

Restorative Justice in U.S. Schools: A Research Review

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Background

This report is part of a larger effort of the WestEd Justice & Prevention Research Center (JPRC) focusing on Restorative Justice (RJ) as an alternative to traditional responses to student misbehavior in schools across the United States. This project was funded to document the current breadth of evidence on the subject, provide a more comprehensive picture of how RJ practices are implemented in schools, and lay the groundwork for future research, implementation, and policy. The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) funded WestEd beginning in 2013 to conduct this research to better understand the national landscape, as a large number of American schools were enacting RJ.

The JPRC's work on this project has included conducting a comprehensive review of the literature (the subject of this report in the series), interviewing experts in the field of RJ (people who are nationally recognized for their work on RJ in schools), and administering a survey to and/or conducting interviews with RJ practitioners currently working with or in U.S. schools.

For more information, please see these related project reports, available from the JPRC website: <http://jprc.wested.org>

- *Restorative Justice in U.S. Schools: Summary Findings from Interviews with Experts*
- *Restorative Justice in U.S. Schools: Practitioners' Perspectives*
- *What Further Research is Needed on Restorative Justice in Schools?*

An Overview of Restorative Justice and Our Literature Review

This report presents information garnered from a comprehensive review of the literature on restorative justice (RJ)¹ in U.S. schools. The purpose of our review is to capture key issues, describe models of RJ, and summarize results from studies conducted in the field. The review was conducted on research reports and other relevant literature published, or made publicly available, between 1999 and mid-2014.

RJ is a broad term that encompasses a growing social movement to institutionalize peaceful and non-punitive approaches for addressing harm, responding to violations of legal and human rights, and problem solving. RJ has been used extensively both as a means to divert people from official justice systems, and as a program for convicted offenders already supervised by the adult or juvenile justice system. In the school setting, it often serves as an alternative to traditional discipline, particularly exclusionary disciplinary actions such as suspension or expulsion. RJ proponents often turn to restorative practices out of concern that more exclusionary disciplinary actions tend to be associated with harmful consequences for children (e.g., Losen, 2014).

Within school settings, RJ encompasses many different program types and might be best characterized as a non-punitive approach to handling a wide range of conflict. An RJ program can involve the whole school, including universal training of staff and students in RJ principles, or it can be used as an add-on approach to respond to an incident or ongoing conflict.

It is not easy to define exactly what constitutes RJ in the schools. Sellman and colleagues (2014) argue that from “...a theoretical perspective, RJ is essentially a contested concept...[and] it is unlikely that there will ever be one agreed definition.” The National Centre for Restorative Approaches in Youth Settings defines RJ as:

... an innovative approach to offending and inappropriate behavior which puts repairing harm done to relationships and people over and above the need for assigning blame and dispensing punishment. A restorative approach in a school shifts the emphasis from managing behavior to focusing on the building, nurturing and repairing of relationships. (Hopkins, 2003, p. 3)

This definition is ambiguous enough to result in many different types of programs to be classified as RJ approaches — even interventions that schools have been doing for years

¹ We use the term “restorative justice” (RJ) broadly to capture what the literature describes using a variety of terms such as “restorative practices,” “restorative approaches,” and similar language.

(e.g., student conflict resolution programs, student youth courts). Aside from trying to define RJ, researchers have identified several reasons why schools and districts are more frequently embracing RJ practices, including the following:

- Zero-tolerance policies have led to larger numbers of youths being “pushed out” (suspended or expelled) with no evidence of positive impact on school safety (Losen, 2014).
- There is racial/ethnic disparity in what youths receive school punishments and how severe their punishments are, even when controlling for the type of offense (Skiba et al., 2002).
- More school misbehavior is being handed over to the police (particularly with programs that have police in schools, such as School Resource Officers), leading to more youth getting involved with official legal systems — thus contributing to a trend toward a “school-to-prison pipeline” (Petrosino, Guckenburg, & Fronius, 2012).
- Research strongly links suspension and other school discipline to failure to graduate (Losen, 2014).

Thus, schools and districts are investigating methods that reduce reliance on traditional school sanctions such as suspension and referral to police (sometimes resulting in an official arrest), while retaining the ability to hold misbehaving students accountable. RJ is viewed by many as one approach that keeps young people in school, addresses the root causes of the behavior issues, and repairs relationships between students.

Schools have adopted a variety of programs and approaches under the RJ umbrella. These programs range from informal restorative dialogue techniques between teachers and students to formal restorative conferencing that involves students, staff, and often community members, including family. In California, districts receiving federal Safe and Supportive Schools (S3) funding are being encouraged to use their grants to implement RJ to improve school climate and reduce reliance on punitive responses to student misbehavior like bullying, vandalism, and harassment (Health and Human Development Program, 2011). The most common RJ practice noted in the literature and a recent set of interviews with experts and practitioners in the field (Guckenburg, Hurley, Persson, Fronius, & Petrosino, 2015) is the practice of holding restorative circles.²

The research on restorative practices in schools is still at the infancy stage, but several exploratory studies have indicated promising results of RJ approaches in terms of their impact on school climate, student behavior, and relationships between students and with staff, among other outcomes (see Ashley & Burke, 2009). Despite the nascent state of the

² See Appendix B for a glossary of RJ terms and practices.

empirical literature, there are countless reports, articles, and case studies that provide context on RJ practices in U.S. schools.

Literature review

To learn more about RJ in schools, we conducted an extensive review of literature. The review was not designed to provide a definitive answer to the question of whether RJ in schools works but does aim to capture key issues, describe models of RJ, and summarize results from studies available from 1999 through mid-2014.³ Specifically, our literature review was guided by the following questions:

- What are the origins and theory underlying U.S. schools' interest in restorative justice?
- How does the literature describe RJ programs or approaches in U.S. schools?
- What issues have been identified as important to consider for implementing RJ in the schools?
- What does the empirical research say about the impact of RJ in the schools?

Our literature review focused on RJ approaches in primary and secondary schools, excluding programs designed for higher education. Although RJ in the schools originated and is popular in other countries such as Canada, the United Kingdom, and Australia (e.g., Hopkins, 2004), our searches focused on U.S.-based programs, studies, and reports.

To find relevant literature, we conducted a number of search strategies. First, we examined documents at websites for specialized centers such as the American Humane Society's RJ for Youth, the International Institute for Restorative Practices, the National Centre for Restorative Approaches in Youth Settings, and the Suffolk University Center for Restorative Justice. Second, we conducted searches of electronic bibliographic databases such as *Education Resource Information Center (ERIC)*, *Criminal Justice Abstracts*, *National Criminal Justice Reference Service (NCJRS)*, and *Education Full-Text*. We also conducted a *Google Scholar* search and combed the first 240 hits for any unpublished literature.

These three search strategies were redundant in that they covered much of the same literature. Searches were designed to be as sensitive as possible so as to get as many documents relevant to RJ in the schools.

³ There are articles included in this report that were published after our searches concluded. These articles were typically provided to us directly by authors. There were no additional searches conducted, and so recent literature may be omitted.

Our queries included iterations of the following terms: (“restorative justice” OR “restorative practice*” OR restorative) AND (school* OR class*) AND (youth* OR child* OR student* OR adolescent* OR teen* OR boy* OR girl* OR pupil* OR youngster* OR juveniles OR minors OR kids). The full list of publications we identified through these searches is included in Appendix A. We also consulted with the experts who were interviewed for a related report (Guckenburg et al., 2015), and many of those experts provided additional literature to supplement our searches.

Once we’d identified and collected a comprehensive set of literature on the topic of RJ in K–12 schools in the U.S., we gathered information from the texts in order to answer the questions that guide this report.

Origins and Theory Underlying RJ in Schools

Although there is no consensus in the literature on a definition of RJ in schools (e.g., Sellman, Cremin, & McCluskey, 2014), there is agreement on how RJ came to become a popular alternative to traditional punishment in U.S. schools. In this section, we outline the general origins and theory behind RJ and its pathway into schools in the United States. We also explore the more practical basis for why RJ is a growing alternative approach to discipline in schools.

RJ's pre-modern origins and theoretical frameworks

The literature we reviewed is mostly consistent in indicating that RJ originated in the pre-modern native cultures of the South Pacific and Americas. These cultures had a different approach to conflict and social ills. They emphasized the offender's accountability for the harm they caused, along with a plan for repairing the hurt and restoring the offender to acceptance. The emphasis on the harm done rather than the act is a widely recognized principle across the RJ literature.

