RETHINKING DISCIPLINE COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE PILOT

—

A Formative Evaluation

Rethinking Discipline Community of Practice Pilot: A Formative Evaluation

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Executive Summary

During the 2019-2020 school year, nine San Antonio, TX schools joined forces with UP Partnership to rethink discipline as a community of practice and begin implementing whole school restorative justice. The formative evaluation findings suggest that Rethinking Discipline Community of Practice created value by enabling learning through community involvement and networking, ultimately accelerating restorative justice implementation. In its first year of implementation, despite limited implementation resources and scheduling disruptions related to the COVID-19 pandemic, eight out of nine schools made progress in their whole-school implementation journey. Even though most of the schools implemented restorative justice for less than nine months, a majority achieved the indicators appropriate for the first year of implementation. They gained commitment, changed dialogue, established pockets of practice, and increased options for managing behavior (Morrison, Blood & Thorsborne, 2005). Several schools also decreased their overall exclusionary discipline incidents and narrowed racial disparities.

In addition to participating in the community of practice, the following factors facilitated restorative justice implementation: immersive 3-day training by a team of experienced whole school practitioners, principal's leadership, the right implementation team composition, focus on adults before focus on students, allocated time for planning and implementation, district-level support, shared vision, voluntary participation, and slow approach to implementation.

The schools encountered multiple barriers at the individual, school, district and community of practice levels. At the individual level, barriers included lack of time, fear of failure, inability to imagine a restorative school, lack of ongoing training, challenging team dynamics, and personal challenges. At the school level, barriers included lack of teacher buy-in, competing priorities, lack of time, lack of restorative practice coordinator, lack of administrative buy-in, lack of administrative tangible support, lack of equity focus, and structural factors. Barriers at the district level included lack of leadership, including providing tangible support, and leadership turnover. Finally, barriers at the community of practice levels included inadequate time, inadequate ability to meet the needs of different campuses, inadequate coaching support, and peer pressure.

The following recommendations integrate the formative evaluation findings with empirical evidence and best practices for the implementation of whole school restorative justice. This report compares the findings with the Thorsborne and Blood's (2013) three-stage model for managing whole-school restorative justice implementation and the Denver School-Based Restorative Practices Partnership's *School-Wide Restorative Practices: Step-by-Step* guide. It also leverages the recent policy brief by Gregory and Evans (2020), entitled *The starts and stumbles of restorative justice in education: Where do we go from here?* This policy brief reviews the accumulating evidence for effectiveness of restorative justice to reduce the use of exclusionary discipline and narrow racial disparities, offering

recommendations for addressing documented implementation challenges that lead to inconsistent outcomes. Our recommendations include actions that school teams, administrators, UP Partnership, and community members can take to elevate the chances of success for whole school restorative justice efforts in Bexar County.

School teams should undertake the following actions:

1. Take time to celebrate and reflect on their year of implementation.
2. Continue the comprehensive approach to restorative justice, with an emphasis on integrity of practice and positive youth development.
3. Develop long-term implementation plans which prioritize sustainability, professional support, and strategic rollout.
4. Center equity.
5. Destigmatize data and increase its use.
6. Develop meaningful school-community partnerships.
7. Remember that principals must be change catalysts but cannot lead alone.

District administrators should undertake the following actions:

1. Allocate adequate resources.
2. Manage timeline expectations, especially expectations related to the timing of quantifiable results.
3. Avoid mandating restorative justice implementation.

UP Partnership should undertake the following actions:

1. Allocate adequate resources for the community of practice.
2. Plan sessions that can meet the complex needs of diverse school teams.
3. Invest in long-term evaluation that focuses on integrity, fidelity, and outcomes.
4. Emphasize equity, restorative practice integrity, and implementation fidelity.
5. Create advocacy avenues at all levels of systems impacting whole school restorative justice implementation to support its integrity.

All other whole school restorative justice enthusiasts and skeptics must remember that restorative justice is not a panacea. While the current progress of the nine school teams highlights the transformative power of restorative justice, it also highlights its limits. To maximize the prospects for success, stakeholders at all levels of social systems must examine their capacity to both create and remove barriers to whole school restorative justice implementation. All nine of the participating schools are high poverty schools, meaning that more than 75% of the students are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch. In addition, all have more than 300 students, making it challenging to develop trusting relationships. Evidence suggests that within these structural conditions, school transformation and improvement in outcomes is possible, but requires a significant alignment of multiple efforts and many stakeholders (Bryk et al., 2010). While advocating for the implementation of restorative justice in schools, it is imperative that those invested in achieving better student outcomes simultaneously focus on structural interventions beyond schools that can improve quality of life for families with children. Advocates must engage their radical imagination to envision schools and communities which allow all children to flourish, be free, and live with dignity. Restorative values, philosophy and practices can be instructive in how to take actions that translate this vision into reality.

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Background

Although Texas high school graduation rate has increased overall in recent years, disparities by race and ethnicity persist (Texas Education Agency, 2019). Many factors contribute to high school dropout; evidence, however, suggests that exclusionary school discipline practices—suspensions and expulsions—play a critical role (Chu & Ready, 2018; Fabelo, Thompson, Plotkin, Carmichael, Marchbanks, & Booth, 2011; Marcbanks, Blake, Booth, Carmichael, Seibert & Fabelo, 2015; Noltemeyer, Ward & Mcloughlin, 2014; Peguero & Bracy, 2014). The goal of Rethinking Discipline Community of Practice, implemented during the 2019–2020 school year in San Antonio, TX, was to introduce and scale restorative justice practices in order to increase students' sense of belonging and connection to school. Whole school restorative justice is a "distinct praxis for sustaining safe and just school communities," which relies on the relationships between all school members as the primary change vehicle (Morrison, Blood & Thorsborne, 2006, p.139). The pilot's ultimate goal is to decrease high school dropout and increase high school graduation rate in Bexar County.

UP Partnership—a local nonprofit and community-based organization with a mission to ensure that "all young people across Bexar County are ready for the future"—facilitated Rethinking Discipline Community of Practice (RDCP) as one of My Brother's Keeper San Antonio (MBKSA) collaborative initiatives. To deliver on its mission, UP Partnership coordinates data, aligns pathways and promotes policy change. Using a collective impact approach, the organization relies on four partner networks to achieve this mission: Diplomás, Excel Beyond the Bell SA, My Brother's Keeper and Our Tomorrow (Figure 1). My Brother's Keeper San Antonio is a network of cross-sector partners working together to change outcomes for boys and young men of color.

SCHOOL DISCIPLINE AND WHOLE-SCHOOL RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

The roots of whole school restorative justice are in the practices of the indigenous people of North America and New Zealand, southern Africa's Zulu and Venda communitarian values, and the peace philosophy of the U.S. Mennonites (Davis, 2019; Zehr, 2014). According to the restorative justice philosophy, any misconduct is a violation of people and relationships rather than a violation of the law (Zehr, 2002) or school rules. Consequently, misconduct creates obligations to center the needs of those who have been harmed and to repair the broken relationships. The process engages individuals who were harmed, individuals who were responsible for the harm, and the community, providing an opportunity for all to be involved in making things as right as possible (Zehr, 2002).
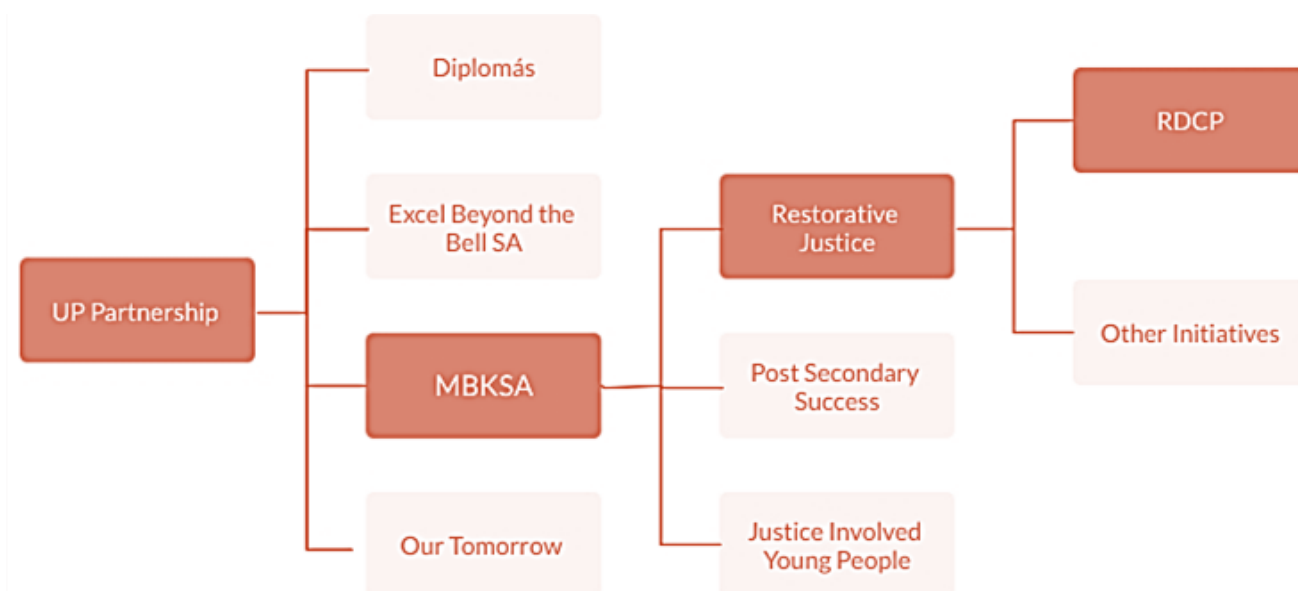
Figure 1. UP Partnership facilitated RDCP as one of MBKSA collaborative initiatives

In schools, restorative justice philosophy and practices translate into building a school culture that relies on relationships as a motivator for change rather than on fear (Morrison & Vaandering, 2012). Within the relational ecology context, community members make changes because they care about each other rather than out of the fear of punitive consequences. Unlike punitive zero-tolerance policies, which exclude students from the school community, restorative schools use circles and other restorative practices to reintegrate the student as a productive member of the community and to decrease the potential for resentment and recidivism (González, 2012). In other words, while the community recognizes the undesirable behavior as harmful, the person is treated as a valued member of the community who has the capacity to act differently and can make different choices in the future (Riestenberg, 2012). Ultimately, restorative justice is a transformative process that integrates support with accountability, while resisting vengeful responses that reproduce the original harm and destroy community safety nets (Davis, 2019).

School-to-Prison Pipeline

Over the past several decades, whole school restorative justice has emerged as a promising approach to interrupting the school-to-prison pipeline. The school-to-prison pipeline is a US-based phenomenon that refers to the relationship between the exclusionary school practices that criminalize youth and the increased likelihood that the criminalized youth will have contact with the legal system (King, Rusoja & Peguero, 2018). A vast body of evidence indicates that this phenomenon disproportionately impacts youth of color, youth with disabilities, youth with a history of foster care, and LGBTQ youth, with Black and Native American youth experiencing the greatest burden (Anyon et al., 2014; Bradshaw, Mitchell, O'Brennan & Leaf, 2010; Himmelstein & Brückner, 2011; Morris & Perry, 2017; Payne & Welch, 2010; Skiba, Mediratta & Rausch, 2016; Skiba, Horner, Chung, Rausch, May & Tobin, 2011). Furthermore, intersectionality matters. While boys are the most likely to be punished, when stratified by ethnicity and gender, Black girls are more likely to be punished than Latinas or White girls, with the disparity based on ethnicity being actually greater for girls than for boys (Crenshaw, Ocen & Nanda, 2015). On the other hand, growing evidence suggests that restorative practices can: 1) reduce school suspensions and expulsions; 2) improve academic achievement and attendance; 3) reduce school violence and cyberbullying victimization; and 4) contribute to a positive

institutional environment (Acosta, Chinman, Ebener, Malone, Phillips & Wilks, 2019; Augustine et al., 2018; Todic, Cubbin & Armour, 2019; Todic, Cubbin, Armour, Rountree & González, 2020).

