



San Francisco Board of Education Parent Advisory Council

COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS ABOUT RESTORATIVE PRACTICES

January - April 2012

During community engagement campaigns over the past few years, PAC members have heard from hundreds of families who voiced concerns about unfair or inconsistent school discipline policies, as well as worries about bullying and school safety. We believe restorative approaches to school climate and student discipline are effective in addressing some of the underlying issues that contribute to these problems. SFUSD policy emphasizes Restorative Practices to improve school climate and reduce student suspensions. The PAC is working in partnership with SFUSD staff to engage families in this process, to help shape and strengthen implementation of Restorative Practices across the district.

Goals & Objectives for Community Conversations

Our overall goal for this project is to support reducing student suspensions, and improving school climate and student outcomes, by engaging families to help shape and strengthen implementation of Restorative Practices across the district.

While a number of schools are already using Restorative Practices, and others are beginning to embrace this approach, we know that most families haven't heard about Restorative Practices. The PAC will work with school site staff and community partners to bring families into the process. We hope to hear from about 250 participants, in conversations at 10-15 schools or community centers.

Through these conversations, the PAC will share information about the needs, goals, and plans for implementing Restorative Practices, and lead small-group discussions to identify parents' questions, concerns and suggestions. We can also provide a structure for communities who want to talk about "next steps" for strengthening Restorative Practices in their school.

We will share our findings from these conversations, and present our recommendations to the Board of Education, district staff and the community, by the end of this school year.

How the Conversations Will Work

PAC members will conduct the conversations between February and April. In schools that are already implementing Restorative Practices, school staff may present information about their specific implementation plans. Discussion questions will focus on a few specific issues, to help us identify parents' ideas to strengthen Restorative Practices - in their children's schools, and across the district. At the end of each conversation, we'll leave time for the participants to talk about any "next steps" they want to take, to help strengthen or expand Restorative Practices.

Where We'll Conduct the Community Conversations

PAC members have developed a list of 24 schools that we're approaching to ask if they're interested in hosting a conversation. We don't have the capacity to actually conduct that many conversations, but we know some will decide not to participate, given the many different programs and initiatives going on at schools.

We balanced a number of different things when we came up with this list, including:

- The school's suspension rate, compared to the district average for those grade levels
- If the school is already implementing Restorative Practices, or is interested in developing more concrete implementation plans
- Demographics of the school's student population.

Because African American and Latino students are suspended at disproportionately high rates, the PAC is making it a priority to reach out to hear from these communities. At the same time, we also want to hear from families in different kinds of schools, at different grade levels, and in different neighborhoods.

We would also like to work with community groups who can convene parents outside of a school setting to talk about these issues, and will invite other partners to participate in the conversations.

For more info about the PAC, please visit us at **www.pacsf.org**

Or contact us at:

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