BUILDING PRACTITIONER CONSENSUS FOR BETTER STUDENT HEALTH

A Report by the

Restorative Schools Visions Project
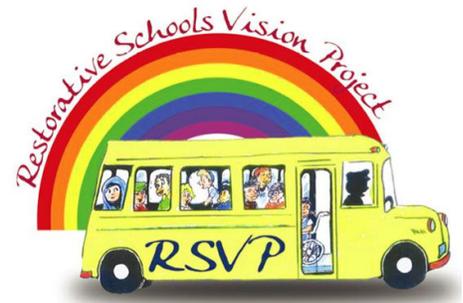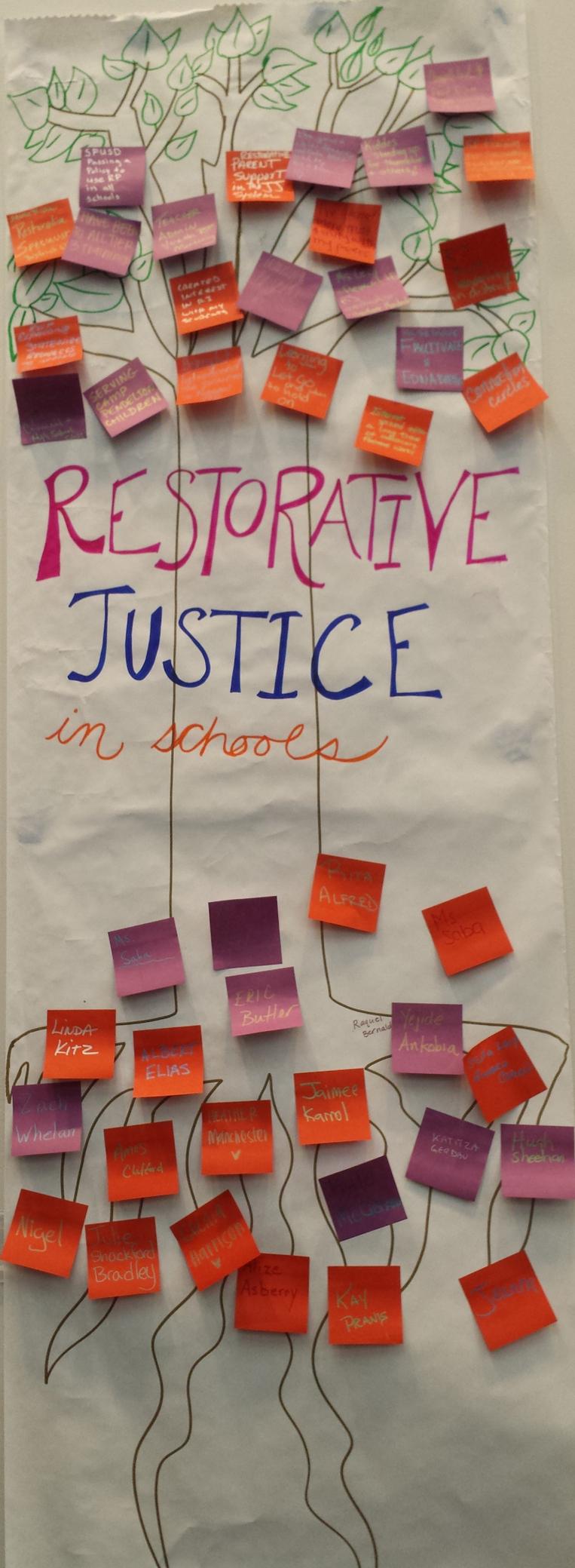
The Long Journey

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Wisdom from a circle with Awele, Tatiana, Lisa, LeAna, Ingrid, Tim, Jeanna, & Meliya
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This is the long journey.
We live in a culture of domination where might makes right.
A rigid colonialism that falls on you like a ton of bricks.
The pain is deeply rooted in trauma as a society.
We ask young people to make super moral choices in this unjust world.
How do you learn when to question academics versus authority?
We name the guilty forces of communal trauma.
In need of healing and accountability.
An active self-study. Like Janus: looking back, looking forward.
Learning how to really connect and interact with each other.
This is the pedagogy of people.
Teachers who know your story. Who know your family.
Don't just teach me. Be with me.
Care about me. Consider me. Consider my story.
Creating this change is like whispering to an ocean storm.
What will we create?
A learning community that becomes a microcosm of a new world.
Imagining community as a renewable resource.
This time around we can do better.
We will do better.
We just have to do it in unity.
How will we take words to actions?
This is the long journey.

RESTORATIVE SCHOOLS VISION PROJECT REPORT:
BUILDING RESTORATIVE JUSTICE PRACTITIONER CONSENSUS FOR BETTER STUDENT HEALTH

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As school disciplinary policies move away from punitive approaches, Restorative Justice (RJ) is emerging as an effective and transformative alternative. Restorative Justice offers a holistic perspective that, when implemented in schools with fidelity, provides both a preventative and responsive modality to negative behaviors. When conflict occurs, the focus is on supporting a mutual process of repairing the harms caused rather than an authoritarian reliance on enumeration of rules that may have been broken. Those who engage in harmful or negative behaviors are fully accountable for their actions but their actions do not define or label them.

The research presented in this report utilizes the core concepts of RJ to identify and discuss a pedagogic model and corresponding terminology. Implementation of RJ values of kindness, respect, and compassion as well as core and supportive practices, such as circles, and mediations or conferences are important to move California forward on a 21st Century public school model that honors diversity and teaches to the whole child. This report is based on statewide stakeholder input in identifying Restorative Justice core concepts and supportive practices in the school environment. The report addresses implementation strategies along with enabling factors and barriers. It highlights the importance of establishing trusting relationships, hearing youth voices and integrating a values based pedagogy into the curriculum. Stakeholders throughout the state emphasized the importance of social justice in addressing the crisis of disproportionate school discipline. They also identified operational needs including a great need for teacher training, consistent and reliable data collection and evaluation as well as the importance of statewide designated funding. This report includes stakeholder recommendations for accomplishing the goals of the project and for shifting the punishment paradigm to one of a healthy school climate through Restorative Justice.

In order for Restorative Justice to become prevalent in schools statewide and nationally, it is necessary to develop a clear and consistent understanding of what Restorative Justice looks like. This report by the Restorative Schools Vision Project reflects the need for a common RJ language and mutual recognition of the set of core values and concepts, and practices that are necessary for Restorative Justice to be universally acknowledged.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Create increased opportunities for relationship and movement building amongst Restorative Justice allies. These opportunities and outreach must include students, parents, RJ practitioners, educators, funders, and researchers reflecting diversity across geographic regions and demographic variables.

2. Create and operationalize whole school RJ implementation plans by School Boards on behalf of their constituent communities.

3. Require that key school administrators, teachers, support staff, and students receive RJ training on a regular basis, preferably from RJ practitioners with local knowledge and familiarity with California communities, their issues, and consistent with the goal of ending the school to prison pipeline.

4. Mandate standardized data collection and evaluation utilizing a common language by every school district. Data must be germane and related to school discipline, school climate, and student health and safety outcomes.

5. Redirect funds currently used for SRO/Police presence in schools to be used instead for additional social workers, trauma informed counselors, RJ coordinators, and student health centers.

6. Respond to community concerns by creating sanctuary safe zones in and around schools to protect students, school staff, and their families who may be undocumented immigrants.

7. Ensure designated funding needed to implement and sustain the above six recommendations in all schools throughout the state.

IV. INTRODUCTION AND IMPORTANCE OF RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

Restorative Justice (RJ) is many things. It is rightly considered an accountability based response to harm or conflict, but it is much more. The definition proposed in *The Little Book of Restorative Discipline for Schools* encompasses the understanding that RJ is a philosophy of just and ethical living that puts relationships and connectedness at its center:

> *[RJ] promotes values and principles that use inclusive, collaborative approaches for being in community. These approaches validate the experiences and needs of everyone within the community, particularly those who have been marginalized, oppressed, or harmed … [RJ allows] us to act and respond in ways that are healing rather than alienating or coercive.[1]*

Howard Zehr, a founder of the contemporary RJ movement, recognizes the importance of acknowledging the ancient roots of RJ in wisdom traditions, concepts, and practices that "draw upon traditions as deep as human history and as wide as the world community."[2]

These traditions prioritize balanced relationships within caring communities. In the school setting, RJ must be based on the insight and understanding that when harm occurs, the harm to relationships is the deeper harm. That is what must be addressed, rather than merely referencing what rules were broken. Restorative Justice both prevents and responds to harmful interactions. As a preventative approach an ethic of kindness, respect, and compassion must be modeled, discussed, and reinforced so as to elevate relationships over authority. As a responsive approach, the focus shifts to one of repairing harm and healing relationships. Unlike the punitive model, the person who was harmed takes an active role in the process. The person who caused harm actively seeks to accept responsibility and make amends. The process is called "restorative" because it heals the wounds of dissension and mends the fabric of relationships. By contrast, the retributive approach aims to correct and punish first, with healing or rehabilitation of lesser importance. Unlike RJ, punishment is not focused on restoring the affected community to wholeness.

Restorative Justice's contribution and significance to the pedagogy of school discipline is its unrelenting focus on addressing the source of problems and creating opportunities for enduring change. Restorative Justice is transformational and changes the very framework from which learning occurs. RJ invites schools to become a community and invites the members of

the community to embrace inclusiveness and understanding, as they bring their best selves to the restorative process. Inevitably, conflicts will arise, but the restorative school is prepared to see the teachable moment inherent in every conflict. RJ fosters resilience and reconciliation by bringing together all participants who were affected or harmed to co-create a positive resolution to conflict. Restorative Justice has the power to heal and mend relationships by systematically seeking to uncover the personal and social stressors that contribute to conflict and negative behavior. The outcomes can be life changing for all participants, and especially for young scholars, who are loved and valued as important members of the school community.

