# High school teachers' perceptions of restorative discipline practices

By: Stacey Rainbolt, Elizabeth Sutton Fowler, and Katherine Cumings Mansfield

## Abstract:

Disproportionality in school discipline is a serious and ongoing problem. Some schools are experimenting with alternative models to address persistent inequities. This article features one high school's adoption of a restorative practices discipline program with a focus on teachers' perceptions of their experiences and the efficacy of the program. Findings indicate that restorative practices can be a powerful means to strengthen relationships and reduce the number of students receiving exclusionary consequences.

**Keywords:** school discipline | disproportionality | restorative practices | equity | justice

## Article:

In the history of the American school system, there has been persistent societal concern about discipline in educational settings (Golden, 1993; MacNaughton & Johns, 1991; Terrell, 1976; Williams, Pazey, Fall, Yates, & Roberts, 2015). In fact, these concerns go back as far as Colonial times (Crews & Counts, 1997). Disruptive student behaviors have inevitably taken away from instructional time (Dinkes, Cataldi, & Lin-Kelly, 2007) and have affected teachers' emotional and occupational well-being (Aldrup, Klusmann, Lüdtke, Göllner, & Trautwein, 2018). Moreover, negative experiences with student discipline has required a large amount of school resources, including time of teachers and administrators, and still accounts for the largest percentage of workplace stress (Cornell & Mayer, 2010).

This combination of workplace stress and community concerns has led to a proliferation of schoolwide discipline programs during the past 65 years (Maag, 2012). For example, in the 1950s, Dreikurs developed a widely used model that led with the concept of "discipline through democracy" where teachers held the power to correct student misbehavior (Maag, 2012, p. 2094). The Dreikurs model was the standard until the early 1970s brought the development and implementation of Canter's assertive discipline model, which held that a firm, assertive teacher, not an aggressive teacher, held power and maintained a stable classroom conducive to learning (Maag, 2012). While the Canter's model is still practiced in many schools, the late 1990s brought attention to schoolwide positive behavior support, most often referred to as PBIS (Maag, 2012). PBIS is a three-tiered model that works on a continuum, starting with proactive prevention

strategies and building to individualized supports as necessary (Horner, Sugai, & Vincent, 2005; Sugai & Horner, 2009).

While several models have been implemented over time in American schools, Curwin and Mendler (1989) categorized all discipline programs as either *obedience* or *responsibility* models. Obedience models center on establishing rules and consequences with Canter's assertive discipline model as an example (Maag, 2012; MacNaughton & Johns, 1991). On the other hand, responsibility models borrow from the work of William Glasser's reality therapy by focusing on teaching students how to make their own responsible choices (Maag, 2012; MacNaughton & Johns, 1991).

Relatively recently, attention has shifted to alternative discipline practices to address the problem of disproportionality; that is, the overrepresentation of particular subgroups in disciplinary referrals and exclusionary punishment, especially students of color, males, and those identified for special education services (Mansfield, Fowler, & Rainbolt, 2018; Mansfield, Rainbolt, & Fowler, 2018; DeMatthews, Carey, Olivarez, & Saeedi, 2017; Golden, 1993; Irby, 2018; Lustick, 2017; Ryan, Katsiyannis, Peterson, & Chmelar, 2007; Williams et al., 2015). For at least a decade, we have recognized that this pattern of disproportionality is liable, at least in part, to the incarceration of Black men and youth as well as former special education students (Mansfield, Fowler, & Rainbolt, 2018; Mansfield, Rainbolt, & Fowler, 2018; Lustick, 2017). In fact, even one school suspension seriously affects students' life chances, drawing further attention to the urgency of the situation (Whitford, Katsiyannis, & Counts, 2016). Williams et al.
(2015) reminded us that exclusionary discipline, while on the rise, is not only ineffective but harmful (Noltemeyer & Mcloughlin, 2010). Moreover, exclusionary discipline has not improved the safety or quality of a school's learning environment nor has it reduced misbehavior (American Psychological Association Zero Tolerance Task Force, 2008; Losen & Skiba, 2010; Skiba & Rausch, 2006). Rather, exclusionary discipline has negatively correlated with academic achievement, school climate, student behavior, and school dropout at both the individual and school levels (Williams et al., 2015).

The purpose of this research study is to address an urgent need identified by our colleagues:

> Discriminatory discipline has been widely documented for decades, yet little progress has been made to narrow the gap. Due to the long-standing history of discriminatory discipline, current nationwide data, and recent federal initiatives, there is a need for a comprehensive examination of this critical issue. (Salazar, 2016, p. 96)

In this article, we share the results of a mixed-method case study that investigated the implementation and efficacy of a restorative practices discipline program in one high school in the Mid-Atlantic States. Specifically, this article focuses on the teachers' perceptions of their implementation experiences as well as their beliefs around the efficacy of the program. We agree with Salazar (2016) "that schools can work to decrease discipline disproportionality by improving school climate and discipline practices and policies" (p. 96). And this study shows that restorative practices can do just that.

First, we share an overview of the philosophical underpinnings of the restorative approach to discipline and describe its fundamental components. Next, we outline the research methods used to conduct this study followed by a presentation of the findings. The article concludes with a discussion and areas for future research.

**Literature Review**

As indicated in the introduction, schoolwide discipline programs have garnered a fair amount attention for over half a century (Maag, 2012). The variety and intensity of discipline programs is astounding: from Dreikurs's model of the 1950s, to Canter's model of the 1970s, to PBIS of the 1990s. As student behavior in school became increasingly publicized through intensified media coverage, legislation swelled. The 1990s brought with them the birth of zero-tolerance policies across the country (Mongan & Walker, 2012; Whitford et al., 2016). The first major piece of zero-tolerance federal legislation was the *Gun Free Schools Act of 1994* (Mongan & Walker, 2012). The intent of Gun Free Schools Act of 1994 was to ensure that school campuses were free from all weapons to safeguard students from major threats and harm (Mongan & Walker, 2012). All K-12 public schools were mandated to enforce this policy in order to receive federal financial funding (Mongan & Walker, 2012).

The use of zero-tolerance policies in schools has now extended beyond the original intent of keeping campuses weapon and drug free (Cornell & Mayer, 2010). This expansion included automatic suspension and expulsions for discipline infractions that previously would have received a lesser consequence; these include the use of rubber bands as projectiles, water guns on school property, and even the imitation of shooting a gun using one's hand or fingers (American Psychological Association Zero Tolerance Task Force, 2008). With the advent of zero-tolerance policies, exclusionary practices have become a use-first consequence instead of a last resort measure (Maag, 2012; Whitford et al., 2016).

Given the negative impacts of traditional exclusionary disciplinary practices, the need for an approach that both encourages order in schools while leading to positive, inclusionary educational and personal outcomes for all students—regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, and disability status—is clear. Restorative practices, which aim to create interactive, inclusive, self-monitoring communities, hold promise for being such an approach.

