

# A Growing Commitment to School Climate and Safety in Philadelphia:

## Capturing the Rollout Experiences with Restorative Practices & School-wide Positive Behavior Support Year One Report

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### Year One Key Findings

- + Nearly \$4 million is supporting the implementation of School-wide Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports or Restorative Practices in 26 schools.
- + 14% of students in the Philadelphia School District will be impacted by funded approaches.
- + Training was delayed due to school closures and staff turnover.
- + District staff are being trained as a way to sustain efforts beyond the duration of grants money.
- + Despite \$243 million less in education funding, some schools experienced success with first year of rollout.

PCCY conducted the research for this report with support from the Philadelphia Youth Network in service of Project U-Turn.

### Key Informants

The information gathered in this report came from a series of interviews. Jody Greenblatt described the district's goals and plans for improving school climate and safety with positive supports and restorative practices and provided detail on the district's structure for this work and progress in rolling out both models. Dr. John Baillie, an assistant professor at IIRP, Dr. Barry McCurdy, the primary investigator from Devereux overseeing the implementation of PBIS with the Philadelphia Foundation, and Dr. Ricardo Eiraldi, the principal investigator of the CHOP study and director of Behavioral Health in Urban Schools Program, explained the function of positive supports and restorative practices along with intended goals and outcomes. Each representative also shared how staff from each

school is trained and the roles that their respective organizations will play throughout the duration of the funded grant. Christi Clark, an education organizer for the Philadelphia Student Union and coordinator of the Campaign for Nonviolent Schools, provided insight on the students, parents, and community members' views and their efforts to reverse zero tolerance practices.

PCCY also reached out to the 26 participating schools. Data was collected from ten schools: Benjamin Franklin High School, South Philadelphia High School, Warren G. Harding Middle School, Chester A. Arthur, John F. Hartranft Elementary, Robert Morris, Henry C. Lea Elementary, Thurgood Marshall Elementary, Penrose Middle School and Rudolph Blankenburg Elementary.

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## Introduction

Public Citizens for Children and Youth (PCCY) has been at the forefront of improving school climate and safety for students within the Philadelphia School District for decades. Most recently, PCCY and the United Way co-convened a city-wide team that assisted in the planning and implementation of Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports (PBIS) in Philadelphia on a district wide scale in 2008.<sup>i</sup>

Over the years, efforts to improve student safety and school climate have been supplemented by resources that allow the District to continue implementing PBIS and other intervention models such as restorative practices in Philadelphia schools. In 2013, the District received several grants totaling nearly \$4 million for the study and implementation of School-wide Positive Behavior and Intervention Supports (SWPBIS) and restorative practices models for a period of three to five years depending on the funding source. Another four schools are implementing the SWPBIS model with funds from the National Forum, a federal partnership facilitated by the U.S. Department of Justice to focus federal and community efforts on stemming the rise youth violence. The National Forum funded schools were not part of the PCCY review because the scope of this review focused only on the two larger initiatives. Because of the District's commitment to SWPBIS, it was awarded in September, 2014, a five year, federal grant of approximately \$3.5 million to sustain and expand the use of the model.

What follows is a report that looks at the District's experience implementing what we will call for shorthand "positive supports" and restorative practices in the 26 schools that are supported with funds from the Philadelphia Foundation or the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia. In particular, this report will discuss the District's shift from punitive behavioral practices, identify key players, explain in greater detail the funded approaches in dealing with student misconduct, and examine the training process. Furthermore, the report will explore the process of rolling out the positive supports or restorative practices in these schools, and some discussion of the District's plan for sustaining these efforts and implementing these models with fidelity.

## The Impact of Zero Tolerance on Philadelphia Schools

In January 2014, the U.S. Departments of Education and Justice jointly released guidelines for creating school environments that are safe and supportive to students.<sup>ii</sup> Rather than simply suspending and expelling students, the report offers alternative methods for student discipline. Attorney General Eric Holder said the problem in dealing with student misconduct often stems from well-intentioned "zero-tolerance" policies that too often inject the criminal justice system into the resolution of school problems. Zero tolerance policies, a tool that became popular in the 1990s, often spell out uniform and swift punishment for minor offenses such as truancy, chewing gum or talking back to school teachers and administrators. Violators can lose classroom time or become saddled with a criminal record. After years of over-investing in police spending, and under-investing in preventive approaches the data is clear: zero tolerance approaches to discipline are ineffective and present a major cost for students and budgets.<sup>iii</sup>