Restorative Justice is taking hold in both large (LAUSD) and small (Le Grand) school districts across California, the United States, and in a multiplicity of nations including Canada, New Zealand, the Netherlands, Brazil, and more. Poor school outcomes and disparate treatment of marginalized populations has caused educators to reconsider whether "business as usual" is working for their school and, if not, to seek out a model that does. Restorative Justice – when implemented with fidelity – can be that model. It is now well established that punitive or zero-tolerance school discipline policies that rely on exclusionary punishments are ineffective and stand in the way of student achievement.

Suspensions and expulsions carry unacceptable social and economic costs, as documented in a groundbreaking 2017 study authored by Daniel Losen and Russ Rumberger. For example, the economic loss to California in only one 10th grade cohort was estimated at a staggering $2.7 billion over the lifetimes of the cohort members.[3]

Earlier research has documented the shocking disproportionately with which harsh punishments are applied to particular student demographics, especially students of color, students with disabilities, English learners, and LGBTQ students.[4] These suspensions lead to high rates of dropout or push out, lower graduation rates, and lower student achievement rates. In addition to the devastating social costs, the economic costs are also unacceptable. Because of its transformative nature, RJ and other allied approaches are uniquely positioned to disrupt what has come to be called 'The School-to-Prison Pipeline.'

It is hoped that this report will contribute to the growing body of evidence that Restorative Justice can greatly improve outcomes for all students, and especially for our most vulnerable young people. California must continue and redouble its efforts to establish Restorative Justice and Social Emotional Learning as part of a firm commitment to the education of the whole child.

V. RESTORATIVE JUSTICE CORE CONCEPTS:

A. Indigenous Wisdoms and Balanced Relationships

The Restorative Justice movement stands on the shoulders of our Respected Elders from a multitude of cultural traditions. The term indigenous wisdoms pays homage to tribal cultural and spiritual traditions based on a deep belief that human beings live in sacred, balanced relationship with others and the natural world. Restorative Justice has its origins in indigenous cultures such as First Nations people of North America, African traditions, Native Hawaiian and Polynesian cultures, and so many others. Howard Zehr credits the development of Restorative Justice practices to "indigenous traditions and their adaptations, such as family group conferences adapted from Maori traditions in New Zealand, sentencing circles from aboriginal communities in the Canadian north, Navajo peacemaking courts, African customary law, and the Afghani practice of jirga."[5]

California has rich and diverse native cultural traditions alive and well today. The 90 plus diverse languages and 300 dialects represent a precious, complex, highly evolved indigenous culture.[6] It is incumbent upon California schools to present its native heritage in a truthful, respectful way that does not ignore contemporary Indian cultures and traditions or try to relegate them to bygone times. The devastating impact of European colonization continues to this day in the disproportionately high representation of Indian children and youth in the the school-to-prison pipeline and the disproportionately low representation in the halls of power. (See Discussion on Disproportionality and the School-To-Prison Pipeline below.)

It was the contemporary Maori elders who insisted that RJ be codified as an alternative to British-style punishment in the New Zealand juvenile justice system.[7] Because juveniles are, by definition, also students, it was only a matter of time before RJ migrated over to education as the appropriate way of preventing and responding to harmful ways of interacting and as an alternative to school-based punitive discipline. In the United States acceptance of RJ is now growing in public schools, though it regrettably has not yet been widely incorporated into the juvenile justice system.

Historically, school discipline has embraced adherence to rules and behaviors as established by those who colonized the New World. Restorative Justice casts a wider, more inclusive cultural net that values trusting relationships, and is therefore more flexible in defining positive and supportive paths forward. It is important in the honoring of cultural traditions to always guard against copying or appropriating cultures that are not ours. Rather

to truly honor these traditions, we should be inspired by them and insure schools embrace the lesson that there are appropriate and creative ways to address fairness and find just solutions to harm. Howard Zehr warned us that because "true justice emerges from conversation and takes into account local needs and traditions … we must be very cautious of top-down strategies for implementing Restorative Justice."[8]

B. Community and Cultural Responsiveness

Cultural understanding is complex. Restorative Justice practitioners and advocates have embraced culturally responsive education as key to ending the school-to-prison pipeline and supporting the success of our young scholars. This approach ensures that school discipline and pedagogy are fully informed by recognition of students' diverse cultural, sociopolitical, economic and ethnic context. RJ places trust and faith in students' abilities to change by creating safe spaces to deconstruct their experiences and foster their growth. Evidence based research fully supports the conclusion that students of color and others from non-dominant cultures and communities are being left behind in an ever widening achievement gap. It is essential that educators acknowledge the role culture plays by creating environments that are responsive to the needs of all students. Students are invited to appreciate both their own and other cultures and map them into academic spaces and curriculum.

Cultural responsiveness in schools recognizes the importance of students' cultural reference in their classroom experiences, learning, conflict management, and communication. A strong body of research is unfolding that supports the proposition that students learn best in culturally familiar settings where there are clear connections between cultural responsiveness, racial identity, resilience, and academic achievement. According to Zaretta Hammond, culturally responsive teaching is valuable because it validates students' experiences. In her book, *Culturally Responsive Teaching,* she observes the importance of "explicit acknowledgement to students that you are aware of the inequities that impact their lives."[9] Thus culturally responsive education respects, recognizes, and uses student identities as a source for creating inclusive learning environments. This is no small feat, as it requires educators to transcend both their conscious and unconscious cultural biases to develop new ways of thinking, learning, and communicating that engages and sustains learning and achievement for all students.

Culturally responsive educators, such as Gloria Ladson-Billings, have pointed out that teachers of so-called "high risk" students are often unfamiliar with the cultural norms and

practices of the students they teach. "The prevailing view in schools is that disciplinary practices and policies are unbiased and race neutral … Increasing research finds that discipline practices are not as unbiased or objective as once thought and are in fact often culturally loaded … Cultural misperception and misinterpretation is one of the major factors producing racial disparity in discipline."[10]

Cultural responsiveness requires a deep understanding of the effect culture has on teaching and learning. Educators must engage in practices and embody competencies that ensure educational equity for all students and work to create safe and inclusive learning communities. These competencies are derived from self-reflection, lifelong learning, continual dialogue and feedback, and practice. There is a growing awareness among researchers and administrators that school discipline must be implemented through a cultural lens. Restorative Circles and Conversations are an excellent forum for discussions of cultural differences and the significance of taking a non-judgmental approach to cultural understandings.

C. Disproportionality and The School-to-Prison Pipeline

It is now well established that punitive or zero-tolerance school discipline policies that rely on exclusionary punishments are ineffective and stand in the way of student achievement. In schools, 'zero-tolerance' refers to punishment-based discipline that enforces strict rules governing student behaviors. Zero-tolerance disproportionately affects and marginalizes students of color, English language learners, students with disabilities, and other vulnerable school populations. The American Psychological Association determined that zero tolerance is actually very harmful especially for young children in elementary school.[11]

In the United States, zero-tolerance drug policies became widespread in the criminal justice and school system beginning in the 1970s and continuing up to the present day. In 1994, John Ehrlichman, counsel and Assistant to President Richard Nixon characterized the war on drugs as follows:

> *"The Nixon White House … had two enemies: the antiwar left and black people … We knew we couldn't make it illegal to be either against the war or black, but by getting the public to associate the hippies with marijuana and blacks with heroin, and then criminalizing both heavily, we could disrupt those communities. We could arrest their leaders, raid their homes, break up their meetings, and vilify them night after night on the evening news. Did we know we were lying about the drugs? Of course we did."[12]*

The zero tolerance "war on drugs" devastated Black, Latino, and other communities by incarcerating members of those communities in hugely disproportionate numbers. This history is well documented in Michelle Alexander's well-received and respected book, *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*.[13]

Inevitably, the inhumane and racist policies that created mass incarceration and the prison-industrial complex spread to education, where the sons and daughters of those identical communities were subjected to the harshest punishments available (suspension and expulsion) in equally disproportionate numbers.[14]

The school to prison pipeline is the progeny of mass incarceration and the failed and misguided war on drugs. Though zero-tolerance school policies claimed to be a cure for drug use and violence, they served instead to cause further harm to already vulnerable individuals (students of color, foster youth, English learners, gender nonconforming youth, and those with disabilities) as well as entire communities of color. For a critical analysis of the failed drug wars see *Lies, Damned Lies, and Drug War Statistics, Second Edition: A Critical Analysis of Claims Made by the Office of National Drug Policy*.[15]

Some sanity was injected into drug policy when the Fair Sentencing Act of 2010 was signed into federal law by President Barack Obama, greatly reducing the huge disparity between penalties and sentencing for crack cocaine and those for powdered cocaine. In 2014, the Departments of Education and Justice issued guidance clarifying federal civil rights laws and schools' responsibilities to provide all children with equal access to education regardless of the immigration status of their parents. The current status of this and related federal guidances issued by the Obama administration is unclear as of this writing. [16]

In 2017, President Donald J.Trump made changes to federal law and policy that has torn families apart and brought deportation and fear of deportation into immigrant communities, especially Latino and Muslim. According to stakeholders, these events have greatly impacted and harmed our young California scholars, resulting in an increase in bullying behavior at schools, as well as negatively impacting student health with observed increases in depression, anxiety, and trauma. This is a crisis situation that has led to increased use of law and order strategies, such as electronic surveillance and greater police presence and intervention in schools. As a result, students are much more likely to receive rough treatment and even criminal charges in addition to school discipline sanctions, feeding the school-to-prison pipeline.

Zero-tolerance practices and policies have no place in school and must be replaced by Restorative Justice. With its ethical philosophy and practices of dialog, resolution, and reconciliation, Restorative Justice transforms the zero-tolerance paradigm from blame and punishment to one based on talking and learning the root cause of disciplinary issues. RJ practices have been shown to be effective in reducing suspensions and improving school climate for the entire school community. As Paulo Freire says in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, we must "imagine a world…that is less ugly, more beautiful, less discriminatory, more democratic, less dehumanizing, and more humane."[17]

An influential study looked at the disciplinary records of 11,000 students in 19 Indiana middle schools and found that African-American students were punished more often and more harshly than other students for *less serious, more subjective reasons.* This study lays to rest any claims that black kids are punished more because they act out and get into trouble more frequently.[18]

This data, along with other research, including the data in this report, clearly indicates that the disproportionate representation of African-American and Latino children and youths in exclusionary punishments, in-school detentions, and office referrals demonstrate a pervasive and systematic bias and disproportionality that shocks the conscience and violates federal and California civil rights law.

