

# San Francisco Unified School District Restorative Practices

“Schools are not buildings, curriculum timetables and meetings. Schools are relationships and interactions among people.”

Johnson & Johnson, 1994

# Defining the Need

**Board Resolution:** #96-23A1, October 13, 2009

In support of a Comprehensive School Climate, Restorative Justice, and Alternatives to Suspension/Expulsions

- Aim:**
1. To reduce overall numbers of suspensions and expulsions within the district
  2. address the disproportionate numbers of African-American, Latino, and Pacific Islander students who are suspended.

# Suspension Data

## ► 2010-2011 school year

African American students comprise 10.8% of the student population, yet they made up 48% of the suspensions

In 2008-2009: 52% of expulsion referrals, and 62% of those actually expelled.

Latino students comprise 23% of student population with a suspension rate of 29%.

We are only beginning to collect out-of-class counseling office referral data at this time.

# Values and Principles of Restorative Practices and Discipline

- ▶ Relationships are central to building community
- ▶ Addresses misbehavior and harm in a way that strengthens relationships
- ▶ Focuses on harm done rather than only on rule-breaking
- ▶ Gives voice to the person harmed
- ▶ Engages in collaborative problem-solving
- ▶ Empowers change and growth
- ▶ Enhances responsibility

# Restorative Practices Definition

Restorative Practices are based on principles that emphasize the importance of positive relationships as central to building community and involves processes that restore relationships when harm has occurred.

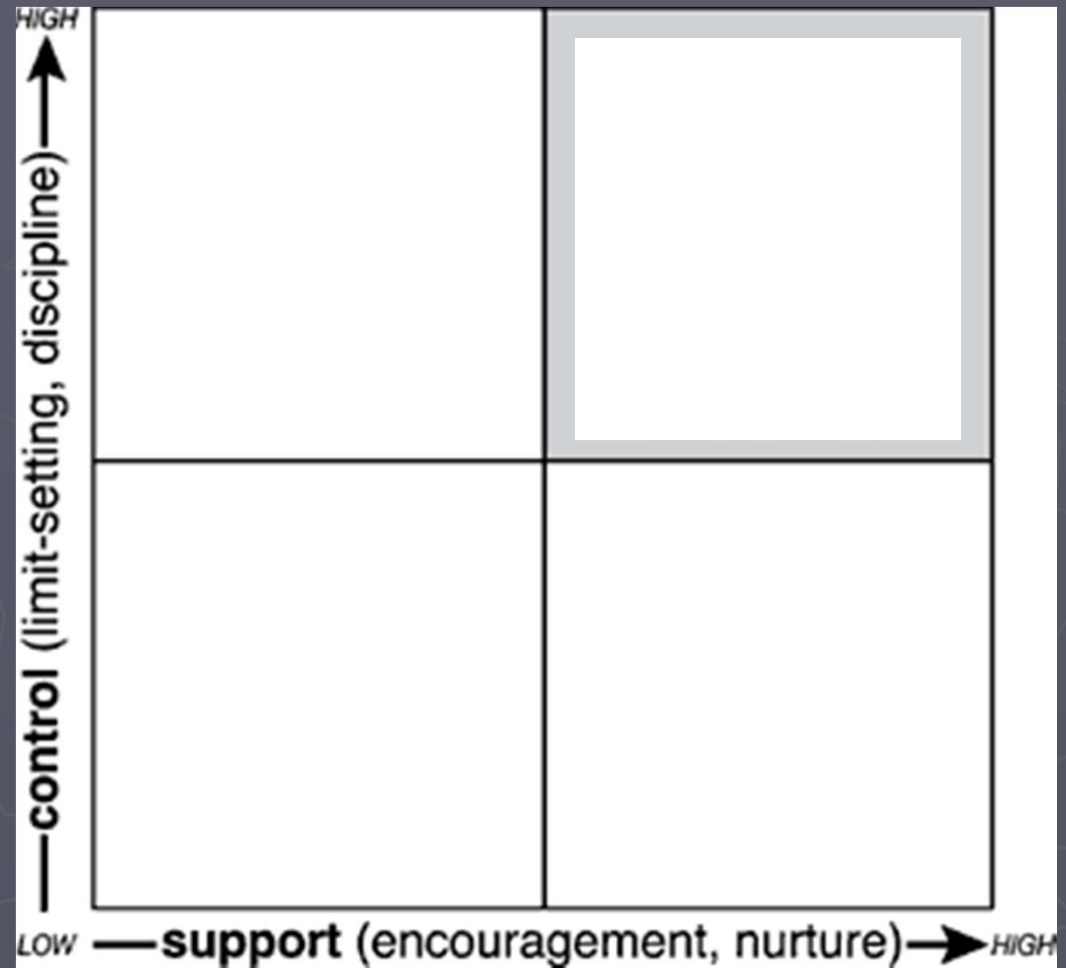
Relationship Based Principles

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graph TD; A[Relationship Based Principles] --> B[Building Community]; A --> C[Restoring Relationships];
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Building  
Community

