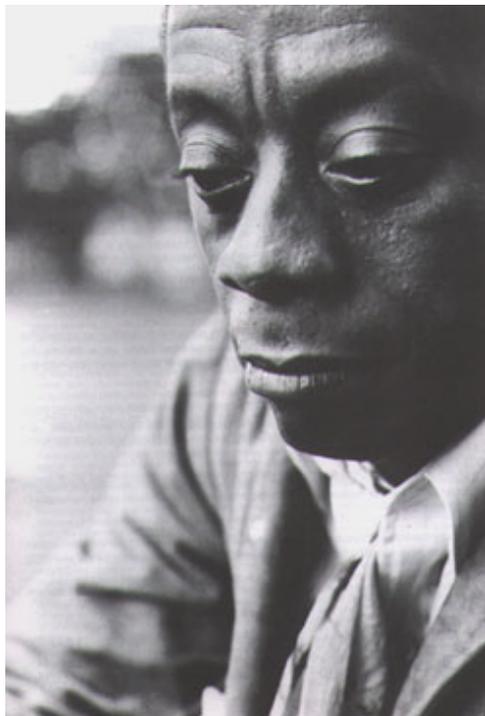


**The James Baldwin School  
for Expeditionary Learning**

New York City, NY



# [Snapshot]

**School:** The James Baldwin School for Expeditionary Learning

**Borough:** Manhattan, NY

**Authors:** Josh Heisler and Tyler Brewster, 2015



*The James Baldwin School for Expeditionary Learning was created by educators who valued the importance of community and wanted to build a school that taught students how to be good people, and do good work in their communities. The mission of the school is very much tied to the writings of its namesake, James Baldwin. We use his writings with our students and in our staff discussions. His belief in social justice and a need to fight against inequality and exploitation permeates everything we do. We meet in small groups regularly throughout the week and students have spaces to express their ideas in ways you rarely see in schools today.*

**Principal:** Brady Smith

**Grade Levels:** 09 - 12

**District:** 02

**Number of Students** 255

**Scanning?** No

**% Title 1:** 59.6% free/reduced lunch eligible 2011/2012

## **Students - *breakdown by ethnicity***

- Hispanic, 120 Students, 47.06%
- Black/African-American, 113 Students, 44.31%
- White, 17 Students, 6.67%
- Asian, 4 Students, 1.57%
- American Indian/Alaska Native, 1 Student, 0.39%

## **Staff**

Full-Time Teachers	20, including two Special Education, one ESL
Social Work & Guidance	3
Secretaries	2
Co-Director	1
Parent Coordinator	1
Principal	1
Restorative Coordinator	1
Technology Coordinator	1

# [Testimonials]

**Excerpt** from *What Democracy Requires, A Student Takes His Principal to Fairness*

**Author:** T. ELIJAH HAWKES



*The article appears in its entirety in Schools: Studies in Education, vol. 8, no. 1 (Spring 2011), The University of Chicago Press, Francis W. Parker School*

*Find the complete article at <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1086/659441>*

James Baldwin School, New York City

## **In a Circle, Listening**

Alejandro looked down, then looked up. We were seated in a circle. He was reflecting.

We were waiting. The desks had been pushed aside, and we sat in chairs.

There were a few voices in the hallway, students going where they needed to go. In our circle, it was quiet. “I think it would be a Commitment to Peace,” he said.

The teacher-facilitator asked Alejandro to explain further. I listened. He was talking about me. The two other students and the other staff member also listened.

“He violated my peace, the peace inside me,” he said. “I was really upset.” Alejandro wandered his eyes upward—but he wasn’t rolling his eyes. Actually, rolling his eyes is a signature expression, which Alejandro exhibits in moments of frustration, teasing, or insolence. But he wasn’t doing that now. He was letting his eyes wander above us, looking into his memory of the incident. “What Elijah said, it really upset me. I was so upset I just left. I was thinking about it all weekend.”

More questions followed, from the facilitator, the other teacher, the other students. We were at the phase of the meeting when we determine if a school core value had been violated, and, if so, which one. We’d already clarified the circumstance of the incident itself. Alejandro had shared his recollection of what happened, and I had shared mine...

...Alejandro and the teacher stood before me, and after the teacher finished explaining, I sat back in my chair and gave a sigh. Alejandro might have anticipated this. But the rest of my response was not what he expected, which was intentional on my part. I wasn't going to let us—me, him, the teachers—fall again into the same habits: cutting, disruptions, removals from class, leading to a new suspension from school, meetings with advisor and guardian, a behavioral contract that lists the immature behaviors he mustn't exhibit, and so on and so forth, stating the obvious, again and again. I was aware, first hand, of the general state of his engagement this year, because I had him in an English class. I decided to interrupt this cycle. I leaned forward and told him, "Maybe you should just leave."

He was silent, his face darkened, and what might have been a smirk faded. He said, "What are you talking about?" I explained, quickly, sternly, quietly: "It's not working out. Here we are again, just like last year, and just like the year before that. You're cutting classes—again. And cursing, and using electronics in class—again. And you're frustrated with your teachers—again—and with your advisor. 'She's annoying,' you told me. Well, if we annoy you so much, then why don't you just leave? Maybe you need to consider some other options: other schools, other pathways to graduation, maybe a GED program and then on to college. We'll help you find it, but whatever it is, just no more of this. Enough. You don't have time for it, Alejandro." He stared at me, shook his head, looked away. Then he cursed at me, or at the school, I can't remember which, and he left.