D. Youth Voice

If there is to be a culture shift away from punishment and towards true accountability, honoring the voice of youth is essential. RJ is about a search for solutions involving everyone affected by a harmful situation. Based on the collective experience of RJ practitioners working in schools, we know that youth who have experienced disproportionality and punishment under zero-tolerance policies are particularly well suited to taking leadership roles in shaping a kinder and more holistic school climate. Establishing trusting relationships involves a major shift away from youth being acted upon to youth being architects of their own learning while developing the skills necessary to find and identify solutions to conflict.

In the restorative school students as well as adults accept responsibly for their relationships and the overall health of the school community.[19] RJ encourages youth to assume leadership roles in facilitating circles and actively engaging in mediations or harm circles to resolve conflicts. Ensuring that youth have a seat at the table is key to developing practices aimed at reforming school culture. Young people have a lot to say and should be intimately

involved in shaping school curriculum and disciplinary policies, especially when implementing Restorative Justice. The school-to-prison pipeline will not be disrupted without a concerted commitment to really hear youth, to provide platforms and opportunities for their voices, and to involve them in shaping programs, policies, and actions. Educators must realize that their students are also their teachers and give them full credit for being the experts on their own their life experiences. This is where RJ Circles, restorative conversations and narrative processes are most valuable in providing the contextual opportunities for cultural growth.

VI. CORE PRACTICES AND PROCESSES

A. Circle Practice

Circle practice is widely accepted by the Restorative Justice community as the central practice of Restorative Justice. (See Table 1 below for related data.) Meeting in Circle is a key tradition that that the RJ movement has adapted from indigenous cultures and often includes use of a talking piece and a center piece to honor and acknowledge the Circle as a safe space. Circles build connections and trusting relationships while also teaching listening and leadership skills. We have followed the convention used in the book, *Circle Forward,* of capitalizing the word *Circle* on account of its special sacred significance.[20]

Circles are the core Restorative Justice practice for building trusting relationships, creating safe spaces, building connections, and offering teachers and RJ practitioners a unique means of formative assessment. We have observed a growing practice among classroom teachers of remaining in Circle for discussion-based academic learning in addition to enhancing cultural awareness and uplifting the voices of youth. Circles provide a moveable center of safety, trust, and community framed by ethical guidelines within the larger school campus. Circle practice dismantles hierarchy through the act of sitting in community. The Circle facilitator, also called the Circle Keeper, acts as a "guide on the side" rather than "a sage on the stage." By their very structure, Circles permit and invite a rethinking of traditional power relationships and inequities.[21]

The Circle Keeper may be a teacher, counselor, or student, as long as the person has an understanding and familiarity with the process. Many middle school students welcome the opportunity to practice being Circle Keepers, often in partnership with another student or

teacher. The job is not to dominate the discussion, but rather to demonstrate leadership by respecting and guarding the integrity of the Circle processes and values.

Speaking in Circle is moderated by a Talking Piece, which is often an object with special meaning to the group. The Talking Piece is passed around the Circle, giving everyone the opportunity, but not the obligation, to speak their truth. Because the person holding the Talking Piece is the only one invited to speak, Circle is an inclusive and egalitarian process that can transform and democratize the power dynamic in the classroom. In Circle, everyone faces each other activating what neuroscientists call mirror neurons.[22] Participants not only see and hear each other, but are also more capable of empathizing with each other.

Circles typically begin with a recitation of Circle guidelines that have been intentionally adopted by the group. The guidelines below were adapted by student groups at San Juan Unified School District. The RJ Advocates group at San Juan High School innovated by adding the final Narrative inspired guideline which other students in other districts have chosen to use as well. Middle school students in Sacramento chose to include Thich Nhat Hanh's phrase *Be Peace* on their Upstander Club tee shirts as well as in their guidelines. The guidelines are:

- Speak and listen with your heart
- Speak and listen with respect
- Respect the Talking Piece
- Honor privacy
- Be Peace
- The problem is the problem. The person is NOT the problem.

Circles can be convened around seemingly endless themes, from Checking In Circles, Celebration Circles, Appreciation Circles, and Trust Building Circles to more complex Harm Circles, Re-entry Circles, and Circles about difficult subjects like Racism, Gender, and White Privilege. *Circle Forward* describes over 100 different themes that Circle practice can address.[23] We briefly address three Circle themes in this report.

Community Building Circles: The Community Building Circle builds cohesion and strengthens relationships. It is a model for addressing particular community problems in the classroom or school, and also for helping teachers and staff build their own morale and cohesion. Discussions often revolve around developing trust and transforming school culture and climate. Community Building Circles are particularly important for establishing new groups, however they should also take place throughout the school year. Community Building

Circles are ideal for development of classroom Respect Agreements. A series of Circles can address Teacher Respect for Students, Student Respect for Teacher, and Respect for the Classroom or other physical space.[24]

Peacemaking Circles: The Peacemaking Circle has been described as "a way to bring people together to hold difficult conversations and to work through conflict or differences."[25] Peacemaking Circles are helpful for preventing conflict and responding when harm has occurred. These special Circles "create possibilities for freedom … to speak our truth, freedom to drop masks and protections, freedom to be present as a whole human being, freedom to reveal our deepest longings, freedom to acknowledge mistakes and fears, freedom to act in accord with our core values."[26]

Re-entry Circles: Re-entry Circles are a highly effective tool for use on the occasion of welcoming a student returning to school after a period of incarceration or suspension. These circles will greatly increase and enhance the likelihood of a student who has been excluded experiencing a sense of welcome and belonging. It is a way for the school community to say "we've got your back, you belong here, you are among friends and allies". The Re-entry Circle is a powerful anti-recidivism tool that builds community and fosters inclusiveness and caring. This circle will be most effective if it is held on or very near the first day the student returns to school. A broad spectrum of the community should be present, including parents and parental figures, the school principal and/or assistant principal, other adults who know the student, and one or two of the student's friends or classmates. The overwhelming messages of the Re-entry Circle should be, "We want you to succeed and will help you get there!"

The many types of Circles used in RJ practice lie on a fluid continuum that can be adapted to whatever specific situation arises. The adult Circle keeper can assume young people already have coping and communication skills and ways of resolving conflicts that may not conform to a dominant cultural norm. Circle keepers can ask directed questions to help name the problem, increase the group's understanding of the problem, and generate conversations without placing blame.

B. Social Emotional Learning and the Five Competencies

Like Restorative Justice, Social Emotional Learning (SEL) is based on the development and strengthening of relationships and resilience within the school community. One of the key benefits of Circle practice is development of the five SEL competencies of:

1. Self-management;
2. Self-awareness;
3. Social Awareness;
4. Relationship Skills;
5. Responsible Decision Making.

Students learn to cultivate self-management by discussing how to respond peacefully to those who insult them. Students can build relationship skills and cultivate non-judgmental awareness by participating in and observing amicable resolution of conflicts with others. The SEL competency of Responsible Decision Making is enhanced through a cultural lens that considers the well-being of self and others and recognizes the responsibility to act ethically. For example, students may be asked how they would respond to a student of a different culture being made fun of. Would they be a bystander or an up-stander?

Research has shown that students with SEL experience demonstrate:

- A strong sense of community and positive attitude towards school
- High academic motivation and aspiration
- Understanding of the consequences of different behaviors
- Coping strategies for school stressors

Since relationships are the heart of Restorative Justice, the role of teachers and RJ practitioners expands to embrace SEL and teaching to the whole child. By developing caring relationships and replacing anger and harsh punishments with kindness and accountability, everyone in the school community benefits — students, teachers, administrators, and classified workers. Both RJ and SEL focus on educating the whole child. With an emphasis on the importance of positive relationships, students come to understand that their learning exists within a framework concerned with their well-being and success. Both disciplines develop an interactive skill set that build up the individuals and the community with emotionally healthy students and teachers. A partnership between SEL and RJ leads to a positive transformation of schools from the classroom to the lunchroom.

C. Narrative Process

The guiding insight of the Narrative process is: "The problem is the problem. The person is not the problem." Students and teachers benefit from this process because it frames and names the problem rather than casting blame and shame on an individual. Because language shapes reality, the harm of pejorative labeling cannot be overstated. Instead of a dialectic of teacher-centered approach versus a student-centered approach, narrative processes are centered on strengthening relationships — a key principle of Restorative Justice.

Narrative process makes a tremendous contribution to the fostering of trusting relationships and safe spaces. Narrative initially grew out of work developed in family therapy by Michael White of Australia and David Epson of New Zealand.[27] Since then, the application of the principles and process has extended beyond family therapy into the juvenile courts, conflict resolution, Restorative Justice in schools, and gender health community work.[28]

While RJ practitioners working with RSVP were initially skeptical of Narrative process, over a ten year period, they have moved to fully embrace Narrative process as a hugely important ally to winning the hearts and minds of students. Narrative truly embodies the guiding principle that "youth are the experts in their own lives and have the skills, abilities, and values to allow them to make positive change."[29] Narrative process embeds a profound respect for the ability and insight of individuals involved in a conflict to find creative resolutions to that conflict. Narrative process is perfectly suited for developing restorative teacher-student relationships in the classroom. This can be illustrated by comparing the commonly used deficit descriptions of student behavior to strength based descriptions. Deficit defining descriptions, such as "he is a troublemaker" or "she is totally disrespectful," reduce the complexity of a person to a negative label that purports to capture the enduring essence of the person. These deficit-based descriptions are harmful to young people and carry the danger of being adopted by the community, internalized, and then acted upon by the student. Narrative RJ is based on the positive premises that:

- We are complex and much more than one problem.
- Positive descriptions offer the key to positive growth.
- New descriptions can be aspirations to live by.