Restorative Practices as a Response to Traditional Discipline

While most discipline programs center on punishment, restorative practices aim to do what the name implies: *restore*. That is, in addition to proactively preventing negative behaviors from occurring, restorative practices' intent is to restore relationships between the offended and offender when an infraction does occur (Kane et al., 2007). This means addressing misbehavior within the context of which it occurred and with the people directly involved. This is a major departure from traditional discipline where teachers send an offending student out of the classroom to the principal's office to handle the problem. The idea is that restorative practices develop student maturity by facilitating problem solving, restitution, and reconciliation (Morrison & Vaandering, 2012). In addition, this approach builds empathy and interest in others while allowing feelings of anger, fear, and humiliation to be expressed and discharged by all

parties. The fusion of accountability and social support paves the way for reconciliation and relationship building (Macready, 2009; Morrison & Vaandering, 2012).

*The SaferSanerSchools™ Model.* One structured, comprehensive model is the SaferSanerSchools Whole-School Change™ program from the International Institute for Restorative practices (IIRP) in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania (Mirsky, 2011). This program, which involves a 2-year formal implementation process, holds 11 elements at its core (IIRP, n.d.). These 11 elements can be further divided into those that are preventative and those that are responsive in nature (Gregory, Clawson, Davis, & Gerewitz, 2014). These elements are represented and defined according to these two categories in Tables 1 and 2.

**Table 1.** SaferSanerSchools™ Preventative Elements.

| Level of action | Element | Description |
|---|---|---|
| Tier 1: Schoolwide | Affective statements | Informal, respectful, personal statements of feelings, and how another's actions affect a person; humanize the speaker. |
| | Fair process | Approach to decision making that elicits student's input when outcomes affect them; not synonymous with democratic process of voting but does espouse transparency as to why decisions are made and respect for all opinions. |
| | Restorative staff community | Models restorative practices (affective statements, circles, fair process, restorative questions, etc.) to attain conflict resolution and to build healthy relationships. |
| | Fundamental hypothesis | Cornerstone of all restorative practices; necessitates aligning actions with the belief that positive behavioral changes are most likely to occur in a state of high, consistent expectations where authority figures do things with, not for or to others. |
| Tier 2: Broad-based | Restorative approach with families | Use of other restorative practices in interactions with families aimed at building transparency, respect, and meaningful relationships. |
| | Proactive circles | Precede incidents and focus on preselected topics; can be conducted with any group that meets regularly; used to build trust and relationships, elicit input from all, and to establish common expectations and sharing. Ideally, 80% or more of circles experienced by students. |

The five core elements represented in Table 2 are responsive in nature. They therefore are implemented following a behavioral issue.

The primary-level elements are practiced universally by all school personnel. Tier 2 or secondary elements are targeted to specific groups and in specific settings. These elements are aimed at repairing harmed relationships. A Tier 3 conference is the most intensive and least used response to a specific issue or pattern of issues. This tertiary action occurs only as a responsive element.

Though all staff members at a school implementing the SaferSanerSchools™ model should be knowledgeable of the core elements, not everyone participates in the activities involved at all levels of action (IIRP, n.d.). Building on Morrison and Vaandering's (2012) analogy to a health care model, the program elements practiced at the higher tiers are conducted by professionals within a school setting specially trained to lead them. Thus, Tier 2 actions are practiced by instructional personnel, administrators, and other professional staff. Tier 3 responses are conducted by those select individuals who have received specific training in the conferencing technique (IIRP, n.d.), such as administrators or pupil support personnel like school counselors and school psychologists. Regardless of the level of action an element falls under, however, three

foundational keystones are ubiquitous in each: interpersonal connection, structured and fair interaction, and inclusion of student voice (Gregory et al., 2014).

**Table 2.** SaferSanerSchools™ Responsive Elements.

| Level of action | Element | Description |
|---|---|---|
| Tier 1: Schoolwide | Restorative questions | Informal questions that allow those affected to be heard by the offender and places the onus for making things right back on the offender. |
| | Small impromptu conferences/ circles | Involve two or more people involved in low-level conflict; breaks the cycle of escalation and requires answering of restorative questions in front of each other, promoting expression of feelings and reflection on how actions affect others. |
| | Reintegrative management of shame | Anticipates that shame results when negative behaviors are addressed; actively listens and acknowledges sharing of shameful feelings and rejects negative behaviors, but not the person; does not dwell on shame once acknowledged but moves beyond. |
| Tier 2: Broad-based | Responsive circles | Conducted in a circle with no barriers; engage a group in addressing behavior that has negative effects on members and promotes responsibility for actions and making amends; opportunity to share feelings and plan for corrective measures. |
| Tier 3: Targeted | Restorative conferences | Most formal of restorative practices; held in response to a serious incident or pattern of less serious incidents; involve a facilitator, offender, victim, and often their supporters (friends and family); highly scripted, eliciting input in a set pattern from offender, victim, victim's supporters, and offender's supporters; allows expression, then facilitates solution making and reintegration of offender into the community. |

*Affective statements.* Affective statements are a primary practice used schoolwide and according to Mirsky (2011) are the practice that "underpins all of the Whole-School Change elements" (p. 4). The IIRP (n.d.) defines affective statements as "personal expressions of feeling in response to specific positive or negative behaviors of others" (p. 6). Teachers, staff, and students can use these statements to humanize themselves and to create an open and welcoming school environment (Mirsky, 2011).

*Circles.* Talking circles are a secondary practice and are used to target specific circumstances or relationships and can involve both staff and students (Mirsky, 2011). In a circle, everyone is invited to participate, but only one circle member speaks at a time, tamping down overly assertive students who may usually dominate (Mirsky, 2011).

Two basic circle types exist in the SaferSanerSchools™ model: proactive and responsive. Proactive circles build trust, relationships, and create shared values and understanding. These circles start light and build in depth (both within the specific circle time frame as well as subsequent circles over time). Examples of initial topics for a proactive circle include helping students with academic planning or setting ground rules for class expectations. Practice with proactive circles scaffolds a student's readiness for responsive circles. Responsive circles manage tension and conflict within a group or class and aim to repair damage (Mirsky, 2011). These circles are used for moderate issues or repeated behavior affecting the group (Mirsky, 2011).

*The restorative conference.* The restorative conference is a tertiary practice that is intensive in nature, being used for only the most serious of cases. According to Mirsky (2011), this practice

is the one that takes the most planning: Led by a trained facilitator, a restorative conference brings together those involved to explore what happened, who was affected, and what needs to be done to make amends. Similar to the secondary circle practice, restorative conference participants sit in a circle permitting only one person to speak at a time. Some schools establish protocol for restorative conferences led by key staff that is scripted and formal, involving student and parents, including everyone's voice, and focused on relationship building and implementing a restorative solution (McCluskey et al., 2008).

Steps to Implementation

Though examples abound of a wide spectrum of implementation practices, ranging from small-scale, partial implementation to whole school involvement, research suggests that whole school implementation is the most successful (Kane et al., 2007; Morrison & Vaandering, 2012). Whole school implementation involves the inclusion of everyone in a school, including nonteaching staff members, such as aides, monitors, and custodians (McCluskey et al., 2008). Training of these staff needs to be planned as a part of implementation.

Kane et al. (2007) suggest that a solid and detailed plan should be created to implement restorative practices to include clearly stated aims with planned strategies and measures of success. Additionally, the planning process should allow for schools to set a realistic, yet flexible timeline with clear incremental targets and milestones (Kane et al., 2007). Morrison, Blood, and Thorsborne (2005) developed a five-stage model for implementation of restorative practices in a school setting.