In American schools, Black students without disabilities are more than three times likely to be suspended or expelled than White students.<sup>iv</sup> Students who are suspended or expelled are more likely to be retained a grade and are at a higher risk for dropping out of school.<sup>v</sup> More troubling, a report by Philadelphia-based Youth United for Change and the Advancement Project in 2011 found that most students expelled from Philadelphia schools were 11 and 12 years old.<sup>vi</sup>

## Research Says...

When students feel safe, supported, independent, and competent, they are more likely to engage with teachers, peers, and school work in productive ways. Without this positive environment, students are more likely to lose motivation and productivity in social and academic spheres.<sup>vii</sup> Several studies have uncovered links between a sense of community and positive academic student outcomes.<sup>viii</sup> Schools implementing positive climate programs across the country find an increase in academic achievement as well as a decrease in violence and suspensions, keeping kids in school where more learning occurs. By contrast, harsh discipline practices present a greater chance that students will become disengaged socially and academically which can lead to lower academic performance and students ultimately dropping out.<sup>ix</sup>

## District's Elimination of Zero Tolerance:

In August 2012, amid increasing pressure from student and community advocates, the Philadelphia School District revised its “code of conduct and shifted the District’s climate and disciplinary approach away from a zero tolerance policy which had guided the District’s disciplinary procedures since 2008. The new policy employs a series of intervention approaches with guidelines that can be used by principals at their discretion. The goals of this new approach are to increase student “self management” skills, drive down the use of out of school suspensions and improve overall school climate. In addition, expulsion cases must be reviewed by the relatively new Expulsion Review Committee formed in 2012, which serves as an intermediary council of administrators, before expulsion recommendations are sent to the School Reform Commission for action. “That extra layer of discretion is expected to help reduce the number of expulsions and mitigate the amount of time the SRC spends on individual discipline cases, another concern with the old policy.”<sup>x</sup>

In an effort to reduce the number of suspensions and expulsions, improve school attendance, support students, and create learning environments that promote academic excellence, the district also began to explore and adopt non-punitive approaches for dealing with student misconduct. Well before the U.S Departments of Education and Justice released their 2014 guiding principles for improving school climate and discipline, the School District of Philadelphia was already adopting targeted approaches such as school wide positive behavior support and school-based restorative practice models.

The positive supports model was adopted in Philadelphia as early as 1999 in the Francis Scott Key School. In 2001, the federal government provided a grant to Devereux Center for Effective Schools for a demonstration project at Anna B. Day Elementary and James Logan

Elementary Schools. There have been other attempts over the years to implement positive supports programs in schools, for example at James Logan Elementary which continues to operate the program.

Alternatively, restorative practice models were first adopted in 2000 in some parochial schools in Philadelphia. Likewise West Philadelphia High School adopted the model. The school was on the state's "Persistently Dangerous Schools" list for six years and was quickly able to reduce their violent acts and serious incidents by 52% during the 2007–2008 academic year, just one year after implementation. Harding Middle School adopted restorative practice models in 2012–2013 school year and it too experienced a dramatic decline in serious incidents, reducing out-of-school suspensions by nearly half after their first year of adoption.

## A Growing Commitment to Positive School Climate and Safety in Philadelphia

In 2010–2011 school year, the district convened a Safety Engagement Committee under the leadership of School Reform Commissioner Lorene Cary to focus on improving school climate. The Safety and Engagement Committee included members from the Mayor's office of public safety, the Mayor's office of education, staff from Congreso and other community organizations, District Central Office staff, and school-based staff. After Commissioner Cary left the SRC, the committee has continued under the leadership of Stoneleigh Fellow, Jody Greenblatt, and the district's Chief of Student Support Services, Karyn Lynch. The mission of the Safety Engagement Committee is to consistently implement systemic, sustained school climate improvement efforts across the district. With new resources from the Philadelphia Foundation, the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, and the National Forum on Youth Violence, the district is implementing a multi-million dollar school climate and safety improvement strategy targeted at 17,863 or 14% of the district's students.

The Philadelphia Foundation invested \$730,676 to implement the restorative practices and positive supports models in 20 schools over three years. Additionally, the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) awarded the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia a \$3.1 million, five year grant, to implement positive supports in an additional six elementary schools and to study the level of support needed to address the needs of students with, or at risk for, externalizing or anxiety disorders over the course of the five years. (See Figure 1 at right).