By separating the problem from the person, students will be engaged in respectful, competency-based conversations. For instance, students in a harm circle can be asked to name one of their best qualities. This reminds everyone in the circle that they don't have to be

captured by problems, but already have the skills necessary to push away and disown negative interactions.

When conflicts arise Narrative process invites us to focus on positive strengths and align them with successful outcomes. In this way, trusting relationships are fostered. When the person who is harmed and the one who has caused harm come together, they can co-create their solutions by focusing on the problem rather than the person. Thus, the school community is also restored to an environment where each person is valued. This deeper understanding leads to a school climate where the stressors students and adults bring to school and allows for healing to take place. Public education thus becomes a guide star for a more peaceful world.

D. Mindfulness

The school community can and must be a haven for coping with stressors and recognizing trauma. If not, children experiencing neighborhood violence, parental stress, homelessness, disruption, and economic instability will struggle in school, emotionally and academically.[30] The secular practice of mindfulness offers them the means and opportunity to center and calm themselves in ways they can use to flourish. A mindful student, teacher, or administrator becomes more aware of the multiple forces influencing both negative and positive emotions. By learning non-judgmental awareness, they are better able to distance themselves from the pain and harsh effects of negative circumstances and emotions. Mindfulness practice can open up inner space for positive thoughts and allow transformation to take place. Mindfulness based stress reduction has been embraced by many schools and the practice is supported by practitioners, physicians, and neuroscience experts.[31]

The results have been impressive in California schools that have introduced the practice of mindfulness. The Oakland-based Niroga Institute has given Mindfulness/Yoga training in over 30 schools in the Bay Area, including West Oakland Middle School, Berkeley High School, MLK Elementary, San Leandro High School, and El Cerrito High School. We recommend their videos and have included a link in our Resources section. Because Mindfulness supports student self-management, empathy, and nonjudgmental awareness, it is particularly compatible with Narrative Process and Restorative Justice concepts.[32]

E. Trauma Informed Practices

Within the past 15 years, a growing number of California schools have begun to embrace the understanding that student behaviors, achievements, and health are all negatively affected by trauma and adverse childhood experiences (ACEs).[33] One of the positive responses has been training teachers to recognize that children and adolescents are particularly vulnerable to toxic stress, which may be manifested in angry outbursts, self-harm, and/or disengagement and inability to learn. "Becoming trauma-informed requires a paradigm shift at the staff and organizational level to re-focus on understanding what happened to a child, rather than focusing on the conduct alone."[34] Kindness and understanding from a teacher can gently guide these students back to a calm state. Rigid control and punishment often exacerbates the situation rather than aid healing. Since trauma resides within the body as well as the mind, a kind and understanding teacher can go a long way towards supporting students who are struggling.[35]

A 2011 study of 701 children from the Bayview Child Health Center in San Francisco found that a child with four or more ACEs was 32 times more likely to be labeled with a learning or behavior problem than a child with none. "The categories of adversity include having a household member who is chronically depressed; having an incarcerated household member; living in a household with one or no parents; and living in a household with an alcohol and/or drug abuser. In the classroom, the quick-trigger behavior can be difficult for everyone to handle."[36]

Attention should also be given to sources of trauma found in group identity rather than individualized circumstances. In this respect, a child's race and ethnicity, gender identity, religion, and/or country of origin may indicate that they are members of a group who are vulnerable, oppressed, and/or living in poverty. Educators, Social workers, RJ coordinators, and other members of the school community must embrace activism for social justice, as well as fairness for the afflicted individuals. In order for them to be truly helpful and effective they must be well versed in cultural diversity, the traumas, and the current realities of the oppressed communities.

Neuroscience research demonstrates that trusting relationships are central to healing and coping with traumatic events.[37] Since relationship development is also central to Restorative Justice practices, there was clear recognition among the stakeholders that Restorative schools are particularly well placed in their ability to provide healing responses.

The California Conference for Equality and Justice (CCEJ) promotes RJ in schools and participated in RSVP's SoCal convening. Because they had introduced RJ to a Long Beach USD high school, the latter was well positioned to introduce a training in becoming a Trauma Informed School. In his May 24, 2017 article in Youth Today, author and school-based clinical therapist Nathan Swaringen, observes that the relationship between school-based Trauma Informed and Restorative Justice is like "two interconnecting pieces that are both needed to complete the entire puzzle … With the support of healthy relationships and skills to self-regulate, students can better participate in the inclusive process of Restorative Justice in their schools and communities."[38]

VII. DATA AND ANALYSIS

A. Methods

RSVP initiated multiple stakeholder convenings in California to collect data on best Restorative Justice practices in a school-based environment. This information was supplemented by data collected from surveys and evaluations. While the original quest was to define *best practices*, upon examination of the literature and existing research it was determined that existing evidence is not yet sufficient to justify this specific technical designation. The lack of reliable measurement tools and the very nature of Restorative Justice practices themselves contributed to the decision to make this adjustment. In order to be considered as a best practice or evidence-based practice, specific outcomes are required to be tied to the fidelity of implementation. Accordingly, the term was changed to *promising practices,* which is more appropriate at this stage of the research and is used in this report.

Data collection began with a two-day Guidance Group (GG) convening on September 28-29, 2015. The GG was convened by individual invitation to a diverse group of known experts in the field. Attendees included RJ practitioners, educators, youth, community advocates, indigenous elders, and activists. (GG members are listed by name and organization in Appendix B.) Data collection continued at three subsequent one-day geographically diverse convenings on May 7, May 14, May 21 with self-selected participants who registered in response to widespread announcements. (Names and organizations of convening participants are listed in Appendix D-F.) Data was also collected through convening participant responses to surveys and evaluations. Once all data was collected, grantee RSVP selected a team of two researchers with keen interest in RJ and extensive experience working with community organizations, analyzing data, and writing reports for grantors, including The California Endowment. The research team organized the data and subjected it to rigorous analysis for the purposes of this report.

A mixed methods approach was employed to collect and analyze data. A community-based participatory research (CBPR) approach was employed to cast a wide net to reach RJ practitioners, students, teachers, educators, parents, community stakeholders, and advocates. Obtaining these stakeholders' perspectives and experiences was a key objective of the research and this report.

The number of participants from whom data was collected is listed below:
- A two-day Guidance Group convening (n=30);
- Three one-day regional convenings (n=144);

- Survey respondents (n= 51); and
- Convening Evaluation respondents (n=36).

The Report Review Team (Team) includes stakeholders who are experienced and knowledgeable RJ practitioners, researchers, equity experts, and educators who distilled and organized the data and authored this report. The data was organized into promising practices: core concepts; practices and processes; implementation strategies. Notes from stakeholder and convening discussions, small-group discussions, and survey data were categorized by content and then clustered thematically into subcategories.

In organizing stakeholder concepts, the researchers balanced the tension between clustering similar concepts together and reporting in the words of stakeholders. When words and concepts deviated from the cluster group such that there was concern about losing meaning by omitting the term, they were included within the cluster and reported as a separate item. The source of the data and the frequency of the comments were also documented. Discussion with the Team further fleshed out the concepts, provided additional depth, and underscored the crucial importance of specific categories. This step enabled the initial clustered stakeholder responses to be categorized in a manner that presents up-to-date information for the field.

B. Results

This section focuses on the results that emerged from stakeholders who participated in one or more activities related to determining Restorative Justice best practices. The Team reviewed, clarified, and categorized the findings in the Results section as follows:

- Restorative Justice Core Concepts (Table 1);
- Restorative Justice Promising Practices and Processes (Table 1);
- Implementation Strategies (Tables 2 & 3).

Prior to analyzing the RJ concepts, practices and processes in Table 1 (below), it is important to emphasize that in reality, concepts and practices are blended and merged in ways that address actual on-the-ground situations whether in the classroom or the lunchroom. The practice is always responsive to individual circumstances and eschews an approach that simply checks off a list of concepts or practices. Fidelity requires creativity and attention rather than rote responses. As in other fields, such as public health or psychology, the concept are

blended to create a customized response or intervention that responds to specific needs in a timely and sensitive manner.

Stakeholder responses to the request to identify best RJ practices were wide-ranging with substantial variations in terminology. The process was helpful in making apparent the need for common terminology and practices for the field. A common language is important for ensuring a shared accurate understanding among practitioners and stakeholders. It is also important for ensuring effective implementation, training, and evaluation, thereby promoting fidelity to RJ and the documentation of outcomes.