*Stage 1, gaining commitment*, is where the groundwork of establishing the need for change and creating buy-in and commitment occurs (Morrison et al., 2005). This initial step can be cultivated when fostering school readiness. Creating an awareness of the need for change can be done through several avenues, but data may be one of the most persuasive. Suspension and referral rates, attendance data, climate and safety surveys, and/or a review of school policy can be harnessed for this purpose. Morrison et al. (2005) strongly emphasize that the place to start is where "the energy exists" (p. 345). Once the data are shared and a need for change established, planning should not be a top-down decision, but must involve key school-level stakeholders. Restorative practice has its greatest impact when seen as a chance for faculty and staff to define the "kind of school they [want] and how they [want] to 'be' with their pupils" (McCluskey et al., 2008, p. 415).

Research shows that school leaders are crucial in *Stage 2, developing a shared vision* (Morrison et al., 2005). School leadership must help staff define a clear vision which includes short-, medium-, and long-term goals that address what the school is trying to achieve and the importance of this change for the entire school community (Morrison et al., 2005). Clear methods for delivery and measures of goal achievement also need to be established. Realistic measurable objectives can include "data (e.g., reducing suspensions or office referrals by 10%), policy (e.g., balancing prevention, intervention, and crisis management), staff development (e.g., increase support for staff struggling with discipline), and everyday practice (e.g., increasing the use of dialogue and problem-solving circles)" (Morrison et al., 2005, p. 348). These measurable objectives should be articulated to all stakeholders in the community.

*Stage 3, developing responsive and effective practice*, involves a focused effort on creating a range of responses to various situations and then implementing training for all school staff (Morrison et al., 2005). Such training is likely to be well received, as teachers "consistently [rate] behavior management as the major area for which they want more training" (Maag, 2012, p. 2096). Creating a set standard of restorative responses for the school and training all faculty members in these practices can lead to teacher empowerment when they find that they can implement these elements on their own. Conversely, writing an office referral may actually undermine a teacher's authority with students who perceive the teacher as having handed the problem off. The resulting consequence delivered by an administration can also "undercut a teacher's authority within the classroom and become a bone of contention between managers and staff" (Morrison et al., 2005, p. 349).

A school's administration can do much to support the implementation of restorative practices. Administrator's commitment, modeling, enthusiastic support, as well as investment in strong staff development have been shown to contribute to a successful restorative practices implementation (McCluskey et al., 2008). Providing training and professional development that is focused on the needs of the school site is particularly crucial (Kane et al., 2007). For instance, interest in restorative practice increased in secondary schools when training was conducted by trained peers, especially teachers within one's own department (McCluskey et al., 2008). A strong impact on staff responsiveness also occurs when a school's administration demonstrates a commitment to training and emphasizes time to review training (McCluskey et al., 2008). Administration also needs to give performance feedback to staff, as it affects the degree to which teachers implement new strategies and, therefore, may be crucial to a full and sustained implementation of restorative practice (Gregory et al., 2014). Thus, schools cannot just train at the beginning of the year. Implementation instead is an ongoing process.

*Stage 4, developing a whole-school approach*, includes aligning policy and practice within the building to restorative practices (Morrison et al., 2005). Restorative practices should be integrated into whole-school policy and should not be viewed as an add-on. Policies on student behavior will have to shift from the traditional punitive reactive model to be driven by proactive restorative practices (Morrison et al., 2005).

Polka (2007) contends that organizational change is a continual process that starts with leadership. A long-term strategic approach is necessary, but organizational progress can be slow, so identifying milestones toward preferred outcomes in the short, medium and long term is suggested (Morrison et al., 2005).

*Stage 5, developing professional relationships*, is where words and actions need to be in step.

> If schools are to develop a restorative culture, the professional working environment must also be underpinned by restorative philosophy and practice . . . this would be reflected in the structures, communications and processes that engage staff in the everyday life of school. (Morrison et al., 2005, p. 353)

Self-reflection and willingness to act on those reflections are a crucial step to Stage 5 and should include more than just teachers. Perceived failures are often pinned on teachers, when in fact many layers of implementation exist (Morrison et al., 2005). Zimmerman (2006) also proposes that in any organizational change there is often an implementation dip. Change is difficult and teachers' confidence levels may decrease initially as they try new strategies; it is critical that principals respond with the necessary feedback and reassurance and allow for continued practice to occur (Zimmerman, 2006).

**Method**

Overview of the Study

We came to the research setting as a part of a community-based research partnership with a school district in the mid-Atlantic states, Tenakomakah County Public Schools (TCPS).[1] Central office leadership shared that Algonquin High School (AHS)[2] had significantly reduced discipline gaps in terms of race/ethnicity, gender, and special education status, which caught the attention of the superintendent and school board. They were curious to know whether there were "hard data" that showed a relationship between the implementation of restorative practices and the testimonies from AHS administrators about positive change over time. Upper administration was keen to know more about the program at AHS in order to make some decisions around possibly scaling up restorative practices across the district.

***Context of the Case.*** Opened in the late 1970s, AHS has a current enrollment of approximately 1,400 students in Grades 9 to 12. The school is situated in a large metropolitan area in the Mid-Atlantic region that includes a large, urban center and several inner ring suburbs and outer rim exurbs. For the most part, concentration of economic and racial isolation is located in the central city (students of color living in poverty) and the exurbs (relatively wealthy White students). In between are the larger, more suburban areas that are quite diverse in terms of wealth, education levels, and the racial/ethnic identity of families. Particular to this region is the presence of expansive county school districts that serve families across all spectrums of economic and educational levels as well as race/ethnicity, religion, and other identity markers. As a result, AHS enrolls a diverse student body. In fact, according to the school's state report card from the 2014-2015 school year, Asian, Black, Hispanic, White, disabled, and economically disadvantaged students are all enrolled at a percentage high enough to be included in the school's aggregated data with the largest percentage of students identifying as either Black or White ([X] Department of Education, 2015).[3] The demographic of AHS teachers reflects the national trend of majority White women.

In 2008, the TCPS Code of Student Conduct stated that students and staff shared "a primary responsibility for creating a climate of mutual respect, honesty, and trust . . . in order that the dignity of the individual [was] protected" (Regulation 401.1). The outcomes imposed on students as a result of this then 20-page document did little to build this relationship between students and staff in the view of AHS's school psychologist at the time, however. He revealed that throughout

---

[1] Pseudonym
[2] Pseudonym
[3] Some references are masked to enhance anonymity.

the county, between the years of 2003 and 2006, the number of school disciplinary infractions had increased approximately 8.5%, while student enrollment went up only 3.5%. Current disciplinary practice, he concluded, was not affecting the change TCPS hoped to see for its school community. Faced with political and community pressure to increase state mandated test scores and to meet federal and state requirements for on-time graduation, he further realized that the exclusionary discipline practices of suspension and expulsion likely negatively affected these measures of student academic success.

In 2008, this realization led AHS's school psychologist to submit a written, researched proposal to the TCPS Office of Student Conduct requesting formal training in restorative practices for the staff of that office, as well as for Student Services staff. He suggested the IIRP in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, as the source of this training. Though the paper was positively received, the county did not move forward with training at that time.