Vaandering (2010) describes several well-developed frameworks for better understanding RJ. Perhaps the most well-known framework for understanding RJ in criminology is called "reintegrative shaming theory" (Braithwaite, 2004). Reintegrative shaming acknowledges the impact of wrongdoing on both the offender and those who were harmed. Shaming may materialize as direct actions (requiring a student to publicly apologize) or indirect actions (expression of disappointment by a teacher to a parent of a student). It may be a teacher addressing a student's disruptive behavior during class, or a police officer calling a youth's parents to report delinquent behavior. The shaming process is at the heart of RJ; the distinction with reintegrative shaming is that, compared to negative shaming, it leads to reconciliation with and reacceptance of the wrongdoer and attempts to reintegrate the offender back into the community, rather than isolating the perpetrator from the community. However, there are critics who argue that reintegrative shaming may have unintended harmful effects in school settings (Vaandering, 2010). There is a fine line between shame that is meant to be a supportive bridge back into the community and shame that is stigmatizing and isolates the offender. In schools, educators may not always be able to recognize how to use shame as a path toward reintegration rather than stigmatization (Vaandering, 2010).

Zehr (2002) suggests that RJ requires society to move away from a system that emphasizes traditional retributive justice ("an eye for an eye"). Morrison and Vaandering (2012) argue that a system influenced by RJ would define "laws and rules as serving people to protect

and encourage relationships and relational cultures” (p. 145) rather than protecting the status quo.

This shift is evidenced in the classroom setting when educators seek to create a sense of community ownership among students. According to Zehr (2002) and others (e.g., Karp & Breslin, 2001), RJ in the schools is meant to bring together all stakeholders to resolve issues and build relationships (González, 2012) rather than control student misbehavior through punitive exclusionary approaches. However, many schools still employ an institutional policy that uses authoritative approaches to dole out exclusionary discipline, thereby removing a student in body and voice from the decision-making and the school’s procedural justice process. This reactive and rigid approach to discipline, sometimes instituted for minor behavioral issues, “reinforce social control and education as compliance” (Morrison & Vaandering, 2012, p. 145).

Critics argue that the traditional approach manages student behavior rather than developing students’ capacity and facilitating their growth. It also establishes a power dynamic between teachers and students (and at times between students) that is detrimental to all students’ having a voice and feeling empowered. Tyler (2006) argues that by giving people, particularly students, a voice in the decision-making and procedural justice process, they will view institutional power as more legitimate and fair. Tyler also makes the case that empowering youth may lead to better self-regulation without the need for formal discipline (Tyler, 2006). Zehr (2002) and others argue that RJ results in a shift in how discipline is applied, which increases student perceptions about fairness of educator actions, thereby leading to greater compliance as they see the school order as one having legitimacy. According to Braithwaite, writing about the context of justice systems:

Given that there is now strong evidence that RJ processes are perceived to be fairer by those involved and strong evidence that perceived procedural justice improves compliance with the law, it follows as a prediction that RJ processes will improve compliance with the law. (Braithwaite, 2004, p. 48)

Some theorists have written that RJ is designed to build an environment that helps address “power and status imbalances” that shape a young person’s perspective on legitimacy and fairness of discipline in the school (Morrison & Vaandering, 2012). The absence of this perceived legitimacy and fairness among young persons might lead to their defiance and future behavioral infractions (Sherman, 1993). RJ’s basic tenets emphasize a fair and collective process, featuring nurturing, growth, and communal empathy and resilience over exploitation and imposed control. These tenets underscore the importance of schools’ implementing discipline approaches viewed as legitimate by students, and

encouraging collective bonding among students and staff. The perspectives of reintegrative shaming, procedural justice, and defiance theory all support the potential of RJ in leading to a stronger school community, better climate, and fewer behavioral issues. It is on these grounds that RJ has been operating in schools in Western cultures for the past two decades.

Although the focus of our literature review is limited to RJ operating in school sites within the United States, RJ has operated within the juvenile justice system and in schools outside of the United States for many years, and implementation in those settings has a stronger evidence base than that documented in the U.S. school system.

RJ's origins in juvenile justice

The earliest applications of RJ in the United States were in the criminal and juvenile justice systems. The evidence of RJ's effectiveness within the justice system (e.g., Sherman & Strang, 2007) has led for a call to implement RJ interventions on a broader scale, particularly for low-level crimes that are nonviolent, and for juveniles. In fact, New Zealand has used RJ as a central framework in its juvenile justice system for nearly 25 years (Zehr, 2002).

Bazemore and Schiff (2005) conducted a census of RJ practices in the U.S. justice system and developed strategies to evaluate the quality and consistency of the various approaches to RJ. Their census identified a total of 773 programs across the nation. Relatively informal practices, such as restorative dialogue and offender mediation, were most common. Bazemore and Schiff (2005) identified conferencing as a potentially effective approach to engage stakeholders (including community members), and repair harm. In the years since the 2005 census, collaboration and coordination between justice systems and education has increased. The overuse of exclusionary discipline is a concern for both education and the juvenile justice system (Schiff, 2013), and so the two systems have common ground in their efforts to adopt RJ programs in the schools.

Schiff and Bazemore (2012) later draw the parallel between the use of RJ in juvenile justice and in schools. Rather than referring youth directly into juvenile justice settings, schools effective in the use of RJ now reserve such punishment for the most serious student offenses (e.g., physical assaults). The researchers argue that educators who collaborate with juvenile justice professionals, such as probation officers, can effectively engage students and keep them in school by employing RJ practices that build relationships and nurture positive growth and development for students, particularly for vulnerable and marginalized populations (Schiff & Bazemore, 2012).

RJ's origins in non-U.S. nations

It is commonly believed that Australia pioneered the use of RJ in school settings. Most literature points to a Queensland high school that first implemented a school-based RJ conference in 1994 to respond to an assault at a school-sanctioned event (Blood, 2005; Sherman & Strang, 2007). Immediately following, funding from multiple government agencies expanded RJ to over 100 schools; this expansion was tested in two pilot studies. While the pilot studies did unearth certain tensions between traditional philosophy on school discipline and the RJ alternative, the results suggest that RJ participants were engaged in the process, felt it was fair, and were generally satisfied with the experience (Cameron & Thorsborne, 2001). In addition, offenders generally followed the agreements reached in the RJ process (Cameron & Thorsborne, 2001). Following this initial work in Queensland, RJ practices in schools were adopted widely across Australia, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, and other European nations, and then eventually in Canada and the United States.

There are a number of types of RJ programs employed outside the United States, and they vary in approach and scope of implementation. For example, Morrison (2002) reports on *The Responsible Citizenship Program*, implemented in one Australian school, that incorporates a number of interconnected practices, such as conflict resolution and shame management, to maintain a positive schoolwide culture. The preliminary evidence from a pre-post, single-group study indicates that a small sample of students who experienced the program also experienced perceived increases in safety within their school and positive impacts on their strategies for shame management (e.g., acknowledgement and reconciliation) (Morrison, 2002).

Other examples of RJ used outside the United States include school-based conferencing, such as the program implemented in Queensland (Cameron & Thorsborne, 2001). This program was used to handle serious offenses among students (e.g., bullying, truancy, and other criminal offenses), and a study of participants indicated that their experiences were positive and impactful. Furthermore, most offending youth complied with all required activities that resulted from the conferencing agreement. Also, there was a large-scale whole-school program in the United Kingdom implemented and evaluated in 2004. The program included a number of components, including staff trainings, restorative inquiry, dialogue, circles, and peer mediation. There were shortcomings in the study (e.g., schools were inconsistent in data reporting), limiting the ability of the authors to render conclusive findings; however, results were suggestive and supported recommendations to improve staff engagement, implementation, and evaluation for future studies (Youth Justice Board for England, 2004).

Those are but a few of the examples of RJ in schools in nations outside the United States which have provided the United States with experiences to learn from before implementing RJ in schools. The following sections summarize the literature on the implementation and effectiveness of RJ within U.S. schools.

An Overview of RJ in U.S. Schools

Educators across the United States have been looking to RJ as an alternative to exclusionary disciplinary actions. The popularity of RJ in schools has been driven in part by a number of developments. First, there is a perception that zero-tolerance policies, popular in the United States during the 1980s–1990s, have had a negative impact on students and schools (e.g., Losen, 2014). Second, research indicates disparity among students who are receiving exclusionary punishment such as suspension and expulsion. For example, Gregory and colleagues (2014) report on a prior study (Fabelo et al., 2011) that found African American students were 26.2 percent more likely to receive out-of-school suspension for their first offense than White students. Data from other studies also indicate the disproportionate use of punishment with racial and ethnic minorities and students with disabilities (Losen, 2014).

