

# Help Oakland Unified to Better Understand the Impact of Restorative Justice in its Schools

## Context

“Restorative justice, which has cut suspensions by more than half at Bunche, is one of several strategies the Oakland Unified School District (OUSD) is embracing as it attempts a seismic shift in the culture of discipline – from punitive to preventive, exclusion to inclusion.” *The Christian Science Monitor*

Restorative Justice (RJ) is a set of principles and practices employed in the Oakland Unified School District to build community and respond to student misconduct, with the goals of repairing harm and restoring relationships between those impacted. The RJ program in OUSD pilots a three-tiered model of prevention, intervention and supported reentry in response to conflict and harm. The RJ program works to lower the district’s rate of suspension and expulsion and to foster positive school climates with the goal of eliminating racially disproportionate discipline practices and the resulting push-out of students into the prison pipeline. Restorative justice is one of the pillars of the district’s 2012 voluntary resolution plan with the U.S. Department of Education Office of Civil Rights to eliminate the disproportionate suspension of African American male students, who comprise 17% of the district’s student body but account for 42% of the district’s suspensions.

[Opening Up, Students Transform a Vicious Circle - NY Times](#)

[Restorative justice: One high school's path to reducing suspensions by half](#)

## Videos

[Tier 1 - Community Building Circle](#)

[Tier 3 - Welcome and Reentry Circle](#)

## Problem

OUSD has no method in place to collect data related to the implementation of restorative practices in its schools. While the district currently collects and analyzes student suspension data, there is no data on the frequency of restorative justice circles in schools, the type of circles being held (tier I, tier II, tier III), the number of students participating, or the outcomes for students who participate in restorative justice.

The restorative justice program would like a data collection tool that could be used by teachers and restorative justice coordinators to capture key data points that they could use to evaluate and improve the program.

The program hopes to collect the following data for the three tiers of intervention:

Tier 1 - Community Building or Prevention Circles (up to 20 students)

- date
- school
- grade
- name of adult
- student name or ID

- topic (bullying/cyber bullying, trauma, community violence, peer conflict, etc.)
- classroom circle or targeted group
- adult led or youth led
- comments

#### Tier 2 - Restorative Discipline/Alternatives to Suspension (1 or more students)

- Date
- school
- name of adult
- name or ID of students as well as their role in the dispute and in the circle, i.e., who are the disputants versus community participants
- type of intervention (peer mediation, harm circle, family conference, etc.)
- adult led or youth led
- disposition: resolved, in process, discontinued
- comments

#### Tier 3 - Re-entry Welcome Circles (1 student plus parent, probation officer, therapist, etc.)

- Date
- school
- grade
- name of adult(s)
- name of student or student ID
- reason for welcome circle (reentry from juvenile hall, expulsion, suspension)
- Services assigned (counseling, tutoring, mentoring, employment, medical, etc.)
- Date of follow-up meeting(s)
- comments

#### Stakeholders

Restorative Justice Coordinators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lead Tier 1, Tier 2 and Tier 3 circles at participating schools</li> <li>• Would be the primary users of the data collection tool</li> <li>• Have access to smart phones (Android and iPhone) or computers</li> <li>• Value a tool that is user-friendly and minimally time-consuming (lots of drop down menus)</li> </ul>
Teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lead Tier 1 circles in their classrooms (in some cases)</li> <li>• Would be secondary users of the data collection tool</li> <li>• Have access to smart phones (Android and iPhone) or computers</li> <li>• Value a tool that is user-friendly and minimally time-consuming (lots of drop down menus)</li> </ul>
Restorative Justice Program Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Would like to connect data collected in the tool to</li> </ul>

	<p>demographic, behavior and academic data in the student information system (AERIES)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Value a tool that is user-friendly and minimally time-consuming</li></ul>
<p>Oakland Unified administration and school board, parent community, U.S. Department of Education Office of Civil Rights</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● The District needs to submit a rigorous quantitative evaluation to demonstrate the extent to which RJ contributes to equity and reduces the achievement gap for African American boys and young men</li></ul>