Undaunted and believing in the power of restorative practices to make a change for the AHS community, the school psychologist began to have conversations with the administrative team of AHS regarding school punishments, including in-school suspension. As a result, in the fall of 2009, AHS introduced a set of restorative, reflective questions into in-school suspension. These questions had to be answered in writing by any student receiving this consequence. These written responses went to the students' administrators, who began to use them in their conversations with the offenders about their actions. This was one of the school's first steps toward restorative practices at AHS.

The school psychologists' efforts at the time were bolstered by a supportive AHS administrative team led by the principal, whom the school psychologist described as having an inherent "humanistic slant" to discipline. Together, this team was able to secure a small grant from TCPS that allowed them to bring in a restorative practices trainer from another region in the state to provide 2 days of training to a small group of staff members. The original team receiving training included administrators, school counselors, the school psychologist, and some teacher leaders. As a result, restorative conferences were officially introduced for students facing significant disciplinary consequences in the 2010-2011 school year.

***Early Implementation Results.*** As reported elsewhere (Mansfield, Fowler, & Rainbolt, 2018), the implementation of restorative practices at AHS are most likely related to the remarkable changes experienced over a 5-year period from 2010 to 2015. For example, during the first 4 years of implementation, general office referrals during one school year dropped from over 3,000 to 500. In terms of overall suspension rates, there were consistent downward trends in both in-school suspension and out-of-school suspension (OSS), dropping from 19% to 7% and 12% to 7%, respectively.

When the data were aggregated according to race/ethnicity, the situation at AHS matched the national trends with Black students suspended at much higher rates than White students. From 2010 to 2015, OSS of White students held relatively constant while the rate of OSS for Black students fell 12 percentage points (Mansfield, Fowler, & Rainbolt, 2018).

Similar to the United States as a whole, disproportionality according to gender and special education status was also skewed with most referrals and suspensions given to male students and students identified to receive special education services (Mansfield, Fowler, & Rainbolt, 2018). In addition, recidivism rates for in-school suspension and OSS were cut by two thirds and one half, respectively (Mansfield, Fowler, & Rainbolt, 2018).

While discipline gaps according to race/ethnicity, gender, and special education status were greatly reduced, gaps still remained. School administrators reported struggling with teacher turnover and the constant need to retrain teachers as new people joined the staff. For a more detailed treatment of the above early implementation efforts, refer to Mansfield, Fowler, and Rainbolt (2018).

Turning the Spotlight on Teachers

In addition to learning more about why and how restorative practices were implemented at AHS, we were also curious to learn how teachers experienced the implementation of restorative practices and their views on the efficacy of the program. Also, school administrators were hoping to learn from teachers how implementation might be improved.

To fully elicit the voice of teachers, the current 2015-2016 teacher staff of AHS was asked to complete an online survey. All teachers were invited to take the survey; therefore, the intended sample was the entire population. The findings were based on the convenience sample of those who completed the survey, which constituted just over 50% of the faculty. This survey was disseminated to all teachers electronically through central office personnel. The invitation to participate included an e-mail from the Director of Research and Evaluation for TCPS that included an explanation of the study, a link to the survey, and reassurances that responses would be kept confidential and available only to the research team. Faculty participation in the survey was entirely voluntary, and no incentive was offered for participation. As part of the research agreement with the school district, no demographics were collected in order to maintain anonymity. Thus, we are unable to report participant characteristics, such as gender and race/ethnicity.

We developed the survey which mostly consisted of responses reported on a Likert-type scale with a few multiple-choice questions, as well as some open-ended questions. Foci of the survey included how teachers are trained in restorative practices, how they currently implement this program, how they receive support for their practice, and their perceptions of restorative practices in their building. This garnered insight into the work setting, the teacher-student relationship dynamic, and illuminated this stakeholder group's perception of success. Staff members were given a 2-week window to take the optional survey.

A second e-mail reminder of the survey was sent a week after the first one. In total, the survey remained open for 2 weeks. Forty-four faculty members accessed the survey over that span. While this was deemed an acceptable level of response by the research team, the lack of response from nearly half of the staff is an acknowledged limitation of the study.

Though 44 faculty members accessed the survey, one chose to opt out of responding by answering "I do not wish to participate in this survey" to the first question. This resulted in that person exiting the survey, leaving a total of 43 faculty respondents. Additionally, some of those 43 respondents chose not to answer certain questions.

The length of tenure of the 43 survey respondents varied greatly with over 13% of the respondents ($n = 5$) indicated that this was their first year at AHS. Nine had been employed at AHS for 1 to 3 years, and two shared their employment ranged from 3 to 6 years. Importantly, 21 respondents to the faculty survey, or just under 57%, had worked at AHS for more than 6 school years. Thus, the tenure of the majority of respondents began before the implementation of restorative practices.

**Findings**

As indicated earlier, the two main purposes of the survey were to understand teachers' perceptions on the efficacy of restorative practices as well as learn more about how teachers experienced implementing the program. We first share findings dealing with the implementation process, followed by how teachers perceived the program's effectiveness.

Focus on Implementation

Earlier interviews with Algonquin's administrators indicated that all faculty had been trained in restorative practices by the beginning of the 2015-2016 school year. However, according to the survey, two respondents shared they were never offered training while a third respondent indicated being offered, but not yet attending, training. Nevertheless, the remaining 34 faculty members who responded to this question had, in fact, been trained at least once in restorative practices. Moreover, 32% of teachers reported they had been trained in restorative practices two or three times, with over half of respondents ($n = 19$) reporting attendance on more than three occasions. Thus, approximately 92% of those surveyed reported completing training in restorative practices.

In addition to learning more about training, we included a survey question asking respondents how often they *use* restorative elements at school. We found that around half of teachers used restorative practices "often" with another 19% indicating they used restorative practices "almost daily." Conversely, nearly 30% shared that they "seldom" use restorative practices at school with one person indicating they "never" use them.

In addition, teachers were asked to assess their peers' use of restorative practices by responding to the following statement: "I observe others using restorative elements, including restorative language, in my school." Participants were given a 4-point Likert-type scale of *never, seldom, often*, and *almost daily* for this purpose. Fifty-six percentage of the responses answered often or almost daily. In fact, the most popular selection was often, which was chosen by 18 of 36 respondents. Conversely, 16 respondents indicated seeing restorative practices used seldom. None of the respondents indicated never seeing restorative practices used at AHS.

Earlier in the study, building administrators had expressed concern that teacher turnover may affect the ongoing implementation or restorative practices. Consequently, we wondered if faculty members had peers to whom they could go with questions or concerns about implementing restorative practices in their classrooms. We found that 81% of faculty responded that they did have peers whom they considered to be resources for restorative practices, whereas 16% of respondents stated they were uncertain whether they have peer support on campus. One survey respondent stated definitively that no peer existed whom could serve as a restorative practices resource.

In addition to our curiosities around peer support, we also wondered whether teachers perceived that students were knowledgeable about and experienced with restorative practices, as these cultural characteristics may influence teachers' perceptions around implementation fidelity. The first of these questions asked, "How many students know about restorative practices at AHS?" Possible answers included none, some, most, and nearly all. Out of the 35 faculty respondents, 60% ($n = 21$) selected "some" as their response. The other 40% of teachers reported "most" or "nearly all" students know about and have experienced restorative practices No faculty member indicated a belief that none of AHS's students know about restorative practices.