RJ is viewed as a remedy to the negative consequences of exclusionary punishment and its disproportionate application. RJ proponents argue that a strict focus on “paying the offender back,” which is often the philosophy behind exclusionary punishment, can leave the victim without closure or fail to bring resolution to the harmful situation. RJ involves the victim and the community in the process. Such a philosophy, advocates state, can open the door for more communication and for resolutions to the situation that do not involve exclusionary punishments like suspension. Advocates also argue that the process facilitates more positive relationships among students and staff (Ashley & Burke, 2009).

Discipline policies based on zero tolerance often mandate harsh penalties (such as suspension) for misbehavior that could be addressed using non-exclusionary punishments. Talking disrespectfully to a teacher, disrupting class with talking, and “willful defiance” are examples of behavior resulting in suspension in some schools and districts. RJ proponents indicate that they do not intend to minimize the harm caused by each of these behaviors but argue that an RJ response would bring together the offender and the harmed parties (which may include members of the school community) to talk about the harm caused and what can be done to repair the harm and restore the status of the offending student

Recognizing the seriousness of the offense, schools applying the no tolerance policies of restorative justice attempt to avoid being overly prescriptive in favor of a wider variety of approaches and consequences designed to hold students accountable for their behavior while also taking into account mitigating circumstances.

— Stinchcomb, Bazemore, & Riestenberg (2006, p. 125)

within the school (e.g., Morrison & Vaandering, 2012), rather than excluding the student from the school setting.

As documented in a juvenile justice system review (Bazemore & Schiff, 2005), there are a variety of practices that fall under the RJ umbrella that schools may implement. These practices include victim-offender mediation conferences, group conferences, and various circles that can be classified as peacemaking or restorative.⁴ Conferences and circles are meetings of the parties that were involved in or impacted by the harmful actions.

Participants include the victim(s) and the offender and a facilitator, but may also include other community members (e.g., witnesses, friends, family). The victim(s) could also include members of the school community who represent the school that was harmed by the perpetrator's actions (e.g., in the case of vandalism). Together, the conference participants aim to determine a reasonable restorative sanction for the offender.

Restorative sanctions are sought out during these justice processes rather than employing traditional punitive sanctions like suspension. Restorative sanctions could include such things as community service, restitution, apologies, or specific behavioral change agreements, such as the offender agreeing to comply with certain conditions, sometimes in exchange for incentives (Stinchcomb, Bazemore, & Riestenberg, 2006).

The literature underscores the many challenges confronted when implementing RJ in the schools. For example, there is confusion about what RJ is and no consensus about the best way to implement it. RJ also requires staff time and buy-in, training, and resources that traditional sanctions such as suspension do not impose on the school. With RJ, teachers are often required to perform duties traditionally outside of their job description, such as attending RJ trainings, conducting circles during instruction time, and spending more time one-on-one talking with students. Some educators and other stakeholders are resistant to RJ because it is sometimes perceived as being "too soft" on student offenses (Evans & Lester, 2013). Finally, while RJ programs will certainly vary by the size of the school and scope of the program (Sumner et al., 2010), some researchers suggest that a shift in attitudes toward punishment may take one to three years (Karp & Breslin, 2001), and the deep shift to a restorative-oriented school climate might take up to three to five years (Evans & Lester, 2013). This timing assumes that the program will also be sustained financially, which underscores the importance of considering what resources will be needed and for how long to introduce RJ in a school or district.

⁴ See Appendix B for a glossary of some common RJ terms.

Implementation Steps for Schools and Educators to Consider

Our review of the literature indicates that RJ is perceived to work best when it is integrated into the school's overall philosophy (Ashley & Burke, 2009). No matter how extensive the RJ program, administrators and educators need to have access to the tools and resources necessary to successfully fund, implement, and evaluate their RJ program. This section highlights what we found in the literature and through our interviews with experts and key practitioners (Guckenburg et al., 2015; Guckenburg, Hurley, Persson, Fronius, & Petrosino, 2016) regarding resources and factors for educators to consider when developing an RJ approach for their school or district, or when considering adopting an existing RJ approach. The following recommendations represent just a sample of implementation issues discussed in the literature. It is also critical to note that the information below, while grounded in contextual findings from real-world implementation, is not backed by rigorous scientific evidence that would support whether any particular steps actually “work.”

Funding the program

According to key practitioners (Guckenburg et al., 2016), considerable time and resources are required to build an RJ program in a school or district. It is possible to generate the funds needed to support this effort through successfully pursuing grant opportunities, or through reallocation of existing funds within the district. For example, one district in Detroit leveraged its Title I funding to ramp up its RJ efforts by hiring a full-time coordinator. Leveraging existing community partnerships may also be possible, or even pooling resources between communities, to fund training for staff. This approach to funding has been successful for Oakland and surrounding counties (Kidde & Alfred, 2011).

Sustainability

According to some of the literature, one way to sustain RJ is to integrate it across the school and district rather than having it be an add-on program (e.g., Morrison & Vaandering, 2012). Another way is to provide support for continued training and growth opportunities for staff (e.g., The Advancement Project, 2014).

A critical driver to long-term sustainability is a district's ability to integrate the RJ approach into its formal policy and procedures (The Advancement Project, 2014). A school or district should ensure that decisions about discipline and the policymaking process consider multiple stakeholders (teachers, administrators, youth, parents, and

community members) to ensure buy-in from all drivers of change (Kidde & Alfred, 2011). As with recommendations for other school programs, teachers and administrators need to be supportive of RJ for it to be successfully sustained (e.g., Kidde & Alfred, 2011).

Some researchers advocate for a strong professional development program for teachers and administrators, as they must be trained to understand specific restorative techniques and the reasoning behind the shift from traditional punishment approaches to RJ (Mayworm, Sharkey, Welsh, & Scheidel, in press). The impact of this type of professional development has not, to our knowledge, been the subject of research. But the underlying assumption of professional development is that when teachers participate in RJ and understand its potential for effectiveness, they can facilitate students doing the same (Kidde & Alfred, 2011). Some advocate that the optimal method for increasing a teacher’s understanding of restorative approaches is through discussion and training with school-based RJ consultants. That is because interaction with consultants and more formal RJ training programs require emphasis on problem-solving skills and fostering group cooperation to reach the best outcome while maintaining a concern for sensitivity to the victims and all involved parties (Mayworm, Sharkey, Welsh, & Scheidel, in press).

There are many resources available to practitioners in the field who are interested in implementing an RJ program. A few guides and toolkits are available for more information on the steps to consider when starting an RJ program in a school or district (Table 1).

Table 1. Restorative Justice Implementation Guides and Toolkits

Resource	Author, Year	Source
Restorative Practices: Fostering Healthy Relationships and Promoting Positive Discipline in Schools: A Guide for Educators	The Advancement Project, 2014	http://schottfoundation.org/sites/default/files/restorative-practices-guide.pdf
Alameda County Health Care Services Agency, RJ: A Working Guide for Our Schools	Jon Kidde & Rita Alfred, 2011	http://www.courts.ca.gov/documents/D2_Restorative-Justice-Paper_Alfred.pdf
Restorative Interventions Implementation Toolkit	Kara Beckman, Barbara McMorris, & Amy Gower, 2012	http://education.state.mn.us/MDE/SchSup/SchSafety/RestorativePractices/index.html

RJ in Schools and Students' Experiences

Our literature review indicated that educators and education leaders are giving more attention to creating a safe and supportive community that is built around fair, equitable, and transparent rules, healthy relationships between students and adults that support student growth, and avoiding disparity in punishment for minority groups of students (Voight, Austin, & Hanson, 2013). School staff need to be aware of issues that can negatively impact a supportive school community, such as bullying among students or disparity in discipline for certain types of students, and develop effective strategies to reduce or eliminate them. This is particularly important when rules and norms within a school are broken (González, 2012). One way to accomplish this, according to RJ proponents, is by adopting policy and practices that integrate RJ. For example, "...when the school rules...[are] broken, harm is defined not in terms of the technical infraction but by the effects on other members of the community. The web of obligations include the needs of both the victims and the offender as well as the needs of the community to sustain a safe learning culture" (Karp & Breslin, 2001). However, there are certain situations, such as bullying and disparity, which require additional consideration.