Funds from the Philadelphia Foundation go directly to the International Institute for Restorative Practices (IIRP) and Devereux's Center for Effective Schools, both of which are nationally recognized organizations specializing in the training of restorative practice and positive supports models. Both organizations provide prescribed services to the twenty participating schools to support effective implementation of the specific behavioral models. IIRP collects baseline discipline data, provides online tools to help school staff implement restorative practices, conducts four days of onsite professional development for school staff, manages ongoing consultation, and finally ensures the licensure of school staff.<sup>1</sup> Devereux provides training for the leadership team and on-

<sup>1</sup> A more detailed description of IIRP's program activities can be found by visiting [safersanerschools.org](http://safersanerschools.org) and selecting "program activities"

**FIGURE 1: SCHOOLS INVOLVED IN PHILADELPHIA FOUNDATION PILOT**

Positive Supports	# of Students SY 2013	Restorative Practices	# of Students SY 2013
<b>Elementary Schools</b>		<b>Elementary Schools</b>	
Chester A. Arthur	307	Robert Morris	553
Rudolph Blankenburg	507	<b>Middle Schools</b>	
Tanner Duckery	590	Warren G. Harding	919
John F. Hartranft	559	<b>High Schools</b>	
Henry C. Lea	582	John Bartram	1,067
William McKinley	464	Benjamin Franklin	848
Penrose	709	High School of the Future	696
<b>Middle Schools</b>		Kensington CAPA	447
Roberto Clemente	518	Martin Luther King	1,109
Theodore Roosevelt	694	Overbrook	973
Tilden Middle	680	Roxborough	618
		South Philadelphia	1,029
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>5,610</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>8,259</b>

#### ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS INVOLVED IN CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL OF PHILADELPHIA POSITIVE SUPPORTS STUDY

Positive Supports	# of Students SY 2013	Restorative Practices	# of Students SY 2013
Julia Deburgos	835	Philip H. Sheridan	732
Thurgood Marshall	687	Bayard Taylor	536
Andrew J. Morrison	679	John Welsh	525
<b>TOTAL IN CHOP STUDY</b>	<b>3,994</b>	<b>OVERALL GRAND TOTAL OF STUDENTS</b>	<b>17,863</b>

Four additional schools, Dick, Blaine, Kelley and Wright are also employing the positive supports model as part of the Department of Justice's National Forum program.

going coach training. They are also responsible for the development of a School-wide Information System, which is a web-based data system now used by schools to evaluate and revise their approach in dealing with student misconduct, and posters that reinforce school-wide expectations.

CHOP is chiefly responsible for research examining the training and on-going consultation for school staff. They also contract with the Coping Power Program and the Friends for Life Program to train the counselors at each school on how to effectively tend to children with behavioral and anxiety problems. CHOP also pays small stipends to parents and teachers for data collection and to the counselors for conducting group sessions for students that exhibit at-risk behavior.

A "district level leadership team" was formed to monitor progress, share successes and address any issues that may arise throughout the process of implementing this phase of the positive

supports and restorative practices models. Jody Greenblatt, the co-leader of the district’s Safety Engagement Committee, leads the “district level leadership team” which also includes representatives from the Campaign for Nonviolent Schools, Devereux, the International Institute for Restorative Practices (IIRP), Mayor’s Office of Education, Department of Behavioral Health, the city’s Department of Health, the Deputy for Rights and Responsibilities, the Deputy for Prevention and Intervention, the Philadelphia Foundation, and the Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP).

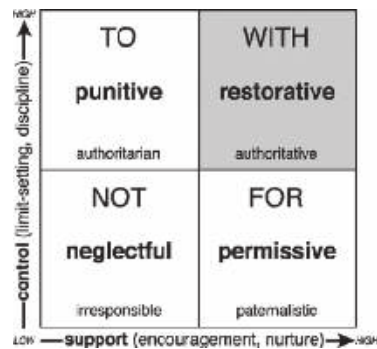
## Describing the Methods

### Restorative Practices—Theory of Change

Restorative practices are adopted from the “restorative justice” model used widely in the criminal justice sector. At its core, restorative justice practices seek to hold offenders accountable by giving them the opportunity to repair any harm they may have caused another individual or group of people. The reparation of harm is done through face-to-face interactions between the “offender” and “victim.” The idea of being restorative suggests that misconduct is best resolved by involving every individual that may have been affected by the act.