Next, participants were asked how many students they thought participated in elements of restorative practices. Responses indicated that 25% of teachers believed that "most" Algonquin students participate in restorative practices. Meanwhile, most teachers (75%) indicated that only "some" of AHS students were participating in restorative practices. Neither "none" nor "almost all" were selected by any participant.

Focus on Efficacy

In addition to faculty perceptions concerning the implementation of restorative practices, the survey also sought understand teachers' perceptions on the effectiveness of the restorative practices approach. First, we listed each of the 11 elements of the SaferSanerSchools™ model along with a short definition. We asked teachers to indicate which of the restorative practices elements they found most effective. Respondents could select as many or as few according to their experiences or could skip the question altogether.

Eleven participants chose to skip this question, while 33 others chose to select one or more elements. As indicated in Table 3, of the 33 respondents, 24 selected "Affective Statements" as being most effective. The next most frequent response was "Fair Process," which was selected 19 times. "Small Impromptu Conferences/Circles" was the third most popular selection, receiving 14 votes as most effective. The complete list of the 11 elements of the SaferSanerSchools™ model are represented in Table 3 in the left-hand column. The number of times faculty ranked a particular element as being most effective appears in the right-hand column.

Participants were then asked to evaluate the following statement: "I believe that RP works to curb student misbehavior at this school." Teachers could then select their answers on a Likert-type scale: *never* assigned a value of 1; *seldom* was given a value of 2; *often* had a value of 3, and; *almost daily* was assigned 4 points. Of the 35 faculty responses, 21 selected *often* and 14

selected *seldom*. No faculty selected either *never* or *almost daily*. Numerically speaking, these responses had an average rating of 2.6, indicating teachers leaned more toward the perspective that restorative practices often curb student misbehavior.

**Table 3.** Faculty Ranking of Restorative Practice Elements' Efficacy.

| Restorative practice element | $n^a$ |
|---|---|
| 1. Affective statements | 24 |
| 2. Fair process | 19 |
| 3. Small impromptu conferences/circles | 14 |
| 4. Restorative questions | 12 |
| 5. Restorative conferences | 10 |
| 6. Restorative approach with families | 9 |
| 6. Proactive circles | 9 |
| 7. Restorative staff community | 6 |
| 8. Responsive circles | 4 |
| 9. Reintegrative management of shame | 3 |
| 10. Understanding fundamental hypothesis | 2 |

[a] Number of times this element was selected as "most effective" by 33 respondents.

We were also curious to know whether, given the slow implementation of restorative practices over many years, the "Fundamental Hypothesis" of restorative practices had permeated the school's culture in the eyes of the faculty. Recall, the Fundamental Hypothesis of the SaferSanerSchools™ model states that "actions within a school must align with the belief that positive behavioral change occurs in a state of high, consistent expectations where authority figures do things with, not to or for, others" (IIRP, n.d.). During visits to the school, we noted two major cultural guideposts throughout the school. First, Algonquin's "Chief Belief" was posted in high-profile areas of the school, such as the entrance and cafeteria: "Building Respect Through Building Relationships." Second, the concept of aiming to be a "MARKSmen," which stands for *M*aturity, *A*ccountability, *R*esponsibility, and *K*nowledge, appeared on cultural artifacts, such as posters and pamphlets.

Though these two mantras are visible throughout the school building, we wanted to know if teachers' perceptions of school culture reflected these high expectations with an emphasis on relationships, two essential characteristics of restorative practices.

Toward this point, teachers were asked to rate the following statement on a 5-point Likert-type scale: forming and maintaining positive relationships are important at this school. Choices included *disagree, disagree somewhat, neither disagree or agree, agree somewhat*, and *agree*. The 37 answers were also assigned a value between 1 and 5 based on the strength of their response. The average value for all responses was a 4.68, most closely numerically aligned with the 5-point answer of *agree*. In fact, 84% of the faculty surveyed assigned this statement the highest rating available on the Likert-type scale.

Three further questions endeavored to gauge the faculty's feelings about three specific types of relationships: student, staff, and teacher-student relationships. Using the same Likert-type scale described above, participants were asked to rate whether, generally speaking, student-student relationships at AHS are respectful. Thirty-seven responses averaged to a mean score of 4.38, numerically closest to the answer of *agree somewhat* on the Likert-type. The same statement was made asserting that staff relationships at Algonquin are generally respectful, and staff was again

asked to rate it using the same Likert-type scale. An average rating of 4.49 was collected for this statement, again most closely rounding to *agree somewhat*, but only by .01.

When rating the same statement regarding respectful relationships, but this time focusing on teacher-student relationships, 37 responses were again collected. The average rating for this statement rose to 4.51, tipping slightly toward the strongest available *agree* response. Thus, the staff responses collected highlight teacher-student relationships as being the most respectful of the three types of relationships looked at by this survey. Perhaps an even more striking finding from this question is that no faculty member disagreed to any extent or was even neutral when evaluating the statement that teacher-student relationships are respectful at AHS.

Teachers' Insights Via Open-Ended Comments

In addition to Likert-type questions and other rating scales, faculty were asked three open-ended questions:

1. How could the current use of restorative practices at AHS be improved or enhanced?
2. Based on your experiences with restorative practices, what suggestions would you have for other schools looking to implement restorative practices?
3. Is there anything else that you would like to share regarding the implementation and efficacy of restorative practices at AHS?

Unsurprisingly, since open-ended questions were placed at the end of the survey, comments were not as plentiful as we would have liked. And while follow-up interviews with teachers will not take place until the next phase of the study, we were still able to glean some important insights into what teachers think is working well, as well as what some of their concerns are. In all, across the three open-ended questions, five could be categorized as completely negative of restorative practices, while 34 responses expressed more positive perceptions and often included suggestions for improvement in practice.

Commendations, Concerns, and Suggestions for Improvement

Many teachers attested to restorative practices' efficacy. For example, one teacher expressed, "I sure wish I had learned about this before, when I had a couple of difficult years with disrespectful students always looking for trouble." Another teacher shared that patience and persistence with restorative practices "pays off," while another offered that "[t]here are immediate benefits [to RP], but it also takes a few years to see the overall impact when you are just starting the process." Supporting this assertion that the true efficacy of restorative practices is best assessed over a span of years, this faculty comment seems especially poignant:

> Having taught at [Algonquin] for 9 years, I see restorative practices have been helpful to both teachers and students. For teachers, it has been an effective tool for those who are not natural relationship-builders. For many students, it has become an important tool to keep them in the classroom where they belong and not in ISS or OSS. I notice a better, more congenial overall atmosphere in the school. It's a good thing.

Thus, this teacher was able to observe longitudinally the decrease in exclusionary discipline that accompanied the implementation of restorative practices.

In addition to statements reflecting a positive attitude toward restorative practices, some concerns were raised by respondents. For example, one teacher expressed the belief that students "take advantage of the system and pay it lip service," but they are not "truly changing or modifying behaviors." Similarly, in five other instances, teachers shared the concern that some students could potentially manipulate the restorative process for the sole purpose of lessening behavioral consequences. A third respondent shared, "School life is not real life with so many do overs," but went on to say, "I love teaching and I love kids—I am the closest thing to the real-world in this school."