I let him go, called and left a message for his guardian, and planned to follow up with her and his advisor after the weekend. I was trying to shock him, to bluntly assert that we'd reached a limit. It seemed to have worked, for I could see he was shocked, though it remained to be seen what decisions would follow in the wake. I was glad to find out on the following school day, a Monday, that Alejandro was upset by the suggestion that he leave and that he had decided to take me to the Fairness Committee for redress...

...The remainder of the hearing was devoted to determining consequences for the violation of the core value: logical consequences that Alejandro and I would undertake to help restore our relationship. Student and staff voices generally have equal weight in this determination, and it is one made by a consensus process. One consequence we agreed to was simply the Fairness meeting itself—which was restorative. Another consequence, which I proposed, was that I apologize to Alejandro for unknowingly echoing denigrating voices in his life. He accepted this apology.

This Fairness hearing was an important forum for Alejandro to assert his commitment to the school before an audience of his peers, his teacher, and his principal. And all of us participating were able to validate our commitment to our core values and to democratic structures for addressing and resolving conflict.

I should note that, during the course of the hearing, the student and teacher committee members were able to solicit from Alejandro an acknowledgment of his own problematic behaviors. I should also note that this was not the only forum when those behaviors would be discussed. In another meeting, Alejandro would be reminded that another instance of classroom disruption would, as it had in the past, result in suspension from school.

### **A Menu of Interventions**

Staff are not often brought by students to the Fairness Committee, but we feel it is important that the student community knows that it is possible, for this further invests them in the power that the structure holds—a power we intend, above all, for them to wield (within the

parameters we provide and with our guidance). Typically, a teacher brings a student to the Fairness Committee or a student brings another student. The agenda is more or less standardized, and it proceeds as outlined in the anecdote above.

Appearance at the Fairness Committee is one of many behavioral interventions employed at our school, including suspension, guidance, and family meetings, peer-facilitated and traditional mediation, counseling, behavioral contracts, and, in extreme situations, calling upon security agents and police...

...The main behavioral intervention we make in the lives of our students, and our own, has to do with the simple habits that value an individual's humanity in a society that often devalues it. And we do this—valuing the individual—not at the expense of the collective, but as a means to sustain the collective. It helps us get our common work done.

### **Academics vs. Values**

I have heard guidance counselors, school social workers, and others responsible for “youth development” rightly wonder how a school can sustain extensive social-emotional work in a time of such heavy pressure to focus on academics. Given the relentless repetition of the tests—and the calls to publicly tie teacher status to the scores, the breathless race to achieve on the AP and SAT exams, and the competition to gain admission to a portfolio of top-ranked colleges—doesn't time focused on character and culture directly conflict with these other more academic endeavors? Recess is cancelled; art programs wither and die, and guidance departments are shrunk until counselors have caseloads in the hundreds.

True, it feels like a zero-sum game, and there is a cleavage that can settle into the psychology of a school: academic skills versus character traits. When our main school accountability measures skew so widely in one direction, it makes it really difficult to focus on anything other than literacy and math test scores. But we have to try. Otherwise, what's the point?...

### **Testimonials** about Fairness at James Baldwin from students and staff:

#### **Devon, 12<sup>th</sup> grader:**

Fairness is a system in which consequences are given when a student or staff members breaks a Core Value. Being that Fairness is a form of restorative justice, it aims to repair the damage that was done instead of punishing the student. The benefit of fairness is that it allows everyone to have a voice in what happens in the community.

In an environment where Fairness does not occur, I suspect that students feel like they don't have a voice / their voice doesn't matter. I also suspect that students get suspended for things that could be resolved otherwise.

For an organization that is considering Fairness, make sure that students know that they have a voice in what goes on.

**Anonymous teacher:**

Fairness is a space where those immediately affected by, and with representatives of the larger community (stakeholders) can air out misunderstandings and clear violations of the school's 7 Core Values.

Fairness reestablishes community norms, and helps build community. It creates a common space and language for the resolution of conflict.

I would expect that an environment where Fairness does not occur would have higher incidents of misunderstanding and violence, which might lead to behaviors and attitudes detrimental to one's school community. This would lead to community destruction, rather than community building.

**Anonymous 12<sup>th</sup> grader:**

Fairness is all about hearing both sides to a story before things get out of hand. Fairness is not to punish the students, but to place consequences. Fairness is a good approach when the situation has not taken a turn for the worse. When it's not the best approach is if or when they already had a fight.

If you have Fairness in your school, it would make it so much better and peaceful; the students would know that the teachers would listen to both sides, instead of just listening to only the teacher or a student. I was on a Fairness when a girl brought a boy for saying hurtful things. It was successful because from sitting down and listening to how she felt, he knew that he was wrong for what he had said.

If your school is considering starting a Fairness Committee, there are some things that you can keep in mind:

- Don't judge the people involved
- What happened in Fairness should stay confidential
- People need to be open to hearing both sides
- You need to show understanding of the people involved

You need to make Fairness is seen, and not just heard. This means you need to put posters up about it, and make sure that people know about it.

# **The James Baldwin School Core Values**

The James Baldwin School is a community, not just a school. A community is a group of people who share common interests, concerns, and values. While we want to cultivate and help you find your unique talents and individual voice, being part of our school is agreeing to share our common ideals and expectations.

Our curriculum and teaching, school culture and ceremonies, rules, regulations, and habits of interaction – inside the classroom and out – are based on the following Core Values:

*Respect for Humanity*  
*Respect for Diversity*  
*Respect for the Intellect*  
*Respect for the Truth*  
*Commitment to Peace*  
*Commitment to Justice*  
*Commitment to Democracy*

## **Respect for the Intellect**

Curiosity: demonstrates enthusiasm for new ideas, theories; explores the philosophical/abstract; seeks practical application and relevance.