Using this approach, schools hold students accountable for their actions, promote empathy, and espouse a sense of community where students feel welcome, safe, supported and ready to learn. The model aims to: (1) improve safety by preventing future harm, (2) offer productive alternatives to suspensions and expulsions, (3) create supportive environments that can improve learning, and (4) cultivate effective strategies in dealing with behavior and complex school behavioral issues.

The goal of restorative practices can be captured in the “Social Discipline Model” figure below. The “Social Discipline Model” suggests that restorative practices work best when there is high support and high control present.<sup>xi</sup> Any deviation from high support and high control, as the model suggests, will not result in the desired student behavior. The “Zero



Tolerance” model is high in control but provides low support. The IIRP found that simply punishing students provides a temporal solution with no active engagement from the student and does not adequately address the underlying motive that may have caused the student’s misconduct.<sup>xii</sup> It is important that the reparation of harm is done with students rather than to or for them— or simply doing nothing at all. Restorative practices engage students as a way to hold them accountable to their actions.





### IIRP'S SOCIAL DISCIPLINE MODEL

Restorative practices range from informal to formal approaches that respond to misbehavior and harm. As identified on the “restorative practice continuum” below, restorative practices rely on five fundamental processes. These approaches include affectionate statements, affectionate questions, small impromptu conferences, “circles,” and formal conferences.<sup>xiii</sup>

Figure Retrieved from the International Institute of Restorative Practices

- + **“Affective Statements”**—used by teachers or school administrators when addressing the (good or bad) behavior of their students. Affective statements promote empathy and humanize school administration by giving them the opportunity to express how a student’s behavior made them feel. “It upsets me when you talk during class, I expect better from you” is an example of an affective statement.
- + **“Affective Questions”**—or “Restorative Questions” give school administrators the opportunity to address inappropriate behavior but allow students to think for themselves and reflect on how they may have affected other people. “What impact has this incident had on you and others?” is an example of an affectionate question.
- + **“Small impromptu conferences”**—builds on affective questions to quickly resolve lower-level incidents involving two or more people.
- + **“Circles”**—are small group conversations facilitated by a trained school staff. “Circles” are the most distinctive approach in restorative practices. They build a sense of community by allowing everyone to express their feelings and take responsibility for their actions.
- + **“Formal conferences”**—involves a trained facilitator from IIRP. Conferences take more time to organize because the participants include those who did the wrong, the individuals that were affected by the wrong, along with the family and friends of both parties.<sup>xiv</sup>

The appropriate intervention is based on the severity of the incident, stakeholder needs, and the time needed to address the misconduct. Generally, the more serious and complex incidents require a more structured and formal approach. While restorative techniques are useful in dealing with misconduct, it is important to note that they are not used only to correct misbehavior. Restorative techniques are also proactive in that they are intended to prevent and reduce the recurrence of student misconduct.

## School-Wide Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports— Theory of Change

The Positive Supports model is an integrated service model that targets changes in school climate as a way of improving a school’s operations and procedures. In order to provide the most appropriate services, students are organized in three different groups: (1) primary prevention, (2) secondary prevention, and (3) tertiary prevention. The organization of the three groups is best displayed in the “Continuum of School-Wide Instructional & Positive Behavior Support” diagram below.

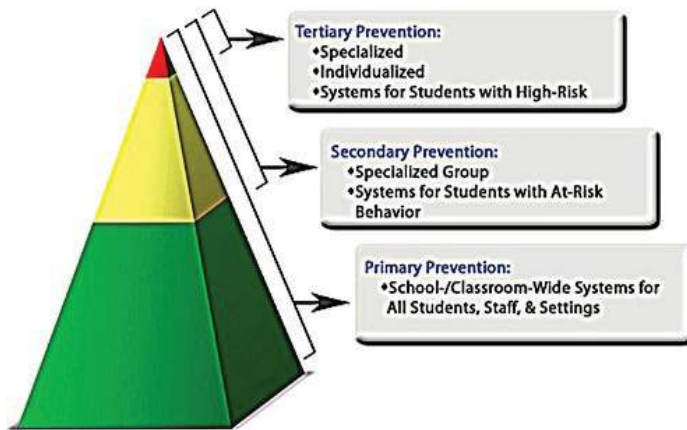


Figure retrieved from pbis.org

- + **Tier 1: Primary Prevention**—focuses on preventing new cases of behavioral problems by using school-wide strategies such as school-wide discipline, classroom management, and effective instructional practices. Students and school personnel all play a role in setting behavioral expectations and routines that promote a positive school environment.
- + **Tier 2: Secondary Prevention**—geared towards students that display behavioral problems despite the school-wide approach adopted in Tier 1. These students may require additional adult and peer support through different programming, structure, and feedback.
- + **Tier 3: Tertiary Prevention**—for students who exhibit high-risk behavior and require more individualized support. These students have failed to respond successfully to the interventions in Tier 1 and Tier 2 or display behavior that is harmful to themselves, their peers, or school staff that warrants an individualized intervention. A behavioral program such as Therapeutic Emotional Support (TES) is an example of individualized services available through the School District of Philadelphia for students that fall in Tier 3.

