

DISMANTLING THE SCHOOL-TO-PRISON PIPELINE



DIGNITY IN SCHOOLS

October 17th, 2014

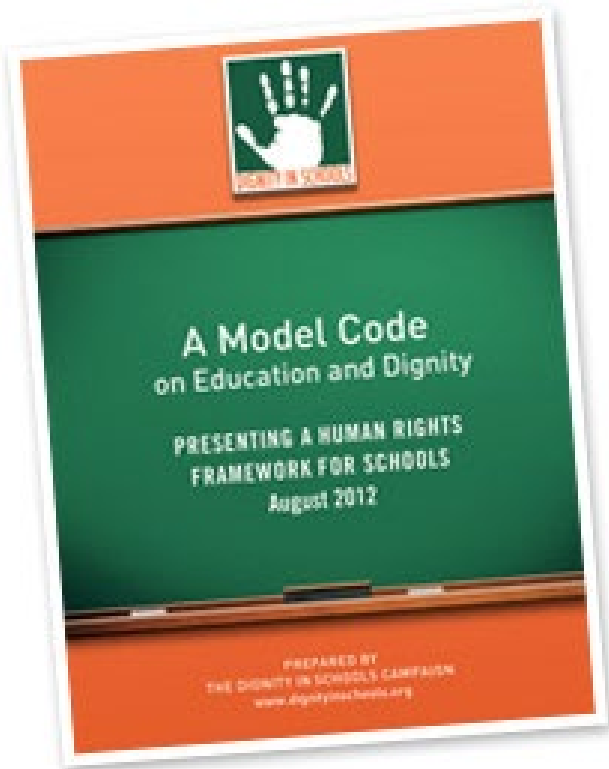
DIGNITY IN SCHOOLS CAMPAIGN (DSC)

- Challenges the systemic problem of **school pushout** and advocates for the **human right** of every young person to education and dignity
- 89 organizations from 24 states
 - Youth and parent base-building
 - Legal and advocacy
 - Teachers and educators
 - Researchers



DSC MODEL CODE

- Model policies for schools, districts and legislators to address school pushout and create safe and positive climates for learning
- Based on research, best practices and on the ground experiences of students, parents and educators
- Rooted in fundamental human rights principle that the goal of education is to develop each young person to their full potential