Janti, a high school freshman, was having a heated argument with a boy in a school hallway. Janti was a student leader in her middle school, which practiced restorative justice. As the quarrel escalated and began to become physical, Ina, an administrator, walked by. Ina drew Janti aside, put both hands on Janti's shoulder, made eye contact, and simply asked, "You do know what to do here, don't you?" Janti immediately calmed down, nodded, looked back at Ina and said, "Yes." They made a plan to have a restorative meeting between Janti and the boy. Ina spoke to the principal who agreed to not suspend the students if they followed through with the agreements made at the restorative justice meeting.

— Kidde & Alfred (2011, p. 13)

Bullying

A major problem facing students in U.S. schools is bullying (Christensen, 2009). Although recent data show that bullying prevalence and incidence are decreasing, it is still a common problem faced by students. For example, some research indicates that 30 to 45 percent of youth experience bullying in their peer group, either as a victim, bully, or

both, and that most of this bullying occurs in schools (Kasen, Berenson, Cohen, & Johnson, 2004; Dinkes, Kemp, & Baum, 2009; Nansel et al., 2001). It has also been found that the majority of bullying goes unreported to teachers or adults at school (Petrosino et al., 2010). Moreover, chronic victimization (occurring two or more times per month) is estimated to occur at a rate of 15 to 20 percent (Sawyer, Bradshaw, & O'Brennan, 2008). There are three major components to bullying: a differential in power between victim and bully, its frequency, and the intent to harm (Morrison, 2001). Bullying affects the perpetrator and victim, as well as overall school climate, leading to students feeling unsafe and unsupported, which can negatively impact overall student learning (e.g., Limber & Nation, 1998).

The school response to bullying is often punitive (e.g., suspension or expulsion), even though some research questions the efficacy of punitive actions to resolve bullying and other school disciplinary incidents. For example, Swearer and colleagues (2008) found that punitive responses to bullying, such as zero-tolerance policies, often cause problem behaviors to increase rather than diminish. Some proponents argue that schools are a good place to begin early intervention with RJ because they represent a smaller society within the larger community, offering greater ability to integrate and nurture individuals within that society (Morrison, 2001). Since RJ focuses on repairing relationships and changing the community, some suggest that it is a more viable alternative to traditional peer mediation strategies in dealing with bullying (e.g., Christensen, 2009).

Morrison (2006) writes that RJ could be a suitable response to bullying incidents. RJ promotes healing between the community, victims, and offenders, which is not offered through traditional punitive sanctions (Duncan, 2011). In RJ, school community members hold each other accountable for their behaviors, providing a community-oriented response to bullying that may be more effective at changing behavior than traditional disciplinary methods (Morrison, 2006). Molnar-Main (2014) draws on limited evidence supporting RJ practices that incorporate meetings, or conferences, between the bully and his or her victim as a potentially useful means to involve everyone in the justice and peacemaking process (Gregory et al., 2010). However, given the power dynamics involved in bullying, it is important to have trained adult facilitators involved, and even then the victim may not be comfortable facing the bully due to potential consequences (Amstutz & Mullet, 2005).

It is important to note that bullying does not define all forms of conflict. If the power balance is perceived to be relatively equal, bullying is not in play.

— Morrison (2001, p. 5)

Molnar-Main (2014) goes on to suggest indicators of how to best integrate RJ into a bullying intervention program if educators use the approach.

Racial disparities

Research indicates that punitive sanctions may be having the toxic effect of driving students — particularly minority and poor students — out of school altogether, resulting in a “school-to-prison” pipeline (Losen, 2014). As previously mentioned, research has indicated disparity in exclusionary punishment for racial minorities and students with disabilities. For example, minority students are suspended three times more than White students (Payne & Welch, 2010). Gregory and colleagues (2014) cite a study (Fabelo et al., 2011) from one Texas district that found African American students were 26.2 percent more likely to receive out-of-school suspension for their first offense than White students (9.9%). Students who are suspended, all things being equal, are more at risk for poor attendance, inability to progress to the next grade, failure to graduate, and subsequent involvement in the juvenile and adult justice systems (Osher et al., 2010; Skiba et al., 2014).

One possible explanation for this disparity could be the move toward more surveillance and law enforcement activities in schools (e.g., armed police or security forces patrolling the grounds, metal detectors, security cameras, locker searches), particularly those in urban environments with large numbers of minority youth. These procedures have led to students perceiving that their schools are like prisons and that they are viewed as criminals committing crimes, especially as they are designated as “suspects” and “under investigation” (Payne & Welch, 2010). Some argue that zero-tolerance policies have removed responsibility of discretion from school administrative staff. If that were true, the observed disparities might be explained by the assumption that more minority students are being disciplined because they are engaging in more serious behavior that warrants stricter punishment. However, there is also considerable discretion among administrators as to what is punishable under zero-tolerance policies (Payne & Welch, 2010). For example, minority students may not be committing more serious offenses, but are more likely to receive exclusionary discipline for vaguely defined offenses such as “disrespect,” “willful defiance,” and “disruption.” It is even possible that staff bias, such as implicit bias, lead to disproportionate discipline for certain groups of students (Skiba et al., 2002). However, there is no rigorous evidence, to our knowledge, that supports this hypothesis (Payne & Welch, 2010).

As previously mentioned, RJ has been introduced as one method for addressing this disproportionality (Gregory et al., 2014). It is argued that RJ can facilitate positive student-teacher relations through increased respect and fewer teacher-issued referrals for misbehavior. Gregory and colleagues (2014) indicate that teachers who implemented

RJ frequently had better relationships with their students. The students felt respected by their teachers, and teachers generally issued fewer referrals. The authors also found preliminary indications that frequent use of RJ led to reductions in the racial discipline gap, but that disparate discipline patterns were not completely removed from the school.

Research on RJ's Impact in Schools

Despite the popularity of RJ in the United States, most programs are still at the infancy stage (Guckenburg et al., 2015). As such, there are a limited number of evaluations and other studies. One trend that we discovered in our searches of the available literature was the prevalence of RJ program descriptions rather than evaluation studies.⁵

Although these descriptive accounts do not bear on the question of whether RJ “works,” they provide valuable information that should be considered, particularly by those attempting to implement RJ in their school settings. These descriptive reports take many forms and include student and faculty testimonials, case-by-case anecdotes, and the opinions given by community members. Each of these reports provides firsthand accounts of the perceived effectiveness of RJ at their school.

The settings and content of these descriptive reports also vary. For example, one report describes an incident that was resolved using RJ at an alternative school in Pennsylvania (Mirsky & Watchel, 2007). Another report highlights RJ programs across 12 states (González, 2012). Another describes a successful middle school pilot program that eventually led to the implementation of RJ as an alternative to zero-tolerance policies across the Oakland and San Francisco Unified School Districts (Sumner et al., 2010).

The reports highlight a variety of approaches to RJ in schools. There are models derived from the juvenile justice system, such as the Balance and Restorative Justice (BARJ) model, while others were developed specifically for school communities (Mirsky, 2007; Mirsky & Watchel, 2007). It is clear that even within similar models, the components and practices are not always implemented the same. González (2012) describes the evolution of these models of practice from the early adopters of victim-offender mediation to the more contemporary use of an RJ continuum. Nearly all program descriptions and case studies discuss some type of restorative circle,⁶ restorative conferences, and offender-victim

Students responded easily and well to restorative dialogues. They were forthcoming in their stories and comments, able to use the talking piece to structure their interaction, and realized that a conference or circle could stave off a possible fight.

— Armour (2013, p. 57)

⁵ We are aware of several rigorous studies currently in the field, but are not aware of any results published from these studies to date.

⁶ Circles are identified by a variety of names that include peacemaking, talking, restorative, classroom, and re-entry circle.

mediation as the forms of RJ being practiced within the school (González, 2012; Suvall, 2009; DeVore & Gentilcore, 1999; Hantzopolous, 2013; Mirsky, 2007; Mirsky & Watchel, 2007; Lange, 2008). Others have programs that, in some instances, resemble criminal justice's reparation boards (i.e., community-led meetings with offenders to address offense and apply criminal sanctions) (Hantzopolous, 2013).

The reports that we identify also highlight the geographical diversity of RJ across the United States. RJ is being implemented in schools and districts across many states, to varying degrees. However, in a few states (e.g., California, Colorado, Illinois, Minnesota, and Pennsylvania), RJ has been implemented in the schools for many years, evidenced by the presence of more large-scale and, thus far, sustainable programs. Most reports describe the RJ program or model as being successful whether implemented in public, private, or alternative schools, in urban or suburban environments, and whether the program is in one school or every school in the district.