Positive supports approaches build an environment that fosters empathy, promote critical thinking, and develop behavioral skills critical for a life beyond school. Each school is responsible for choosing three to five behavioral expectations for their students. For example, “be kind”, “be respectful”, and “be responsible” are behavioral expectations

that everyone in a given school would be expected to uphold. A system of rewards and consequences is developed to provide incentives to students for following the rules and disincentives for disobeying the rules.

The idea of a school-wide intervention program suggests that positive behavior support is not exclusive to the classroom—everyone in the cafeteria, on the playground, and hallway plays an instrumental role in implementation. To successfully implement a positive supports model, as noted by Devereux’s Dr. Barry McCurdy, “all of the adults in the school have to exhibit the behavior that is expected of the students.”

## Applying Theory to Action—The Training Process

### Training for Restorative Practices

Superintendent Dr. William Hite saw the need to use restorative practices in the ten “receiving schools.” These schools received new students transferring in from one of 23 schools closed in 2013. The “receiving schools” participated in the IIRP training throughout the school year. The trainings, led by IIRP, introduced the basic elements of restorative practices with an emphasis on how to conduct “circles” for both behavioral and academic purposes.

Originally IIRP was expected to conduct the training in a four day concentrated manner in the in 2013. Unfortunately, the high level of transition in the District due to the closures made the delivery of training in a concentrated fashion wasn’t possible. While the training occurred during the school year, the District reported that it was a challenge to deliver the training over several months rather than in four successive days as originally planned.

With respect to the training, every school employee who has contact with students was encouraged to attend. IIRP noted that getting some school staff to fully commit to the idea of restorative practices while letting go of old practices and habits was challenging. To help persuade some participants on the effectiveness of restorative practices, IIRP found it beneficial to conduct a circle with school staff. The trainers used the subject of the school closures and layoffs which affected school staff personally as the subject of the “circle.” Staff shared their feelings in a “circle” facilitated by an IIRP representative. Members from IIRP noted that this strategy was very effective in convincing those who were initially hesitant of the benefits associated with restorative practices.

Each school was expected to establish a “professional learning group” comprised of the principal, counselor(s), and teachers. The learning group was charged with leading the school-wide model implementation and meeting with IIRP representatives at least once a month for technical assistance and evaluating school progress. Though no explicit numerical benchmarks are established for each school with respect to reducing suspensions or expulsions, the IIRP monitors were charged to see if schools are: “(1) improving their discipline numbers, (2) fostering a greater sense of safety on campus, (3) experiencing more order and less discipline referrals, and (4) are more sane.” In the upcoming 2015 school year, the restorative practices schools will participate in more training during the school year to increase adherence to the model for the second year of program implementation.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Visit the following link to learn more about IIRP’s training: [iirp.edu/pdf/WSC-Overview.pdf](http://iirp.edu/pdf/WSC-Overview.pdf)

Building community “buy-in” is at the heart of restorative practices. The IIRP believes that the more people that are on board with using restorative practices, the closer schools get to creating safer, saner, and more supportive environments. To help build that buy-in, the IIRP donated four days of trainings in November 2013, where students from nearby schools, representatives from the district, the Campaign for Nonviolent Schools, and the Department for Human Services attended trainings. Participants in this four-day training were introduced to the various components of restorative practices and equipped with the toolset to support the restorative practices approach to interaction with students.

### Training for Positive Supports

As noted earlier, two funding streams support positive supports model expansion in Philadelphia; one is a three year project administered by the Philadelphia Foundation and the other by the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD). The CHOP model funded by the NICHD differs from the Philadelphia Foundation model because it includes a direct intervention approach, a research component, and it extends for five years.

The CHOP model will, in addition to training, study the level of support school personnel need to implement a program that meets the needs of students with, or at risk for, externalizing or anxiety disorders such as Oppositional Defiant Disorder (ODD) and Separation Anxiety Disorder (SAD).