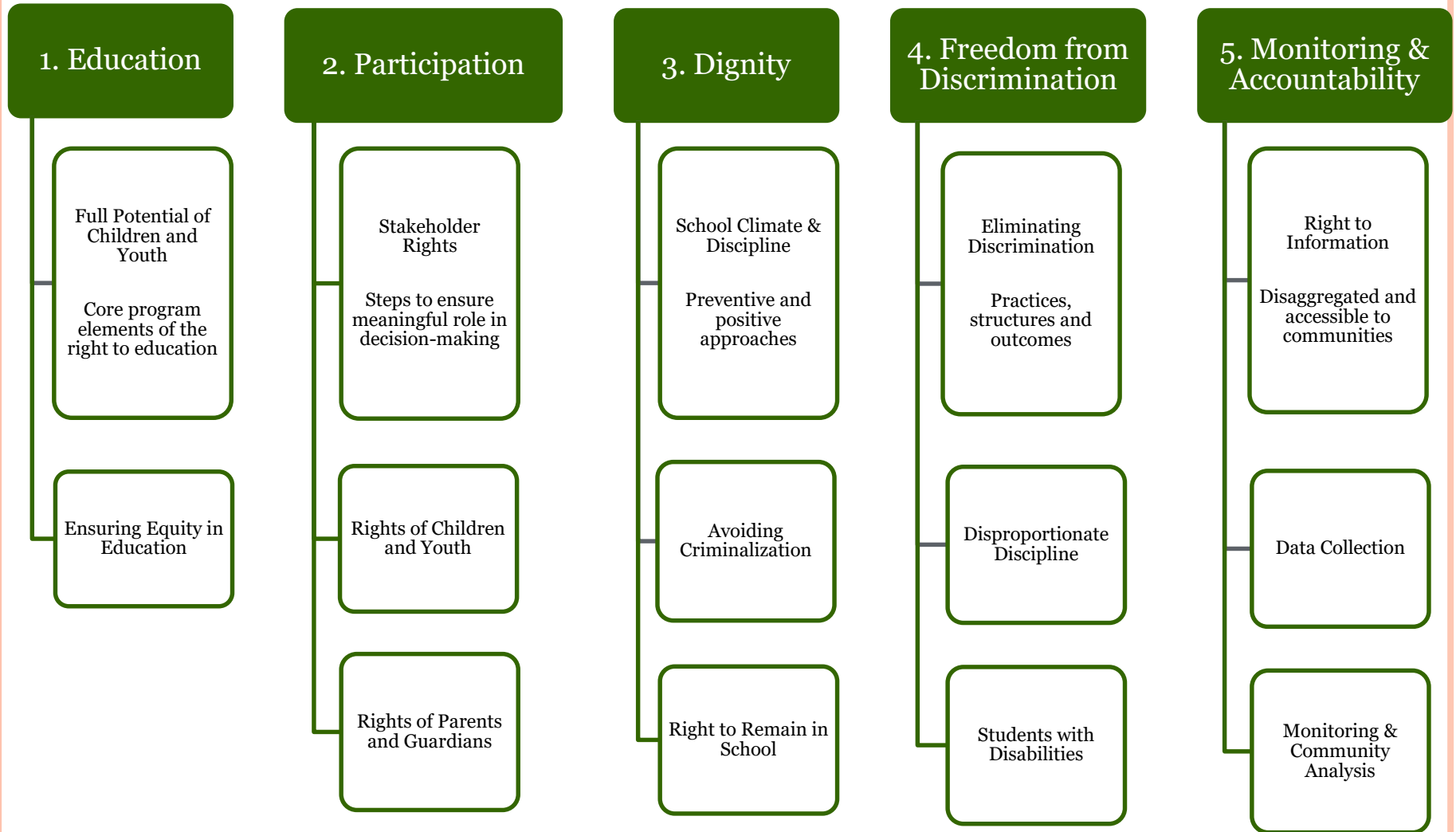


HOW WAS THE MODEL CODE DEVELOPED?

- Drafted and reviewed by members of the Model Code Working Group
- Reviewed at two American Bar Association summits
- Reviewed and edited at community engagement sessions with students, parents and teachers in 8 different states (CA, FL, GA, IL, LA, MS, NY, PA)



OVERVIEW OF THE MODEL CODE



HUMAN RIGHTS GOAL: POSITIVE DISCIPLINE (SECTION 3.1, PG. 24)

- *School discipline policies shall be aimed at creating a positive school climate, supporting the social and emotional development of students, and teaching non-violence and respect for all members of the school community.*
- *The purpose of discipline must be to understand and address the causes of behavior, resolve conflicts, repair the harm done, restore relationships and reintegrate students into the school community*

OVERVIEW OF SECTION 3.1.B, MODEL 2: RESTORATIVE PRACTICES - DEFINITIONS

- **Restorative Justice** – A theory of justice that emphasizes repairing the harm caused or revealed by misconduct rather than punishment by:
 - a. Identifying the misconduct and attempting to repair the damage
 - b. Including all people impacted in the process of responding to conflict
 - c. Creating a process that promotes healing, reconciliation and the rebuilding of relationships

- **Restorative practices** – A framework for a broad range of restorative justice approaches that :
 - Proactively build a school community based on cooperation, mutual understanding, trust and respect, and
 - Respond to conflict by including all people impacted in finding solutions that restore relationships and repair the harm done to the community.

DISTRICT LEVEL STRUCTURES AND FUNDING

- B.** School districts shall provide the **resources, training and technical assistance for schools** to implement restorative practices district-wide.
1. Incorporate restorative practices into **Discipline Codes or Student Codes of Conduct** as the primary process by which schools shall respond to behavior and conflict.
 2. Create a **Restorative Support Team** at the central district level
 3. Fund, designate and train a **Restorative Coordinator** position in each school

SCHOOL-LEVEL PLANNING TEAMS

- C. Schools shall establish a Restorative Planning Team** that is responsible for developing and implementing a plan to integrate restorative practices into the school policies, practices and culture.
1. Include **representatives of all stakeholders** in the school.
 2. Responsible for **disseminating information about restorative practices** and engaging all members of the school community in supporting its implementation on campus
 3. Responsible for **presenting monthly reports** on school climate, discipline, safety and restorative practices.
 4. **Reach out to community-based organizations and other actors in the community** to build support for restorative practices inside and outside of the school.

CLASSROOM AND SCHOOL-WIDE PRACTICES

D. Schools shall actively create a positive school climate through the regular use of classroom and school-wide restorative practices.

