

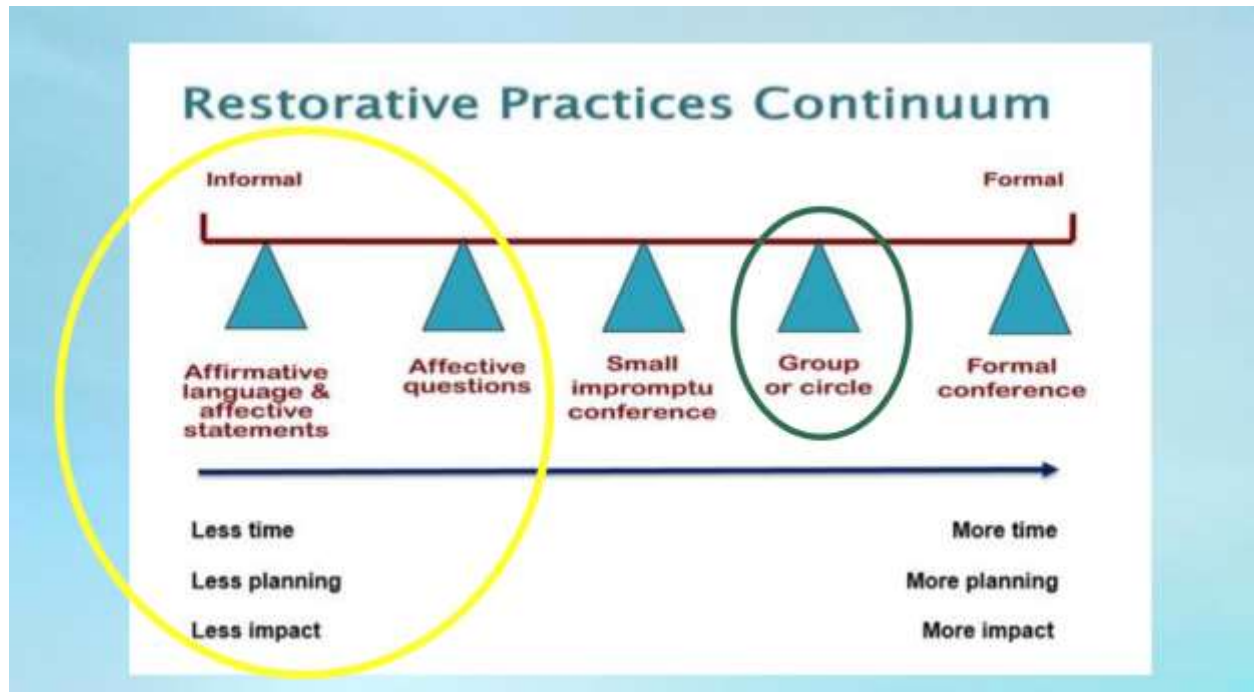
**Public Comments**  
**January 23, 2020 Board Meeting**  
**Sharon Solórzano**

Dear Superintendent Hutchings and Honorable School Board Members,

My name is Sharon Solórzano, and I am speaking tonight on behalf of Grassroots Alexandria. My daughter is a senior at TC Williams HS, and my eldest daughter is a recent graduate who is now in college. I teach Social Studies at the middle and high school levels. I am trained in Restorative Practices (RP), and I conduct professional development on RP at the school and countywide level in my district. I use Community Building Circles in my classes regularly, and have personally experienced the positive outcomes of implementing RP with my students.

When I spoke before the School Board last April, I emphasized disturbing data regarding the high number of students who are suspended out of school in ACPS. We also questioned the racial disparities and subjective reasons for suspensions. Tonight, I am here to ask for a renewed *commitment* to Restorative Practices. Grassroots Alexandria members have contacted or met with each of you, and we are convinced of your resolve to see RP emphasized in ACPS. We request a *prioritization* of RP in the ACPS 2025 Strategic Plan to reflect the ACPS value that “Every Student Succeeds.”

Grassroots Alexandria would like to see a renewed commitment to the basic tenets of Restorative Practices, which includes using affirmative and affective language (please see below **Characteristics of High Quality Affective Statements and Language**) and Community Building Circles. The RP Continuum reflects and encompasses ACPS



priorities of providing an equitable education for all ACPS students. A commitment to using affective language by all ACPS members is especially important and would be appreciated. Affective language involves active, non-judgmental listening and authentic expressions of feelings. When things go wrong, we use affective questions, including:

## RESTORATIVE QUESTIONS

### WHEN THINGS GO WRONG:

- What happened?
- What were you thinking of at the time?
- What have you thought about since?
- Who has been affected by what you have done? In what way?
- What do you think you need to do to make things right?

We would also like to see structural supports for Community Building Circles at the middle and high school levels. My students love Circles because they get to hear something new about each other during check-in, and a chance to connect and reset before getting into content. Today we used our Community Building Circle to welcome a new student and give him tips about our school.

We would like to know how the RP Liaison program is progressing. We would also like an updated plan on RP with outcomes, as we appreciate transparency, yet insist on accountability.

Thank you for your continued collaboration with the Alexandria NAACP, Tenants and Workers United and Grassroots Alexandria. As community partners, we look forward to furthering work with you toward equity and fairness for all students in ACPS.

Thank you,

Sharon Solorzano  
Grassroots Alexandria

## Characteristics of High Quality Affective Statements and Language:

- Can be “I” statements that express a feeling, but don’t have to be.
- Make students aware of either the positive or negative impact of their behavior.
- Provide a precise description of a student’s behaviors and the specific impact of those behaviors.
- Do not protect students from the consequences of their behavior.
- Are strategically delivered to the right person in a time frame, place and manner most likely to maximize impact.
- Are delivered in a personalized manner directly to the student who impacted others.
- Focus on the behavior, not on the intrinsic worth of the person (separates the deed from doer).
- Are respectful in tone.
- Encourage students to express feelings.
- Five positive to one corrective statement

### Affective Statement Sentence stems:

I am moved to see/hear you...

I am so excited to see/hear...

I am so appreciative of you/your...

I am so grateful that/for.....

I am so thankful that/for.....

I am delighted to learn/see/hear ...

I am so pleased to see/hear/by.....

I am so impressed by...

I am so touched that you...

I am worried about/by/to see/to hear that....

I am concerned about.....

I am feeling frustrated about/by/to see/to hear that...

I am feeling irritated by.....

I am angry about.....

I am so sorry that.....

I am upset that ...

I am having a hard time understanding.....

I am uncomfortable when I see/hear.....

I feel sad because I heard.....

I am uneasy about .....

I am feeling distracted by.....