Six K-8 public schools in North Philadelphia were selected to participate in the CHOP study. The district established baseline criteria for the selection of the participating schools. The criteria were: (1) an elementary and/or middle school, (2) student population must have at least 90% of children qualifying for free and reduced priced lunch, (3) a majority of minority students, and (4) no existing school-wide climate initiative in place. Before schools were selected to participate in the CHOP positive supports roll-out, 80% of school staff had to vote in favor of adopting the approach. However, PCCY found that in some schools the process for demonstrating staff support was rushed or less developed than in other schools.

Similar to the training process discussed with restorative practices, each positive supports school was responsible for developing a leadership team composed of principals, teachers, school administration, counselors, and support staff. The leadership team participated in three days of formal initial training.



Each leadership team was assigned a “coach” from the District who was trained by the Devereux Center for Effective Teaching and CHOP and responsible for ongoing consultation with the schools. The Director of Behavioral Health and her four specialists served in the role of the coaches. To start their work each coach led three days of training for the leadership team’s school. Coaches are also expected to conduct two-hour biweekly on-site meetings to help schools develop their positive support practices. The head of each leadership team is expected to maintain frequent communication with their coach via phone and email as needed.

For the schools involved in the CHOP administered grant, as the training and implementation of the model rolls out, each leadership team is required to complete a 23-item checklist to assess the fidelity of implementation. In addition, Devereux and CHOP will conduct a series of interviews and focus groups with randomly selected school personnel throughout the five years of the study. Data pertaining to children’s academic performance, office discipline referrals, and absenteeism will also be used to measure the effectiveness of intervention programs of each school. Video recording is another method being employed to measure the fidelity of implementation of the model.

The initial training for the roll out of the model was delayed as a result of leadership changes within the district’s central administration and staff turnover at the school level during the summer of 2013. As a result the positive supports schools did not start their rollout until February—some schools started as late as April.

Because the positive supports model is accompanied by a rigorous evaluation, at the end of the five year study, investigators hope to identify the unique and full suite of practices that are critical to creating and sustaining support systems that enhance learning within the classroom and improve overall school climate. Findings from this study can be used as a guide for policymakers, district officials, teachers, and education researchers in their efforts to develop effective strategies for meeting the needs of students with behavioral health challenges.

## Rolling Out the Intervention Models at the School Building Level

The roll out of these two models was complicated by and delayed in part by the disruption caused by the closure of 23 schools and far reaching staff layoffs. In large measure, the school closures were due to state budget cuts that reduced funding by \$243 million.<sup>xv</sup>

PCCY’s analysis finds that state cuts to the district means many buildings have far fewer staff and many more students. Using the 2010 and 2014 staff levels for comparison, the student to staff ratio worsened in 92% of the intervention model schools, with



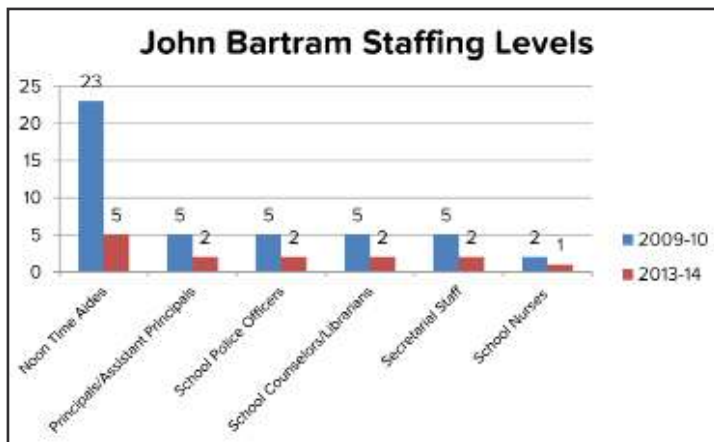
Penrose Elementary and Roxborough High School being the only exceptions. Among the 26 schools implementing intervention models, 453 staff positions were cut while student enrollment rose by 2%.

In the most severe case, the student to staff ratio at Chester A. Arthur Middle School more than doubled with staffing being reduced by 25% and student enrollment increasing by 54% since 2010.

Martin Luther King High, Roosevelt, and John Welsh also experienced a reduction in both their students and staff that worsened their student to staff ratio. For example Roosevelt Middle School reduced their student enrollment by 23% between 2010 and 2014 but reduced their staff by 40%, almost double the rate of students. In fact, the student to staff ratio worsened by more than 15% at each of these three schools.