Whole School Restorative Justice

Although schools may implement restorative practices in a number of ways, there is general agreement that a whole-school multi-tiered systemic approach is preferred over a classroom or fragmented model. This approach requires an emphasis on building a close-knit and caring school community (Kidde & Alfred, 2011). Morrison's three-tier model (Figure 2) offers a visual representation of the whole-school implementation approach. Primary or Tier 1 practices are key to the whole-school approach because they are foundational, strengthening and reaffirm relationships among community members through developing social and emotional skills (e.g., classroom circles to "check in" with students). Secondary or Tier 2 practices build on Tier 1 practices and focus on repairing relationships. The goal is to respond to difficulties that arise in the school community through problem solving and addressing conflict. Finally, Tier 3 practices focus on rebuilding relationships and addressing harm through intensive practice targeting specific students. This model emphasizes the need to move away from understanding restorative justice as primarily an approach to addressing harm and conflict to understanding it as an approach to building the relational ecology of a school (Morrison & Vaandering, 2012).
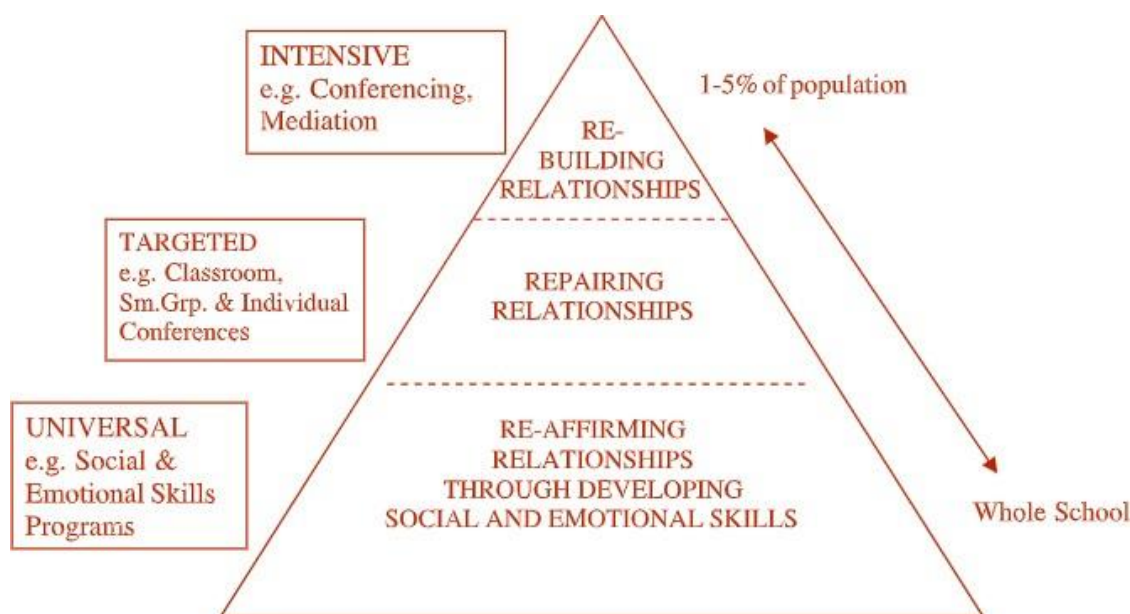
Figure 2. Morrison's three-tier model of restorative responses

RETHINKING DISCIPLINE COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE PILOT

In 2019, MBKSA network actively worked with community leaders across San Antonio to create a common agenda for shifting the discipline approaches in local schools. That year, in addition to preparing the Community of Practice, UP Partnership also coordinated one restorative justice training led by Umoja Student Development Corporation (hereon referred to as Umoja). In addition, many local educators had participated in the Texas Education Agency, Region 20 restorative justice

trainings facilitated by the Institute for Restorative Justice and Restorative Dialogue at the University of Texas at Austin. Collectively, these past educational opportunities sparked interest in creating a restorative justice city.

Community of Practice

Community of practice refers to a group of people "who genuinely care about the same real-life problems or hot topics, and who on that basis interact regularly to learn together and from each other" (Pyrko, Dörfler & Eden, 2017, p. 389). In communities of practice, learning refers to "a social formation of a person rather than as only the acquisition of knowledge" and includes a collaborative learning process of "thinking together" (Pyrko, Dörfler & Eden, 2017, p. 390). The process of joining and identifying with the community, which then produces and reproduces knowledge, is the central feature of communities of practice (Land & Jonassen, 2012). According to Weneger, Trayner and de Laat's (2011), "the formation of a community creates a social space in which participants can discover and further a learning partnership related to a common domain. […] The key characteristic is the blending of individual and collective learning in the development of a shared practice […] The learning value of community derives from the ability to develop a collective intention to advance learning in a domain" (p. 10). The goal of the Rethinking Discipline Community of Practice was to accelerate implementation of the whole-school restorative justice approach in San Antonio through learning, reflection, action, dialogue and mutual support.

RDCP Implementation Structure

UP Partnership, with the guidance of the MBKSA restorative justice workgroup and funding from the Strive Together Foundation, initiated the Rethinking Discipline Community of Practice (RDCP) pilot. Five San Antonio school districts, all members of the MBKSA network, had an opportunity to join the pilot. Three districts joined. The pilot implementation structure included:

- School-teams representing nine schools from three districts that volunteered to take part in the pilot. The school teams committed to attending a 3-day restorative justice training, implementing restorative justice in their schools, joining the community of practice by attending monthly meetings, presenting their learning at the end of the year practitioner summit, and sharing their data with UP Partnership.

- Each district designated at least one district lead whose role was to serve as the liaison between UP Partnership and the district, as well as advocating, communicating, coordinating participation in the community of practice activities, and serving as a resource for the school teams.

- UP Partnership secured the funding for the pilot, recruited all participants, coordinated the partnership agreements, data-sharing memorandums of understanding (MOU) and project addendums for third party sharing with UTSA, received monthly discipline data reports from the schools and visualized the data, managed logistical tasks (e.g., scheduling rooms, providing refreshments, activities communications), contracted Umoja to deliver 3-day training, contracted UTSA to conduct process evaluation and facilitate monthly RDCP sessions, provided quarterly reports to the funder, worked closely with the evaluation team, and provided ongoing support to the district leads and school teams.

- UTSA's team included a social work researcher with expertise in organizational change, whole school restorative justice implementation, and program evaluation; a long-term restorative justice practitioner and a professor of criminal justice experienced in whole school restorative justice implementation; and one social work graduate research assistant. This team, as participant observers, designed the pilot process evaluation, collected data throughout the process, and used the data to inform the community of practice monthly activities. The team also sent out monthly resources emails to all participants. Finally, the UTSA team took over the logistics once the monthly sessions moved to the UTSA Downtown Campus.

- UP Partnership organized Healing Justice film screenings. MBKSA network partners--American Indians in Texas, Martinez Street Women's Street Center, and City Year--facilitated film discussion and provided guidance about disrupting the school to prison pipeline through restorative justice.

Methods

The purpose of this study was to conduct a formative evaluation of the Rethinking Discipline Community of Practice (RDCP) pilot in San Antonio, TX. Formative evaluation findings should assist with adjusting and solving problems with the new intervention (Royse, Thyer & Padgett, 2015). In other words, the approach supports efforts to form the intervention. The concern and focus of this evaluation was the process, not necessarily the outcomes that RDCP is ultimately aiming to accomplish. The aim of the formative evaluation was to identify problems and fix them before the initiative continues and grows. The goal was to discover what was working well as well as the glitches, breakdowns, and departures from what was intended to happen. Figure 3 displays how formative evaluation fits into an overall program evaluation process, based on Royse, Thyer and Padgett (2015).
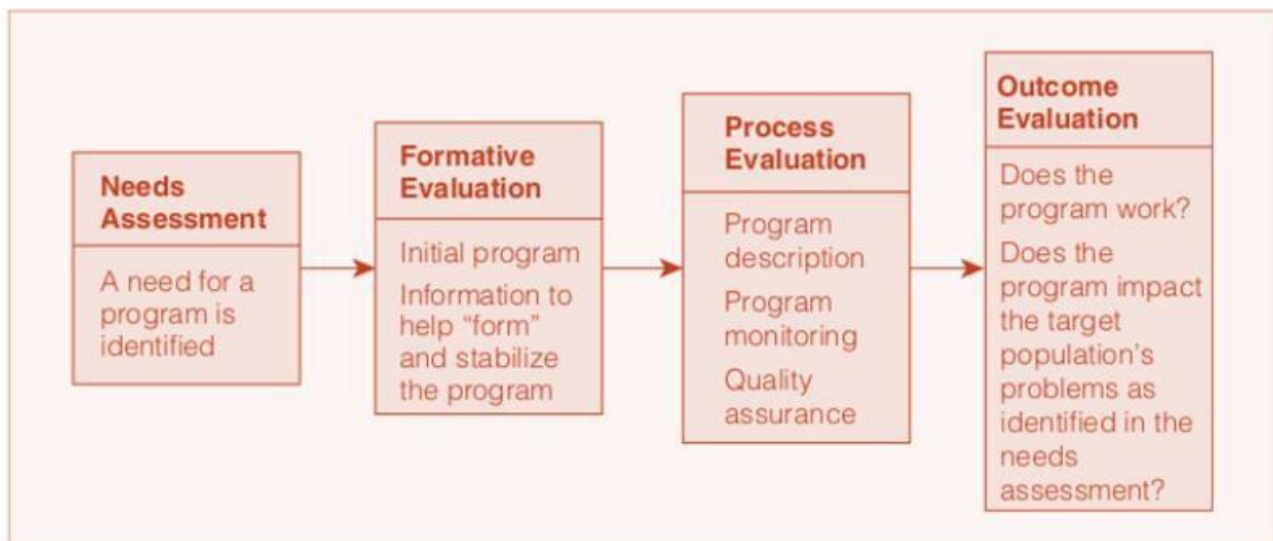
Figure 3. Stages of program evaluation

EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

The formative evaluation focused on two areas: 1) the process of implementing the community of practice and 2) the process of implementing whole school restorative justice in each of the nine schools that had volunteered to participate in the community of practice. To evaluate the implementation process for the community of practice, we used Weneger, Trayner and de Laat's (2011) conceptual framework for promoting and assessing value creation in communities and networks. In this framework, value creation refers to the value of the learning enabled by community involvement and networking. To evaluate the implementation process in each school, we relied on

best practices for whole-school implementation from two different sources:The Denver School-Based Restorative Practices Partnership's *School-Wide Restorative Practices: Step-by-Step* guide (see Appendix A for the framework overview) and Thorsborne and Blood's (2013) three-stage model for managing whole-school RP implementation (see Appendix B for the framework overview). According to Morrison, Thorsborne and Blood (2005), implementation of the whole-school restorative justice model requires a period of between three and five years. Table 1 displays the timeframe and expected change indicators according to Morrison, Thorsborne and Blood (2005). Given this framework and the fact that the teams implemented restorative justice for only seven months because of the school disruptions associated with the COVID-19 epidemic, we evaluated the school teams' process against the indicators expected to be achieved within the first 12–18 months. See Appendix C for the pilot logic model.

12–18 months	Gaining commitment. Changing dialogue. Pockets of practice. Increased options for managing behavior. Improved statistics.
12–24 months	Altered dialogue and processes. Alignment of policy and procedure. Increased skill development. School community commitment.
24–36 months	Embedding of practice at all levels. Altered operating framework. Reviewing policy and procedure. Creative solutions emerge.
4–5 years	Best practice. Behavior change embedded. Cultural change across the school community.

Table 1. Timeframe and indicators of change.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the evaluation:

1. What activates were implemented?
2. Were the activities implemented as planned? How many people did the activities reach?
3. How well were the pilot activities implemented?
4. What were the facilitators of and barriers to whole school restorative justice implementation?
5. What difference did the pilot activities make? In what ways were the participants and their school campuses better off?