Engagement: participates in “work share;” follows protocols/guidelines, follows “speakers list;” listens and responds to others, asks and responds to questions.

Self-discipline: fulfills assignment expectations; brings school supplies; is punctual and present.

## **Respect for the Truth**

Self-reflection and Revision: admits mistakes and when ideas have changed; participates in self-assessments; integrates suggestions into revision of work.

Debate: encourages all voices to be heard; seeks and acknowledges opposing viewpoints; respectfully disagrees; avoids stereotypes and absolutist statements; expresses understanding of complexities, subtleties and nuance.

Evidence and Conviction: supports opinions with evidence from experience or research; gives credit for ideas to those who voiced them; cites work appropriately; doesn't plagiarize; is willing to stand by convictions, to express and defend unpopular positions and minority viewpoints.

## **Respect for Diversity**

Exposure: Is open – and seeks – exposure to a diversity of voices or points of view; is open to – seeks – exposure to different experiences.

Acknowledgement: acknowledges as valid other people's opinions and experiences; is respectful of other groups, identities; avoids slurs or degrading language.

Inclusion: acknowledges and includes diverse perspectives in building own view points

## **Respect for Humanity**

Empathy and Action: seeks to understand, empathize with and actively help others – in class and life outside of class and school.

Holistic Thinking: makes interdisciplinary connections; locates work and ideas in historical and current contexts; acknowledges multiple intelligences in self and others;

textures work and expression with a variety of influences; acknowledges universal human needs and values.

Creative Expression: employs visual art, music, movement in expression of self and ideas; appreciates artistic expression in and by others.

### **Commitment to Peace**

Non-violence: avoids violent and disrespectful conflict with others; respectfully challenges other people's ideas and authority; uses constructive criticism.

Conflict Resolution: seeks or creates non-violent alternatives to hurtful conflict; makes recourse to Fairness Committee and mediation to solve problems.

Interior Peace: understands how to calm self when angry; is able to communicate passionately without violence or hurtful language; is able to be quiet and alone.

### **Commitment to Democracy**

Citizenship in Class: contributes to creation and revision of rules; ensures that decisions are not made without input of all who are affected.

Citizenship in School: facilitates and participates in school-wide forums for discussion and governance, including Town Meeting and Staff Meeting.

Citizenship in Society: participates in public forums for debate, demonstration and decision-making; understands local and national systems of government.

### **Commitment to Justice**

Stewardship: ensures fair treatment of school environment; practices "leave no trace" ethic, picks up garbage, and leaves space better than as found.

Activism: protests and seeks to change unfair treatment of self, others, now and in the future.

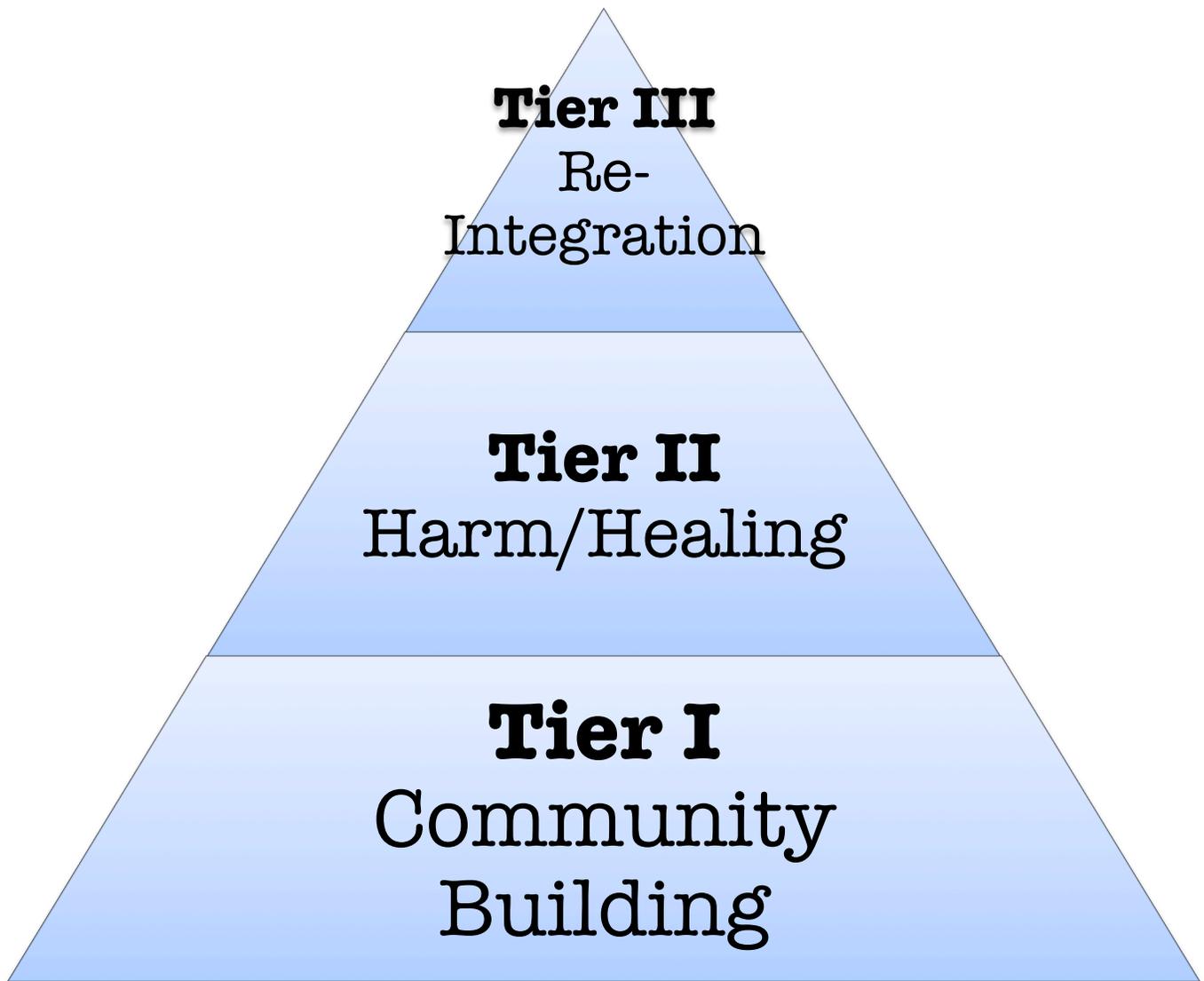
Guardianship: works towards maintaining what is fair in school and life; enforces rules and routines that treat all fairly.