In addition to the specific observations shared above, there were two comments that seemed particularly vague and unconstructive. For example, when asked whether they had anything else they would like to share, one participant typed, "a complete waste of time." And when asked what advice they would give to schools looking to implement restorative practices, one person responded, "look for a different model."

Many who shared their observations and/or expressed specific concerns also shared specific strategies for improving the implementation process. For example, one teacher observed that teachers "are rarely told when a student goes through the process with the administrative team." Another teacher suggested there needed to be "better follow-up" and that "[c]onsistency needs to be improved." Other suggestions fell into four main themes: *onboarding, perseverance, overcoming discomfort*, and *training*.

***The Importance of Onboarding.*** A recurring theme among respondents was the importance of making sure "the entire school" was aware and "on board" with the philosophy behind restorative practices. It was not enough to announce a new program or even follow it with good training. Rather, teachers felt it was essential that people understand why restorative practices is needed (e.g., overuse of exclusionary discipline, overrepresentation of Black students) and how restorative practices is different from traditional punitive measures. One teacher suggested that Algonquin specifically "spend less time focusing on circles and more on the philosophical and ideological principles" behind restorative practices. Respondents had similar advice for those considering implement restorative practices at their particular schools: That leadership must "give context to the need for [the practice]" and warned would-be implementers of the need for "a CLEAR understanding from the beginning [of] exactly what it is." Another respondent stated directly that the philosophy behind restorative practices "must be part of the school culture." The sentiment seemed to be that purposeful onboarding would communicate the urgency of the situation and strengthen the will toward putting in the work necessary for successful implementation.

***Time and Perseverance Are Key.*** A second theme related to the implementation of restorative practices concerned time and persistence. Time (or persistence over time) was specifically referenced in seven responses across the three narrative questions. For example, one respondent shared, "Patience. In the classroom, it may sometimes seem that restorative practices aren't working. But persistence pays off." This sentiment was repeated by another who stated a

suggestion for improving AHS's restorative practices: "Mainly just getting teachers to take the time to use proactive circles and the restorative language when they have a conflict with a student." Meanwhile, the same respondent who characterized restorative practices as "A complete waste of time" also expressed an unwillingness to spend time studying and practicing restorative practices.

***Overcoming Discomfort and Connecting With Students Authentically.*** Many teachers expressed a desire to connect with students in an authentic, comfortable way. For example, one person felt the circles were "too contrived." Another person shared, "What I use works[,] and I do not like or feel comfortable with some of the [RP] language and the circles." Six additional comments noted either discomfort with circles specifically or a desire to use behavioral approaches that come more naturally to them. One respondent recommended they have a variety of practices at hand "and use what works for them in their class." Two additional people suggested allowing teachers to self-select the element of restorative practices in which they want to receive training. Another respondent thought that overcoming discomfort was possible if they assigned an "'RP expert' to help with a proactive circle in [the] classroom . . . [because] Some practical, first-hand guidance in the classroom could build teacher and student confidence in the process." While this theme brings to the fore the idea that teachers are uncomfortable with certain elements or just prefer certain elements over others, there seemed to be an overall recognition of the importance of building relationships, a core value of restorative practices.

***Tailoring Training Opportunities.*** While the survey did not include an open-ended question relating to restorative practices training, nine respondents shared specific implementation suggestions related to training. One recommendation was to "pick a few specifics and really focus on them" in training, while another reflected a preference for longer training opportunities. This particular teacher felt that "[t]he full days of training were much more informative than a one-hour session here and there." Additional recommendations included holding trainings with "documentaries" and "real-life, classroom-based examples." These teachers felt restorative practices needed to be made "real" for some people and that participating in role play might alleviate discomfort and enhance implementation fidelity. One person's suggestion reflected what we learned from the quantitative data: Some teachers have been trained more than three times on the same thing. This teacher felt restorative practices trainings "were redundant, [a] waste of my time and almost insulting." Finally, one teacher expressed a readiness to expand the training beyond teachers to students, stating that "[s]tudents need to practice how [they] think [things] 'should' have gone." Overall, teachers seem to communicate their understanding that training is something that is essential but that it needs to be better tailored to individual teachers' needs.

## Discussion

We were surprised by some of the findings related to teachers' views of restorative practices' efficacy. For example, faculty rated conferences/circles as one of the top three most effective elements of restorative practices. However, in open-ended comments, teachers made their aversion to, or discomfort with, circles clear. Yet this seeming contrast might be explained by reexamining the wording of that listed element: *small impromptu conferences/circles.* Staff members who do not "do" large, planned circles—or conduct them, albeit uncomfortably—may

still have selected this practice as most effectual because the phrasing also incorporated the use of "small impromptu conferences." Our combined experience of 50 years in the K-12 classroom remind us that conferences are a staple of the profession and that may be the part of that particular element with which teachers feel comfortable. Instead, teachers may be pointing out that the more intensive, carefully planned restorative conferences are only lead by those professionals specifically trained to lead them. Future conversations with teachers may help us better understand these nuances.

On the other hand, we were not surprised by teacher responses indicating that restorative practices have been effective in positively affecting the culture at AHS over the past several years. For example, 84% of respondents agreed most strongly with the statement that forming and maintaining positive relationships is important at AHS. This finding supports the notion that valuing relationships, which is also at the heart of restorative practices, is a part of the AHS culture. Thus, neither were we surprised to learn that 78% of respondents indicated a belief that restorative practices contributes to positive relationships at AHS *often* or *almost daily*. Thus, one could deduct that restorative practices is also contributing positively to the culture of this school. Surprisingly, though, only 67% ($n = 25$) of 37 respondents agreed with this exact statement linking restorative practices as a contributor to school culture either *strongly* or *somewhat*. In fact, 19% ($n = 7$) actually *disagreed* or *somewhat disagreed* with the notion of restorative practices positively affecting school culture at Algonquin. Perhaps the emphasis on relationships and respect, inherent in restorative practices, are now so ingrained in the daily activities at Algonquin that the staff no longer sees them as residual of restorative practices, but rather just the way that things are done around their school. Again, future research is needed to tease that hypothesis out more fully.

Unexpectantly, we also recognized a barrier to teachers accurately assessing the efficacy of restorative practices. Though it was reflected in only one narrative comment, the statement, "We (teachers) are rarely told when a student goes through the process with the administrative team," is concerning. Another teacher did caution about the lack of "follow-up," though it was unclear whether this was follow-up with the teacher or the student. Obviously, lack of communication and/or follow-up about what had transpired would more than likely limit a teacher's ability to assess the efficacy of restorative practices. It would also make reintegration of the offender exceedingly difficult. Thus, while only one or two people alluded to some communication or follow-up issues, we still note this topic as a concern to share with school leadership for further exploration.