Data Collection

We collected qualitative and quantitative data using the following methods:

RDCP Activities Attendance Records. UP Partnership provided sign-up sheets for each pilot activity.

Training Evaluation Surveys. After each summer 2019 training session, participants completed a paper evaluation of the 3-day Umoja training.

RDCP Monthly Sessions Evaluation Survey. RDCP participants completed an online survey evaluation after each monthly session.

Whole school Restorative Justice Best Practices Self-Assessment Survey. We developed a self-assessment instrument using the Denver School-Based Restorative Practices Partnership's *School-Wide Restorative Practices: Step-by-Step* guide and Thorsborne and Blood's (2013) three-stage model for managing whole-school RP implementation. We finalized the survey after the MBKSA restorative justice workgroup had reviewed it and provided suggestions for changes. Each school team completed the survey at the beginning of the school year and then again at the end of the fall semester.

RDCP Overall Experience (Harlandale and Judson ISDs only). Participants completed an online survey at the end of the year reflecting on their overall experience in the community of practice.

Focus Groups (Harlandale and Judson ISDs only). Four school teams participated in the focus groups at the end of the year. A focus group is a qualitative research method that allows a researcher to systematically and simultaneously interview several individuals (Rubin & Babbie, 2014). The approach represents a flexible and cost-effective tool to gather data and use the group dynamics to uncover topics that usually do not emerge in surveys (Rubin & Babbie, 2014). Evidence suggests that three to six focus groups are sufficient to likely be able to identify 90% of themes on a topic among a relatively homogeneous sample, including themes that are most broadly shared (Guest, Namey & McKenna, 2017). The sessions took place via Zoom and were recorded and then shared with the participants.

Interviews. We interviewed community organizations involved with the pilot and various individuals with support roles outside of the whole school teams (e.g., UP Partnership staff) about their role and experiences with the pilot.

Secondary Data. Participating teams submitted their monthly suspension and expulsion data to UP Partnership and UP Partnership visualized the data by developing graphs to display trends over time.

Unstructured Field Observation. As participant observers, the UTSA team transcribed the group activities content generated during the session activities. The principal investigator also took field notes. The observations addressed the main research questions and included observations about the context, content, and concepts (Fetters & Rubenstein, 2019).

Protection of Human Subjects

In compliance with The University of Texas at San Antonio and San Antonio Independent School District Institutional Review Boards (IRB) requirements, participation in this evaluation was voluntary. All surveys were completed anonymously. Only two out of the three school districts elected to participate in the final round of data collection (focus groups and overall process evaluation). No

identifying data were included on the survey or in the data collected through observation. The Zoom recordings were only available to the research team.

Data Confidentiality. We stored the data using the UTSA OneDrive for Business, which is a campus-wide service that allows faculty, staff and students to use cloud-based file sharing for business and academic purposes. The service allows for the safe storage of Category I, II and III data. All records from this evaluation were stored securely and kept confidential.

Analysis

We analyzed the quantitative data using SPSS and descriptive statistics. Guest and colleagues' (2012) applied thematic analysis for the interviews and focus groups guided our qualitative data analysis and specifically helped the focus on answering the five research questions.

Findings

WHAT ACTIVITIES WERE IMPLEMENTED?

After receiving the Strive Together' s Promising Practice Fund grant, UP Partnership extended an invitation to the five Bexar County school districts that are part of the My Brother's Keeper San Antonio network. Three districts—Harlandale, Judson and San Antonio Independent School Districts—volunteered to participate. Nine K-12 schools joined the community of practice.

Figure 4. Summary of the RDCP pilot participants

After developing and signing MOUs with the three districts, designing the evaluation plan, and undergoing two IRB review processes in the spring of 2019, the pilot implementation begun in the summer of 2019. The pilot was scheduled to end in December 2019, aligning with the original grant funding period; however, based on the participants' request in October 2019, UP Partnership extended the community of practice through May 2020. Table 2 displays the pilot activities. Figure 5 displays the pilot timeline. Table 3 compares the intended and actual pilot activities.

Pre-Implementation Activities	Pre-implementation activities included team recruitment, signing MOUs, scheduling activities, planning evaluation, and obtaining the university- and district-level IRB approvals.
3-day Umoja Training	The training focused on the essential groundwork for the self-awareness and skills required of a restorative practitioner. Participants engaged in experiential activities in which they explored mindsets and cultivated self-awareness about relationships, community and conflict. They also learned proactive and responsive restorative practices to prevent and address harm.
Monthly Sessions	The monthly sessions included didactic content, an opportunity to practice restorative justice skills, and opportunities to connect with other participants. In spring 2020, sessions also included planning time for school teams.
Monthly Resource Emails	Once a month, the participants received an email from the UTSA team which included a list of video and written resources, including the current empirical literature related to restorative justice and whole school restorative justice implementation. The resources also included current empirical literature related to whole school restorative justice.
Monthly Data Tracking	At the end of each month, each school team submitted to UP Partnership their suspension and expulsion data. UP Partnership visualized the data by tracking the overall suspensions and expulsions over time, and stratified the data by gender and race/ethnicity, and by gender and ethnicity combined.
Site Visit	All principals had an opportunity to do a Chicago site visit in October 2019. Principals visited one of the schools working with Umoja.
Healing Justice Film	MBKSA and participating school district hosted a Healing Justice documentary film screening for the community. Healing Justice explores the causes and consequences of the current North American justice system, including the school-to-prison pipeline, and its effect on marginalized communities.
Umoja Virtual Coaching	School principals and one additional staff received virtual coaching from Umoja during spring 2020.
Reflection Sessions	All the school teams had an opportunity to reflect on their implementation journey at the end of the fall and spring semesters. They discussed their experiences in the pilot, discussed implementation facilitators and barriers, and explored the next steps in their implementation process. During spring, the teams also reviewed their data. The fall session was self-facilitated using a structured process and reported to the entire group. The UTSA team facilitated the spring reflection session via Zoom.
Virtual Sessions: Rethinking Discipline	Teams shared their lessons learned with peers and Bexar County schools considering restorative justice implementation.

Table 2. Description of the RDCP activities, January 2019–May 2020.

2019

January-March
Finalize participating school teams, develop partner MOUs, develop evaluation plan.

April-May
Obtain IRB approvals to collect evaluation data.

June-July
Participating teams attend one of the two 3-day Umoja restorative justice trainings.

August
Community of Practice Session 1: Introduction to implementation science and organizational change theory; Self-assessment

September
Community of Practice Session 2: Circle structure; Tier 1 and Tier 2 Practices; Data collection; Data and equity-focused implementation

October
Chicago Site Visit; Community of Practice Session 3: Principals' report out after Chicago site visit; Tier 3 practices

November
Community of Practice Session 4: Virtual dialogue with experienced colleagues across the country who are implementing school-based restorative justice

December-January
Community of Practice Session 5: Implementation journey reflection; Self-assessment

February
Community of Practice Session 6: Exploration of adultism and the role of youth in school-based restorative justice implementation

March
Community of Practice Session 7: Approaches to evaluation; logic models; qualitative and quantitative data; equity (recorded session)

May
Final Reflection Session; Virtual Sessions: Rethinking Discipline; Final evaluation report.

2020

Figure 5. RDCP timeline

WERE THE PLANNED ACTIVITIES IMPLEMENTED AS INTENDED?

Pre-Implementation Activities	Mostly as planned	Despite the districts' engagement in the pilot planning, it took several months, which was longer than anticipated, to recruit schools and sign data MOUs. Securing IRB approvals from UTSA and SAISD took about two months, as anticipated. The other two districts did not have internal IRBs but provided formal permissions for staff participation. The original pilot plan included 10 schools. Nine schools volunteered to participate.
3-day Umoja Training	As planned	Umoja held two 3-day trainings during summer 2019.
Monthly Sessions	Mixed	The pilot was scheduled to end in December 2019; however, based on the participants' needs and request in October 2019, UP Partnership extended the pilot through May 2020. The UTSA facilitation team volunteered to facilitate the monthly sessions and continue evaluation. In addition, during fall 2019, the UTSA team had less capacity than originally planned due to one of the co-PIs unanticipated scheduling conflict. The original format for the monthly sessions—time for learning, connecting with other teams, and practicing new skill—also included team planning time during spring, per participants' request. Finally, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, regular school operations and RDCP monthly sessions were discontinued in March.
Monthly Resource Emails	As planned	UTSA sent monthly emails to participants containing restorative justice resources, including readings, videos, podcasts and empirical literature.
Monthly Data Tracking	Mixed	Eight out of the nine participating schools submitted 2019–2020 monthly suspension and expulsion data. Only one school also submitted their 2018–2019 data for comparison. Schools did not submit attendance data due to a stalled MOU process, although one school reported improvements in attendance in their final virtual presentation. Furthermore, none of the participating schools were already collecting school climate data. Selecting and implementing a climate survey is a significant undertaking that requires planning at the school and district levels. Implementing a new climate survey in the first year of implementation was not feasible. One school, however, developed an internal Transformational Leadership Instrument, which allowed teachers and students to rate multiple dimensions of teachers' leadership style.
Site Visit	As planned	Principals traveled to Chicago in October 2019 for a site visit as planned. Upon return, they shared their learnings during the monthly RDCP session with the rest of the participants.
Healing Justice Film Screening	Not originally planed	The Healing Justice film screening was not originally included in the pilot plan. However, both community partners and participating ISDs recognized a need for deeper understanding and dialogue with staff and community members about the justice system. Since the film screening is one of the MBKSA activities, partnering with the three districts to hold community screenings allowed districts to engage in the broader community dialogue related to the justice system, the school-to-prison pipeline and its effect on marginalized communities, and restorative justice.

Table 3. RDCP activities January 2019–May 2020: intended compared to implemented.

Umoja Virtual Coaching	Not originally planed	The Umoja virtual coaching sessions were originally not included in the pilot plan, but were offered as a response to the expressed needs and request for coaching. These Zoom sessions included two school representatives—the principal and one additional team member—to allow time for meaningful discussions.
Reflection Sessions	Mostly as planned	All teams engaged in reflection about their implementation journey at the end of the fall and spring semesters. They discussed their experiences in the pilot, implementation facilitators and barriers, and next steps in their implementation process. During spring, the teams also reviewed their data. The fall session was self-facilitated, using a structured process and reported out to the large group. The UTSA team facilitated the spring reflection session via Zoom and shared the recording with each team for use in their future strategic planning. The zoom sessions were not a part of the original pilot plan.
Rethinking Discipline Virtual Series	Mostly as planned	The school teams presented their learning to MBKSA partners and schools considering implementing restorative justice. While the summit was a part of the original plan, the virtual format was a response to the COVID-19 pandemic.
Pilot Length	Not as planned	The pilot was originally funded for 12 months and was scheduled to be implemented from January through December, per funding cycle. The funding cycle did not align with the school year. In addition, preplanning for a pilot that included three different school districts and nine schools required more time than anticipated. The total implementation time was 17 months.
Pilot Administration	Mixed	Recruiting participants and securing partner and data agreements took longer than anticipated. Hosting a large group of RDCP participants requires a large space. A community partner hosted the fall monthly sessions, but was unable to pre-book the same space. This resulted in uncertainty and monthly room changes, leading to frustration and confusion. In response, a stable space was secured for the spring sessions.
Pilot Communication	Mixed	Although communication improved over the course of implementation, challenges remained due to the complexity of the pilot. Implementing the project required communication within and between UTSA facilitation and evaluation team, UP Partnership, and nine schools located within three school districts. Each school team included was also situated within in its own organizational hierarchy, which included educators and staff, associate principals, principals, district leads, and superintendents.
Evaluation Data Collection	Mostly as planned	Data collection occurred mostly as planned, except for a few adjustments. In October, participants requested that the post monthly session survey be shortened. COVID-19-related adjustments required an IRB approval modification (e.g., zoom recording the final reflection session). One district elected not to participate in the modified data collection activities.

Table 3 (continued). RDCP activities January 2019–May 2020: intended compared to implemented

HOW MANY PEOPLE DID THE ACTIVITIES REACH?

