



## Public Comments: Tsebaot Tilahun

Comments on Evaluation of Restorative Justice  
May 19, 2015

- Good Evening Chairman Graf, members of the school board, Superintendent Crawley, ACPS administrators and staff and fellow community members.
- My name is Tsebaot Tilahun a member of Tenants and Workers United: Alexandria United Teens. I am currently in Minnie Howard.
- Thank you for taking the time to hear us. I am also here today to share about the importance of implementation and evaluation for Restorative Justice.
- Restorative Justice is important to make sure students feel supported and are having our needs met. Thank you Superintendent Crawley for moving forward with implementation this upcoming school year for Minnie Howard, International Academy and 10<sup>th</sup> grade.
- In order to make sure that the implementation is on track, evaluation is important, which is why we need to ensure there is baseline data and progress checks for the implementation of RJ.
- Just like our teachers give us quarterly progress reports to see if we are on track, we also need progress checks to see if the implementation of RJ is on the right track.
- A few months ago, at the request of district staff, we created two surveys, which we have attached copies of to our public comments. We created a student survey which has two parts:
  - The first part was a progress check on the implementation of restorative justice from a teacher perspective, which can be used at Minnie Howard or International Academy. It is a teacher survey to evaluate teacher perspectives on Restorative Justice and their feedback on the program.
  - The second part was to evaluate the school climate, which is a survey that can be used at any school in the district annually. We understand RJ is a philosophy that needs to be implemented and a climate survey will give us an idea how students every year. Each year, it will show us the improvements of relationships between students, teachers and all of the school community.

- These surveys are similar to surveys used in other districts and states that have implemented Restorative Justice, such as the San Francisco Unified School District and the Minnesota Department of Education.
- We worked very hard to create these surveys after school staff asked us to. We looked at examples of other surveys that have been used across the country, we spoke with students about the surveys and made revisions when necessary, we tested the surveys with our peers, and we even made revisions based on ACPS staff feedback. All of the students we spoke with agreed that this was the best survey they had ever taken.
- Again, here is a copy of the surveys and we would like to have ACPS look at it. Though, our survey was not taken into consideration and the end of the school year is quickly approaching. We are willing to work with ACPS staff on implementing a survey that includes students' inputs.
- We know that evaluation is an important tool to make sure expectations are being met especially during the implementation process of Restorative Justice.

Thank you.

## TEACHER RESTORATIVE PRACTICES SURVEY

**Thank you for agreeing to complete this survey. Your answers will be used to help find out how effectively Restorative Practices are being used in your school. DO NOT WRITE YOUR NAME.**

**Instructions:** This section is meant to determine your attitudes and beliefs about restorative justice. Please mark one box for each statement.

Attitudes and Beliefs	Indicators of Attitudes and Beliefs	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
	1. It is important to get to know students personally.				
	2. Meetings with students should include discussions about emotions and feelings.				
	3. It is important that a person who has caused harm is given support to change their behavior.				
	4. When someone causes harm, they should be allowed to make amends.				
	5. Restorative Practices benefit students academically.				
	6. Restorative Practices help teachers get to know students at a personal level.				

**Instructions:** A key to successfully implementing restorative practices is to ensure that all adults in the school are trained to accurately replicate the program with fidelity. Make a check in the box that best describes each statement.

Training	Indicators of Training	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Almost Always
	1. I quickly and accurately assess situations and know whether to respond with a restorative conference or harm circle.				
	2. I feel confident in my ability to conduct a Restorative Conference.				
	3. I feel confident in my ability to conduct a Restorative Harm Circle.				
	4. I know who to contact when I have questions about using restorative practices.				
	5. All teachers and staff receive training in how to immediately address minor behavior incidents in a way that includes both persons harmed and wrongdoers in solving the problem.				

**Instructions:** Restorative Practices are most effective when the whole school adopts a restorative ethos. In order to accomplish a whole school approach, there must be commitment from the Principal and the leadership team. Make a check in the box that best describes each statement.

Administrative Support	Indicators of Administrative Support	Rarely	Sometimes	Almost Always
	1. I'm allowed to take the time needed to complete conferences and circles.			
	2. I'm given appropriate space for conferences and circles.			
	3. Any staff who need to participate in conferences are allowed substitutes as necessary.			
	4. Our principal overtly supports Restorative Practices work in our school.			
	5. Our dean of discipline overtly supports Restorative Practices work in our school.			
	6. Our counselors overtly support Restorative Practices.			

**Instructions:** The statements below represent an assessment of preparedness to implement Restorative Practices school-wide. Please consider each item from your own personal viewpoint, as well as from the perspective you perceive your school administration to have. Make a check in the box for those statements with which you agree, and those with which you think the administration in your school would agree.

Preparedness/Readiness	Indicators of Preparedness/Readiness	Yes, I agree	No, I don't agree	Yes, I think my administration would agree	No, I don't think my administration would agree	
	<b>In thinking about my school's discipline policy and environment...</b>					
	1. The Student Code of Conduct encourages use of restorative practices.					
	2. There is a need for better behavior, relationships, and learning environments in our school.					
	3. We have assessed current discipline challenges of our school community and believe restorative practices can respond to those needs.					
	<b>The people who are in charge of setting discipline policies in our school believe that...</b>					
	4. Repairing harm done to relationships and people is more important than assigning blame and dispensing punishment.					
<b>The following indicators are in place of our school's readiness to implement restorative practices</b>						
5. My school is ready to provide the supervision support needed for effective implementation of Restorative Practices.						

**Instructions:** These questions provide a guide for considering what your school may already be doing to address behavior issues. Make a check in the box that best describes each statement.

	<b>Indicators of Current Practices</b>	<b>Nearly Always</b>	<b>Mostly</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>Rarely or Never</b>	<b>I Don't Know</b>
<b>Current Practices</b>	1. Our school has management strategies in place to respond to student behavior in non-classroom settings, including playgrounds, hallways, etc.					
	2. We are tracking data about behavior responses that occur in non-classroom settings.					
	3. We assign staff to non-classroom settings who are trained to use restorative practices.					
	4. Our school effectively tracks office discipline referrals and disaggregates data based on race to detect any bias in our referral process.					
	5. Our school makes disciplinary data publicly available.					
	6. Students and staff communicate to each other in a respectful way.					
	7. I am allowed to contribute to solving school-based behavioral problems that affect me.					
	8. When students, staff and/or parents are in conflict, everyone's views are listened to.					
	9. Students are given opportunities to make amends if they are responsible for causing harm.					
	10. Students are running restorative circles.					

How many times have you referred students to the dean or another administrator for disciplinary purpose: \_\_\_\_\_

What are your main reasons for referring students to the dean?

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Thank you for your time. If you have any additional comments, please write them in the space provided.

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