As veteran educators, we were not surprised to also discover evidence of the second concern related to the efficacy of restorative practices at Algonquin: the manipulation of the system by the students in order to receive a reduced disciplinary consequence. This apprehension aligns with other comments collected from teachers that state that restorative practices "is not real life with so many do overs" and that "a student can learn from a harder consequence than a RP [consequence]." Teachers, who may have not only taught under traditional disciplinary practices, but who were likely raised and went to school under them themselves, may be hard converts to a restorative practices mind-set. Being that restorative practices is relatively new as a disciplinary approach; this statement might very well pertain to many more teachers than this initial survey sample adequately communicated. Again, follow-up conversations will be important to further

understand this concern as well as to determine whether, if true, this tendency to game the system seriously undermines the implementation process and/or should lead one to conclude it is better to not implement restorative practices because of it. We also wonder whether these teacher perceptions might also say more about a lack of trust of particular students and whether teachers of different ethnicities and genders would talk about this concern differently. Comparing teachers' perceptions based in identity intersectionalities, such as race/ethnicity, gender, and class, is an important area for further inquiry. Irby's (2018) work on teachers' sensemaking around collective racial awareness and critical self-reflection would be an important guide for us.

Another interesting observation was the finding that while 9% of faculty indicated never having been trained in restorative practices, either by choice or lack of opportunity, only 3% shared that they do not use restorative practices. Thus, these results seem to indicate that some teachers are implementing restorative practices even without having received formal training. It would be interesting to explore whether there is an informal mentoring process whereby teachers well-versed in restorative practices might be coming alongside those less so to aid in the implementation process.

Finally, there were some conflicts in teacher perception. For example, findings on the teachers' use of restorative practices do not align with their perception of the students' knowledge of and participation in restorative practices. That is, 68% of the faculty responses indicate they personally use restorative practices either *often* or *almost daily* at Algonquin. A total of 56% shared that they also observe restorative practices used at Algonquin *often* or almost *daily*. Yet despite these levels of observation and self-reported practice, 60% of the faculty surveyed believe that only *some* of the students at AHS know about restorative practices. Thus, respondents report using restorative practices and observing others using restorative practices at a higher rate than they believe their students are involved in restorative practices implementation. These conflicting perceptions are something we hope to explore further in the future.

While no study can fully capture what is going on in a context as complicated as a high school, our findings nonetheless fill an important gap in the literature. Restorative practices, as a relatively new discipline approach, is emerging more strongly in public consciousness and the research literature. Specifically, there is a lack of research focused on teachers' perceptions of using restorative practices as an alternative discipline model. As the discussion above implies, our findings point to some important areas for additional research.

**Conclusion**

As the literature points out, disruptive student behavior takes away from instructional time, requires a large amount of school resources, and creates an emotional toll on teachers (Aldrup et al., 2018; Cornell & Mayer, 2010; Dinkes et al., 2007). As a preemptive approach, restorative practices could be viewed as taking away from instruction time, although only one teacher in our sample referred to restorative practices as a "big waste of time." Almost all teachers in this study reported they volunteered their time to be trained in the approach and used at least some components on a regular basis. There is no evidence to suggest that teachers are feeling despondent concerning disruptive behavior at present.

Also, the literature is clear that exclusionary discipline does not curb misbehavior or improve the quality of the school environment (American Psychological Association Zero Tolerance Task Force, 2008; Losen & Skiba, 2010; Noltemeyer & Mcloughlin, 2010; Skiba & Rausch, 2006). The theory of action behind restorative practices, on the other hand, aims to improve the school culture by building relationships (Morrison et al., 2005). Almost 80% of respondents indicated that restorative practices did indeed contribute to positive relationships at AHS. Meanwhile, almost 20% of respondents *disagreed* or *somewhat disagreed* that restorative practices positively affected the school culture at Algonquin. We are not sure why. But, when we revisit Morrison et al.'s (2005) implementation steps, we note the importance of developing professional relationships and that administrator communication is key. Some participants shared that they needed clearer communication from the administrative team. This follow-up from administrators is especially important in a secondary school context where students are usually taught by numerous teachers each day. Strengthening communications and professional relationships would surely bolster their efforts at improving school culture.

Finally, recall that the literature shows that implementation dips are a normal occurrence when effecting change in schools. Moreover, teachers' feelings of self-efficacy can decline as they try new approaches, so it is critical their supervisors respond with developmental feedback and positive reassurance (Zimmerman, 2006).

While some findings were mixed, the preponderance of positivity communicated by the teachers, coupled with the data that there is an overall downward trend in racial and other discipline gaps, leads us to conclude that, overall, implementing a restorative practices discipline approach is a positive and effective way to improve school culture, contribute to a downward trend in exclusionary discipline overall, and begin the process of recognizing the role implicit biases and teacher/administrator level of tolerance plays in understanding and addressing discipline gaps. Thus, we also join Irby (2018) and Lustick (2017) in concluding that implementing programs that address student behavior is not enough. Rather, training around restorative approaches must also include culturally relevant professional development opportunities that address educators' attitudes and beliefs. White supremacy, racism, and implicit biases must be challenged and transformed to strengthen the fidelity of program implementation and consequent organizational change (Irby, 2018; Lustick, 2017).

We agree with Kane et al. (2007) that a shift in culture can only be attained through message management from school leadership. Moreover, leadership needs to set the stage for organizational change by (a) balancing top-down and bottom-up decision making, (b) including stakeholders in developing a shared mission and vision, and (c) creating opportunities for teacher collaboration and participation in decision making (Zimmerman, 2006).

Still there will likely be resistance to change. An adept leader recognizes issues related to obstacles and resistance and works to promote change readiness among staff in a number of ways. For example, by

1. modeling willingness to change and displaying risk-taking behaviors, even at the risk of exposing weakness by taking on the role of learner,

2. displaying optimism and determination while sharing one's own learning curve and encouraging others to try new things,
3. winning over the support of influential teachers to the change, and
4. working to earn teachers' trust and to develop a culture of support (Zimmerman, 2006).

Research also shows that an external impetus for change is not as effective as an internal impetus (Kane et al., 2007). Thus, a school may also be better prepared to implement restorative practices when staff morale is high and a pervasive sense that staff can make the school better is evident (Kane et al., 2007).

Schools with certain supports in place may be also at a distinct advantage when implementing restorative practices. Restorative practices have been found to dovetail well with existing practices and initiatives, such as peer mediation, cognitive reasoning programs, and social skills curriculums (McCluskey et al., 2008). By building on familiar and successful school programs, the school community is able to scaffold to create restorative dialogue and willingness to learn (Macready, 2009). Support staff such as school counselors, school psychologists, and school social workers are often key stakeholders in these existing programs and may be uniquely qualified to aid this scaffolding process (McCluskey et al., 2008). Schools with such a sturdy framework already in place may be most ready to implement restorative practices in a meaningful, schoolwide manner.

## References

Aldrup, K., Klusmann, U., Lüdtke, O., Göllner, R., Trautwein, U. (2018). Student misbehavior and teacher well-being: Testing the mediating role of the teacher-student relationship. Learning and Instruction, 58, 126-136.

American Psychological Association Zero Tolerance Task Force . (2008). Are zero tolerance policies effective in the schools? An evidentiary review and recommendations. American Psychologist, 63, 852-862.

Cornell, D. G., Mayer, M. J. (2010). Why do school order and safety matter? Educational Researcher, 39, 7-15. doi:10.3102/0013189X09357616

Crews, G. A., Counts, M. R. (1997). The evolution of school disturbance in America: Colonia times to modern day. Westport, CT: Praeger.

Curwin, R. L., Mendler, A. N. (1989). We repeat, let the buyer beware: A response to Canter. Educational Leadership, 46(6), 83.