- Discussions in the classroom and school-wide forums on how members of the school community should treat one another
- Time to share the highs and lows of the day in advisory classes
- Creating a welcoming environment for parents to volunteer and participate in the school community
- Creating mechanisms for students to check-in each day to share concerns or problems
- Teachers shall use restorative circles as a classroom teaching method to work collaboratively with students to set academic goals, explore the curriculum and set classroom norms for behavior.
- Teachers, staff and students shall regularly use restorative problem solving techniques that increase communication and provoke student reflection.

RESTORATIVE DISCIPLINE RESPONSES

- E.** In response to disciplinary infractions or conflict, **schools shall use a continuum of strategies that are restorative rather than punitive.**
- Schools shall use restorative and other positive responses except for the most serious and dangerous offenses when exclusion from school is absolutely necessary to protect the safety of the school community (see 3.1.c).
- The continuum of strategies include but are not limited to:
 - a. Restorative Chat
 - b. Restorative Circles
 - c. Fairness Committees
 - d. Restorative Group Conferencing
 - e. Restorative Peer Juries
 - f. Impact Panels
 - g. Mediated Conferencing

TRAINING IN RESTORATIVE PRACTICES

- G. School districts shall require and provide restorative practices training** by experienced practitioners for all stakeholders.
1. All **administrators and support staff** shall receive training on using restorative practices in interacting with staff, parents and students and in responding to conflict.
 2. All **teachers, counselors and social workers** shall receive training in using restorative practices in day-to-day classroom activities and as a technique for classroom management and conflict resolution.
 3. All **students** shall receive instruction on restorative practice in the classroom and receive academic and/or community service credit for participating in restorative committees, groups or boards.
 4. All **families and members of the community** shall have access to training in restorative practices through workshops and activities.

EXAMPLES OF RESTORATIVE PRACTICES IN
CHICAGO, PORTLAND, SACRAMENTO AND LA
COUNTY

CHICAGO, IL

POWER PAC
(PARENTS ORGANIZED TO WIN EDUCATE AND
RENEW POLICY ACTION COUNCIL)
&
ELEMENTARY JUSTICE CAMPAIGN

THE AUSTIN PEACE CENTER

WHY DO WE DO IT

- In one school year, more than 73,000 students were suspended and 700 expelled
- 25% of CPS's student population is African American male, but they represent 45% of suspensions and more than 60% of expulsions
- More arrests happen in schools than on the street
- **END THE SCHOOL TO PRISON PIPELINE**

THE AUSTIN PEACE CENTER

3 Locations:

- Milton Brunson Math & Science Specialty School
 - Francis Scott Key Elementary School
 - Wells Community Academy High School
- Peace Centers host intensive restorative justice sessions and teach students conflict resolution skills.
 - Parent facilitators run the peace centers; they are the “peacemakers” or “circle keepers”.
 - The peacemakers are highly trained in restorative justice practices and are from the community/neighborhood as the school they serve in.

THE AUSTIN PEACE CENTER

WHAT HAVE WE ACCOMPLISHED SO FAR

- “Zero Tolerance” stricken from the Code of Conduct
- Age appropriate discipline
- CPS adopted the philosophy of Restorative Justice
- Trained over 300 parents as Restorative Justice advocates. These parents advocate for Restorative Justice in their schools and communities
- We’ve serviced over 1600 students.
- At the end of this school year 25 of the students we’ve been consistently working with at Wells High School made the Deans list for the first time
- Created a Parent Guide on Restorative Justice. It’s available online www.cofionline.org

PORTLAND PARENT UNION RESTORATIVE LISTENING AND DIALOGUE PROJECT

WITH TEACHERS, PARENTS, ADMINISTRATORS AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS

- The Restorative Listening and Dialogue Project seeks to understand the harms that have been generated out of the education process by having two represented groups sit down together to listen to and share each others' stories. Parent Union believes that these two groups—teachers and parents/students—are the groups most directly impacted by the education system.
- The restorative model is based on the idea that no one understands the harm more than the person who has experienced it. Families, community members, teachers and administrators are asked: What happened? Who was harmed? How were they harmed? and How can the harm begin to be repaired?