Restoring  
Relationships

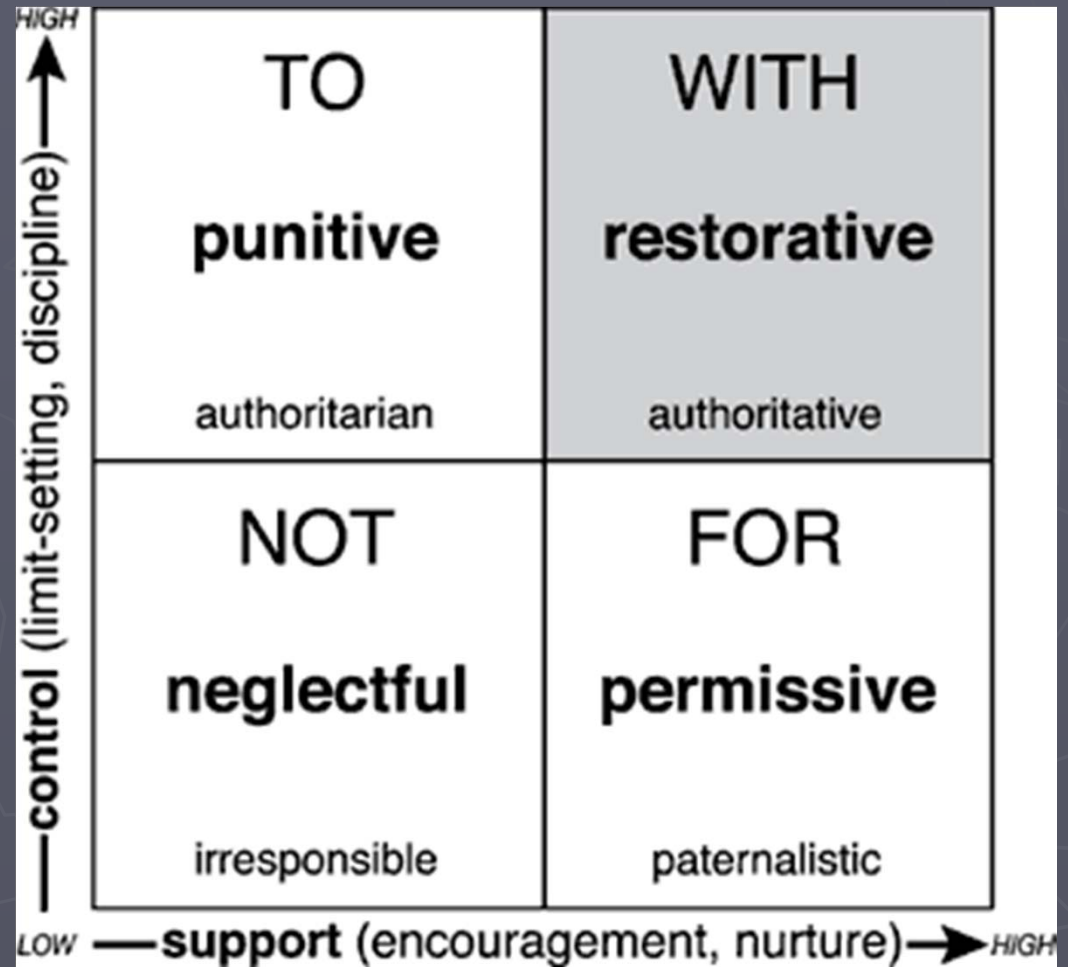
# Social Discipline Window



Wachtel & Costello (2009), *The Restorative Practices Handbook*, pg 50

# Social Discipline Window

The underlying premise of Restorative Practices rests with the belief that people will make positive changes when those in positions of authority do things *with* them rather than *to* them or *for* them.



# Fair Process

## Three core components of Fair Process:

- ▶ 1 - **Engagement**: Involving individuals in decisions that affect them by asking for their input and allowing them to refute the merit of one another's ideas.
- ▶ 2 - **Explanation**: Everyone involved and affected should understand why final decisions are made as they are. Creates powerful feedback loop that enhances learning.
- ▶ 3 - **Expectation Clarity**: Once decisions are made, new rules are clearly stated, so that everyone understands the new boundaries and consequences of failure.