The number of RDCP participants fluctuated over time due to turnover and role changes at the school and district levels. Overall, 89 adults participated in the community of practice activities, excluding the Rethinking Discipline Virtual Series and Healing Justice Film Screenings. These two sets of activities also included community members and individuals considering restorative justice implementation in their schools. Table 4 summarizes the number of participants in the RDCP activities who signed in.

Umoja 3-day training; June	Umoja 3-day training: July	RDCP August session	RDCP September session	RDCP October session	RDCP November session	RDCP December/January session	RDCP February session	RDCP May session	Rethinking Discipline Virtual Series	Healing Justice film, four screenings
37	28	54	60	50	27	55	40	38	84	132

Table 4. Number of participants who attended the RDCP pilot activities

HOW WELL WERE THE ACTIVITIES IMPLEMENTED?

Table 6 on the following page displays the results from the surveys the participants completed after the 3-day Umoja training and after most monthly sessions. The December/January and May sessions were reflection sessions and we collected field observation data at that time. The participants responded to the survey questions using a 5-point Likert scale (Strongly agree, Somewhat agree, Neither agree nor disagree, Somewhat disagree, and Disagree) to indicate their agreement with statements listed in the table. Overall, at least 80% of the participants agreed that they would be able to use the session content in their professional and personal lives, that the facilitators and the process were effective, and that the meeting locations were adequate. Advanced communication about the session logistics was considered initially inadequate, but after examining the evaluation feedback from the first RDCP session and problem-solving the issues, the communication effectiveness improved.

While communication improved over time, it remained a challenge throughout the implementation period due to the complexity of the project and context. School districts are complex systems and require communication with representatives at different levels of its hierarchy, including assistant superintendents, restorative justice district leads, principals, associate principals, staff, and partnering community organizations. RDCP participants received ongoing email communication from UP Partnership and the UTSA team. Unstable meeting location for the monthly meetings during fall 2019 added an additional challenge. Moreover, many of the pilot participants are also engaged in the broader county-wide MBKSA restorative justice initiative. As a result, it was challenging to ensure clear communication with all stakeholders, at times resulting in frustration and mistakes. For instance, in December 2019 an entire district missed a session because they thought the monthly RDCP meeting was canceled. While UP Partnership/MBKSA did have a canceled event, it was not the monthly RDCP session.

Circle at the Umoja 3-day training at St. Phillips College, June session. Photo credit: UP Partnership.

	Umoja 3-day training; June, N = 37	Umoja 3-day training: July, N = 28	RDCP August session, N = 54	RDCP September session, N = 60	RDCP October session, N = 50	RDCP November session, N = 27	RDCP December/January session, N = 55	RDCP February session, N = 40	RDCP May session, N = 38
Response rate	86%	52%	30%	60%	84%	56%	N/A	58%	N/A
I will be able to apply what I learned in my school.	100%	100%	88%	100%	93%	91%	N/A	91%	N/A
I will be able to apply what I learned in my own life.	100%	100%	88%	100%	91%	82%	N/A	83%	N/A
The content was organized and easy to follow.	100%	100%	94%	100%	91%	96%	N/A	96%	N/A
The facilitators were knowledgeable.	100%	100%	88%	100%	100%	96%	N/A	96%	N/A
The facilitators encouraged participation and interaction.	100%	100%	94%	100%	100%	96%	N/A	96%	N/A
Adequate time was provided for discussion.	100%	100%	82%	97%	96%	96%	N/A	96%	N/A
Adequate time was provided for connecting with others.	N/A	N/A	82%	95%	98%	96%	N/A	96%	N/A
Advanced information about the session was adequate.	N/A	N/A	59%	94%	91%	83%	N/A	82%	N/A
The facility was comfortable.	100%	100%	94%	100%	96%	96%	N/A	96%	N/A

Table 5. Umoja 3-day training and monthly RDCP session participants' evaluation results

Most Useful Activities

The RDCP participants reported that the 3-day training and monthly sessions were the most helpful aspects of the pilot.

3-day Umoja Training. The initial training was helpful because "it set the foundation" and helped "our school get off to a great start." "It offered the whole picture." "It was an introspective process that allowed us to see where we were and see where we could be." The training was "the most thorough and intense in terms of time and effort." Participants valued that the training was "hands on and in person." For those who had already received training through the University of Texas/Region 20, the training "reinforced and added to my knowledge." One participant also stated that they would "love to take it again as a refresher."

Monthly Community of Practice Sessions. Monthly RDCP sessions were helpful because they allowed the participants to "not feel alone." The sessions allowed for relationship building within and across school teams. They also allowed teams to stay on track because they had time to get "into our circles and talk out how to execute our plan to fulfill the [implementation] objectives." It was helpful to be able "to debrief and listen to other schools' success and trials." The participants also appreciated being able to practice circles, have access to "the activities, modeling and coaching, [which] allowed for participation and involvement," and learning about implementation resources. Finally, these sessions were affirming and rejuvenating. A participant shared: "The personal collaboration and growth assisted in the buy-in, despite the fact that most people who were there were already in the disposition to implement restorative justice. It helped value and reaffirm the ideas we were bringing to the table."

Least Useful Activities

The RDCP participants reported that, generally, the virtual activities—training, coaching and emails—were the least helpful. Several participants also mentioned the Healing Justice film screening as the least useful activity for the RDCP participants, but helpful for the community overall.

The Monthly Resource Emails. At the beginning of the community of practice, we asked the participants about their preference for receiving restorative justice resources from UTSA. The vast majority responded that receiving one email per month with resources was the best option. However, at the end of the year, the participants reported that the emails were the least helpful because they "missed them; they were lost in the amount of emails I receive daily." Another participant reported that, "I didn't use the monthly resource emails as much as I should have because I would get busy and not have time to look at them." Another participant shared: "I appreciate the monthly resource emails, but they were sometimes overwhelming."

Virtual Activities. The pilot included several virtual activities. For instance, the November monthly session was virtual, as requested by the principals due to the scheduled session date being too close to the Thanksgiving break. The March session was converted to a series of recorded presentations due to COVID-19. The virtual coaching sessions with Umoja were not a part of the original pilot plan and became available to teams during spring 2020. Generally, participants preferred in-person and

hands-on activities. One participant also reported confusion about how to access the virtual coaching sessions.

Small Group Discussion, Umoja 3-day training, Park Village Elementary, July 2019.
Photo credit: UP Partnership.

WHAT WERE THE FACILITATORS OF AND BARRIERS TO WHOLE SCHOOL RESTORATIVE JUSTICE IMPLEMENTATION?

Facilitators

The evaluation participants identified the following facilitators for successful whole school restorative justice implementation:

Immersive 3-Day Training by a Team of Experienced Whole School Restorative Justice Practitioners. As discussed in the previous section, this training set the foundation for implementation and provided the opportunity for school teams to envision their future restorative schools. Several participants pointed out that their entire school would benefit from the training they had received and that bringing a similar training to their colleagues could reduce resistance to restorative practices.

Monthly Community of Practice Sessions. Participants reported that the monthly community of practice sessions accelerated their implementation through providing a regular opportunity to: 1) continue to experience, learn and practice restorative skills; 2) meet with the school team and stay on target; 3) focus on the integrity of practice and implementation fidelity; 4) learn from and with others passionate about restorative justice.

Principal's Leadership. Participants' highlighted that the principal must fully support restorative practices, both in words and actions. It is not enough for the principal just to support the team's implementation efforts. The principal must also be familiar with the research supporting restorative practices, actively work on developing the restorative mindset, model restorative values and behaviors, and be open to feedback from the school and surrounding community. In addition, the principal must be able to communicate the importance of the relationship between social emotional learning and academic success. These priorities are in constant tension within the educational system. Principals must be able to help their staff work within that constant tension while navigating the pressures they face from their district and the Texas Education Agency. Finally, empowering the staff to also lead and take ownership of the implementation efforts was critical.

The Right Implementation Team Composition. The implementation team must include individuals who are early adopters, restorative practitioners, and influencers. They must have the courage to speak up and be willing to challenge each other.

Focus on Adults before Focus on Students. Before asking adults to implement restorative justice in their daily work, it is essential to provide opportunities for them to learn about and experience the benefits of restorative practice. It is important to begin implementation efforts with proper staff training. The training should "clearly define what restorative justice is, and what it's not." Additionally, there should be ongoing opportunities to experience restorative practices as part of professional development and in staff meetings.

Allocated Time for Planning and Implementation. In the context of competing priorities and busy school schedules, intentionally making time for meetings and planning is essential.

Circle, Umoja 3-day training, Park Village Elementary, July, 2019. Photo credit: UP Partnership.

District Support, Including Designated District Leads. Clear school district direction and support are key. Dedicated district-level staff will ensure follow through. All participating districts had at least one district lead, whose role included serving as a liaison between UP Partnership, the district, and the individual schools. That person was also an internal resource to the implementation team. While the districts organized these roles differently, several best practices emerged: 1) district leads should have advanced restorative justice training and practical experience to be able to provide practical support to teams; 2) they need to be knowledgeable about best implementation strategies 3) they need to have influence and decision-making powers; 4) they need to focus on advocacy and ensuring the needed resources are available; and 5) restorative justice implementation needs to be a formal part of their job. They need to hold regular implementation team meetings and restorative justice cannot be their side-effort. On the contrary, "it has to be focused, active and intentional engagement."

Shared Vision and Voluntary Participation. Ensuring that the principal and their school team are volunteering to implement restorative justice was key. Furthermore, developing a shared vision together was essential for ensuring that the team persists even in the face of implementation barriers and challenges.

Taking it Slow. Participants talked about the importance of developing a vision and implementation strategy, and about "not taking on too much, too soon." Taking it slow ensures more opportunities for success that teams can then build on.

Barriers

As part of conducting a formative evaluation, it was important to pay attention to the potential barriers and challenges to successful implementation in order to inform the next stage of RDCP implementation and to prevent future problems. We organized the barriers by level, starting with internal barriers and ending with systemic barriers.

Individual Level Barriers.

Lack of Time. Participants struggled with finding time to teach and embed restorative practices into their daily work while also training and supporting other colleagues on their campus.

Fear of Failure. Participants reported feeling like they were failing if they did not observe changes in the students' behaviors. In addition, "there is always that fear of still losing control in the class, but having help on understanding how to handle a situation, helped with that."

Inability to Imagine a Fully Integrated Restorative School. "I struggled with the vision of the approach. I wanted to see what the end result looked like." This also made it hard to be patient.

Lack of Ongoing Training. Participants discussed the need for more hands-on training to address different situations, more training on the use restorative language, more opportunities to practice, and more individual 1:1 coaching. This lack of training and experiences, at times resulted in doubting the approach. "Having a 'leader' or 'coach' at the campus that could dedicate an extended amount of time planning for training and implementation," could make a difference.

Challenging Team Dynamics. Challenging team dynamics could be discouraging. One participant felt hopeless "that even the team was not completely on board." Another one struggled with the power dynamics: "I was not the lead per se and thus the full implementation was not my call, so I had to step back and not overstep my boundaries." When there is conflict on the team, it "further complicated our process."

Personal Challenges. "I was personally having a very difficult school year and split across multiple roles and campuses. I felt I needed more training and time to implement things; I also felt like because the rest of our campus did not have the same level of training, it was difficult for them to be on the same page as those of us who had been trained."

School Level Barriers.

Lack of Teacher Buy-in. Teacher buy-in was one of the most salient barriers at the school level. Teachers often did not have the required "patience and understanding." "Some of our teachers were apprehensive about using restorative conversations with their students." There was not enough support to "get teachers onboard" and help them move away from the old attitude of "What is going to happen to this kid?" The restorative approach "would be better received with more training for our faculty and staff. I felt like it was a challenge to find time with everything else going on to have more training with them."