TABLE 1: Promising Practices: Responses from Stakeholders

Guidance Group (GG) (n=30), Regional Convenings (n=144), Surveys (n=51), Evaluations (n=36)				
General Category	**Stakeholder Responses**	**Number of Convenings where Concept was Cited**	**Cited in Surveys**	**Cited in Evaluations**
Restorative Justice Core Concepts				
Indigenous Wisdom and Balanced Relationships				
	Harmed and harmer come together.	2 convenings	Yes	Yes
	Shared responsibility; invitation to take responsibility.	2 convenings	No	No
	Build interpersonal and community relationships as a preventive and repairing-harm approach.	1 convening	Yes	No
	Inclusive, accountable, fluid, restoration of balance.	1 convening	No	No
	Use nature to create balance and use art to encourage creativity	Guidance Group	No	No
Community and Cultural Responsiveness				
	Cultural inclusiveness (school, community, parents, students).	3 convenings	Yes	Yes
	Cultural appropriateness: respect for community, its history, and norms.	1 convening	Yes	Yes

Guidance Group (GG) (n=30), Regional Convenings (n=144), Surveys (n=51), Evaluations (n=36)				
General Category	**Stakeholder Responses**	**Number of Convenings where Concept was Cited**	**Cited in Surveys**	**Cited in Evaluations**
	Cultural competence, fluency, proficiency.	2 convenings	No	No
	Cultural humility.	2 convenings	No	No
	School community critical in identifying solutions.	3 convenings	No	No
	RJ practices are a process; the goal is to build healthy communities.	1 convening	No	No
	Understand implicit bias and consequences.	2 convenings	Yes	No
Youth Voice				
	Youth voice central to process	3 convenings	Yes	Yes
	Student facilitated circles.	3 convenings	Yes	Yes
	Youth participation and leadership development including using youth as trainers.	3 convenings	Yes	Yes
	Establishing school RJ Clubs and providing academic credit for student contributions.	1 convening	No	No
Restorative Justice Practices and Processes				
Circle Practices				
	Ask respectful, curious questions, honor privacy; speak and listen with respect.	1 convening	Yes	No
	Employ affective statements (Avoid blaming statements).	2 convenings	No	No
	Reduce stigma, increase healing.	1 convening	No	No
	Focus on issues, not person.	1 convening	No	No

Guidance Group (GG) (n=30), Regional Convenings (n=144), Surveys (n=51), Evaluations (n=36)				
General Category	**Stakeholder Responses**	**Number of Convenings where Concept was Cited**	**Cited in Surveys**	**Cited in Evaluations**
	Continual inquiry, curiosity.	1 convening	No	No
	Be willing to be uncomfortable, be willing to grow.	1 convening	No	No
	Increase self-reflection.	1 convening	No	No
	Collaborate, build consensus.	2 convenings	No	No
	Humility and continual learning.	2 convenings	No	No
	Transform power relationships, reduce hierarchy	3 convenings, GG	No	No
	Transparent interactions and Fairness.	3 convenings, GG	No	No
Social Emotional Learning (SEL)				
	Self-awareness; self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, responsible decision-making.	3 convenings	Yes	No
	Modeling healthy adult relationships.	1 convening	No	No
	Reframe options with focus on learning.	3 convenings, GG	No	No
Narrative				
	Understand stories.	3 convenings	Yes	Yes
	Help people see alternative stories.	3 convenings	Yes	Yes
	People are multistoried.	3 convenings	No	No
	Language shapes reality.	3 convenings, GG	No	No
	Probe to get to underlying (root) causes.	3 convenings, GG	No	No
	Build on strengths rather than punishment for deficits.	3 convenings		

Guidance Group (GG) (n=30), Regional Convenings (n=144), Surveys (n=51), Evaluations (n=36)				
General Category	**Stakeholder Responses**	**Number of Convenings where Concept was Cited**	**Cited in Surveys**	**Cited in Evaluations**
Mindfulness				
	Calming oneself/self control.	1 convening	No	No
	Non-judgmental awareness.	GG	Yes	No
Trauma-informed Approaches				
	Trauma-informed approaches: Understand community stressors, micro aggressions, cultural oppression.	3 convenings	Yes	No
	Understand underlying reasons for behavior.	3 convenings, GG	No	No

TABLE 1: RJ Core Concepts

Indigenous Wisdom and Balanced Relationships: The stakeholder responses that are clustered in the Indigenous Wisdom and Balanced Relationships category include: harmed and harmer come together; shared responsibility; invitation to take responsibility; build interpersonal and community relationships as a preventative and repairing-harm approach; inclusive, accountable, fluid, restoration of balance; and use nature to create balance and use art to encourage creativity.

Indigenous wisdom is understood to refer to cultural traditions that value respect, courage, compassion, and justice. These traditions deeply value balanced relationships in the natural and the world. Righting wrongs and restoring equilibrium is a foundation of RJ that runs counter to an authoritarian model of interacting. Because human beings are defined by their interrelationships, the indigenous healing tradition of uplifting respect for each human being provides an inclusive framework within which RJ practices occur.

Community and Cultural Responsiveness: Stakeholder responses clustered in this category include: cultural inclusiveness (school, community, parents, students); cultural appropriateness: respect for community, its history, and norms; cultural competence, fluency, proficiency; cultural humility; school community critical in identifying solutions; RJ practices are a process; the goal is to build healthy communities; and understand implicit bias and consequences.

Community and cultural responsiveness build upon the strength and resilience of cultural communities and integrates these into educational experiences that benefit students. Community and cultural responsiveness requires a deep understanding of the effect culture has on teaching and learning.

Youth Voice: Stakeholders identified the importance of youth voice in all three regional convenings, reflected by the number of youth attending and making heartfelt presentations. The stakeholder responses that are clustered in this category include: youth voice central to process; student facilitated circles; youth participation and leadership development including using youth as trainers; establishing school RJ clubs and providing academic credit for student contributions.

Youth voice has long been appreciated in community based participatory research (CBPR) and is not unique to RJ concepts and practices. Youth voice recognizes the importance of including students as vital, positive, and contributing members of the school community. By honoring student voice and doing things with them instead of to them or for them, high levels of support and accountability are created within the school environment.

TABLE 1: RJ Practices and Processes

Circle Practices: Stakeholders identified circles more frequently than any other practice as a central tenet of RJ. The stakeholder responses that are clustered in this category include: ask respectful curious questions, honor privacy, speak and listen with respect; employ affective statements (avoid blaming statements); reduce stigma, increase healing; focus on the issues, not the person; continual inquiry, curiosity; being willing to be uncomfortable, be willing to grow; increase self-reflection; collaborate, build consensus; humility and continual learning; transform power relationships, reduce hierarchy; transparent interactions and fairness.

Circle practice is an interactive approach designed to recognize individuals, encourage their participation, and share ideas and goals. Circles are used to create a space where trust can

be established and conflicts prevented or resolved. Circles honor indigenous cultural wisdom and provide fertile ground for promoting balanced relationships.

Social and Emotional Learning (SEL):   Stakeholder responses clustered in the SEL category include: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, responsible decision-making; modeling healthy adult relationships; reframe options with focus on learning.

SEL teaches individuals the knowledge and skills necessary to understand emotions and manage harmful ways of thinking and acting. Individual self-management helps students think ahead, curb impulsive actions, and come to class focused and ready to learn.

Narrative Process: Stakeholder responses reflected the importance of understanding and appreciating students' stories. The theme of understanding stories occurred in three data collection points — convenings, surveys, and evaluation. Stakeholder responses clustered within this category include: understand stories; help people see alternative stories; people are multistoried; language shapes reality; probe to get to underlying (root) causes; and build on strengths rather than punishment for deficits.

During each of the three regional convenings, experienced RJ practitioners gave presentations to stakeholders on their positive experiences incorporating narrative into their RJ practices and trainings. Questions and hypotheticals were posed by stakeholders unfamiliar with the process but curious to learn how they might incorporate it into their own work. The power of honoring and respecting individual stories was attested to by students and others in attendance.

Mindfulness: Stakeholder responses clustered in this category include: calming oneself/self control; and non-judgmental awareness. Mindfulness complements the RJ values of respectful, compassionate interactions. The secular practice of mindfulness has emerged as a practice very helpful to student learning and development. It is a practice that helps individuals to think before they speak or act, quiet the mind, and maintain a sense of emotional equilibrium.

Trauma Informed Practices: Stakeholder responses clustered in this category include: trauma informed approaches; understand community stressors, micro aggressions, cultural

oppression; and underlying reasons for behavior. These understandings are critical to the success of implementing RJ and facilitating equity in schools.

Traumatic events can overwhelm a student's ability to cope with school . Examples of trauma include exposure to violence, poverty, and abuse (physical, sexual, or emotional). Trauma informed approaches focus on ameliorating the effects of trauma on child development and fostering safety and recovery for children and youth in school and community settings.[39] In order for children and youth to flourish, schools must address acute and chronic stress from whatever sources.

C. Implementation Strategies

Table 2: Implementation Strategies Reported by Stakeholders

IMPLEMENTATION COMPONENTS	STAKEHOLDER RESPONSES	FREQUENCY OF OCCURRENCE IN CONVENING'S	CITED BY SURVEY RESPONDENTS	CITED BY EVALUATION RESPONDENTS
School Assessment: Assets, Challenges, Data Analysis	What does school community want to change, why, what is capacity to implement change, etc.?	1 convening.	No	No
	Present data to all stakeholders in community-friendly terminology and setting.	1 convening.	No	No
	Determine buy-in from stakeholders. Include: • Teacher, • District, • Administration, • Family, and • Community.	3 convenings.	Yes	Yes
	Determine who is excited to work with RJ and cultivate a learning environment.	1 convening	No	No
Planning	Be strategic.	3 convenings	No	No
	Be intentional.	3 convenings	No	No

IMPLEMENTATION COMPONENTS	STAKEHOLDER RESPONSES	FREQUENCY OF OCCURRENCE IN CONVENING'S	CITED BY SURVEY RESPONDENTS	CITED BY EVALUATION RESPONDENTS
	Create a narrative about culture change and RJ practices.	1 convening	No	No
	Parent / caregiver integration into process.	2 convenings	Yes	No
	Establish supportive structures and systems, e.g., integrated guidance group, ongoing coaching and technical assistance.	2 convenings	No	No
	Define roles for administration, teachers, parents, community stakeholders.	1 convening	No	No
	Create space and allocate budget for onsite RJ practitioners.	2 convenings	No	No
	Employ prevention principles. Engage community with community building before there is a need for harm and repair discussions. (Employ practices to build trust, create strong communication channels, personal connectedness, etc.)	1 convening	No	No
	Determine implementation strategy that fits the school. • Small pilot to test practice in specific setting.	1 convening	No	No
	Determine how to start—small pilot to test and make adjustments, roll-out, whole school or grade level, etc.	1 convening	No	No