# [Tools]



## **Tiers of Restorative Justice**

Restorative Justice is a community-based approach to repairing harm. This philosophy unites all stakeholders and calls for collaboration to address issues within the community. The practice of restorative justice ensures the healing of **all** community members.



## The James Baldwin School 2016 - 2017 Restorative Justice Implementation Goals

Activity	Description	Stakeholder	Outcome
<p><b>RJ Elective Course</b> <i>Tier I</i></p>	<p><b>One (1) Credit Elective Course</b> <i>10 - 12 student participants</i></p> <p>Introductory course on restorative justice practices. Students will investigate the importance of establishing community for implementation of school-based RJ practices.</p>	<p><b>students</b></p>	<p>Student end-of-term projects and surveys will provide a direction for future restorative practices at JBS. It will also produce a pool of students who are knowledgeable about RJ and able to partner with other schools/organizations.</p>
<p><b>FreshStart Democracy Block</b> <i>Tier I - Tier III</i></p>	<p><b>Connected to 1.25 Credit Advisory Course</b> <i>12 student participants</i></p> <p>Students will participate in a 10-week program designed to create a space for them to re-commit to the JBS school community. Participants will be selected based on factors such as academic performance, attendance, community engagement, peer interactions etc. The group will provide a support system for setting and meeting academic and social-emotional goals for the Fall 2015 semester (and beyond). Staff members will be invited to attend circles where appropriate for community building or re-entry efforts.</p>	<p><b>students</b> <b>teachers</b></p>	<p>Provides support for a group of students who are having difficulty adjusting to the JBS school community. This program will provide a point of re-entry for students to the JBS community. Once the pilot model is complete, training will be available to staff members over the summer, in order to offer the course in future school terms on a wider scale.</p>
<p><b>Department RJ Workshop</b> <i>Tier I</i></p>	<p><b>RJ in the Classroom, 1.5HR Workshop</b> <i>5 Teacher Participants - ELA, MATH, SCI, SpEd, SS</i></p> <p>Professional Development workshop opportunity open to one person from each core academic department. Teachers will explore the implementation of community building activities into academic classes.</p>	<p><b>teachers</b></p>	<p>Provide teachers with tools to include community-building circles in academic classes. This will help emphasize proactive effects of school-based RJ.</p>
<p><b>SLT Parent Workshops</b> <i>Tier I</i></p>	<p><b>Introduction to Restorative Practices</b> <i>20 -25 parents/student family members/SSAs</i></p> <p>Introductory workshop for student families focused on the restorative practices in place at JBS. Using a circle process model parents, and student staff (inter-campus), participate in a forum designed to educate about school-based RJ. We will debrief and identify connections and opportunities for parents to be involved in this work/ask questions. Members from within the Baynard Rustin Educational Complex will be invited.</p>	<p><b>campus neighbors</b> <b>families</b> <b>students</b> <b>teachers</b></p>	<p>Develop a new pool of stakeholders that are familiar with the philosophy of restorative justice. Student families will better understand school decisions and provide support for restorative practices.</p>

# Introduction to Using Circles in School

## *Adapted from the Morningside Center for Teaching Social Responsibility*

The Circle approach is grounded in a Native American philosophy and practice that values individuals as they build and maintain supportive relationships and communities. Circles are used by hundreds of tribes in North America, including the Ojibwe and Lakota. The Circle process provides an alternative the style of discussion that involves debating and challenging each other. Instead, Circles create safe and non-hierarchical places where each person can speak without interruption. They encourage respectful listening and reflection. In Circles we listen for understanding rather than try to prove the other person wrong.

Circles can serve many different purposes. They can heal a community when harm has been done – thus the term “Restorative Circles.” They can solve conflicts. They can enrich academic learning. Throughout the school year, we will be working in Circles each day!

## ***The Circle Process***

There are five key components that make the Circle process unique –

1. Sitting in a physical circle
2. The Talking Piece
3. The Center Piece
4. The Opening Ceremony
5. The Closing Ceremony

1. **Sitting in a Circle.** This is an incredibly important component of Circles. Hence the name!

When we sit in a Circle...

- all participants can see each other in an obstructed way;
- all participants can fully engage with one another;
- there is a clear focus on the issue at the center of the circle; and
- there is equal participation in the process for all; no one sits at the head of a Circle. Everyone is invited into the Circle to participate on an equal footing, and all perspectives are welcomed.

2. **The Talking Piece.** A talking piece is a small token, usually of significant emotional value, which is used facilitate the dialogue in Circles. The piece should always be passed to the left, as the heart is located on the left side of our bodies and Circles encourage participants to always speak from the heart! The talking piece is passed around the Circle in order, from one person to the next. The person who is holding it is invited to speak or pass. While one person speaks, the other participants in the Circle practice **active listening**, knowing that their turn will come when the talking piece comes around. Everyone in the Circle has the opportunity to share without interruption while the others can listen more fully without the distraction of preparing a response or rebuttal. In this way, the talking piece encourages thoughtful reflection and unhurried expression.