Competing Priorities. The tension between the focus on social emotional learning and academic is a constant struggle, "particularly in the spring semester." "Another participant pointed out the complexity of the context, "I think it goes deeper than just buy-in … there's a full paradigm shift that has to take place, and unfortunately, the system is set up against RJ. There are so many directives and high stakes testing takes precedence over everything. Resolving things in the quickest manner (whether or not it is best or most effective) is what many educators fall back on when things start to get stressful."

Lack of Time. Lack of time is a salient theme at all levels of the educational system. There is not "enough time to train staff" or to develop a clear vision to "come together and work it through." These factors then influence "teachers utilizing" restorative practices. "Lack of time is so stressful for many people because academic accountability is always lurking in our minds."

Lack of Restorative Practices Coordinator. Participants reported that having more support, such as having a site coordinator, could resolve many of the challenges related to limited time and competing priorities, making restorative practices more possible.

Lack of Administrative Buy-in. Participants shared that if administrators were not supportive of restorative practices, implementation at a whole-school level is nearly impossible. "There was very little support to practice restorative on my campus. I tried numerous times to institute restorative justice through classroom circles, restorative conversations, return-to-campus circles, etc., and received no support for any of it." Resistance can occur as a result of misunderstanding restorative practices or as a result of being "voluntold" to implement it.

Lack of Administrative Tangible Support. Participants shared that support from administrators could make a difference. "I would have liked to have the support that we had discussed, such as having admin watch the class while we dealt with students. But I understand that it is not always an option."

Principals present lessons learned after returning from the Chicago site visit.
Photo credit: UP Partnership.

Lack of Equity Focus. While many individual educators brought a strong social justice perspective to restorative justice implementation, generally the teams did not center equity in their implementation. As one educator noted, "Just because people are trained in restorative practices, does not mean that they get social justice issues."

Structural Factors. All nine schools were high poverty schools, which means that 75% of the students were eligible for free or reduced-price lunch, and all schools had more than 300 students. Evidence suggests that these structural factors influence the school's ability to develop relational trust and improve student outcomes (Bryk et al. 2010).

District Level Barriers.

Lack of Leadership, Including Providing Tangible Support. Administrators may have a supportive attitude, but not take action to support efforts. For example, giving grace to implement restorative justice as appropriate at each campus, but not allocating resources. "For us, the role has been added to the plates of people who are definitely willing but already spread too thin." In addition, some campuses experienced challenges with having subs in order to be able to leave to attend monthly meetings.

Leadership Turnover. Change in leadership at the district level can mean a lack of knowledge as well as a lack of support from the new leadership, resulting in follow-through issues for the campus.

Rethinking Discipline Community of Practice Barriers.

Inadequate Time. Three-hour sessions were not long enough to be able to learn, practice, plan and connect with others. It especially noteworthy that participants pointed out the need to include more time dedicated to collectively evaluating RDCP's impact, examining data, and working together to solve specific campus issues. (Note: March and April 2020 sessions included some of this focus as a result of end of the fall semester feedback, but the changes were not actualized due to COVID-10 interruption). Participants suggested that full day sessions would be more beneficial.

Inadequate Ability to Meet the Needs of Different Campuses. Some school teams were further along in the implementation process than others and reported that the pace and content of the sessions were not meeting their implementation needs. They noted that monthly sessions focused too much on the Tier 1 practices and needed to include more role plays and actual case studies from the involved campuses. Elementary school campuses in particular reported feeling that the session content was primarily tailored to older grades.

Inadequate Coaching Support. Participants emphasized the need for on-the-ground coaching from experienced practitioners, which was not included in the pilot as an original activity. While some funding was reallocated for virtual coaching with Umoja, some participants reported that they would have preferred in-person coaching.

Peer Pressure. A few participants expressed concerns that administrators may be under pressure to say "the right thing during the monthly meetings," when they were in fact struggling with embracing restorative justice.

WHAT DIFFERENCE DID THE PILOT ACTIVITIES MAKE? IN WHAT WAYS WERE THE PARTICIPANTS AND THEIR SCHOOL CAMPUSES BETTER OFF?

Before we present the results that answer this research question, we remind readers that this was a formative evaluation focused on two areas: 1) the process of implementing the community of practice and 2) the process of implementing whole school restorative justice in each of the nine participating schools. According to best practice, implementation of the whole-school restorative justice model requires a period of between three and five years (Morrison, Thorsborne and Blood, 2006). The concern and focus of this evaluation was the process, not necessarily the outcomes that RDCP and the participating schools are ultimately aiming to accomplish. The primary goal was to discover what was working well as well as the glitches, breakdowns and departures from what was intended to happen. Readers should keep in mind that: 1) Rethinking Discipline Community of Practice and associated whole school implementation efforts occurred over a period of 17 months and 2) the actual whole school implementation efforts, which would normally last nine months, were interrupted after seven months due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, it is critical that readers keep that context in mind as they interpret the meaning of the findings in this section.

Community of Practice

To evaluate the community of practice, we used Weneger, Trayner and de Laat's (2011) conceptual framework for promoting and assessing value creation in communities and networks. In this framework, value creation refers to the value of the learning enabled by community involvement and networking. Table 6 provides a summary of the self-reported impacts of the community of practice at the end of the year for the participants from two districts. The subsequent findings reflect the responses from all the participants.

Impact	Agree
I know more about whole school restorative justice now than I did before partaking in RDCP.	83%
I have experienced personal growth as a result of partaking in RDCP.	91%
I feel more connected with colleagues who are part of our school team than I did before partaking in RDCP.	75%
I have built new meaningful connections with colleagues from other schools who are implementing restorative justice.	75%
I have access to more resources to advance restorative justice implementation at my school than I did prior to partaking in RDCP.	83%
Participating in RDCP has enabled me to learn from others who are also implementing whole school restorative justice.	88%
Going through the RDCP process with other teams implementing restorative justice has helped me build the confidence I need to keep implementing restorative justice in my school.	79%

Table 6. Impacts of the community of practice on the participants from two districts, N = 24 (response rate 49%)

The participants reported that the monthly community of practice sessions accelerated their implementation through providing a regular opportunity to: 1) continue to experience, learn and practice restorative skills; 2) meet with the school team and stay on target; 3) focus on the integrity of practice and implementation fidelity; 4) learn from and with others passionate about restorative justice. Table 7 presents additional salient themes from the qualitative data.

Experience, Learn and Practice Restorative Skills.

Participants reported that the monthly sessions provided a regular opportunity to experience circles. One participant noted, "The highlight for me was the circle of sharing. I realized just as important as it is for one to be heard, one must also listen with care and respond appropriately." In addition, the sessions expanded the participants' range of "tools to put in my tool kit bag." For instance, the sessions helped them "better understand circles" and even to become more comfortable facilitating them. The sessions reminded them "to use restorative language; to keep using the language regularly with all constituents so we are all on the same page." They also allowed participants "to realize that circles can be used in teaching" and to respond "to students in difficult situations." Circle scripts, the implementation benchmarks self-assessment tool, restorative questions, Morrison's hierarchy of restorative responses, one particular district restorative justice lead, and Circle Forward: Building a Restorative School Community by Boyes-Watson and Pranis were the most noted resources.

Meet with the School Team and Stay on Target.

Given the hectic school schedules and competing priorities, the monthly sessions provided an intentional and designated time for school teams to focus on implementation. The participants appreciated being able to engage in team building, "collaborate with my campus team," and "get our principal's feedback."

Focus on the Integrity of Practice and Implementation Fidelity.

The participants also valued the ongoing focus on the integrity of practice and best practices for implementation. The sessions helped participants become "more self-aware." They reported being able to more easily take responsibility for their role in the relationship or conflict. For example, one participant reported that the sessions "helped me check myself first" and to be "more aware of the language I use with my students." Another one noted, "I become more and more reflective and motivated after each session." Participants also reported developing a more expansive view of restorative justice. For example, one participant said, "I will attempt to use circles more outside of correction." Others realized that "implementing restorative practices is a team effort," and implementing it "will take time." "It is a process, and that's okay." In addition, participants reported being "more informed about the restorative justice process" which, in turn, contributed to feeling "able to implement it at my campus." Others highlighted that discussions about strategic planning, the need for a restorative coordinator for each campus, data collection on student demographic stratification, school-community partnerships and youth-engagement were important for their teams' strategic planning. For example, one participant was able to realize the action they need to take to be successful: "It is going to be difficult to implement this on our campus because there is currently no plan in place to proceed."

Learn from and with Others Passionate about Restorative Justice.

Being a part of the community of practice was affirming, energizing, and motivating for the majority of participants, both at the personal and professional level. One participant noted that the sessions have "partially restored my dedication to education." Another shared that, "I'm personally going through some hard times this school year, so having support from my colleagues has been monumental." Others appreciated the value of learning from other educators. For instance, one participant noted that they were "excited for what is to come! Seeing other campuses that were trained over the summer and already implementing is inspiring." The community has "given me insights to the way others are incorporating RJ and the setbacks that people have experienced." "It gives me hope that if we all stay united and work through all the ups and downs that we can and will be successful. And the beneficiaries of all this hard work will be the students, the staff, the faculty, their home lives and the overall community." "It's impressive that we meet monthly and work on keeping the momentum going in the right direction. To make sure everyone truly understands the process and that everyone is on board. To address any and all problems. Plus, to provide everyone with solutions to the issues they face expediently so that they don't feel alone, ignored or overwhelmed."

San Antonio Mayor Nirenberg participating in a circle with school leaders, Alamo College District, August 2019. Photo credit: UP Partnership.

After this session one thing …	RDCP August, Implementation science N = 54	RDCP September, Tier 1 and 2 Practices, N = 60	RDCP October, Chicago Site Visit Report & Tier 3 Practices, N = 50	RDCP November, Dialogue with restorative leaders, session, N = 27	RDCP February, Adultism and youth engagement, session, N = 40
Response rate	30%	60%	84%	56%	58%
I know	That it's a process. More about implementation.	That this will take longer and more time than the time we have. Best practices for implementing successfully. New approaches to circles.	Different restorative approaches. RJ is successful when community partners are involved. That I should not give up. Restorative practices can be resources. I am not the only one feeling frustrated.	Restorative justice is a mindset change that takes time! Students are an important part of the entire structure. We need to listen to their needs.	Systems of oppression, including adultism, affect every aspect of our work. Youth are full individuals facing many challenges that may impact their adult lives. There is still a lot of work ahead. I just think the word oppression is a strong word.
I feel	Hopeful. Confident.	Rejuvenated. Motivated. Reeducated.	Hopeful. Inspired. Refreshed. Validated. Disheartened/defeated.	Conflicted. Confident.	Hopeful. Encouraged. Empowered.
I can do	Ask for and give support. Use best practices for implementation.	Facilitate a circle. Bring restorative practices to my campus. Support restorative practices on my campus.	Integrate restorative practices into my daily work. Continue. Seek additional resources and support. Be proactive in engaging others.	Remain persistent. Work with my team. Model.	Be empathetic. Continue to implement. restorative justice. Address adultism. Dare to lead!

Table 7. Summary of the most salient themes from the monthly RDCP sessions evaluation qualitative data

Whole school Implementation Efforts

To evaluate the implementation process in each school, we relied on best practices for whole-school implementation from two different sources: The Denver School-Based Restorative Practices Partnership's *School-Wide Restorative Practices: Step-by-Step* guide (see Appendix A for the framework overview) and Thorsborne and Blood's (2013) three-stage model for managing whole-school RP implementation (see Appendix B for the framework overview). Thorsborne and Blood's (2013) three-stage model for managing whole-school RP implementation helps frame the progress the schools have made so far. This model is based on Kotter's change management work and its core idea is that change is a nonlinear, often messy, process and not an event. Given this framework and the fact that the teams implemented restorative justice for only seven months because of the school disruptions associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, we evaluated the school teams' processes against the indicators expected to be achieved within the first 12–18 months. See Appendix C for the pilot logic model.

Achievement of 12–18 Month Indicators.