IMPLEMENTATION COMPONENTS	STAKEHOLDER RESPONSES	FREQUENCY OF OCCURRENCE IN CONVENING'S	CITED BY SURVEY RESPONDENTS	CITED BY EVALUATION RESPONDENTS
	Identify a group that is excited, willing to learn, change, support others in the process to start. Then as success occurs, others will become excited and want to participate.	1 convening	No	No
	Consistency • The goal is to have systemwide implementation so that messages across all levels of a school, grade, or class are consistent. This means training and follow-up with teachers, administrators, coaches, bus drivers, cafeteria workers, etc.	2 convenings	No	No
	Whole-school implementation, consistent messages.	3 convenings	Yes	No
	Honor teachers.	1 convening	No	No
Training	Quality training: teachers, administration, students, community.	3 convenings	Yes	Yes
	Train teachers to understand their own social and emotional issues so they can understand trauma-informed approaches.	2 convenings	Yes	Yes
	Train peer mediators.	2 convenings	Yes	No
Active Implementation	Create a learning environment	1 convening	No	No
	Tailor implementation to each school.	3 convenings	No	No
	Orient systemwide stakeholders to plan rollout.	3 convenings	No	No

IMPLEMENTATION COMPONENTS	STAKEHOLDER RESPONSES	FREQUENCY OF OCCURRENCE IN CONVENING'S	CITED BY SURVEY RESPONDENTS	CITED BY EVALUATION RESPONDENTS
	Whole school implementation, consistent messages across school.	3 convenings	Yes	No
	Communication between school and community. Good communication, meet community where they are.	3 convenings	No	No
	Create connections to offsite providers.	1 convening	No	No
	Remove police from school.	1 convening	No	No
Evaluation	• Quality Improvement. • Rapid turn–around of data. • Ongoing training and monitoring with feedback.	2 convenings	No	No
	Self-assessments.	1 convening	No	No
	Create real-time (or frequent) data collection and feedback systems so decisions are made with data.	1 convening	No	No
	Ongoing monitoring of implementation.	1 convening	No	No
Sustainability	Continue strategic planning.	2 convenings	No	No
	Create ongoing resources.	2 convenings	No	No
	Involve school counselors.	1 convening	No	No
	Create structure of older students teaching younger students.	1 convening	No	No

IMPLEMENTATION COMPONENTS	STAKEHOLDER RESPONSES	FREQUENCY OF OCCURRENCE IN CONVENING'S	CITED BY SURVEY RESPONDENTS	CITED BY EVALUATION RESPONDENTS
	Build structure to develop leadership.	2 convenings	No	No
	Cultivate champions in all sectors.	1 convening	No	No

Implementation strategies were intermingled with RJ concepts and practices in all stakeholder data collection modalities. In Table 2 (above), they have been pulled out in order to facilitate understanding and discussion. Components of implementation strategies include: school climate assessments; planning; training; active implementation; evaluation; and sustainability. The picture that emerges from stakeholder responses is one that requires both a high degree of planning and a high degree of customization. The process begins with a school assessment that looks at a school's assets and challenges. The ongoing collection of data then becomes a touch point for stakeholders throughout the implementation process. As new information unfolds, the entire school stakeholder community (administration, teachers, students, parents, and other classified staff) can adjust and respond accordingly.

The inclusion of the school stakeholder community is essential. As information is gathered on a school's readiness for change, each stakeholder group must be listened to and respected. Planning and implementation then proceed incrementally with an opportunity for the entire school community to experience the benefits of a shifting paradigm. As a general rule, discussions should be, when possible, conducted in circle as a model for how RJ should be implemented.

An intentional decision to dedicate physical space and resources for RJ is a condition predicate to successful implementation. This assures the entire school stakeholder community that there is a genuine commitment to implementation from district decision makers. The discussions that follow can model the Restorative Justice approach and can serve to reinforce the school's movement from a blaming, punitive approach to a collaborative, responsibility-sharing approach.

While certain aspects of RJ must exist, such as a commitment to the core concepts, there is wide variability in how a school chooses to move forward. For example, if the school

assessment reveals a climate in which change is not widely supported, it makes sense to take steps necessary to build support for change. This might include establishing a pilot program that the school and stakeholders can learn from. Another option would to implement RJ across a grade level as a pilot site. This approach permits early identification of what works and allows for early adjustments prior to implementation in a larger segment of the school. When a committed group is chosen for the pilot site, this can allow enthusiasm to build and spread across the campus.

Training is essential once the decision to move forward has been made. The input stakeholders provided around training included: Quality training of teachers, administration, students, community; Train teachers to understand their own social and emotional issues so they can understand trauma-informed approaches; and Train peer mediators.

Training is an ongoing endeavor. Stakeholders referenced the creation of a continual learning environment once the school enters the roll-out or active implementation phase of RJ. This learning environment can be cultivated by determining who is excited to change. Consistency communication among and between stakeholder groups is vital. As with all change initiatives, evaluation is crucial in order to make necessary adjustments to implementation, measure indicators and outcomes, and ensure that RJ is being implemented with fidelity. Respondents at the convenings recognized the importance of monitoring the implementation roll-out with a rapid turnaround of data concerning key indicators and outcomes.

Stakeholders highlighted the importance of sustainability from the onset of planning and continuing through all planning and implementation phases. Stakeholder responses that are clustered in the category of Sustainability include: continual strategic planning; ongoing creation of resources; involvement of school counselors; creation of a tradition where older students mentor younger students; and leadership development. Some of the enabling factors for RJ implementation were included in the Implementation Strategies. The Report Review Team found it useful to highlight these issues in the stand-alone table below.

TABLE 3: Enabling Factors and Barriers to Implementation

Enabling Factors	Frequency by Number of Convenings
Teacher and administration buy-in.	3 convenings

Persistence.	1 convening
Champions across sectors.	2 convenings
Resources: space and budget for onsite RJ practitioners.	2 convenings
Funding from grants or school district.	3 convenings
Barriers	**Frequency by Number of Convenings**
Punitive mind set.	3 convenings
Rigidity of punitive disciplinary systems.	3 convenings
Lack of funding.	3 convenings

The stakeholder listings of enabling factors and barriers highlight key issues that are salient to RJ moving forward. By zeroing in on enabling factors and barriers, RJ advocates can be strategic in harnessing resources for their local and statewide efforts. Identified enabling factors for RJ implementation include: teacher and administration buy-in; persistence; champions across sectors; space and budget resources for onsite RJ practitioners; and dedicated funding from various sources. The barriers to RJ implementation that identified by stakeholders include: punitive mind set; rigidity of punitive disciplinary systems; and lack of funding. Entrenchment of a punitive disciplinary system was identified as a major barrier to RJ implementation that must be systematically and strategically dismantled.

Every school should have at least one RJ coordinator and a core of teachers and administrators who are skilled in training and dedicated to this crucial paradigm shift. The participants in this process brought with them a strong sense of the need for change. In the words of Dr. King, "Tomorrow is today, we are confronted with the fierce urgency of now."

VIII. CONCLUSION

We conclude as we began, by paying our respects to the indigenous cultures upon whose shoulders we stand. In the words of Maori elders, "We are all whanau — family." We learned by meeting with Restorative Justice advocates and practitioners throughout the state that the time is ripe for change. We can no longer cling to punishment as the dominant force for controlling students. Controlling must give way to resilience, understanding, and healing. Restorative Justice provides the ethical basis, inclusivity, and compassionate energy to shift the school discipline paradigm from intolerance and pain to one grounded in justice and healing. RJ Practitioners and students fully embrace circle practices as the most democratic, inclusive, and effective tool to speak and listen with respect while resolving conflict. RJ circle practice is also the preferred tool for developing the SEL competencies and cultural responsiveness. Narrative process, trauma informed practices and mindfulness are important allies to weaving a justice that heals into the lives of children and youth in the school environment.

Restorative Schools Vision Project convened a group of diverse stakeholders from across the state to identify Restorative Justice best practices. A set of promising practices and strategies emerged along with a common set of terms and concepts. Of particular importance were identification of core concepts, supportive practices, and emerging practices; the need for training across stakeholder groups; the primacy of data collection and analysis; and the importance of designated funding. Restorative Justice has the power to deeply affect the roots of conflicts and assist school communities in designing pathways away from punitive paradigms and toward healthy restorative environments where strong academic outcomes are achieved and students thrive.

A school where Restorative Justice is fully embraced is a just and supportive community with no room for exclusionary punishments — much less a school-to-prison pipeline. The information we gathered demonstrates a statewide agreement to support school communities where everyone counts and is counted. Using Howard Zehr's metaphor, we agree that RJ moves like a river, broad and deep with many tributaries. We are a movement whose story will continue to be co-created with emerging narratives still to be told. Restorative Justice points the way. All that is needed is the will to join together to fight for a justice that heals. It is hoped this report serves as a call of action to accomplish just that.

IX. APPENDIX

A: Resources

Books and Printed Materials:

Alexander, M. (2012) *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*. New York: The New Press.

Beaudoin, N-M & Taylor M. (2004) *Breaking the Culture of Bullying and Disrespect: Best Practices and Successful Strategies*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Boyce-Watson, C. & Pranis, K. (2015) *Circle Forward: Building a Restorative School Community*. Cambridge, MA: Living Justice Press.

Claassen, R. & R. (2008) *Discipline That Restores; Strategies to Create Respect Cooperation, and Responsibility in the Classroom*. South Carolina: BookSurge Publishing.

Coates, T. (2015) *Between the World and Me*. New York: Random House.

Coloroso, B. (2009) *The Bully, the Bullied, and the Bystander: From Preschool to HighSchool--How Parents and Teachers Can Help Break the Cycle*. New York: HarperCollins.

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Oakland Unified School District (2017) *Restorative Justice Implementation Guide - A Whole School Approach* https://sites.google.com/a/ousd.k12.ca.us/ousd-rj-resources/documents

Pranis, K. (2005) *Circle Processes*. Intercourse, PA: Good Books.

Public Counsel (2017) *Fix School Discipline Toolkit for Educators* www.fixschooldiscipline.org/community-toolkit/

Riestenberg, N. (2012) *Circle in the Square: Building Community and Repairing Harm in School*. Cambridge, MA: Living Justice Press.

Rios, V.M. (2011) *Punished: Policing the Lives of Black and Brown Latino Boys*. New York: New York University Press.

Ross, R. (1996) *Return to the Teachings: Exploring Aboriginal Justice*. Toronto: Penguin Books.

