additionally, CPS should develop an addendum to their current five-year plan to ensure that everyone in each building is provided training that is high-quality, ongoing, and differentiated for the culture and climate needs of each school and includes explicit and ongoing anti-racist and anti-bias training.²⁹ This addendum

should expand upon approaches included in CPS' 2016 three-year plan to promote professional development for security officers to improve their interactions with students and mediate conflicts before fights break out.³⁰ It cannot be a singular "one size fits all" approach because restorative practices are critically dependent on responding to individual student needs, and because some schools are much farther along than others in their successful use of restorative practices. All staff must be provided with the tools to identify student needs and respond appropriately with confidence and consistency. Unlike punitive discipline which is immediate, restorative practice requires gradual work and ongoing effort tailored to the demonstrated behavioral needs of the student. It is therefore necessary to develop different citywide training protocols around the specific three-tiered intervention strategies to address specific behavioral needs within each unique school environment.

In order to determine which training protocol a school should implement to best meet the emotional and behavioral needs of their students, schools can use a variety of tools or measures. These include self-assessment rubrics provided by CPS' comprehensive Restorative Practices [Guide and Toolkit](#), schoolwide walk-through data, student and staff surveys around school culture and/or disciplinary practices, or other measures to drive more effective, targeted training to more effectively prepare teachers and staff. In addition, restorative practices require large mindset shifts for staff members, so regular training alongside ongoing PLCs, with the opportunity to practice restorative language, role-play restorative conversations, and implement circles in safe settings with room to reflect and debrief with other professionals, will be a crucial aspect of training approaches. There are many great resources within the CPS Restorative Practices Toolkit, but there must also be training and real-life, scenario-based practice in using and applying protocols in order to make the best use of this comprehensive resource. Like students, teachers learn best by doing, therefore training protocols must involve active participation in learning and practicing these measures.

CPS should also consider changing the current training model to promote teacher leaders as restorative discipline advocates. This would not only help to mitigate cost across CPS, but would also help to build and strengthen a school's culture and climate by including all staff and providing ongoing opportunities to collectively learn, reflect upon, and refine knowledge of restorative practices. This will bring CPS closer to actualizing systemwide equity and help maximize student achievement in schools that feel both safe and appropriately responsive.

3. Improve restorative practice usage among school staff by implementing accountability measures for network and school leaders.

Improving consistency in restorative practice implementation across CPS will only happen if school and network leaders are held accountable for providing evidence that teachers are trained and supported in the implementation of restorative practices and school systems are in place to effectively meet the behavioral and social emotional needs of students. Current accountability measures include ensuring a reduction in the number of suspensions in the years since SB100 was passed, but moving away from punitive discipline measures is one small piece of the complex puzzle that is school discipline reform in Chicago.

Teachers report that the implementation of restorative practices is currently based on the priorities of each individual administration, and systems of implementation



look different for every school. Implementing accountability measures for principals, network staff, and central office staff will bring restorative practices to the forefront as a priority for all schools, leading to school cultures that appropriately meet the needs of the diverse groups of learners in our city. An early childhood teacher in CPS recognized the need for consistent expectations for all stakeholders in order to create better learning environments for Chicago's students:

Moving away from punitive discipline measures is one small piece of the complex puzzle that is school discipline reform in Chicago.

"District leaders should make sure that all staff receive the same training and language for restorative practice." One CPS 3rd grade teacher acknowledged that in schools where restorative practices are implemented effectively, there are "Clear schoolwide expectations that support positive behavior." All stakeholders must be held accountable for providing training and an implementation plan of the designated three-tier system laid out by CPS if restorative practices are to be implemented consistently and effectively across our city.

Accountability at the central office level:

Members of the central office team must ensure there are personnel responsible for the implementation of restorative practices at each network level. Requiring use of an implementation rubric and evidence of restorative practice collected during the principal evaluation will aid in ensuring that network leaders are effectively monitoring the use of restorative practices in schools. Central office staff members should also regularly receive training around each of the three tiers of restorative practices to ensure they have the knowledge base to properly support network leaders.

Accountability at the network office level:

Network staff should be required to attend a training on how to evaluate the effectiveness of schoolwide implementation of restorative practices. In addition, they must gather evidence of ongoing principal and staff training in restorative practices and schoolwide systems of three-tiered restorative practice implementation as a part of principal evaluations. This could include using the restorative practices implementation rubric provided in the CPS Restorative Practices Toolkit to evaluate effectiveness of implementation at each school. Network staff then can provide appropriate interventions and resources for schools who do not show evidence of consistent training and restorative practice implementation. Network leaders would create school intervention programs with action items and training opportunities, and follow up on the progress throughout the year.