At this point in the implementation process, the schools should expect to observe an increase in commitment to restorative practices, changing dialogue, pockets of practice and increased options for managing behavior. Eight out of the nine schools achieved these benchmarks. The school that struggled the most with making progress had a motivated implementation team but had challenges with aligning administrative support. All the schools took steps to get ready for change, such as identifying key people to do the ground work and forming their implementation teams. Eight out of the nine schools had cohesive teams, identified threats and opportunities, and were generally leading by example. The vast majority of the schools were in the second stage of the Thorsborne and Blood's (2013) three-stage organizational change model, getting the ball rolling and overcoming the initial inertia.

Only one team reported having a designated restorative practices coordinator, although this was not a full-time position. One district designated a district restorative coordinator, who served as a resource to all participating schools in that district, which made a notable difference for the implementation teams in that district. In several schools, community organizations supported restorative justice implementation efforts with varying degrees of success.

While eight out of the nine teams submitted their data to UP Partnership, all eight were still in the early stages of using their data to inform the implementation process.

All the schools had visible pockets of practice, including offering professional development to their staff; establishing peace rooms; using circles to build community and resolve conflict among staff; using circles to build community, teach, solve problems, and respond to harm among students; and using restorative practices to solve conflict with the surrounding community. In one school, a parent who was originally concerned about restorative practices, joined the implementation team after learning more about it. While all the teams had some interest in engaging students in the process of implementation and some individual educators had found ways to engage youth leadership, none of the teams had yet formally engaged students in the process of implementation.

Restorative Practice and COVID-19.

The teams discovered that the restorative practices prepared them well for working remotely with their students during the COVID-19 pandemic because "social emotional learning became a very high priority as we worked with students in a 'virtual environment.'" The participants reported that building relationships became even more important in these new circumstances because students "had to buy-in" to the new way of learning. The restorative mindset helped the educators be flexible and prioritize caring for students, staff and families. "Student and family needs come first. It was important to me to not overwhelm families with phone calls or other forms of communication."

Many educators continued doing circles in the virtual environment, including student wellness checks. "I think we have allowed the emotional well-being of our community to take priority." "During this time, the students needed an outlet to speak about how they are being effected." "The whole child and the whole family dynamics are critical before even expecting any learning to take place. It is ok to talk about other things beside the math equation. See it in my own kids' lessons daily with their teachers and they look forward to that nonacademic discussion (even with home support), so it is even more critical for those needing support outside of the home."

The participants also discussed that restorative practices helped them be more empathetic, listen and to be patient in the new environment. "It made more patient and I tried to look at things how a student or parent might be experiencing the situation." "I'm more concerned about not overwhelming people and ensuring that they are doing okay." "I value that importance of listening hearing the stories in an effort to make stronger connections."

Small group discussion, Umoja 3-day training, Park Village Elementary, July, 2019.
Photo credit: UP Partnership.

Statistics.

As discussed earlier, given that the schools were in their first year of implementation and that the COVID-19 pandemic interrupted their implementation efforts, these data trends should be interpreted with extreme caution. They also should be understood at this point as in-process and not as outcome indicators.

Overall Suspensions and Expulsions. At this point in the process of organizational change, some schools may detect improved statistics. After seven months of implementation, the data among the eight schools that submitted data was mixed. One school maintained low rates of suspensions and expulsions throughout this period of implementations, while four displayed a downward trend, and two displayed an upward trend. One school, which compared their 2019–2020 data against their 2018–2019 data for the same period, detected a dramatic decrease in suspensions and expulsions during the year of restorative justice implementation. Other schools did not submit their 2018–2019 data and a similar comparison was not possible.

Disproportionality. The current data also suggests mixed trends related to closing the discipline gap based on gender and ethnicity. Three out of the eight schools showed promising signs of reducing the disproportionate impact of exclusionary discipline on children of color. Three out of the eight schools displayed the expected national trend pattern, with African American boys experiencing a disproportionate exclusionary discipline burden. Finally, two schools displayed unusual data patterns. In several cases, girls, and especially Latina girls, were disproportionately represented in the discipline system.
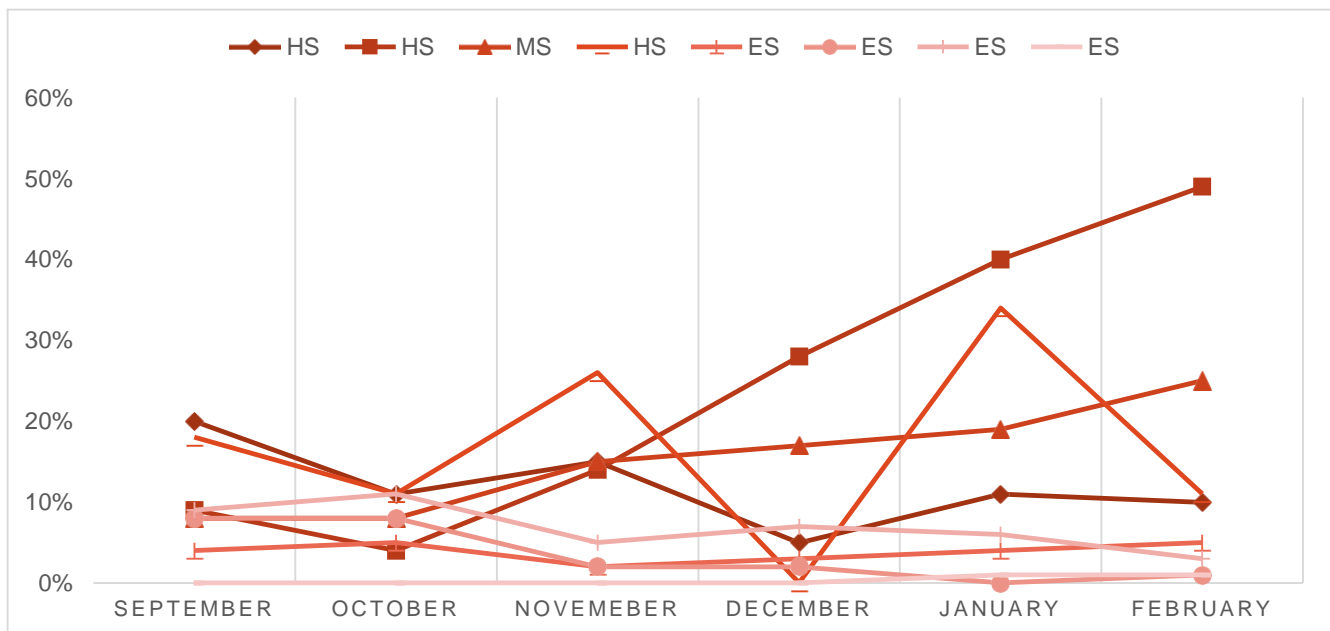

Figure 6. Suspension and expulsion trends for eight schools, 2019-2020 school year, less than one year of implementation; HS=high school; MS=middle school; ES=elementary school

Recommendations

During the 2019-2020 school year, nine San Antonio, TX schools joined forces with UP Partnership and MBKSA to rethink discipline as a community of practice and begin implementing whole school restorative justice. The formative evaluation findings suggest that Rethinking Discipline Community of Practice created value by enabling learning through community involvement and networking, ultimately accelerating restorative justice implementation. In its first year of implementation, despite limited implementation resources and scheduling disruptions related to the COVID-19 pandemic, eight out of nine schools made progress in their whole-school implementation journey. Even though most of the schools implemented restorative justice for less than nine months, a majority achieved the indicators appropriate for the first year of implementation. They gained commitment, changed dialogue, established pockets of practice, and increased options for managing behavior (Morrison, Blood & Thorsborne, 2005). Several schools also decreased their overall exclusionary discipline (suspensions and expulsions) incidents and narrowed racial disparities.

However, readers should evaluate these findings in light of several limitations. This was a formative evaluation, focused on the Rethinking Community of Practice process indicators. Consequently, no cause and effect can be evaluated. In addition, except for suspensions and expulsions, we derived the findings primarily from the self-reported data and observation. Also, most teams included early-adopters who were passionate about restorative justice, but these may not be representative of their broader school communities. To address this concern, we collected data over time, using a number of different instruments and sources. Future process evaluation efforts should include data from students, caregivers and all staff. Finally, any impact evaluation should allow for a minimum of three to five years before the outcomes are measured and can be fully assessed.

The following recommendations integrate the formative evaluation findings with empirical evidence and best practices for the implementation of whole school restorative justice. This report compares the findings with the Thorsborne and Blood's (2013) three-stage model for managing whole-school restorative justice implementation and the Denver School-Based Restorative Practices Partnership's *School-Wide Restorative Practices: Step-by-Step* guide. It also leverages the recent policy brief by Gregory and Evans (2020), entitled *The starts and stumbles of restorative justice in education: Where do we go from here?* This policy brief reviews the accumulating evidence for effectiveness of restorative justice to reduce the use of exclusionary discipline and narrow racial disparities, offering recommendations for addressing documented implementation challenges that lead to inconsistent outcomes. Our recommendations include actions that school teams, administrators, UP Partnership, and community members can take to elevate the chances of success for whole school restorative justice efforts in Bexar County.

Recommendations for School Teams

Take Time to Celebrate and Reflect on the First Year of Implementation.

Transitioning the entire school from a punitive to relational restorative ecology is a challenging and time-intensive undertaking (Morrison, Blood & Thorsborne, 2005). Furthermore, evidence suggests that building a relational ecology is especially hard for schools with more than 300 students (Bryk et al., 2010). In the RDCP pilot, the school size ranged from 401 to 1498 students. Given these contextual challenges, the brief implementation period (7 months for most), and the limited resources that schools had at their disposal, the progress the schools achieved so far is remarkable. While most teams had an opportunity at the end of the pilot to briefly reflect on their journey and lessons learned so far, the teams should take time to celebrate their efforts, even if they did not go as planned. All the teams should continue to honestly examine their experiences against the best practices frameworks discussed previously and use their insights to make well-informed decisions about future implementation activities.

Continue the Comprehensive Approach to Restorative Justice, with an Emphasis on Integrity of Practice and Positive Youth Development.

All the participating schools have already embraced the whole school model of restorative justice. The schools should continue to build on this foundation, remembering that their ultimate aim is to build a relational school ecology. This means intentionally moving away from understanding restorative practices as an alternative approach to conflict and instead embracing it as "the way we do things around here" (Thorsborne & Blood, 2013, p. 58). To get there, the teams and their schools must make a commitment to integrating restorative justice into all aspects of the school community—changing the worldview of students, parents, staff, teachers and administrators. Finally, it is essential that restorative values-—respect, dignity, mutual concern for all members of the school community, a commitment to justice and equity, and a belief in the worth of all people—inform all implementation activities (Gregory and Evans, 2020). Positive youth development should be a priority, including exploring proactive ways to develop restorative youth practitioners.

Develop Long-term Implementation Plans Which Prioritize Sustainability, Professional Support and Strategic Rollout.

All teams must develop long-term implementation plans, with an intentional focus on sustainability and ongoing professional development opportunities—including coaching and peer mentoring—to grow their restorative capacity (Gregory and Evans, 2020; Thorsborne & Blood, 2013). The plans must also account for staff turnover. Teams should expect to take three to five years to transform the entire school and should develop their multi-year strategic plans accordingly (Gregory and Evans, 2020; Morrison, Blood & Thorsborne, 2005). Strategic roll-out, with clear and realistic benchmarks, is a necessary guide through the complexity of organizational change. While all the participating teams understood the importance of having a shared vision, not all of them developed a brief and clear vision statements. However, the vision is essential for the organizational change process because it guides the implementation journey, including the development of implementation objectives. Teams should prioritize writing down a short summary of their vision that captures their school's restorative future, determine the values that are central to the achieving that vision, and then become fluent in communicating the vision to the rest of the school community. When schools encounter challenges—

competing priorities during the spring semester academic testing, for instance—their clear vision and values provide guardrails that will help them stay on track.

Center Equity.