Siegel, D. (2015) *Brainstorm: The Power and Purpose of the Teenage Brain.* New York: Penguin Group

Shook, E.V. (1984) *Ho'oponopono: Contemporary Uses of a Hawaiian Problem-Solving Process.* Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.

Steele, C. (2010) *Whistling Vivaldi: And Other Clues On How Stereotypes Affect Us.* New York: W. W. Norton & Company.

Stevenson, B. (2014) *Just Mercy: A Story of Justice and Redemption*. New York: Spiegel & Grau.

Stutzman, L. & Mullet, J. H. (2005) *The Little Book of Restorative Discipline for Schools, Teaching Responsibility: Creating Caring Climates.* New York: Good Books.

Tatum, B.D. (1997) *Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria?: And Other Conversations About Race*. New York: Basic Books.

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Dignity in Schools Campaign (DSC) - dignityinschoolscampaign.org

Edutopia - www.edutopia.org

Forward Change - tia.martinez@gmail.com

Oakland Unified School District - www.ouds.org

Public Counsel - publiccounsel.org

Restorative Schools Vision Project(RSVP) - restorativeschoolsproject.org

Restorative Justice for Oakland Youth (RJOY) - rjoyoakland.org

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The Civil Rights Project - schooldisciplinedata.org

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<u>RJ Training Providers And Culture Keepers:</u>   (* = Guidance Group participant)
*Communities United for Restorative Youth Justice (CURYJ)
     George Galvis ggalvis@curyj.org

*National Compadres Network - www.jerrytello.com

James Morehouse Project at El Cerrito High School
    Jenn Rader jenn@jmhop.org

Loyola Marymount Center for Urban Resilience (CURes)
    Schoene Mahmood schoene.mahmood@lmu.edu

*Oakland Unified School District, RJ Coordinator
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*Restorative Schools Vision Project (RSVP)
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    David K. Nylund rsvp@restorativeschoolsproject.org
    Carmen Perkins rsvp@restorativeschoolsproject.org
    Stella Connell Levy stella@restorativeschoolsproject.org
    Lisa Bertaccini lisa@restorativeschoolsproject.org
    Orlando Fuentes rsvp@restorativeschoolsproject.org

*Restorative Justice for Oakland Youth (RJOY)
    Fania Davis fania@rjoyoakland.org
    Eric Butler eric@rjoyoakland.org

Restorative Justice Training Institute
    Rita Renjitham Alfred renjitham@rjtica.org

*Restorative Process
    Amos Clifford restorative process@gmail.com

Restorative Solutions
    Millie Burns millieburns585@gmail.com

*Restorative Schools Trainer and Implementation Specialist
    Kerri Berkowitz kerriberkowitz@gmail.com

B. Guidance Group Roster

Name	Title, Organization	Location
Lisa Adams	Trainer, Implicit Bias California Teachers Assoc.	Burlingame
Aswad Arif	RJ Community Coordinator, Catholic Charities of the East Bay	Richmond
Kerrie Berkowitz	RJ Practitioner, Consulting RJ Practices	San Francisco, Santa Rosa, Statewide
Amos Clifford	RJ Facilitator, Wilderness guide for at risk youth, Center for Restorative Process	Sonoma
Richard J Cohen	RJ Practitioner, Trainer, Mediator, Restorative Schools Vision Project	Sacramento, Statewide
Ali Cooper	Organizer Staff, Restorative Schools Vision Project	Sacramento
Justine Darling	RJ Practitioner, National Conflict Resolution Center	San Diego
Fania Davis	RJ Practitioner, Executive Director, Restorative Justice for Oakland Youth	Oakland
Rose Elizondo	Practitioner, Culture Keeper, North Oakland Restorative Justice Council	Oakland
Orlando Fuentes	RJ Practitioner, Restorative Schools Vision Project	Sacramento, Statewide
George Galvis	Youth Advocate, Culture Keeper, Community United for Restorative Youth Justice	Oakland
Andre Griggs	RJ Coordinator, Le Grande USD	Le Grand

Erica Hassenbeck	RJ Coordinator, Fresno USD	Fresno
LeAna Hudson	Youth Intern, Restorative Justice for Oakland Youth	Oakland
Gordon Jackson	Director, Coordinated Student Support Division, California Dept. of Education	Statewide
Stella Connell Levy	RJ Practitioner, Trainer, Advocate Restorative Schools Vision Project	Sacramento, Statewide
Joseph Lucciani	RJ Coordinator, California Conference for Equality and Justice	Long Beach
Felipe Mercado	RJ Practitioner, Educator, Fresno USD	Fresno
Theresa Montano	Professor, CSU Northridge, Vice President California Teachers Assoc.	Los Angeles, Statewide
Koty, Oglala Lakota	Culture Keeper, Community activist and facilitator	Oakland
Dan Sackheim	Consultant, Coordinated Student Support Division, California Dept. of Education	Statewide
Michelle Rivera Schnack	Mental Health Practitioner, Restorative Schools Vision Project	Sacramento
Cameron Simmons	Youth Advocate, Restorative Justice for Oakland Youth	Oakland
Jerry Tello	Trainer, Culture Keeper National Compadres Network	San Jose

Jordan Thompson	Director, Mental Health Catholic Charities of the East Bay	Richmond
Mai Linh Tompkins	Program Consultant, Restorative Schools Vision Project	Sacramento
Charles, Wakan Wicasa Yuwipi	Medicine man, culture keeper, and tribal elder	Northern California
David Yusem	RJ Program Coordinator Oakland USD	Oakland

C. Guidance Group Reception Flyer

(Co-hosted with Assemblymember McCarty)
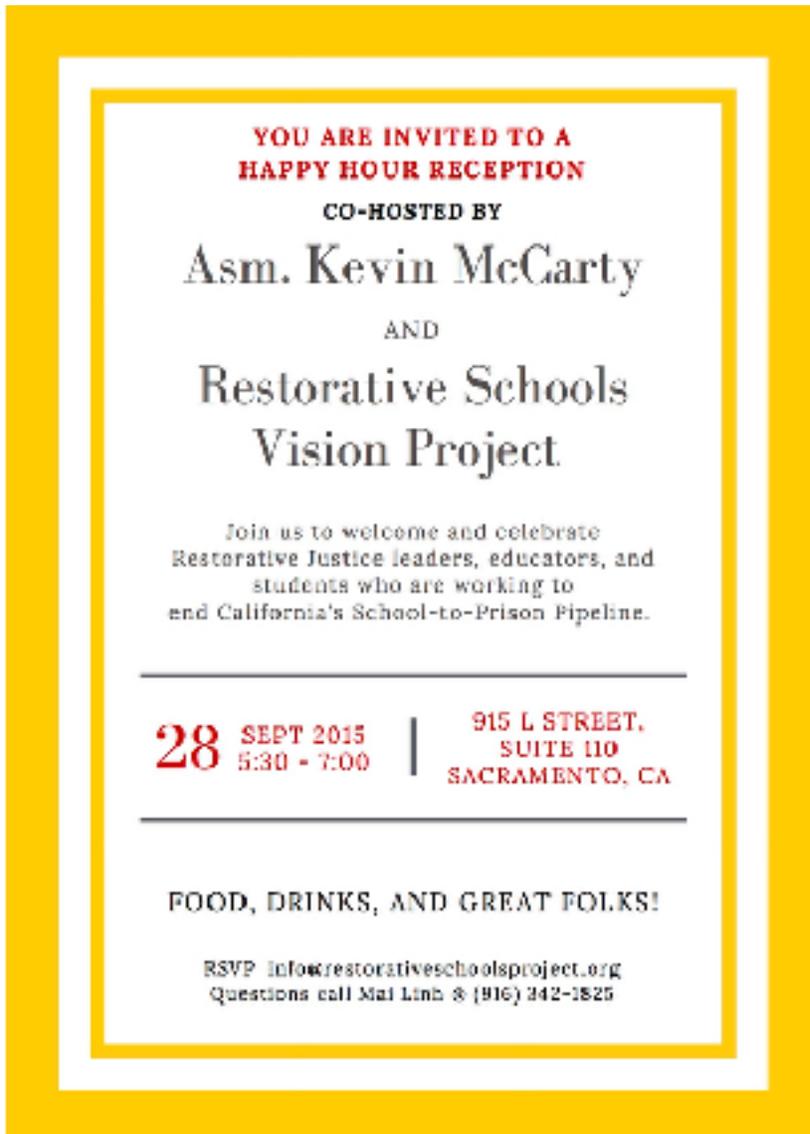
D. NorCal Regional Convening Roster

<u>Burlingame, May 7, 2016</u>

Name	Organization/Title	Area
Lisa Adams	California Teachers Association	Burlingame
Lisa Bertaccini	RSVP	Sacramento
Kevine Boggess	Coleman Advocates	San Francisco
Lisa Bohorquez	Oakland USD	Oakland
Ayesha Brooks	Fontana USD	Fontana
Elisha Butler IV	United for Success Academy	Oakland
Mallory Byrne	Irvington High School	Fremont
Arianna Caplan	Oakland High School	Oakland
April Casarotti	Elsie Allen High School	Santa Rosa
Tatiana Chaterji	Oakland USD/RJOY	Oakland
Jack Cheramie	Fremont High School	Oakland
Richard Jaffee Cohen	RSVP	Sacramento
David Contreras	Fremont High School	Oakland
Ali Cooper	RSVP Staff	Sacramento
Kusum Crimmel	Oakland USD	Oakland
Lark Curtin	Center for Human Development	Concord
Denise Curtis	Oakland USD	Oakland
Fania Davis	RJOY	Oakland
Reagan Duncan	CTA/ Vista USD	Vista
Laura Clauson Ferree	California Rural Legal Assistance (CRLA)	Marysville
Tim Fisher		
Meliya Fullard	RJOY	Oakland