The power of the talking piece ultimately lies in its democratic nature. It gives each participant equal opportunity to speak, with the idea that all have something valuable to contribute. As the piece moves from one participant to the next, every person in the group is acknowledged, whether they speak or not.

3. **The Center Piece.** A centerpiece usually sits at the center of the open space inside of the circle of chairs. It is intended to create a meaningful focal point for Circle participants so they can be more fully present and bring their best self to the Circle. Members of the Circle are asked to contribute to

the centerpiece in a variety of ways; this helps create a centerpiece that represents – and is valued by – the community that surrounds it.

#### **4. & 5. The Opening & Closing Ceremony: Bookends to the Circle Process.**

Circles provide a space apart from the rest of the school day. They provide a space where students can speak openly and honestly. An opening ceremony marks the start of the Circle process, giving students a chance to put aside whatever has happened so far that day. Openings are a time for students to center themselves so that as participants in the Circle they are present in the moment and mindful of their values. Openings may consist of a poem, a quote, a piece of music, a few minutes of silent meditation, a story, or question for reflection and sharing.

A closing ceremony serves to wrap things up, preparing students to return to the regular school day. Closings may acknowledge the work that participants have done, summarize the lessons learned and affirm the connection among the Circle participants.

### ***The Role of the Circle Keeper***

The facilitator, known in Circles as the keeper, invites and supports Circle participants in building and maintaining a safe and supportive community. The keeper does this by introducing the process and inviting participants to identify values and guidelines they deem important for this shared space. The keeper also introduces and ensures the proper use of the talking piece, and, together with the participants, builds a centerpiece that is valuable and relevant to all.

Though the keeper may initiate the Circle and monitor the dialogue and the safety of the space, the goal is for this to become a shared responsibility, so that everyone – teachers AND students – comes both a participant and a keeper.

### ***Types of Circles***

Restorative practices in schools are more successful when they are seen, not simply as a response to extreme and harmful behavior, but as principles and practices in place (and put into practice) throughout the school day.

#### **TIER I - Community Building Circles**

Build a community of care and a sense of shared responsibility for each other's wellbeing, using community building circles, SEL skill building circles and restorative language.

#### **TIER II - Harm/Healing Circles**

Using restorative conferencing and circles to address harms/hurts to the community. There are four (4) stages of circles that aim to repair harm.

- Stage 1 – Discernment
- Stage 2 – Preparation of Circle Process
- Stage 3 – Circle Facilitation
- Stage 4 – Follow-Up

#### **TIER III - Re-Entry Circles**

Using the circle process to reintegrate a student who has been removed from the school community as a result of suspension, arrest etc.

## Academic Circle Lesson Plan

**Circle Type:** Academic, Community Building  
**Title:** Getting Started on the Right Foot

**Suggested Time:** 45 - 50 minutes

- Materials**
- Center piece - w/ Plus/Delta Signs
  - Talking piece
  - Index cards
  - Markers/colored pencils/pens

### **Before we get started:**

- Participants should be seated in a circle for this activity.
- If necessary, briefly review the circle process and protocol
  - Circles place all participants on an equal level, everyone's input is equally valuable
  - The talking piece guides the conversation. All circle participants should respect the individual holding the talking piece by practicing active listening.
  - The talking piece is an *invitation* to not only **speak** but to also **actively listen** during the circle process.

### **Opening**

*"Education is not the filling of a pail, but a lighting of a fire."* - William Butler Yeats, 19<sup>th</sup> Century Poet

### **Round 1**

Using the talking piece to facilitate the conversation, participants should be asked to provide the following:

- Name
- When you transferred to JBS
- What does this quote mean to you?

**Facilitator:** *JBS is a network of communities. There is the JBS community as a whole and each individual classroom is its own smaller community that strives to support the larger structure of our Core Values. We'd like to create a community, here, within this group that strives to not only achieve individual success, but to also create a support system to push (and sometimes pull) one another to reach their full potential.*

### **Round 2**

#### **Setting Classroom Community Agreements**

Have participants write on a card what they need to create a safe and supportive classroom environment and why they feel it is important (i.e. accountability, trust, motivation etc.) As they explain, participants should place index cards in the centerpiece. It is OK, if ideas are repeated.

**NOTE:** These cards should be collected and recorded on a large poster to be displayed in the classroom for the remainder of the semester.

**Facilitator:** *Check in with participants about agreements, is there anything that*

should be added or adjusted? Once a consensus is reached, explain that these values/agreements will be the foundation of this semester's class. When there are difficult days, we should return to our community agreements for support and motivation.

### **Plusses (+) & Deltas (Δ)**

**Facilitator:** *Successfully completing a class may be a difficult journey and there are times we may need to lean on one another to support. Everyone in this circle possesses something of value they can offer to strengthen our classroom environment. As we travel through the year, there will be times when you are the supporting a colleague or reaching out for support yourself.*

On an index card,

- Round 3**
- Participants write their name
  - **PLUS:** Something positive they can bring to the classroom community
  - **DELTA:** Something you will need support to improve this semester

Once students have completed their cards. Circulate talking piece and have students share their +/ Δ and place their index cards on the centerpiece.