PORTLAND, OR

PORTLAND PARENT UNION RESTORATIVE LISTENING AND DIALOGUE PROJECT

WITH TEACHERS, PARENTS, ADMINISTRATORS AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS

- Our goal is to build community and collective understanding to find ways to act together to include and value all members of the Education Community. The more we communicate with each other the better.
- The solidarity front is key for changes in our school system—the more we communicate the more there will be change.
- Video clip on Restorative Justice: <http://youtu.be/s-pthyakjvI>

SACRAMENTO, CA

IMPLEMENTING RESTORATIVE PRACTICES IN SCHOOLS:

“THE PERSON IS NOT THE PROBLEM, THE PROBLEM IS THE PROBLEM.”

Presented by Richard Jaffee Cohen on behalf of the Restorative Schools Vision Project

- **Introduction:** We at Restorative Schools Vision Project use and teach a process we developed called Restorative Narrative Practice. Like all restorative practices we are interested in helping students take responsibility for their action by being a part of the solution in a non-judgmental and supportive manner. We have added to this approach a narrative practice that is transformative and relational in nature, that asks what is really going on beyond the presenting problems (deconstruction), that draws upon the student’s strengths, not their deficiencies (unique outcomes), and that focuses on the problem, not the person (externalization).
- **We use four main practices:** Circles (prevention & response), Conversations (response), Mediations (response) & Conferences (response).

CIRCLES & CONVERSATIONS

- We see **circles** as the main preventive practices for teaching compassion, empathy, and understanding. In circles everyone is an equal and the social & emotional competencies of self awareness, social awareness, and self control are learned and reinforced. The circle keeper must model respect, appreciation, and deep non-judgmental understanding. Students are asked questions from a respectfully curious perspective, both in circles and in conversations. Respect Agreements instead of rules work better.
- Ask more questions, make fewer statements. **Ask about assumptions, feelings, actions, and ways of thinking and how these ways of being were formed.** (deconstruction)
- Examples of restorative narrative questions are: Can we talk about what is happening in your life? How would you characterize your greatest caring qualities? Do you demonstrate these qualities to your family? To your friends? How did you learn to act this way? e.g. loyal, friendly, helpful? Do you prefer acting like a good guy/gal?

MEDIATIONS & CONFERENCES

- **Mediations & conferences** are used when more than one person is involved in problematic behavioral issues. The mediator or conference facilitator, like the circle keeper or conversation initiator, must model a respectful and supportive tone.
- Like in circles and conversations, the emphasis is on what is right with the parties not what is lacking. To assist students to make things right, a caring and trusting relationship between student and teacher or student and administrator is essential.
- Examples of questions are as follows: What gets in the way of your acting like a good guy/gal? It seems like your bullying behavior was out of character for you. Is that right? It seems like you have the strength to push away the problem of bullying behaviors. Do you have any ideas about how you will accomplish this? Do you want to challenge yourself to push the bullying problem out of your life ?

(All materials in these slides were developed by Restorative Schools Vision Project)

LOS ANGELES COUNTY

USING HARM/CONFLICT CIRCLES IN LIEU OF SUSPENSION AND EXPULSION

(CALIFORNIA CONFERENCE ON EQUALITY AND JUSTICE)

- Create a referral process
- Need to meet/talk with everyone individually first
- Make sure to include an administrator, teacher, and parents
- End with an accountability plan

USING HARM/CONFLICT CIRCLES IN LIEU OF SUSPENSION AND EXPULSION

Things to look out for:

- Unique needs of students with IEPs
- Disproportionate referrals
- Issues of innocence or refusal to accept responsibility

Results of Harm/Conflict circles:

- Healing & accountability
- Changes in school policy and procedure
- Parent empowerment
- Serves to convince resistant teachers of the power of RJ

WHAT RJ IS NOT

- Mediation
- Peer/Teen court
- Primarily about forgiveness & reconciliation

Question & Answer

UPCOMING DSC WEBINARS IN 2013

- August - Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports
- October - Alternative Schools

LEARN MORE ABOUT DSC

- Read the Model Code and share with others
<http://www.dignityinschools.org/our-work/model-school-code>
- Hold a Model Code training in your community
Contact Fernando, DSC Field Organizer
fernando@dignityinschools.org, 205-960-3498
- Get involved in the DSC National Week of Action 9/28-10/5
<http://www.dignityinschools.org/our-work/week-of-action>
- Learn about Solutions Not Suspensions:
A Call for a Moratorium on Out-of-School
Suspensions, DSC and OTL
<http://www.stopsuspensions.org/>



SOLUTIONS
NOT SUSPENSIONS
a call for a moratorium on out of school suspensions

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