Camisha Fatimah Gentry	West Oakland School	Oakland
Maria Freebairn-Smith	Restorative Resources	Santa Rosa
Elizabeth Guillen	Public Advocates	Sacramento
Leonardo Guzman	Catholic Charities of the East Bay	San Leandro
Todd Harper	Restorative Resources	Santa Rosa
Cecilia Harrison	Fremont High School	Oakland
John Harrison	Newark Junior High School	Newark
Toni Hunt Hines	Coleman Advocates	San Francisco
Kei-Ni Hewtitt	Skyline High School	Oakland
LeAna Hudson	RJOY	Oakland
Jeanna King-Ruppel	Santa Rosa City Schools	Santa Rosa
Scott Krumsee	Oakland USD	Oakland
Jeannette Lejardi	Yolo Conflict Resolution Center	Davis
Awele Makeba	Community Producer, Educator, Performing Artist	Oakland
Heather Manchester	San Francisco USD	San Francisco
Alena Marie	RSVP (consultant)	Sacramento
Melissa Merin	Hillcrest Elementary School	Oakland
Teresa Morales-Phillips	Restorative Resources	Santa Rosa
Peggy Rahman	Fremont USD Teachers Association	Fremont
Daniela Reynosa	Fremont High School	Oakland
Hilary Roberts	Peer Advocates Training and Consulting	Oakland
Reuben Roberts	Frick Middle School	Oakland
Mariela Romero	Elsie Allen High School	Santa Rosa

Yari Ojeda Sandel	Oakland USD	Oakland
Nimat Shaheed	REACH Academy	Oakland
Cameron Simmons	RJOY	Oakland
Jermone Traylor	RJOY	Oakland
Neelima Upamaka	RJOY	Oakland
Ingrid Villeda	LAUSD/UTLA	Los Angeles
Iyana Wade	Skyline High School	Oakland
Catherine Wilted	Catholic Charities of the East Bay	Oakland
David Yusem	Oakland USD	Oakland

E. CentValCal Regional Convening Roster

Fresno, May 14, 2016

Name	Organization/Title	Area
Lisa Adams	California Teachers Association	Burlingame
Rebecca Aleman	Fresno USD/McLane High School	Fresno
Monica Arechiga	Fresno USD	Fresno
Rita Baharian	Fresno USD	Fresno
Jill Blanks	Fresno USD	Fresno
Denise Brown	Burroughs Elementary School	Fresno
Rafeal Carranza Jr.	Addams Elementary School	Fresno
Christina Cassinerio Wilson	Fresno USD	Fresno
Ali Cooper	RSVP Staff	Sacramento
Celeste Diaz	Le Grand High School	Le Grand
Roland Diaz	Fresno USD	Fresno

Dana Dillon	California Teachers Association	Burlingame
Ambra Dorsey	Fresno USD	Fresno
Maria Enos	Addams Elementary School	Fresno
Orlando Fuentes	RSVP	Sacramento
Gloria Garcia	California Rural Legal Assistance	Delano
Andre Griggs	Le Grand High School	Le Grand
Tatiana Griggs	Le Grand High School	Le Grand
Amy Hardcastle	Fresno USD	Fresno
Erica Hasenbeck	Fresno USD	Fresno
Michelle Holliss	Fresno USD	Fresno
Leslie Kelly	Fresno USD	Fresno
Alena Marie	RSVP (consultant)	Sacramento
Wayne Moua	Fresno USD	Fresno
Jonathan D. Muster	Fresno USD	Fresno
Lisa De Orian	Addams Elementary School	Fresno
Samantha Plummer	Mayfair Elementary School	Fresno
Frank Ramirez	Greenfield Union School District	Greenfield
Nirmal Riar	Fresno USD	Fresno
Karina Rodriguez	Fresno USD/ Restorative Practices	Fresno
Rick Santos	McLane High School	Fresno
Silke Schulz	Stockton USD	Stockton
Grisanti Valencia	Californians 4 Justice	Fresno
Veena West	Center for Restorative Process	Santa Rosa
Margarita White	Addams Elementary School	Fresno
Dexter Yang	McLane High School	Fresno

F. SoCal Regional Convening Roster

<u>Los Angeles, May 21, 2016</u>

Name	Organization/Title	Area
Rodolfo Acevedo	Addams Elementary School	Long Beach
Lisa Adams	California Teachers Association	Burlingame
Fartun Adan	Hoover High School	Glendale
Lara Anderson	National CRC	San Diego
Daniel Ayala		
Brenna Baringer	Correia Junior High School	San Diego
Dori Barnett	Orange County Office of Education	Anaheim
Christian Bassell		
Mayte Benitez	National Conflict Resolution Center	San Diego
Ciria Brewer	Hoover High School	San Diego
Anthony Ceja	San Diego County Office of Education	San Diego
Sean Chumbly	McMillan Elementary School/ Interactions for Peace	Chula Vista
Ali Cooper	RSVP Staff	Sacramento
Justine Darling	National Conflict Resolution Center	San Diego
Frances Disney	UC San Diego	San Diego
Rose Elizondo	North Oakland RJC	Oakland
Jenny Escobar	California Conference for Equality and Justice	Long Beach
Larissa Galeana Figueroa	Crawford High School	San Diego

Kristin Gifford	LAUSD/ LA Academic Leadership Community	Los Angeles
Mariana Gomez	Sweetwater Union High School District	Chula Vista
Ingrid Gunnell	California Federation of Teachers	Los Angeles
Diego L. Gutierrez	Crawford High School	San Diego
Estephania de Jesus Gutierrez		
Edgar Ibarria	CADRE	Los Angeles
Tasreen Khamisa	Tariq Khamisa Foundation	San Diego
Lia Klein	CANEI	Los Angeles
Heather Lampron	Fallbrook High School RJ Mediation Program	Fallbrook
Mey-Ling Lazo	Crawford High School	San Diego
Mia Lee	RSVP	So. Pasadena
Stella Connell Levy	RSVP	Sacramento
Joseph Luciani	California Conference for Equality and Justice	Long Beach
Kimmy Manaquis	California Conference for Equality and Justice	Long Beach
Alena Marie	RSVP (consultant)	Sacramento
Ashley McGuire	LifePlay	San Diego
Thomas McNight	Kickstart	San Diego
Deborah Robin Mech	URU-Alternative Educational Systems	San Diego
Ramla Mohamed		
Ramon Marquez Montano	King Chavez Academy	San Diego
Benjamin Mudd	Public Counsel	Los Angeles

Wende Nichols-Julien	California Conference for Equality and Justice	Long Beach
Sergio Nieto	Anaheim High School	Anaheim
Edith Okello	Crawford High School	San Diego
Martha Pinal		
Amelia Roache	Correia Middle School	San Diego
Ryan Ruelas	Anaheim High School	Anaheim
Gilbert Salazar	California Conference for Equality and Justice	Long Beach
Max A. Castillo Sanchez	Academic Leadership Community School	Los Angeles
Michelle Rivera Schnack	RSVP	Sacramento
Talma Schultz	Center for Powerful Public Schools	Los Angeles
Victoria Sean	Hoover High School	San Diego
Margaret Sedor	Sweetwater Union HS District	Chula Vista
Oya Sherrills	CADRE	Los Angeles
Felicia Singleton	San Diego USD	San Diego
Trevor Tillman	Crawford High School student	San Diego
Cheri Todd		
Dayna Westbury	Santa Maria Bonita School District	Santa Maria
Leora Wolf-Prusan	WestEd	Los Angeles

G. Sample Convening Flyer

RSVP
RESTORATIVE SCHOOLS VISION PROJECT

Nor Cal Regional Convening

Exploring Best Practices for
School-based Restorative Justice

Saturday, May 7th, 2016
9am - 5pm
CTA State Headquarters
1705 Murchinson Dr., Burlingame CA

Register/Info:
alena@restorativeschoolsproject.org

Project partners:
The California Endowment
The California Teachers Association
Restorative Justice for Oakland Youth

H. Photos from Convenings

Trevor, a student stakeholder, at
SoCal Convening on May 21, 2016.
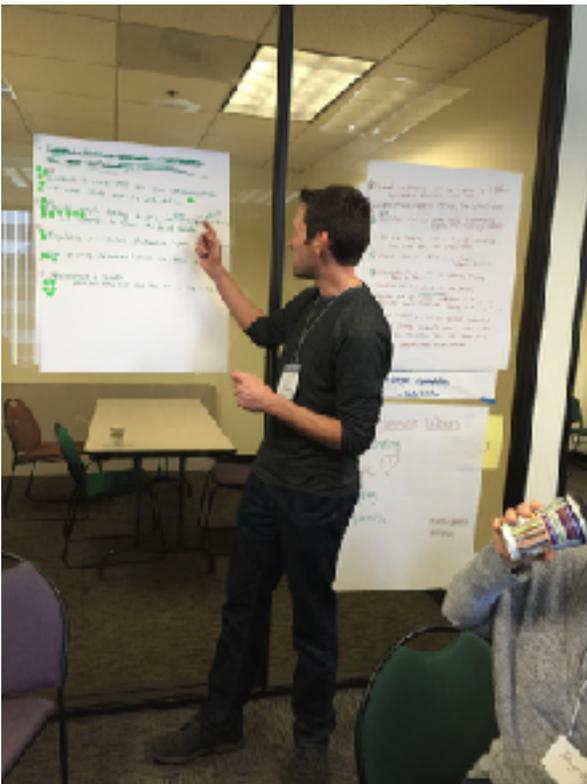
Sean, a teacher, presenting at
SoCal Convening on May 21, 2016.

Students dedicated to ending the School-to-Prison Pipeline at the SoCal Convening on May 21, 2016.

Student panel presenting at the NorCal Convening on May 7, 2016.

Ramon and Mayte at the SoCal Convening, May 21, 2016.

I. Restorative Schools Visions Project Publication

Restorative Schools Visions Project publication featuring personal stories from students, teachers, and policy makers about the power of Restorative Justice, to read the full publication visit: https://issuu.com/news_review/docs/snr_rsvp_060216

X. REFERENCES / END NOTES

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"It is easier to build strong children than to repair broken men."

-Frederick Douglass