**Facilitator:** *Discuss the uniqueness of each classroom community and remind students that each web will be different. Each member of our classroom community brings something important and irreplaceable to the pot. We now have a support network in front of us. For every need we can make a connection to someone within the community who can turn to and lean on.*

**NOTE:** Index cards should be collected and recorded on a chart to be displayed in classroom for the duration of semester. See example below:

+	Δ
<i>Great at solving equations</i>	<b>John</b> <i>Struggles to get to class on time</i>
<i>Always has a positive attitude</i>	<b>Jane</b> <i>Forgets to do homework</i>
<i>Very organized</i>	<b>Joe</b> <i>Has trouble graphing</i>

**Closing** Read opening quote again. Ask participants to share how they plan to light a fire this year, rather than fill their pail.

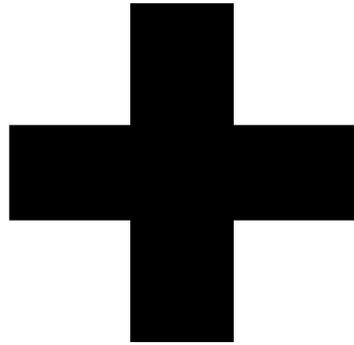
### **Follow-Up/Time Extension Activities**

A. Have students create individual, specific goals for this course. See examples below:

- I will arrive on time for class
- I will complete my homework assignments
- I will ask one question every class session

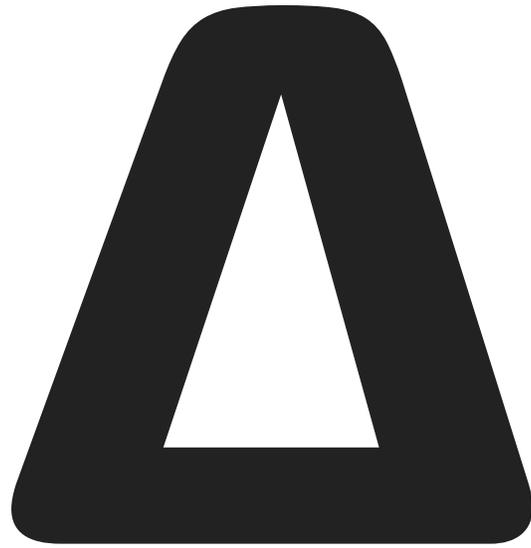
Throughout the semester, revisit these goals in brief check-in circles at predetermined benchmark points. Have students assess their progress for meeting this goal.

B. As a class you could agree to set up mini-support groups of four (4) or five (5) students. Student groups can share e-mail or phone numbers. If a student is absent they now have a network to reach out to so they don't fall behind. These small groups can also be convened to run a "Group Assist" circle if a particular member is experiencing difficulties in the class.



**PLUS:**

**Positive attributes or  
qualities you possess.**



**DELTA:**

**Something you'd like  
to work on or  
improve.**



# The James Baldwin School: Core Value Reflection Sheet

**Core Values**

*Commitment to Democracy, Peace and Justice*

*Respect for Humanity, Diversity, Intellect and Truth*

3. What could you have done differently?

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4. What do you think you can do to make things right?

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# Community Re-Entry Conference 101

## **What is a Community Re-Entry Conference?**

A Community Re-Entry Conference (CRC) is a restorative practice used to address harms that have taken place within the school community. This process allows for reparation to take place in the following ways:

- **Show equal concern** for victims, offenders, and the affected community
- **Encourages the offender to feel accountable** for his/her conduct and to be willing to repair the harm to the victim and the community in a way that helps the offender develop competency
- **Provides opportunities for direct and/or indirect dialogue** within the entire community of people affected, including the victim and offender
- Encourages those involved to **collaborate in restoring and developing positive relationships**, including the victim and the offender
- **Empowers those affected** to increase their capacity to recognize and respond to harm and crime in a restorative way

## **Why are CRCs Important?**

- ✓ *Relationships* - developing caring connections and finding common ground
- ✓ *Respect* - listening to others' opinions and valuing them
- ✓ *Responsibility* - being accountable for actions taken
- ✓ *Restoration* - repairing harm that has been caused
- ✓ *Reintegration* - ensuring all remain included and involved

## **Who is Involved in a CRC?**

- **Student** - *If re-entry involves more than one student, it may be wise to conduct the CRCs separately*
- **Requesting Teacher** - *The requesting teacher should always be present for successful facilitation.*
- 1. **Facilitator** - *The student's Crew Advisor will generally play this role. Depending upon the occurrence it may be necessary to involve the RC or a Co-Director. The facilitator should check-in with both parties periodically to ensure that the terms of the agreement are still being upheld.*

## **How to Facilitate a CRC...**

1. **Welcome & Introductions**
  - Introduce all parties present
  - Why is the CRC taking place? State the facts as they've been relayed to you
  - Explain we are here to talk about what is going on and develop a plan to move forward
  - Emphasize the need for both parties to be honest and maintain an open-mind.
2. **Opening & Orientation**
  - What do you need in this conversation in order to feel safe and heard?
    - Ex: We will speak and listen with respect.
    - Ex: We will speak and listen honestly
3. **Narratives/Storytelling**

- Student and teacher describe what happened from their perspective and what core value they felt was violated and why.
- Facilitator should paraphrase to ensure understanding once both parties have spoken.
- How have you been affected by the incidents we just heard?
- What were you thinking/feeling when the incident happened?

#### **4. Goal-Setting**

- Ask each participant to discuss their goal for the class
- How has this incident affected that goal?

#### **5. Building Empathy**

- Ask each participant to imagine and describe what it would be like to be in the other person's shoes.

#### **6. Exploring Options & Creating Agreements**

- How will the harm be repaired? *What needs to happen to make things right?*
- Who is responsible for repairing the harm? *What do you need to do to make things right?*
- Develop an agreement/consequence that both parties can agree upon.