Regardless of program type or name, these reports suggest that for the RJ program to be effective, it should be embedded within the school culture (González, 2012) or ethos (Beckman, McMorris, & Gower, 2012). The most common goals in embedding RJ in the overall school culture are to create an environment that is respectful and tolerant (Hantzopolous, 2013), accepting (González, 2012), and supportive (Mirsky & Watchel, 2007).

The outcomes addressed in these descriptive reports vary. For example, some reports indicate that RJ has resulted in an improved school climate (Mirsky, 2007; Mirsky & Watchel, 2007). Other reports indicate that RJ has led to increased student connectedness, greater community and parent engagement, improved student academic achievement, and the offering of support to students from staff (González, 2012). In addition, several descriptive reports highlight decreases in discipline disparities, fighting, bullying, and suspensions as a result of an RJ program (e.g., Suvall, 2009; González, 2012; Armour, 2013; Baker, 2009). Again, these descriptive reports do not use a formal evaluation design, but summarize observations made by those involved in RJ in the setting.

Despite the growing popularity of RJ, rigorous empirical tests of whether RJ makes an impact on discipline, climate, and related outcomes have not yet been completed. Many of the studies we located are descriptive or use a pre-post ("before and after") evaluation design. Such designs are considered low in internal validity because they lack a comparison group and other statistical controls (e.g., Weisburd, Petrosino, & Fronius, 2014). These studies make it challenging for researchers to ascribe any observed changes to RJ. This is not to say that these studies have no value. The promising results reported

across these descriptive studies lay the groundwork for more rigorous experimental tests of RJ, several of which are currently in the field.⁷

Impact on school discipline

The earlier discussion about RJ theory suggests that a well-implemented program could reduce punitive disciplinary actions and problem behavior over time (Tyler, 2006). All the empirical studies we reviewed report a decrease in exclusionary discipline and harmful behavior (e.g., violence) after implementing some type of RJ program.

For example, Armour (2013) reports an 84-percent drop in out-of-school suspensions among sixth graders in one Texas school during the first year RJ was introduced, and a 19-percent drop in all suspensions. These findings dovetail with other studies. For example, Denver schools that implemented restorative circles and conferencing report a 44-percent reduction in out-of-school suspensions. They also report an overall decrease in expulsions across the three-year post-implementation period (Baker, 2009). In Oakland, Cole Middle School experienced an 87-percent drop in suspensions across the first two years of implementation compared to the prior three years; expulsions were eliminated entirely after RJ was put in place.⁸ More recent figures from Oakland suggest continued success, with a 74-percent drop in suspensions and a 77-percent decrease in referrals for violence during a two-year follow up (Sumner et al., 2010; Davis, 2014).

In a summary of findings from several individual reports, Lewis (2009) identifies results across schools that have implemented RJ. For example, the West Philadelphia High School⁹ reports that “violent acts and serious incidents” dropped 52 percent in the first year of RJ implementation; this was followed by an additional 40-percent drop through the first half of year two (Lewis, 2009). McCold (2002) reports that RJ reduced offending by 58 percent for youth participants in an alternative education program in Pennsylvania during a three-month follow up. In a follow-up study of the same program, McCold (2008) finds that effects were sustained through two years of implementation, with reductions in

⁷ For example, current randomized controlled trials (RCT) in the field include:

- A RCT of Restorative Practices Intervention (RPI) — <https://clinicaltrials.gov/ct2/show/NCT02155296>
- Pursuing Equitable Restorative Communities — <http://nij.gov/funding/awards/pages/award-detail.aspx?award=2014-CK-BX-0020>
- Using a Restorative Justice Approach to Enrich School Climate and Improve School Safety — <http://nij.gov/funding/awards/pages/award-detail.aspx?award=2014-CK-BX-0025>

⁸ The single school in the study was undergoing major changes, including being in the midst of a shutdown and having only one grade enrolled at the time of the case study, so it is unclear how this context may have affected the RJ process and subsequent success.

⁹ These results from West Philadelphia High School are comprised of administrative data exclusively and were not part of any evaluation.

offending of around 50 percent. In both studies, McCold (2008) reports that recidivism rates were significantly related to youth's length of participation in RJ, with youth who complete the program showing more reduction compared to those who were discharged early. A possible mechanism for why participants who completed the alternative education program did well is in McCold's (2004) analyses that indicate positive increases in self-esteem and pro-social attitudes for "stayers" versus "leavers."

Riestenberg (2003) notes that schools that offered intensive training and follow up for staff demonstrated positive results across a range of discipline outcomes.¹⁰ For example, one elementary school experienced a 57-percent drop in discipline referrals, a 35-percent drop in average time of in-school suspensions, a 77-percent drop in out-of-school suspensions, and only one student was expelled during the one-year follow up. Results from other schools in Minnesota with strong training are similar (45- to 63-percent decrease in suspensions, for example) (Riestenberg, 2003).

Results from a more recent pilot study of a restorative conferencing program in Minnesota indicate a decrease in self-reported incidents of physical fighting and skipping school among conference participants in a six-week follow up (McMorris et al., 2013).¹¹ In addition, results suggest that participants who were referred to the program experienced gains in attendance, credit accrual, and progression towards graduation in the year following implementation of the conferencing program. Participants also experienced a significant decrease in suspensions across the pre-/post-intervention periods.

Impact on attendance and absenteeism

Chronic school absence and truancy have been linked to a wide range of negative childhood and adult outcomes, including low academic achievement, high dropout rates, difficulties in obtaining employment, poor health, increased chances of living in poverty, increased risk of juvenile deviance, and violent behavior (McCluskey et al., 2004; Baker et al., 2001). Punitive and exclusionary approaches to address absence and truancy may backfire, as discussed above, as such approaches may prevent youth from reengaging with school and, in turn, increase their likelihood of engagement with the justice system. RJ is also offered as an approach to address truancy and chronic absenteeism among students.

¹⁰ The author notes that the range of programs, data, and how outcomes are defined makes it challenging to compare across schools.

¹¹ The authors note that the probability level (p) of .10 was used for analyses due to the small sample and pilot nature of the study. Also, administrative data were limited to only those participants with recorded data in the pre- and post-intervention periods. This varied by data point, but did further limit the sample in analyses.

The research studies identified in the literature relevant to attendance vary widely in how outcomes are reported. But, across the studies, school attendance tended to improve after RJ implementation. Baker (2009), for example, reports that students who participated in an RJ program¹² experienced a 50-percent reduction in absenteeism during the first year of implementation and a decrease in tardiness of about 64 percent. McMorris and colleagues (2013), who studied a restorative conferencing program for expelled students, report increased attendance for participants from pre- to post-periods. A more recent study in Oakland (Jain, Bassey, Brown, & Kalra, 2014) reports that middle schools implementing RJ saw chronic absenteeism drop by 24 percent while schools not implementing the program experienced an increase of 62.3 percent during the same period. But not all schools experienced such declines. Riestenberg (2003) reports that one school that implemented RJ reported a 2-percent increase in absenteeism in the follow-up year.

Impact on school climate

Some researchers argue that educators and administrators who create a safe, supportive, and nurturing school climate help promote the social-emotional growth and positive development of students (Voight et al., 2013). One objective of addressing school climate is to foster healthy resilient students who are ready for college and careers out of school. There are many tools in the educator's toolbox used to create and support a positive school climate (e.g., Health and Human Development, 2011). RJ is another approach that schools use to address climate issues. While the evidence is limited, there are findings to suggest that RJ improves school climate. For example, for a pilot study of a restorative conferencing program in Minnesota, McMorris and colleagues (2013) report increased school connectedness and improved problem solving among students in a six-week follow up. Jain and colleagues (2014) also note that two thirds of staff perceived the RJ program as improving the social-emotional development of students, and 70 percent of staff reported that RJ improved overall school climate during the first year of implementation.

Impact on academic outcomes

In the literature that we reviewed, there is limited and mixed evidence that RJ has had an impact on achievement and academic progress. McMorris and colleagues (2013) note that for students in their sample who remained enrolled in school the following academic year, RJ implementation was associated with a slight increase in the students' grade point averages. Although there was a sizeable drop in the number of students on track to graduate in the year of their participation in RJ, this drop may have been due to the poor

¹² The study sample (N = 311) includes students who engaged in at least three RJ interventions over the course of the year.

attendance prior to the program, and a majority of these students did get back on track in the following year.¹³ Jain and colleagues (2014) also report a sizeable gain in graduation rates for schools implementing RJ compared to non-RJ high schools. They found that — over the course of three years post-implementation — cumulative graduation rates rose 60 percent in RJ schools compared to just 7 percent in non-RJ schools. Elsewhere, the results are more mixed. Norris (2009) reports no significant change in grade point average between RJ participants and non-participants. Lewis (2009) suggests that there was improvement in student test scores in one Pennsylvania school, but provides no data.