Roxborough High was the only school to maintain their student to staff ratio after both the number of students and staff were reduced by 25%.

Recent incidents at Bartram High School resulted in the calling of a “crisis response team” to the school. Under the leadership of retired Army captain, Ozzie Wright, the school is now taking precautions that are very similar to those aligned with the Zero Tolerance model to “restore order” at Bartram. Instead of using restorative practices, students at Bartram are greeted with metal detectors, renovated surveillance cameras, and an increase in school police presence.



Fewer adults and more children can be a key reason behind recent violence at Bartram High School and the need to shift to negative intervention models.<sup>xvi</sup> PCCY found that from 2010–2014 Bartram High School lost two of its three assistant principals, all three of its community relations and social services liaisons, three of its five counselors, its sole librarian and nearly all of its bilingual counseling assistants.<sup>xvii</sup> Making matters worse was the cut in noontime aides, the people who keep order in the cafeteria and the hallways, which dropped from 23 in 2010, to just five in 2014.<sup>xviii</sup> In spite of the extreme conditions at Bartram, the principal and building staff are in the midst of rolling out its positive supports model and according to Jody Greenblatt at the District, “Bartram is catching up and undertaking the model implementation with fidelity.”<sup>xix</sup>

Warren G. Harding Middle School had a 56% increase in their student enrollment as a result of the closure of Laura H. Carnell School. Kristen Blizard, Harding's Director of Climate and Safety, suggests that this increase in student enrollment accounts for the rise in the number of out of school suspensions during the 2013-2014 academic year. By way of comparison, before the school closures, Harding Middle School only had 60 out of school suspensions in the fall 2012 semester compared to 104 during the fall 2013 semester, according to Blizard. Worse yet, as a result of a high rate of student transfers and staff turnover, Harding has to re-train everyone (staff and students) on how to effectively implement restorative practices.

Benjamin Franklin High School also received a substantial number of new students after the closures of William Penn High School and University City High School. Principal Gregory Hailey attributed an increase in student fights outside the classroom to the 48% increase in their student enrollment. The school has difficulty controlling the number of fights that take place outside the classroom because there are fewer staff available to monitor hallways and influence student behavior. Restorative practices, as noted by leadership at Benjamin Franklin, are needed now more than ever to reinvent a sense of community on campus.

Otis Hackney III, the principal at South Philadelphia High School, spoke to the challenges he experienced with rollout as a result of limited staff, "The piece that was missing was identifying people that were able to go to Bethlehem or local trainings." Starting the 2014 school year off with 20 fewer teachers from the previous year, Principal Hackney felt the need to devote more time towards building morale and better relationships with his staff. In addition, Principal Hackney mentioned a conflict of scheduling between the professional development time that was allotted for restorative practices vs. more instructionally oriented staff training. As a result, Principal Hackney recognizes that his staff were not as well versed in some of the components associated with restorative practices as they needed to be. Principal Hackney believes that restorative practices can work. He mentioned the success he had with the model while serving as the principal of Springfield Township High School. However, he indicated that running a school with more students and less staff was a real challenge.

While this enormous transition in the operation of the district contributed to the delay in implementation, it also made it hard to keep the implementation process on track. Other factors outside the intervention model's control that also contributed to delays included snow storms and snow days.

### **Some Success Stories with Rollout**

In light of some of these challenges, schools could point to success stories. Leadership at Benjamin Franklin mentions that restorative practices are used everyday inside the classroom. As noted earlier in this report, restorative techniques can also be proactive. For example, teachers at Benjamin Franklin High School use circles to do "check-ins." Ruth King, Principal at Robert Morris, mentioned that these "check-ins" give students the opportunity to "unpack" after breaks so that they are able to be more attentive and focused on academics. The IIRP suggests that "check-ins" give students the opportunity to establish goals for the day, make commitments with respect to behavior, and/or review a recent accomplishment. According to the IIRP, proactive approaches such as check-ins can result in the reduction of class disruptions and support effective classroom management.<sup>xx</sup>

## Red Ticket Club

Principal Newman uses the “Red Ticket Club” to promote and encourage students to abide by the school’s three behavioral expectations. The strategy engages both students and staff which contribute to much of their success according to Principal Newman. Here’s how it works:

- + One red ticket is randomly placed in the mailbox of five staff members each day.
- + These staff members are responsible for handing out their ticket to a student for modeling good behavior. The students never know who
- + At the end of the day, the names of the five students are called to the office over speakerphone to come and claim their prize.