National trends suggest that restorative justice can address the disproportionate impact of punitive discipline on students of color, students with disabilities, students with a history of foster care, and LGBTQ students, but this is not always the case. When restorative justice implementation does not center equity and social justice, schools may well be able to reduce the use of punitive discipline, but gaps based on race and other social identities will remain. Teams "need to explicitly identify opportunity gaps and challenge disciplinary disproportionality as it relates to a range of student characteristics, including race, ethnicity, religion, ability, socioeconomic status, language, culture, sexuality and gender expression. Sole focus on a reduction in suspensions and expulsions will not address the systemic and structural inequalities that impact students' social, emotional, and academic well-being" (Gregory and Evans, 2020, p. 4).

Teams must also embrace the idea that their schools exist within and embody broader structural inequalities. These political and economic hierarchies, institutional practices, and ideologies patterned by race, ethnicity, gender, ability, sexual orientation and other social group memberships (see Figure 7) shape student outcomes and all their relationships. Consistent with the restorative values, schools must work to interrupt "hierarchies and rampant individualism […], honoring the humanity of each member of the learning community" (Gregory and Evans, 2020, p. 4). The critical theoretical approach—which requires an explicit focus on understanding the relationship between institutional forms of oppression, such as racism, and student outcomes—must inform the planning, implementation and evaluation of whole school restorative justice to ensure that the efforts actually reduce inequities (Todic et al., 2020).
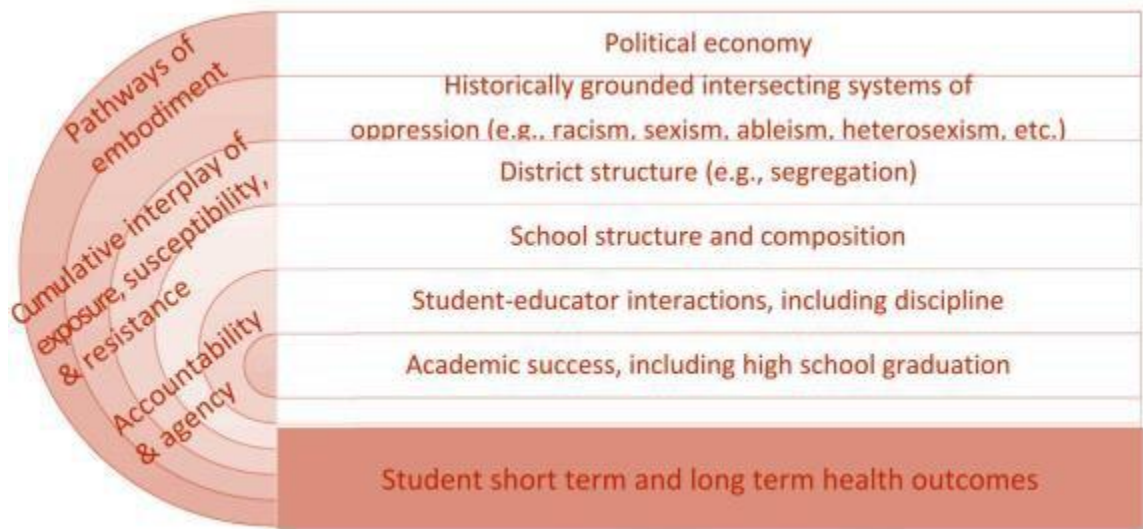

Figure 7. Application of Krieger's ecosocial theory to understanding the factors impacting high school graduation and ultimately students' health outcomes (Todic, Cubbin & Armour, 2019)

In order to do this, educators must strive to simultaneously develop critical consciousness and restorative practice skills. Critical consciousness is an orientation to education which includes: 1) understanding students and adults in a social and historical context; 2) recognizing societal problems impacting educational outcomes and individual school community members' behaviors; and 3) taking action to transform them (Freire, 1996). Educators must understand how social and political structures shape them and the role they play in maintaining or disrupting intersecting systems of oppression. By developing critical consciousness, educators will be better equipped to develop authentic relationships with their students and to support them in developing critical consciousness. In turn, students can begin to also understand how these structures disrupt their relationships with their family and community, motivating them to repair and strengthen them. Ultimately, integrating critical consciousness and restorative approaches to relationship building, teaching and conflict resolution, becomes an anti-oppressive praxis--an ongoing process of reflection and action, capable of disrupting and undermining unjust social structures that produce and reproduce poor student outcomes.

Associate Judge Cruz Shaw of the 436th connecting with education leaders at the 3-day Umoja training, St. Phillips College, June session. Photo credit: UP Partnership.

Destigmatize Data and Increase Its Use.

In the context of K-12 schools, using data to guide restorative justice implementation requires a dramatic paradigm shift. Rather than associating data with the top-down punitive approach of "being held accountable," teams need to reframe their use of data as a choice. Disparities based on race and other social identities are a well-documented national trend that represents a legacy of colonialism, white supremacy and other forms of oppression. This is not unique to schools in Texas or San Antonio. School teams should therefore assume that they will find disparities in their data and commit to taking action to eliminate them. If the implementation teams use restorative philosophy to frame their approach to data, they will understand any disparities as symptoms of unmet needs among the overrepresented students.

Teams should make stratified data examination a regular part of the implementation process, always being curious about how gender, ethnicity, disability, socioeconomic status, history of foster care, sexual orientation and other social identities may pattern their students' outcomes. In addition, the teams should stratify their data by grade and track patterns over several years as evidence, including our findings, suggests that different periods during the school year may predict disciplinary actions. For example, as a result of the impact of stressors associated with testing during the spring semester on adults and students, Texas educators may anticipate an increase in disciplinary actions from February through April.

Finally, "to capture both hearts and minds, schools will need different types of data to make their case for change" (Morrison, Blood & Thorsborne, 2005, p. 356). Teams need to remember that quantitative data can highlight important trends and areas of need, but stories from teachers, students and parents are equally important in capturing the implementation journey. Attendance records, the school-wide climate and safety surveys, staff retention and staff engagement are all important indicators of the school climate.

Develop Meaningful School–Community Partnerships.

School–community partnerships can support whole school restorative justice implantation but they require intentional investment in the relationship through trust building. The relationship needs to be based on mutual respect, valuing all perspectives and investing in each other's growth. The relationship foundation must be consistent with restorative values and include a focus on honesty, direct feedback and a willingness to act upon the feedback. Meeting people where they are and minimizing the power dynamics is an essential part of building a strong relationship. Schools need to welcome feedback from community organizations, while the community organizations must learn the policies and procedures guiding the school environment. Humility is required on both ends.

Remember that Principals Should Be Change Catalysts but Not the Sole Leaders.

Evidence suggests that schools that restructure and improve successfully tend to have visionary principals who are able to effectively engage faculty, parents and the community in improving outcomes (Bryk et al., 2010). Some scholars refer to this approach as leadership that is distributed throughout the school community (Sebring, Allensworth, Bryk, Easton, & Luppescu, 2006). While principals need to have a vision outline for their school, they must invite teachers, parents and students to further shape that vision. They must set high standards for teaching, be able to

communicate the relationship between social emotional learning and academic success, and encourage teachers to take risks and try new methods (Bryk et al., 2010; Sebring, Allensworth, Bryk, Easton, & Luppescu, 2006). Finally, they must move beyond the point of just being able to describe restorative justice, by actually embodying restorative values and practices. Practicing humility, inviting feedback from staff, caregivers and the community, asking questions, listening and transparency are all important characteristics of a principal who can catalyze change. The Framework of Essential Supports and Contextual Resources (Bryk et al., 2010) provides a helpful framework for contextualizing how a principal's leadership, relational ecology and distributed leadership relate to school-wide improvement efforts.
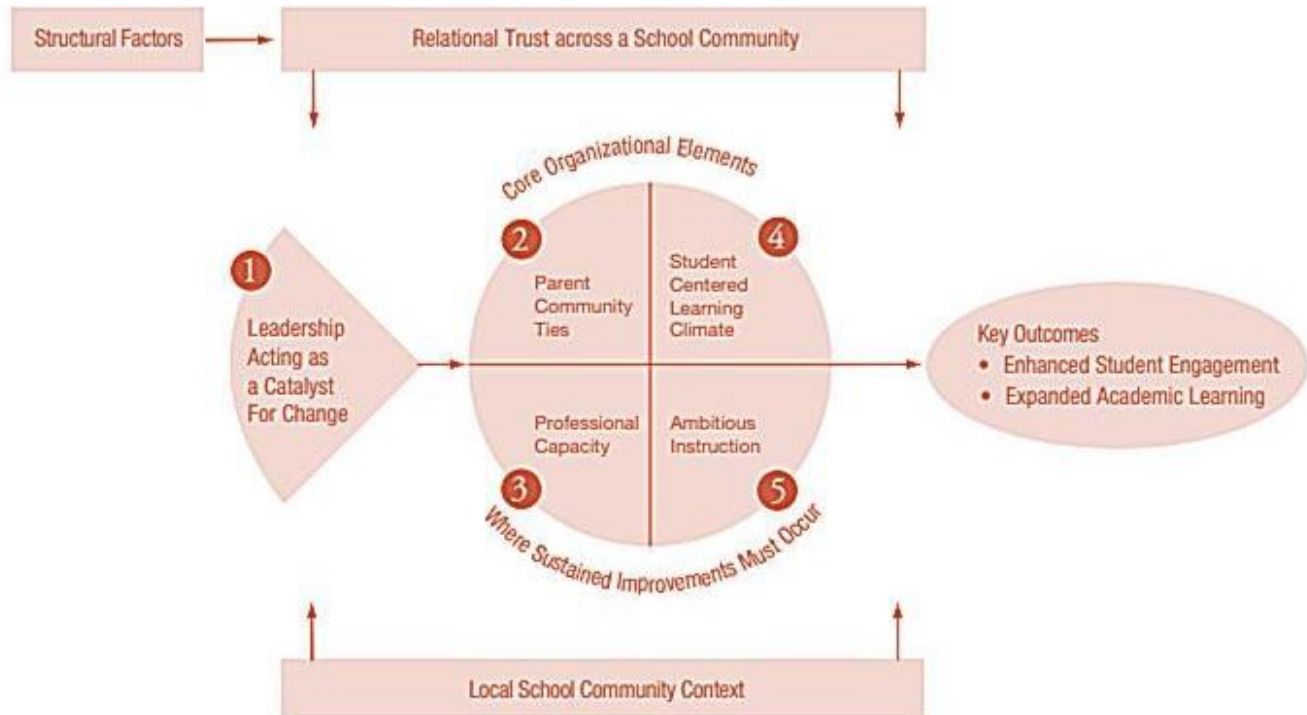
Figure 8. A framework of essential supports.

Recommendations for Administrators

Allocate Adequate Resources.

The earlier discussion in this report underscored that whole-school restorative justice implementation is a resource-intensive process. As a minimum, there should be adequate resources to offer professional development, hands-on coaching and funding for substitute teachers to ensure the ability to participate in the monthly full-day community of practice (Gregory and Evans, 2020). Ideally, all schools should have at least one full-time coordinator to implement this approach school wide (The Denver School-Based Restorative Practices Partnership, 2017). The restorative justice coordinator role generally includes three areas of focus: reactive restorative practices, proactive/preventative restorative practices, and restorative practices training and coaching. Schools that struggle with funding may assign a staff member to this role who has strong relationship-building skills. Furthermore, providing at least one district-level coordinator with advanced training and practice experience may be a promising interim step. The district lead's job description should explicitly include tasks related to supporting restorative justice efforts and should allocate time to complete these tasks.

Manage Timeline Expectations, Especially Expectations Related to the Timing of Quantifiable Results.

Evidence suggests that short-term implementation efforts, partial implementation processes and under-resourced implementation do not yield desired outcomes (Gregory & Evans, 2020). Consequently, expecting quantifiable results needs to be supported with adequate resources and a clear longer term implementation plan.

Avoid Mandating Restorative Justice Implementation.

Top-down district-level initiatives are in conflict with restorative values and principals. Volunteerism and collaborative decision-making are essential components of the restorative process. Being open to and ready for change are critical for the implementation success. Therefore, assessing the reasons for resistance among school leaders and responding to those expressed needs are essential for ensuring the readiness for change. In addition, combined with a shared vision, voluntary participation in the implementation process may help teams persist through the implementation challenges, especially in the context of limited implementation resources.