¹³ It is important to note that the program was a diversion program for students recommended for expulsion due in part to the drop in attendance, which also results in credit loss for students. Readers are advised to review the full report for additional context about the study and its outcomes.

Limitations of the Literature Review

The evidence presented in this literature review is limited to only what we found documented within the United States through July 2014. There are a number of studies, some mentioned briefly earlier in this review, that were conducted in other countries. Furthermore, we know of at least three large-scale randomized controlled trials that are underway in the United States examining the effect of RJ practices in schools across a range of outcomes. While experimental studies are the most rigorous design for establishing program impact, the research community should also consider other quasi-experimental approaches (i.e., using non-randomly assigned comparison groups) to study the impact of RJ in schools. Other studies may have been published or become available after our searches were completed. Although we used comprehensive methods to search the literature, it is possible we also missed evaluation or research studies reported in unpublished documents, such as dissertations or theses, or in other formats.

A review of evidence is influenced by the quality of the studies that comprise the “sample.” For each of the outcomes mentioned in our review, there is some positive evidence that suggests a beneficial impact of RJ in schools. However, there are many limitations within these studies. First, there are far too few studies in each category to have confidence in the stability of findings. An examination of the literature unearthed hundreds of media accounts, program overviews, case studies, district memos, commentaries, and other descriptive accounts of RJ in schools in the United States. More rigorous research evidence, in comparison, was relatively scant.

Second, and perhaps more critical, is that the internal validity of these studies is very low. Most of this research, if not all of it, would not meet the standards of evidence for evidence-based registries in education or justice (e.g., *What Works Clearinghouse*, *Crime Solutions*). There are several studies that focus on a specific program, participant satisfaction, or qualitative accounts by victims, offenders, parents, and other stakeholders; however, the methods employed in many studies make offering any conclusive recommendations a challenge. For example, the most common evaluation design reported in the literature is based on a pre- and post-test. By nature, such pre-post designs only study those exposed to the program (i.e., a single group design) with no counterfactual (control or comparison condition), and are considered low in internal validity (Weisburd, Petrosino, & Fronius, 2014).

Thirdly, studies were often limited by small sample size. To demonstrate statistical significance that is substantively meaningful, researchers must first obtain a properly sized

sample. For studies of RJ that focus on individual or school-level effects, reaching an adequate sample size can be a challenge.

A fourth issue is that there were often implementation problems, apart from evaluation issues. Even if a rigorous design was successfully mounted, it is unclear in some instances what RJ program was actually being studied. For example, some studies report significant implementation changes to the RJ program and staff turnover during the course of the study, changes that may have compromised the study. To address challenges related to implementation, school personnel and RJ providers should work with evaluators to conduct an implementation-readiness assessment. This process is used to determine whether the program has an underlying theory of change or logic model for staff to follow and researchers to use in building an evaluation plan. It also serves as a means to review staff capacity and motivation to implement the model, and gauges whether there is funding that will sustain implementation, especially during the early and challenging years.

Conclusion

Restorative justice is a term that has a long and well-documented past that predates its implementation in schools in the United States. There is no one definition for the term. It is based on principles that establish a voice for victims, offenders, and community in order to address offender accountability for the harm caused (rather than the act itself), and to develop a plan to repair and restore relationships. In the United States, RJ was introduced into schools as an alternative to traditional punitive, and often exclusionary, discipline.

Schools that decide to implement RJ face a number of challenges in development, implementation, and sustainability. Researchers suggest that schools that integrate RJ into their overall philosophy are perhaps better suited to establish a program that works and lasts (Ashley & Burke, 2009). RJ also requires staff buy-in and time, training, and additional resources that may not be necessary under more punitive exclusionary policies. There are many resources available for schools and districts planning to establish an RJ program. Generally, the focus of these resources is on establishing buy-in, building funds, and collecting quality data on implementation and outcomes to support sustainability, if it is warranted.

Schools implement RJ to address a number of issues. For example, it is implemented as a means to address overuse of exclusionary discipline that can lead youth — often disproportionately youth from minority groups — from the classroom to court and prison. Some schools use RJ to address bullying in some instances; however, this is a contested approach. Bullying introduces a power imbalance that leaves the victim vulnerable, and he or she may not be comfortable facing the bully due to potential retaliation. More generally, schools and districts are beginning to integrate RJ into their overall philosophy to address school climate, culture, and the social-emotional growth of students.

In general, the research evidence to support RJ in schools is still in a nascent state. Despite the exponential growth of RJ in U.S. schools, and some evidence of its effectiveness abroad,¹⁴ the evidence to date is limited and the research that has been published lacks the internal validity necessary to exclusively attribute outcomes to RJ. However, the preliminary evidence does suggest that RJ may have positive effects across several outcomes related to discipline, attendance and graduation, climate and culture, and various academic outcomes.

In a prior report that highlights data drawn from nearly 50 experts interviews (Hurley, Guckenburg, Persson, Fronius, & Petrosino, 2015), we provide additional considerations

¹⁴ See Sherman and Strang (2007) for a thorough account of the international literature.

for future research. These considerations suggest that future research should focus on areas such as the following:

- Examining the factors associated with a school's *readiness to implement* RJ.
- Establishing a *clear, concise, and largely acceptable definition* of RJ.
- Examining implementation and effectiveness via *rigorous outcome-based research*, and gathering data in the places in which successful and sustainable RJ programs have been implemented to uncover the conditions that lead to replicable examples.
- Determining what *training and professional development* for school leaders have been implemented and proven to successfully enhance the ability of leaders to value, believe in, and implement an RJ approach.
- Examining the *integration of RJ with other multi-tiered models* such as Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support (PBIS) and Response to Intervention (RTI).

In the literature reviewed for this report, RJ is generally portrayed as a promising approach to address climate, culture, and safety issues in school. The community of support for its implementation has grown exponentially over the past several years, but more research is needed. There are several rigorous trials underway that will perhaps provide the evidence necessary to make stronger claims about the impact of RJ, and the field will benefit greatly as those results become available over the next several years.

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Appendix A: Full List of Studies and Reports

Table A1. Publications Identified for Restorative Justice Literature Review

Reference	Location	Setting
Adler School Institute on Public Safety and Social Justice; Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights. (2011). <i>White paper on restorative justice: A primer and exploration of practice across two North American cities.</i>	U.S. (IL) & Canada	Education
Ahmed, E., & Braithwaite, V. (2012). <i>Learning to manage shame in school bullying: Lessons for restorative justice interventions.</i>	Australia	Education: Grades 4–6
Anyon, Y., Jenson, J., Altschul, I., Farrar, J., McQueen, J., Greer, E., Downing, B., & Simmons, J. (2014). <i>The persistent effect of race and the promise of alternatives to suspension in school discipline outcomes.</i>	U.S. (CO)	Education
Armour, M. (2013). <i>Ed White Middle School restorative discipline evaluation: Implementation and impact, 2012/2013 sixth grade.</i>	U.S. (TX)	Education: Middle School
Armour, M. (2013). <i>Real-world assignments for restorative justice education.</i>	U.S.	Education: Higher Ed
Ashley, J., & Burke, K. (2009). <i>Implementing restorative justice: A guide for schools.</i>	U.S. (IL)	Education
Ashworth, J., Van Bockern, S., Ailts, J., Donnelly, J., Erickson, K., & Woltermann, J. (2008). <i>An alternative to school detention.</i>	U.S. (SD)	Education
Baker, M. (2008). <i>DPS Restorative Justice Project: Executive summary.</i>	U.S. (CO)	Education: Middle & High School
Baker, M. (2009). <i>DPS Restorative Justice Project: Year three.</i>	U.S. (CO)	Education: Middle & High School
Bazemore, G., & Schiff, M. (2005). <i>Juvenile justice reform and restorative justice: Building theory and policy from practice.</i>	U.S.	Juvenile Justice
Bazemore, G., & Schiff, M. (2009). <i>Addressing the school-to-jail pipeline: Restorative justice and theory for practice in real alternatives to zero tolerance.</i>	U.S.	Education
Boulton, J., & Mirsky, L. (2006). <i>Restorative practices as a tool for organizational change.</i>	United Kingdom	Education
Braithwaite, V., Ahmed, E., Morrison, B., & Reinhart, M. (2003). <i>Researching the prospects for restorative justice practice in schools: The “Life at School Survey.”</i>	Australia	Education
Britto, S., & Reimund, M. (2013). <i>Making space for restorative justice in criminal justice and criminology curricula and courses.</i>	U.S.	Education: Higher Ed