Students have been rewarded with free school dance tickets or treated to water ice in exchange for their red ticket.

Despite beginning the model late in the academic calendar, Principal Newman at Chester A. Arthur spoke to the success she experienced with rolling out positive supports. “Be respectful, be responsible and be a learner” are the three behavior expectations established at Chester A. Arthur and Principal Newman assures that all of her students are able to recite the “three be’s”. This is due in part to the interactive video that staff at Chester A. Arthur created for their students. While trying to accurately capture the expected behavior of students at Chester, the video depicts staff modeling their “three be’s” throughout the school building including the classroom, cafeteria, and even the restroom. Principal Newman suggests that students were very receptive to the comedic, yet informative video and plans to show it at the beginning of each year to remind students of the behavior they are expected to uphold.

## Systems to Measure Fidelity

Fidelity is a key ingredient to the success for the rollout of any model and restorative practices and positive supports are no exception. Since some schools have yet to begin full implementation, it is hard to fully gauge whether or not schools are implementing the models with fidelity. However, both models have systems that emphasize fidelity.

For positive supports the “School-wide Evaluation Tool” (SET) will be used to gauge fidelity. The SET is designed to assess and evaluate the critical features of school-wide effective behavior support each school year.<sup>xxi</sup> The SET results are used to:

- + Assess features that are in place,
- + Determine annual goals for school-wide effective behavior support,
- + Evaluate on-going efforts toward school-wide behavior support,



- + Design and revise procedures as needed, and
- + Compare efforts toward school-wide effective behavior support from year to year.

Observations, along with staff and student interviews and surveys, are essential elements to successfully completing the SET.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> More details on SET can be found by visiting this link: [http://pbis.org/evaluation/evaluation\\_tools.aspx](http://pbis.org/evaluation/evaluation_tools.aspx)

## Moving forward with the Intervention Models

PCCY's previous reports on school climate<sup>xviii</sup> capture past experiences with rolling out intervention models and the degree to which recommendations for improving the district's school climate work are accepted and having the desired impact. For instance, one of the recommendations in our 2008 report underscores the importance of building the region's capacity to sustain training efforts.

In line with the PCCY recommendations, the district, IIRP, CHOP and the Devereux Center for Effective Schools have each been intentional about building the district's capacity to sustain the implementation of models beyond the three-year grant. One piece of evidence is that a portion of the grants covers the cost of licensing district staff as trainers for these models. This investment can enable the district to conduct and facilitate ongoing trainings and professional development without tapping their budget or seeking grants to pay external providers.

Another recommendation included in PCCY's previous reports was the need for schools to display a "readiness" factor, which includes buy-in from all school staff before rolling out these models. In the case of the positive supports programs schools receiving resources administered by CHOP, the readiness factor was demonstrated by the school staff's affirmative vote to implement the model. PCCY commends the District for adopting intervention models to improve school climate and safety. In spite of the "readiness factor" demonstrated by teacher and building leadership buy-in that stressed conditions in these schools where student to teacher ratios have increased may be undermining the fidelity of implementation. As a result, more must be done to sustain and build buy-in and capacity at the school level.

In addition to buy-in, schools must have an adequate amount of staff time available to effectively implement with fidelity and monitor progress over time. An increase in student enrollment and/or a decrease in staff means staff are likely to have less time to devote to this important work. Karyn Lynch, the district's Chief of Student Support Services, is charged with deepening school level buy-in for both models. Lynch indicated that in 2014, more professional development days are scheduled to increase the fidelity of implementation. There is anticipation for higher attendance and greater reception with the new schedule set for the summer.

## Conclusion

The investors, partners, teachers, academic and system leaders at the district and students have demonstrated a strong appreciation of the potential for both models to create a school climate that invigorates learning and inspires students to achieve. The investments are wise and under traditional conditions may have been substantial enough to improve the climate in these 26 schools. However, far-reaching layoffs, fear of layoffs, significant transitions in the principal corps all have created unforeseen obstacles to the smooth implementation of these models. The partners and the district share a strong commitment to finding ways to overcome these challenges and deepen the level of utilization of the practices in the SY 2015 school year. Fortunately, the recent investment of \$3.5 million in Federal School Climate Transformation funds awarded to the District can make it possible for stronger and even wider adoption of these critical practices to take hold.

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