#### **7. Closing**

- If this were to happen again, what will you do differently?
- What can you personally do to keep this agreement?
- What supports do you need to keep this agreement moving forward?

# **Classroom Re-Entry Circles**

Classroom re-entry circles are an excellent opportunity to welcome a student back to the community following an offense that resulted in their removal. It is important that these circles are **not** used to re-punish a student. Instead it should create a space for an offending student to “make it right” with the members of their class and move forward past the incident. The conversation about consequences associated with this incident should happen separately and prior to facilitating a re-entry circle.

## **Circle Preparation**

1. Schedule, with the classroom teacher, a specific time and location for the circle to take place during the class period.
2. Meet with the returning student to discuss the details of the circle and expectations. A few questions/prompts for them to consider have been included below:
  - How will you acknowledge **your** specific role in the incident?
  - Which core values do you feel may have been violated by you?
  - How will you acknowledge the appropriateness of your behavior at the time?
  - How do you think your behavior affected the other students in your classroom?
  - Do you feel that your behavior was an accurate representation of who you are and what you represent? If not, what is it that you’d like the class to know about you?
  - How do you plan to adjust/correct your behavior in the future?
  - Is there anything the class can do to support you?
  - Determine how/if you will apologize to the classroom community.

## **Circle Facilitation**

### **1. *Introductions***

Have each circle participant introduce him or herself and state their role (i.e. student, teacher, counselor etc.) All members of the classroom community should participate – including the teacher.

### **2. *Welcome***

Share with participants that we have come together today to welcome **(STUDENT’S NAME)** back to class. Remind participants that this circle is designed to support the returning student and we will not discuss specific details of the incident.

### **3. *Student Address***

Using the questions addressed during the Prep Meeting, the student should address the class and apologize for their involvement in the disruption of the classroom environment.

### **4. *Appreciation***

Passing the talking piece around, each participant will have the opportunity to appreciate the student for acknowledging that their behavior affected the class.

### **5. *How did this affect me? What did I think?***

Passing the talking piece around, participants will have an opportunity to express how the incident may have affected them or what they may have thought following the incident. This round can end with the student offering an apology if necessary.

### **6. *What do we need to move forward?***

Using the talking piece each participant, including the returning student, can share what kind of support he or she may need to move forward from this incident.

### **7. *Agreements***

Participants will make commitments to try to meet the community needs mentioned in the previous round.

# **Fairness Committee Lesson Plan for Advisories**

## **What is a Fairness Committee?**

The Fairness Committee of The James Baldwin School is a restorative justice model of school discipline. Parameters and protocols for discussion place emphasis on the violation of community core norms and values rather than on the breaking of rules. Fairness seeks to create, through dialogue and by consensus, appropriate “consequences” for those violations, rather than simply mete out prescribed “punishments.”

Overview: The object of this lesson is to introduce the concept of a Fairness Committee to students and to discuss the rationale for it.

### Materials Needed

Handout about the Fairness Committee (***Deepening Democracy***, by Maria Hantzopoulos)

### **Pre-reading**

- Ask the students to think about a time that something happened that wasn't fair at school. It could be a problem they had with another student or with a teacher. Or even something that happened to someone else. They can keep names confidential and they should avoid bringing up any issue that might still be unresolved.
- What happened?
- Was it resolved in a fair way?
- Why or why not?

Ask them to think about this experience for a few minutes.

- Have a few students share their stories. Make sure they responded to the above prompts.
- Ask students to share what they already know about the fairness committee. Have they participated in it before?

### **Reading**

Explain to the group that this year we asking more people to participate in the Fairness Committee as a way to address these issues in a fairer way. Ask for a few volunteers to read out loud the Deepening Democracy story about what a fairness committee is like at Humanities Prep, a sister school of The James Baldwin School.

### **Post-reading**

You can ask any of the following questions:

- Ask students what stood out to them about the article.
- Ask students what questions they have about this.
- Ask students why it is worthwhile to include so many different stakeholders in a fairness hearing.
- Remind students that any violation of the core values (Respect for Humanity, Respect for Diversity, Respect for the Intellect, Respect for the Truth, Commitment to Peace, Commitment to Justice, Commitment to Democracy) can result in a hearing. Ask students to brainstorm some situations that might result in a fairness hearing. What might be the value of resolving these issues through fairness?
- What are alternatives to fairness? Why might someone choose that alternative?
- Lastly you could review the fairness committee protocol and discuss what questions committee members would want to ask students based on some of the situations students brainstormed earlier.

# ***Deepening Democracy***

*Abbreviated version*

**By: Maria Hantzopoulos**

*Full version available at [Rethinking Schools](http://Rethinking Schools), where the article was first published:  
[TinyURL.com/DeepeningDemocracy](http://TinyURL.com/DeepeningDemocracy)*

On any given day at Humanities Prep, a small public high school in Manhattan, it is not uncommon to see the hallways teeming with students long after school hours. While many are catching up on schoolwork, others might be playing chess or ping-pong, listening to music, or just lounging on the couches of what everyone calls Prep Central, our communal work and social space for students and teachers. It is usually a welcoming and friendly scene, free from the typical confines of the regular school day.

But one late afternoon I came down the stairs from the second floor to discover broken glass scattered all over the floor. Feeling a breeze from behind, I realized that someone had smashed the stairwell window, and I suspected it was an intentional act. I immediately went to report it so it could be cleaned up, though I felt overwhelmed by sadness. Acts of vandalism were rare in the school and usually represented some rupture in our attempt to build a community of trust. When I went into Prep Central, I casually shared with the remaining students and teachers what I had discovered. All of the students seemed shocked at what had happened, and no one seemed to know who did it or why it happened.