Reference	Location	Setting
Burke, K. (2013). <i>An inventory and examination of restorative justice practices for youth in Illinois.</i>	U.S. (IL)	Education & Juvenile Justice
Calhoun, A., & Pelech, W. (2010). <i>Responding to young people responsible for harm: A comparative study of restorative and conventional approaches.</i>	Canada	Education & Juvenile Justice
Carson, B., & Bussler, D. (2013). <i>Teaching restorative justice to education and criminal justice majors.</i>	U.S.	Education: Higher Ed
Cavanagh, T. (2009). <i>Creating schools of peace and nonviolence in a time of war and violence.</i>	U.S.	Education
Christensen, L. (2009). <i>Sticks, stones, and schoolyard bullies: Restorative justice, mediation and a new approach to conflict resolution in our schools.</i>	U.S.	Education
Clark, J. (2012). <i>Youth violence in South Africa: The case for a restorative justice response.</i>	South Africa	Whole Community
Coates, R., et al. (2003). <i>Restorative justice circles: An exploratory study.</i>	U.S. (MN)	Whole Community
Coldren, J., Haring, C., Luecke, A., Sintic, C., & Balgoyen, S. (2011). <i>School-based restorative justice data template final report.</i>	U.S. (IL)	Education
Davis, F. (2014). <i>Discipline with dignity: Oakland classrooms try healing instead of punishment.</i>	U.S. (CA)	Education
DeAngelo, A. J. (2005). <i>The evolution of juvenile justice: Community-based partnerships through balanced and restorative justice.</i>	U.S. (PA)	Education & Juvenile Justice
DeVore, D., & Gentilcore, K. (1999). <i>Balanced and restorative justice and educational programming for youth at-risk.</i>	U.S.	Education
DeWitt, D., & DeWitt, L. (2012). <i>A case of high school hazing: Applying restorative justice to promote organizational learning.</i>	U.S.	Education
Duncan, S. (2011). <i>Restorative justice and bullying: A missing solution in the anti-bullying laws.</i>	U.S.	Juvenile Justice
Educators for Social Responsibility. (2013). <i>Educators for social responsibility annual report 2012–2013.</i>	U.S. (MA)	Education
Elliot, E. (2005). <i>New directions in restorative justice: Issues, practice, evaluation.</i>	Canada	Education & Juvenile Justice
Evans, K., & Lester, J. (2013). <i>Restorative justice in education: What we know so far.</i>	U.S.	Education: Middle School
Featherston, T. R. (2014). <i>An experimental study on the effectiveness of a restorative justice intervention on the social aggression, social problem solving skills, and prosocial behaviors of African American adolescent girls.</i>	U.S. (MN)	Education

Reference	Location	Setting
Fields, B. A. (2003). <i>Restitution and restorative justice in juvenile justice and school discipline.</i>	Australia	Whole Community
Glanzer, P. (2005). <i>The limited character education of zero tolerance policies.</i>	U.S.	Education
González, T. (2012). <i>Keeping kids in schools: Restorative justice, punitive discipline, and the school to prison pipeline.</i>	U.S. (CO)	Education
Gregory, A., Clawson, K., Davis, A., & Gerewitz, J. (2014). <i>The promise of restorative practices to transform teacher-student relationships and achieve equity in school discipline.</i>	U.S. (NJ)	Education
Grossi, P. K., & dos Santos, A. M. (2012). <i>Bullying in Brazilian schools and restorative practices.</i>	Canada	Education
Haney, K. G., Thomas, J., & Vaughn, C. (2011). <i>Identity border crossings with school communities, precursors to restorative conferencing: A symbolic interactionist study.</i>	U.S.	Adult Justice
Hantzopolous, M. (2013). <i>The fairness committee: Restorative justice in a small urban public high school.</i>	U.S. (NY)	Education: High School
Harrison, L. (2007). <i>From authoritarian to restorative schools.</i>	Australia	Education
Hemphill, S. A., Toumbourou, J. W., & Herrenkohl, T. I. (2006). <i>The effect of school suspensions and arrests on subsequent adolescent antisocial behavior in Australia and the United States.</i>	Australia	Education
Hopkins, B. (2002). <i>Restorative justice in schools.</i>	International	Education
Irby, D. (2013). <i>Net-deepening of school discipline.</i>	U.S. (WI)	Education
Jennings, W. G., Gover, A. R., & Hitchcock, D. M. (2008). <i>Localizing restorative justice: An in-depth look at a Denver public school program.</i>	U.S. (CO)	Education
Karp, D., & Breslin, B. (2001). <i>Restorative justice in school communities.</i>	U.S. (MN, CO, PA)	Education
Kidde, J., & Alfred, R. (2011). <i>Restorative justice: A working guide for our schools.</i>	U.S. (CA)	Education
Knight, D., & Wadhwa, A. (2014). <i>Expanding opportunity through critical restorative justice portraits of resilience at the individual and school level.</i>	U.S.	Education
Krohn, M., Lizotte, A., & Penly Hall, G. (2013). <i>Handbook on crime and deviance.</i>	U.S.	Adult Justice
Lange, B. (2008). <i>The power of community.</i>	U.S.	Education & Whole Community
Lewis, S. (2009). <i>Improving school climate: Findings from schools implementing restorative practices.</i>	U.S. & Canada	Education

Reference	Location	Setting
Mayworm, A., Sharkey, J., Welsh, K., & Scheidel, K. (in press). <i>Teacher consultation to enhance implementation of school-based restorative justice.</i>	U.S.	Education
McCluskey, G., Lloyd, G., Kane, J., Riddell, S., Stead, J., & Weedon, E. (2008). <i>Can restorative practices in schools make a difference?</i>	United Kingdom	Education
McCold, P. (2002). <i>Evaluation of a restorative milieu: CSF Buxmont School/Day treatment programs 1999–2001.</i>	U.S. (PA)	Education
McCold, P. (2008). <i>Evaluation of a restorative milieu: Restorative practices in context.</i>	U.S. (PA)	Education
McMorris, B. J., Beckman, K. J., Shea, G., Baumgartner, J., & Eggert, R. C. (2013). <i>Applying restorative justice practices to Minneapolis Public Schools students recommended for possible expulsion.</i>	U.S. (MN)	Education
Meyer, K. (2011). <i>Restorative circles: Past, present and future.</i>	U.S.	Whole Community
Mirsky, L. (2007). <i>Safer saner schools: Transforming school cultures with restorative practices.</i>	U.S.	Education
Mirsky, L. (2011). <i>Restorative practices: Giving everyone a voice to create safer saner school communities.</i>	U.S. (PA, MD, MI)	Education
Mirsky, L., & Wachtel, T. (2007). <i>The worst school I've ever been to: Empirical evaluations of a restorative school and treatment milieu.</i>	U.S. (PA)	Education
Morrison, B. (2001). <i>Restorative justice and school violence: Building theory and practice.</i>	International	Education
Morrison, B. (2002). <i>Bullying and victimisation in schools: A restorative justice approach.</i>	Australia	Education
Morrison, B. (2002). <i>Restorative justice and school violence: Building theory and practice.</i>	Australia	Education
Morrison, B. (2003). <i>Regulating safe school communities: Being responsive and restorative.</i>	Australia	Education
Morrison, B. (2006). <i>School bullying and restorative justice: Toward a theoretical understanding of the role of respect, pride, and shame.</i>	U.S.	Education
Morrison, B., & Vaandering, D. (2012). <i>Restorative justice: Pedagogy, praxis, and discipline.</i>	Canada	Education
Morrison, B., Blood, P., & Margaret, T. (2005). <i>Practicing restorative justice in school communities: The challenge of culture change.</i>	Australia & New Zealand	Education
Muschert, G., Henry, S., Bracy, N., & Peguero, A. (2014). <i>Responding to school violence: Confronting the Columbine effect.</i>	U.S.	Education