# Paradigm Shift

<b>Traditional</b>	<b>Restorative</b>
<i>School and rules</i> violated	<i>People and relationships</i> violated
Justice focuses on <i>establishing guilt</i>	<b>Justice identifies <i>needs and obligations</i></b>
Accountability = punishment	Accountability = understanding impact, repairing harm
Justice directed at offender, victim ignored	<b>Offender, victim and school all have direct roles in justice process</b>
Rules and intent outweigh whether outcome is positive/negative	<b>Offender is responsible for harmful behavior, repairing harm and working toward positive outcomes</b>
No opportunity for remorse or amends	<b>Opportunity given for amends and expression of remorse</b>

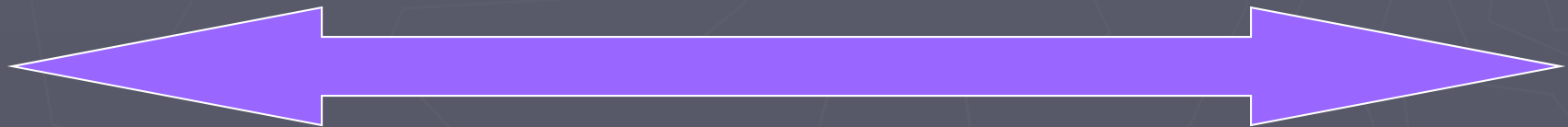
# Restorative Language

- ▶ What is the **relationship** like?
- ▶ Who was **impacted** or **affected** by what happened?
- ▶ What was the resulting **harm**?
- ▶ What **needs** do those involved have?
- ▶ What needs to happen to **repair the harm**?

# Continuum of Practices

Informal

Formal



Affective  
Statements

Restorative  
Questions  
(Impromptu dialogue)

Pro-active  
Circles

Responsive  
Circles

Restorative  
Meetings/  
Conferences

# Affective Statements

- ▶ the starting point for all restorative processes
  - active non-judgmental listening
  - authentic expression of feelings and impact

\* building strengthened relationships by genuinely presenting oneself as someone who cares and has feelings.

Ex. typical response: "Phillip, stop talking!"

- ▶ affective statement: "Phillip, I find it very frustrating to hear a student talking while I'm trying to give directions to the class."

# Restorative Discussion and Questions

- ▶ A restorative approach to help those harmed by other's actions, as well as responding to challenging behavior consists in asking key questions:

## Restorative Questions:

- ▶ What happened, and what were you thinking at the time?
- ▶ What have you thought about since?
- ▶ Who has been affected by what you have done? In what way?
- ▶ What about this has been hardest for you?
- ▶ What do you think you need to do to make things as right as possible?

# Circles

1. **Proactive:** Community/ Team building
2. **Responsive:** Problem solving/repairing harm

## When to Use Circles (examples):

- ▶ community building problem-solving reflecting
- ▶ introducing new students
- ▶ Conflict resolution
- ▶ Brainstorming
- ▶ farewell to students leaving
- ▶ Healing/ diffusing tension
- ▶ family issues
- ▶ community violence debriefing

# Benefits of Group Conferencing

- ▶ Give victims a chance to express their feelings directly to offenders, supported by family and friends
- ▶ Let offenders hear directly from the people they've affected
- ▶ Empower offenders to take responsibility for their actions
- ▶ Hold offenders accountable
- ▶ Collaborative: provides opportunities for all involved to decide what needs to happen to repair harm
- ▶ Provides an opportunity for healing for victims, offenders and their communities of care
- ▶ Works toward reintegrating offenders back into their community
- ▶ Break cycles of misbehavior and disruption

# When is Conferencing Appropriate?

What are some examples of issues you may be able to address at your school site by using a responsive conference?





# When is conferencing appropriate?

- ▶ Interpersonal conflicts
- ▶ Tardiness/Truancy
- ▶ Theft
- ▶ Vandalism
- ▶ Bullying/Harassment
- ▶ Drug/Alcohol use
- ▶ Fighting/Assault
- ▶ Arson

# Conferencing Process

- 1) Pre-conferencing separately with offender and with victim
- 2) Identification, recruitment, and preparation of supporters and other involved parties
- 3) Conference
- 4) Follow-up

# Seating Arrangements



# Stages of Conferencing

Conferencing follows a specific order of stages, carefully constructed to support a safe flow of dialogue and ensure all parties are given a space to share their thoughts and feelings.

The following stages incorporate the conference:

- ▶ Preamble (welcome and introduction)
- ▶ Offender speaks
- ▶ Victim speaks
- ▶ Victim supporters speak
- ▶ Offender supporters speak
- ▶ Offender responds
- ▶ Reaching an agreement
- ▶ Closing the conference

# Thank you!

Feel free to contact the restorative practices team with any further questions

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