DeMatthews, D. E., Carey, R. L., Olivarez, A., Saeedi, K. M. (2017). Guilty as charged? Principals' perspectives on disciplinary practices and the racial discipline gap. Educational Administration Quarterly, 53, 519-555.

Dinkes, R., Cataldi, E. F., Lin-Kelly, W. (2007). Indicators of school crime and safety: 2007 (NCES 2008-021/NCJ 219553). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice.

Golden, D. C. (1993). Discipline of students with disabilities: A decision-making model for principals. NASSP Bulletin, 77(550), 11-20.

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, 25, 1-29. doi:10.1080/10474412.2014.929950

Horner, R., Sugai, G., Vincent, C. (2005). School-wide positive behavior support: Investing in student success. Impact, 18(2), 4-5.

International Institute for Restorative Practices . (n.d.). SaferSanerSchools™: Whole-school change through restorative practices. Retrieved from http://www.iirp.edu/pdf/WSC-Overview.pdf

Irby, D. J. (2018). Mo' data, mo' problems: Making sense of racial discipline disparities in a large diversifying suburban high school. Educational Administration Quarterly, 54, 693-722. doi:10.1177/0013161X18769051

Kane, J., Lloyd, G., McCluskey, G., Riddell, S., Stead, J., Weedon, E. (2007). Restorative practices in three Scottish councils: Final report of the evaluation of the first two years of the pilot projects 2004-2006. Edinburgh, Scotland: Scottish Executive.

Losen, D. J., Skiba, R. J. (2010). Suspended education: Urban middle schools in crisis. Montgomery, AL: Southern Poverty Law Center.

Lustick, H. (2017). "Restorative justice" or restoring order? Restorative school discipline practices in urban public schools. Urban Education. Advance online publication. doi:10.1177/0042085917741725

Maag, J. W. (2012). School-wide discipline and the intransigency of exclusion. Children and Youth Services Review, 34, 2094-2100.

MacNaughton, R. H., Johns, F. A. (1991). Developing a successful schoolwide discipline program. NAASP Bulletin, 75(536), 47-57.

Macready, T. (2009). Learning social responsibility in schools: A restorative practice. Educational Psychology in Practice, 25, 211-220. doi:10.1080/02667360903151767

Mansfield, K. C., Fowler, E., Rainbolt, S. (2018). The potential of restorative practices to ameliorate discipline gaps: The story of one high school's leadership team. Educational Administration Quarterly, 54(2), 303-323.

Mansfield, K. C., Rainbolt, S., Fowler, E. (2018). Implementing restorative justice as a step toward racial equity in school discipline. Teachers College Record, 120(14), 1-24.

McCluskey, G., Lloyd, G., Kane, J., Riddell, S., Stead, J., Weedon, E. (2008). Can restorative practices in schools make a difference? Educational Review, 60, 405-417. doi:10.1080/00131910802393456

Mirsky, L. (2011). Restorative practices: Giving everyone a voice to create safer saner school communities. Prevention Researcher, 18, 3-6.

Mongan, P., Walker, R. (2012). "The road to hell is paved with good intentions": A historical, theoretical, and legal analysis of zero-tolerance weapons policies in American schools. Preventing School Failure, 56, 232-240.

Morrison, B., Blood, P., Thorsborne, M. (2005). Practicing restorative justice in school communities: Addressing the challenge of culture change. Public Organization Review, 5, 335-357.

Morrison, B. E., Vaandering, D. (2012). Restorative justice: Pedagogy, praxis, and discipline. Journal of School Violence, 11, 138-155. doi:10.1080/15388220.2011.653322

Noltemeyer, A. L., Mcloughlin, C. S. (2010). Changes in exclusionary discipline rates and disciplinary disproportionality over time. International Journal of Special Education, 25(1), 59-70.

Polka, W. S. (2007). Managing people, things, and ideas in the "effective change zone": A "high-touch" approach to educational leadership at the dawn of the twenty-first century. Educational Planning, 16(1), 12-17.

Regulation 401.1 . (2008). [Tenakomakah] County Public Schools Code of Conduct. (Reference masked to protect anonymity. Copies in research team's possession and available on request.)

Ryan, J. B., Katsiyannis, A., Peterson, R., Chmelar, R. (2007). IDEA 2004 and disciplining students with disabilities. NASSP Bulletin, 91, 130-140.

Salazar, P. S. (2016). In this issue . . . NASSP Bulletin, 100, 95-96.

Skiba, R. J., Rausch, M. K. (2006). Zero tolerance, suspension, and expulsion: Questions of equity and effectiveness. In Evertson, C. M., Weinstein, C. S. (Eds.), Handbook of classroom management: Research, practice, and contemporary issues (pp. 1063-1089). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Sugai, G., Horner, R. H. (2009). Defining and describing schoolwide positive behavior support. In Sailor, W., Dunlop, G., Sugai, G., Horner, R. (Eds.), Issues in clinical child psychology: Handbook of positive behavior support (pp. 307-326). New York, NY: Springer.

Terrell, H. W. (1976). School discipline: A cooperative approach. NASSP Bulletin, 60(397), 9-14.

Whitford, D. K., Katsiyannis, A., Counts, J. (2016). Discriminatory discipline: Trends and issues. NASSP Bulletin, 100, 117-135.

Williams, J., Pazey, B., Fall, A. M., Yates, J. R., Roberts, G. J. (2015). Avoiding the threat: An exploratory study into a theoretical understanding of the de facto segregation of students with disabilities. NASSP Bulletin, 99, 233-253.

[X] Department of Education . (2015). (Reference masked to protect anonymity. Copies in research team's possession and available upon request.)

Zimmerman, J. (2006). Why some teachers resist change and what principals can do about it. NASSP Bulletin, 90, 238-249. doi:10.1177/0192636506291521

**Author Biographies**

**Stacey Rainbolt** is currently the coordinator of testing for Goochland County Public Schools' secondary schools. She also holds the position of director of School Counseling for Goochland Middle School in Goochland, VA. Rainbolt is a graduate of Virginia Commonwealth University with an EdD in leadership. Her passion is taking both quantitative and qualitative data and using it to help educators create an environment of high structure and high support so that all students can achieve. She has published in *Educational Administration Quarterly* and *Teachers College Record*.

**Elizabeth Sutton Fowler** is currently the director of School Counseling for Goochland High School in Goochland, VA. She graduated from Virginia Commonwealth University with an EdD in Leadership. She has over twenty years combined experience as both a secondary classroom teacher and a school counselor. She holds licenses in secondary English, gifted education, and school counseling. She focuses in her current role on being an advocate for student voices and equity. She seeks to help other professionals understand that strong relationships with students, based on respect, can lead to positive educational, behavioral, and cultural change. She has published in *Educational Administration Quarterly* and *Teachers College Record*.

**Katherine Cumings Mansfield** is associate professor at The University of North Carolina at Greensboro in the Department of Educational Leadership and Cultural Foundations. She graduated from The University of Texas at Austin with a PhD in Educational Policy and Planning and a doctoral portfolio in Women's and Gender Studies. Mansfield, a first-generation college graduate and seasoned teacher and program administrator, has published in *Educational Administration Quarterly, Education Policy Analysis Archives, Educational Studies,*

*International Journal of Multicultural Education, International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, and *Teachers College Record*.