Reference	Location	Setting
Noltmeyer, A., & McLoughlin, C. (2012). <i>Disproportionality in education and special education.</i>	U.S.	Education
Norris, A. (2009). <i>Gender and race effects of a restorative justice intervention on school success.</i>	U.S.	Education
Norris, A. N. (2014). <i>An exploratory study on the effect of restorative justice on school success and disciplinary incidents.</i>	U.S.	Education
O'Brien, S. S., Bazemore, G. G., & Carey, M. M. (2005). <i>Symposium: Communities, organizations, and restorative justice reform.</i>	U.S.	Whole Community
Oklahoma Council on Violence Prevention. (2001). <i>Study of school zero-tolerance policies.</i>	U.S. (OK)	Education
Parcel, T., & Pennell, J. (2012). <i>Child and family teams building social capital for at-risk students.</i>	U.S. (NC)	Education
Payne, A., & Welch, K. (2010). <i>Modeling the effects of racial threat on punitive and restorative school discipline practices.</i>	U.S.	Education
Pennell, J., & Anderson, G. (2005). <i>Widening the circle: The practice and evaluation of family group conferencing with children, youths, and their families.</i>	U.S.	Whole Community
Pennell, J., & Rikard, R. (2013). <i>Child welfare–education system collaborations to increase education stability.</i>	U.S.	Education
Pranis, K. (2004). <i>Restorative justice in Minnesota and the USA: Development and current practice.</i>	U.S. (MN)	Whole Community
Rich-Shea, A., & Gebo, E. (2009). <i>Key implementation issues of restorative justice: Alternative disciplinary initiative in middle schools.</i>	U.S.	Education
Riestenberg, N. (1997). <i>Changing the paradigm: Restorative justice in Minnesota schools.</i>	U.S. (MN)	Education
Riestenberg, N. (1999). <i>In-school behavior intervention grants: A three-year evaluation of alternative approaches to suspensions and expulsions.</i>	U.S.	Education
Riestenberg, N. (2001). <i>In-school behavior intervention grants final report 1999–2001.</i>	U.S. (MN)	Education
Riestenberg, N. (2003). <i>Restorative schools grants final report.</i>	U.S. (MN)	Education
Riestenberg, N. (2006). <i>Applying the framework: Positive youth development and restorative practices.</i>	U.S. (MN)	Education
Rigby, K. (2003). <i>Addressing bullying in schools: Theory and practice.</i>	Australia	Education
Roland, K., Rideout, G., Salinitri, G., & Frey, M. P. (2012). <i>Development and use of a restorative justice ideology instrument: Assessing beliefs.</i>	Canada	Education

Reference	Location	Setting
Schiff, M. (2013). <i>Dignity, disparity and desistance: Effective restorative justice strategies to plug the school-to-prison pipeline.</i>	U.S. (FL)	Education
Schiff, M., & Bazemore, G. (2008). <i>Cracking the school to jail pipeline: Restorative justice, zero tolerance and other disciplinary and suspension alternatives.</i>	U.S.	Education
School Justice Partnership. (2012). <i>Keeping kids in schools and out of courts, national leadership summit on school justice.</i>	U.S. (NY)	Education
Seitz, J. (2014). <i>Rethinking school discipline.</i>	U.S.	Education
Sellman, E., Cremin, H., & McCluskey, G. (2014). <i>Restorative approaches to conflict in schools: International perspectives on managing relationships in the classroom.</i>	International (with a chapter on MN)	Education
Seyko, R. J. (2001). <i>Balanced approach and restorative justice efforts in Allegheny county, Pennsylvania.</i>	U.S. (PA)	Whole Community
Shah, N. (2012). <i>Restorative practices: Discipline but different.</i>	U.S. (IL, CA, PA)	Education
Sharkey, J. D., & Fenning, P. A. (2012). <i>Rationale for designing school contexts in support of proactive discipline.</i>	U.S.	Education
Shaw, G. (2007). <i>Restorative practices in Australian schools: Changing relationships, changing culture.</i>	Australia	Education
Skiba, R., Shure, L., & Williams, N. (2011). <i>What do we know about racial and ethnic disproportionality in school suspension and expulsion?</i>	U.S.	Education
Solinas, J. (2006). <i>Harmonizing restorative justice values, programmes, and whole school culture.</i>	Canada	Education
Stinchcomb, J. B., Bazemore, G., & Riestenberg, N. (2006). <i>Beyond zero tolerance.</i>	U.S. (MN)	Education: Middle School
Strang, H., & Braithwaite, J. (2000). <i>Restorative justice: Philosophy to practice.</i>	Australia & New Zealand	Whole Community
Sumner, D., Silverman, C., & Frampton, M. (2010). <i>School-based restorative justice as an alternative to zero-tolerance policies: Lessons from West Oakland.</i>	U.S. (CA)	Education: Middle School
Suvall, C. (2009). <i>Restorative justice in schools: Learning from Jena High School.</i>	U.S. (LA)	Education
Taslitz, A. E., & Steiker, C. C. (2009). <i>The Jena six.</i>	U.S. (LA)	Juvenile Justice
Texas Appleseed. (2010). <i>Texas' school-to-prison pipeline: Ticketing, arrest and use of force in schools.</i>	U.S. (TX)	Education: Middle School
Title, B. (2011). <i>Teaching Peace: A restorative justice framework for strengthening relationships.</i>	U.S.	Whole Community

Reference	Location	Setting
Torbet, P., Ricci, R., Brooks, C., & Zawacki, S. (2001). <i>Evaluation of Pennsylvania's school-based probation program.</i>	U.S. (PA)	Education
Tyler, T. (2006). <i>Restorative justice and procedural justice: Dealing with rule breaking.</i>	U.S. (NY)	Adult Justice
Umphrey, J. (2013). <i>Restoring relationships.</i>	U.S. (CO)	Education: High School
Vaandering, D. (2011). <i>A faithful compass: Rethinking the term restorative justice to find clarity.</i>	Canada	Whole Community
Vaandering, D. (2013). <i>Student, teacher, and administrator perspectives on harm: Implications for implementing safe and caring school initiatives.</i>	International	Education
Varnham, S. (2005). <i>Seeing things differently: Restorative justice and school discipline.</i>	New Zealand	Education
von der Embse, N., von der Embse, D., von der Embse, M., & Levine, I. (2009). <i>Applying social justice principles through school-based restorative justice.</i>	U.S. (NC)	Education
Wachtel, T. (1997). <i>Real justice.</i>	U.S.	Whole Community
Wachtel, T. (2003). <i>Restorative justice in everyday life: Beyond the formal ritual.</i>	U.S. (PA)	Education
Wadhwa, A. (2010). <i>"There has never been a glory day in education for non-whites": Critical race theory and discipline reform in Denver.</i>	U.S. (CO)	Education
Watt, L. J. (2005). <i>A shift of paradigms: Using restorative justice processes in schools.</i>	Canada	Education
Williams, K., Herzog, K., Reznik, V. D., Dugdale, H. Q., Cooke, A., & Manteco, A. (2005). <i>Law and order San Diego: Teen court metes out restorative justice.</i>	U.S. (CA)	Education
Wilson, H. (2014). <i>Turning off the school-to-prison pipeline.</i>	U.S.	Education
Wong, D. S., Cheng C. H., Ngan, R. M., & Ma, S. K. (2011). <i>Program effectiveness of a restorative whole-school approach for tackling school bullying in Hong Kong.</i>	China	Education: High School
Youth Justice Board for England and Wales. (2004). <i>National evaluation of the restorative justice in schools programme.</i>	United Kingdom	Education
Zaslaw, J. (2010). <i>Restorative resolution.</i>	U.S. (MI, MN, PA, FL)	Education

Appendix B: Glossary of Restorative Justice Terms

There are several sources that provide comprehensive definitions of restorative justice terms and practices (e.g., The Advancement Project, 2014). While there are many practices in the field and many terms used to describe those practices, we've opted for a brief description of key terms used in this literature review. Readers interested in additional terms and alternative definitions should review multiple sources, including those cited in this review.

Active listening — a technique that requires the listener to restate or paraphrase what she or he heard from another in the listener's own words.

Restorative circle — a facilitated meeting that allows students and others to come together for problem solving, resolving disciplinary issues, receiving content instruction, and discussing concerns related to difficult topics, such as violence in the community or racial tensions.

Peace room — a “safe space” created in a school where restorative circles and conferences may be held.

Peer mediation — utilizing student peers to facilitate dialogue or restorative justice practices between students to address an issue and come to a solution to avoid future conflict.

Restorative conference — a facilitated meeting between wrongdoer and person harmed (may also include teachers and parents) to discuss the situation, harm, and solutions.

Restorative questioning — the use of open-ended questions to help individuals process an incident and reach a solution.

Restorative dialogue — informal conversation that uses restorative language as a means to avoid potential conflict and address less serious issues.