Recommendations for UP Partnership and the Community of Practice

Allocate Adequate Resources.

The formative evaluation data indicated that coordinating the RDCP requires at least a dedicated part-time position. As the initiative grows, the position will require a dedicated full-time person. In addition, UP Partnership should use existing evidence, including this formative evaluation, to advocate for adequate resources that can support the county-wide implementation of restorative justice. Funders need to fully understand the resource required to implement restorative justice well. While whole-school restorative justice implementation may appear costly, it is helpful to compare the implementation costs with the social costs of students dropping out of high school in light of exclusionary discipline. Using Texas data, Marchbanks and colleagues (2015) estimated that the increase in the dropout rate associated with exclusionary discipline is associated with $750 million in increased costs and lost wages over the lifetime of each cohort. Furthermore, grade retention associated with exclusionary discipline costs the state of Texas another $178 million per year. Even more alarming is that these numbers do not account for costs associated with a shorter life expectancy and more disability among those who do not finish high school compared with those who do (University of California, San Francisco Center for Social Disparities in Health, 2008).

Plan Sessions that can Meet the Complex Needs of Diverse School Teams.

The evaluation findings suggest that while the community of practice accelerates restorative justice implementation, it requires some restructuring. Allocating a full day for the monthly meetings may be a more effective approach to meeting the participants' needs, which would allow time for learning, practicing, connecting and problem-solving with others, as well as team meetings. In addition, there is a need to think more creatively about how to meet the diverse needs of participants based on where they are in the process of implementation and the grade levels of their students. As the community of practice grows, this task will become increasingly complex. Developing a participant advisory group

that can guide the content and process may be a helpful approach to responding to this emerging complexity. Furthermore, increasing leadership opportunities for participants may be a helpful way to build ownership and further develop the participants' restorative justice capacity.

RDCP Monthly Session, October 2019, Alamo Colleges. Photo credit: UP Partnership.

Invest in Long-term Evaluation that Focuses on Integrity, Fidelity and Outcomes.

Given what is currently known about the number of ways in which whole school restorative justice has been implemented and misimplemented, UP Partnership should ensure future mixed method evaluation that continues to focus on the process and outcomes, giving all stakeholders an opportunity to participate (Gregory & Evans, 2020). Evaluation must focus on a rigorous examination of the fidelity of implementation that can help maintain the integrity of practice (e.g., philosophy, values, equity focus, historic roots), which would offer consistent opportunities for relationship-building, repairing harm and promoting justice and equity. Funded evaluations should allow for a minimum of three to five years of implementation before the outcomes are measured (Gregory and Evans, 2020).

Emphasize the Focus on Equity, Practice Integrity and Implementation Fidelity.

As the focus on equity in whole school restorative justice implementation for the majority of teams remains an underdeveloped priority, UP Partnership should explicitly emphasize its importance in the partner agreements and throughout the process of implementation.

Create Advocacy Avenues at All Levels of Systems Impacting Whole school Restorative Justice Implementation to Support Its Integrity.

Finally, as factors at all levels of social systems can support or inhibit the success of restorative practices, UP Partnership should consider developing a body that would allow for an ongoing interaction between stakeholders from the grassroots up to the state government levels, allowing them to partake in the restorative processes and collective problem-solving to help ensure that restorative justice thrives in the school environment.

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Recommendations for All Other Whole school Restorative Justice Enthusiasts and Skeptics

All other whole school restorative justice enthusiasts and sceptics must remember that restorative justice is not a panacea. While the current progress of the nine school teams highlights the transformative power of restorative justice, it also highlights its limits. To maximize the prospects for success, stakeholders at all levels of social systems must examine their capacity to both create and remove barriers to whole school restorative justice implementation. All nine of the participating schools are high poverty schools, meaning that more than 75% of the students are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch. In addition, all have more than 300 students, making it challenging to develop trusting relationships. Evidence suggests that within these structural conditions, school transformation and improvement in outcomes is possible, but requires a significant alignment of multiple efforts and many stakeholders (Bryk et al., 2010). While advocating for the implementation of restorative justice in schools, it is imperative that those invested in achieving better student outcomes simultaneously focus on structural interventions beyond schools that can improve quality of life for families with children. Advocates must engage their radical imagination to envision schools and communities which allow all children to flourish, be free, and live with dignity. Restorative values, philosophy and practices can be instructive in how to take actions that translate this vision into reality.

Group activity, Umoja 3-day training, Park Village Elementary, July, 2019. Photo credit: UP Partnership

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APPENDIX A: THE DENVER SCHOOL-BASED RESTORATIVE PRACTICES PARTNERSHIP'S FIRST YEAR IMPLEMNTATION BENCHMARKS

Benchmark 1:
There is a common understanding of why restorative practices are being implemented.

Benchmark 2:
Foundational structures to support RP implementation are in place.

Benchmark 3:
A method of collecting and analyzing data is developed.

Benchmark 4:
Educators, both new and returning, are trained in restorative practices.

Benchmark 5:
Restorative language and culture have been established.

Benchmark 6:
Families and students are well-informed of the shift to restorative practices.

Benchmark 7:
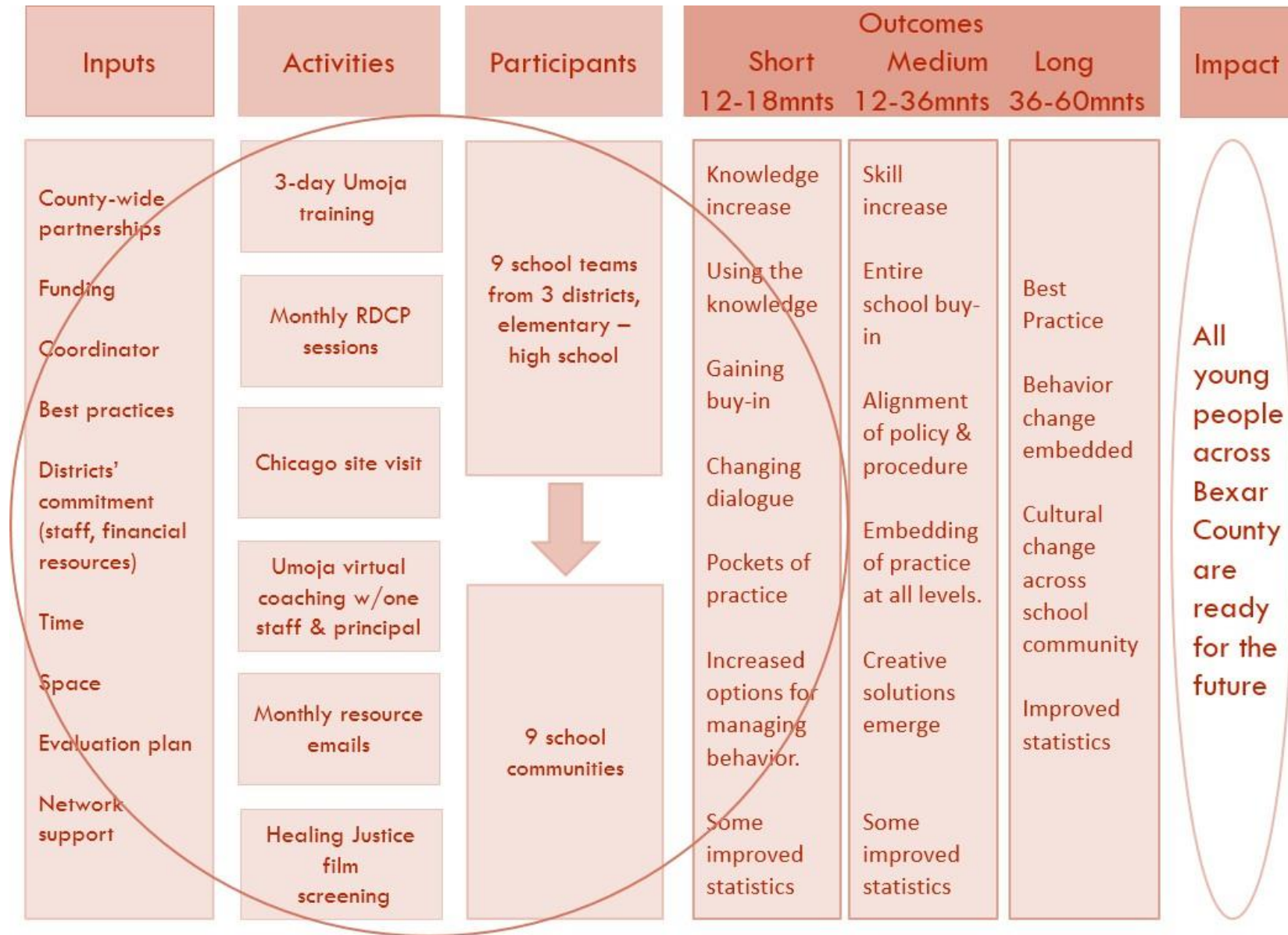Preventative measures, not just reactive measures, are being taken to improve school climate.

Source: The Denver School-Based Restorative Practices Partnership. (2017). School-wide restorative practices: Step-by-Step. Retrieved from https://neaedjustice.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/Implementation-Guide-2017-FINAL.pdf

APPENDIX B: STAGES OF WHOLE SCHOOL RESTORATIVE JUSTICE IMPLEMENTATION, THORSBORNE AND BLOOD (2013)

Stage 1: Getting ready for change	1. Making a case for change	Identify key people to do some ground work Identify potential threats Identify opportunities Begin engaging with stakeholders (staff, students, parents, governing bodies)
	2. Putting an implementation team together	Putting a team together Team building
	3. Creating vision for the future	Develop a short summary that captures the future Determine the values that are central to the change Create a strategy to launch and execute the vision Guiding coalition becomes fluent with the vision
Stage 2: Overcoming inertia and getting the ball rolling	4. Communicating the vision to capture hearts and minds	Talk often about the change vision Address concerns and anxieties Tie everything back to the vision Lead by example—communicate by words and deeds
	5. Overcoming obstacles and getting the ball rolling	Get rid of obstacles that impede the vision Encourage risk-taking, non-traditional ideas, activities and actions Develop skills Choose the vision over self-interest Change structure and systems that undermine the vision
	6. Generating short term wins	Look for sure fire projects that don't require support of critics Choose early targets that will deliver; not too "expensive" and can't fail Acknowledge and reward staff who have helped meet targets
Stage 3: Implementing and embedding change	7. Keeping the pressure on	Used increased credibility to change further everything that doesn't fit the vision Hire, promote, and develop people who can implement the change vision Reinvigorate with new changes
	8. Maintaining the gains	Use stakeholder feedback and achievement data to change behavior Improve and widen leadership Maintain the pressure of values and behaviors

Source: Thorsborne, M. & Blood, P. (2013). Implementing restorative practices in schools: A practical guide to transforming school communities. Philadelphia, PA: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

APPENDIX C: RDCP LOGIC MODEL

Inputs	Activities	Participants	Outcomes Short 12-18mnts	Medium 12-36mnts	Long 36-60mnts	Impact
County-wide partnerships Funding Coordinator Best practices Districts' commitment (staff, financial resources) Time Space Evaluation plan Network support	3-day Umoja training Monthly RDCP sessions Chicago site visit Umoja virtual coaching w/one staff & principal Monthly resource emails Healing Justice film screening	9 school teams from 3 districts, elementary – high school 9 school communities	Knowledge increase Using the knowledge Gaining buy-in Changing dialogue Pockets of practice Increased options for managing behavior. Some improved statistics	Skill increase Entire school buy-in Alignment of policy & procedure Embedding of practice at all levels. Creative solutions emerge Some improved statistics	Best Practice Behavior change embedded Cultural change across school community Improved statistics	All young people across Bexar County are ready for the future

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Report produced by UTSA College for Health, Community & Policy, Department of Social Work