Accountability at the school level:

Principals must develop clear expectations for student and staff behaviors and restorative practices at all three tiers in the CPS model. They should be required to submit evidence of ongoing staff training, positive school culture, and school systems around effective conflict resolution as a part of principal evaluations. Other best practices could include:

- + Establishing a behavior or school climate team that analyzes school climate, discipline, and training data throughout the year.
- + Regularly surveying staff, students, and community members about school climate and school culture.

CONCLUSION

The passing of SB100 led to sweeping changes around discipline practices. The city of Chicago, in an effort to stay in compliance with SB100, made it a priority to switch from punitive to restorative discipline measures and CPS created a comprehensive Restorative Practices Toolkit. However, Chicago teachers report that there is still work to do in order to successfully shift to using restorative practices while maintaining positive, productive learning environments that appropriately meet the needs of the diverse group of learners in our city.

Chicago teachers agree that the shift from the punitive discipline to restorative practices was necessary in order to most equitably and appropriately meet the needs of our diverse school populations. To ensure that all students and staff can learn in a safe and secure environment that emphasizes healing over punishment, teachers need thorough training through teacher-led PLCs, high quality training for citywide staff, and accountability for implementation. By taking these three actions, we will ensure that students and teachers have the safe and supportive schools they need to thrive.

The implications of this shift have led to more positive school learning environments, but district leaders must recognize that there is more work to be done to ensure that teachers have the tools to effectively implement restorative practices to focus on the holistic wellbeing of our students. We are calling on the district to invest further in cultivating positive, responsive, and safe school environments by developing a city-wide plan for ensuring effective implementation of restorative practices at every school. As Teach Plus Policy Fellows, we hope to engage in preparing and implementing differentiated restorative practice protocols, accountability measures, and PLCs with district leaders to ensure success for all schools over the course of the upcoming years. We remain optimistic that in working together, we can create classrooms that not only holistically meet the needs of our students, but also will collectively and effectively build safe and equitable school cultures throughout the city.

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ENDNOTES

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³ Teach Plus Illinois (March 2018). "From Zero to SB100: Teachers' Views on Implementation of School Discipline Reform". Accessed 11/22/2019 at https://teachplus.org/sites/default/files/publication/pdf/from_zero_to_sb100- teachers views on implementation of school discipline reform final.pdf

⁴ Freiberg, H.J. & Stein, T.A. (1999) "Importance of School Climate" Accessed 3/18/2020 at <http://wh1.oet.udel.edu/pbs/school-climate/importance-of-school-climate/>

⁵ UChicago Impact Lab, "The 5Essentials" (2019). Accessed 12/15/2020 at: https://uchicagoimpact.org/sites/default/files/5EOnePager_Nov2019.pdf

⁶ Focus group questions included:

1. When you think about how your school addresses student behavior and discipline, what do you think is working and is having a positive impact on student behavior?
2. Chicago Public Schools has endorsed a model of using restorative practices and discipline in schools. To help familiarize you with these concepts, let's look at these resources (or illustrations) from the school district.
 - a. CPS Schools: To what degree is your school adopting these restorative practices and discipline models? Which elements of the tools or approaches do you see being used in your school?
 - b. Charter Schools: Has your school endorsed restorative practices for proactive and reactive discipline measures? Which elements (if any) of the tools or approaches do you see being used in your school and to what degree?
3. How confident do you feel in implementing restorative practices to address discipline issues within the classroom? (very confident, confident, neutral, not very confident, not confident at all)
4. Do you feel that your school has done an adequate job of training you and your colleagues in implementing restorative practices? If so, how, and if not, what has been lacking?
5. Where did you receive the most helpful training towards implementing restorative practices?
6. What advice do you have for school and district leaders that could help improve implementation of restorative practices in Chicago schools?

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- ¹⁷ Chicago Public Schools. (2013). "Restorative Practices." September, 2013. Accessed 5/18/2020 at <http://www.restorativeschoolstoolkit.org/sites/default/files/CPS-%20OSEL%20Restorative%20Practices%20Guidelines%202013-2014%20%281%29.pdf>
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