About 45 minutes later, Luther approached me as I was hanging some artwork on the bulletin board. He was in the group of students I had discussed the incident with earlier. Usually his booming voice {could be heard throughout} the hallway, but now he barely mustered a whisper, "Maria, I was the one that broke the window." I sighed, not sure what to say, and asked, "Well, what do you think we should do?" "I think I should take myself to Fairness Committee," he said without hesitation. As I reflect upon this now, I realize that Luther had sat on the fairness committee before, so he probably knew it was a space he could feel safe talking about what he had done.

## **How It Works**

When a fairness committee session is called to order, it is because one member of the community believes that another has violated one of the school **core values (respect for humanity, the intellect, truth, and diversity, or a commitment to peace, justice, and democracy)**. Anyone can be taken to fairness: A student can take another student, a teacher can take a student, and a student can even take a teacher. In Luther's case, he actually took himself.

Present at the committee meeting are the person who called the committee to order (that person may have been directly violated or simply witnessed the violation), the person who is being taken to fairness, one facilitator teacher, and a talking committee of one teacher and two other students who are unfamiliar with the situation at hand. ...Facilitators reach out to new and veteran students and staff for inclusion on the committee. In this way, the entire school is involved in the process of creating, through dialogue and by consensus, consequences for the violation of school community norms.

The fairness committee is encouraged to ask questions, listen to all parties, and help uncover all the various truths of the situation. ... After everyone has discussed the issue, the entire committee – including the person being taken to fairness – decides if there should be any consequence and if so, what that consequence is.

During Luther's session, the members of the committee found out that the day before he broke the window, his family received notice that they were being kicked out of their shelter and had no place to go. While this did not fully excuse his actions, we were able to discuss more fully and fairly what the consequences should be, as well as discuss more constructive ways to deal with anger. We jointly decided that he needed to give back to the school community in some way. Knowing that it would be ridiculous to ask a student who was homeless to pay for the window, we all agreed he would help answer the phone after school for a month. In the meantime, his advisor and the school social worker were able to reach out to his family and offer support.

## **The James Baldwin School - Fairness Committee Training Scenarios**

### **Scenario A:**

Two people in the school were together, and now they broke up. When they pass each other in the hallway, the one gives the other one mean looks and glares each time they walk by. The other one just ignores that person in the hall.

- What Core Values would this relate to?
- Would this be a good situation for Fairness?
- What consequences/agreements would be appropriate for this situation?

### **Scenario B:**

Tom, a student, leaves class to go to the bathroom each day. He leaves for way too long and takes the bathroom pass for way too long.

- What Core Values would this relate to?
- Would this be a good situation for Fairness?
- What consequences/agreements would be appropriate for this situation?

### **Scenario C:**

Jeannette, a student, cuts out on a trip. She pretends to get lost, but really she just goes to get something to eat and to go shopping. The trip was to gather data for the Science PBAT.

- What Core Values would this relate to?
- Would this be a good situation for Fairness?
- What consequences/agreements would be appropriate for this situation?

### **Scenario D:**

Christine, a student, is late to school every day. It is a PBAT class, and the teacher and Crew Advisor knows that the student needs to pass the PBAT to graduate.

- What Core Values would this relate to?
- Would this be a good situation for Fairness?
- What consequences/agreements would be appropriate for this situation?

### **Scenario E:**

Adam, a student in a class, doesn't know how to be quiet. It is bothering the other students in the class, and making it hard for them to focus. Sometimes Adam is talking to other students, on other days, he is singing, or talking to himself.

- What Core Values would this relate to?
- Would this be a good situation for Fairness?
- What consequences/agreements would be appropriate for this situation?

### **Scenario F:**

Marie Leblanc, a teacher, is always picking on a student in her class, Rob. She is always calling on him and putting him on the spot. Rob is getting tired of it.

- What Core Values would this relate to?
- Would this be a good situation for Fairness?
- What consequences/agreements would be appropriate for this situation?

### **Scenario G:**

A student, Sharon, calls another student, Rehana, a "brown B\*\*\*\*" in class. Although it was pretty quiet, and the teacher didn't hear, many of the other students in the class heard.

- What Core Values would this relate to?
- Would this be a good situation for Fairness?
- What consequences/agreements would be appropriate for this situation?

### **Scenario H:**

One student hears that another student kissed a boy that was her friend's boyfriend. This student did not see it him/herself, but heard it from someone else. She tells her friend what she heard. Her friend is upset and wants to do something about it. Her boyfriend denies it. She wants to know who said it.

- What Core Values would this relate to?
- Would this be a good situation for Fairness?
- What consequences/agreements would be appropriate for this situation?

# Organization Restorative Justice Assessment

**YOU WILL NEED:** two (2) writing utensils - different colors

Thinking about your school/organization, complete the Restorative Justice Assessment. Use a separate color to indicate what systems/structures are **currently** in place and what systems/structures you **would like to see**.

## **KEY**

*choose a color for each category and shade it below.*

**CURRENT**

**I WOULD LIKE TO SEE**

	<b>Tier I</b>	<b>Tier II</b>	<b>Tier III</b>
<b>Students</b>			
<b>Families</b>			
<b>Teachers</b>			

<p><b>Counseling Staff</b> <i>guidance counselors, social workers, school psychologists etc.</i></p>			
<p><b>Support Staff</b> <i>parent coordinators, deans, secretaries, paraprofessionals, DC-37 etc.</i></p>			
<p><b>Administrators</b></p>			
<p><b>School Safety Agents</b></p>			
<p><b>Other:</b> _____</p>			