

**A GUIDE FOR EVALUATING RESTORTIVE JUSTICE IN SAN
FRANCISCO UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT**

Prepared by Anita M. López

for

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A Guide to Evaluating Restorative Justice Practices in San Francisco Unified School District

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In 2008, the San Francisco Unified School District Board of Education passed the “Restorative Justice Resolution: In Support of a Comprehensive School Climate, Restorative Justice & Alternatives to Suspensions and Expulsions” policy with the vision that all students will receive equitable disciplinary treatment. Restorative justice (RJ) is conflict resolution approach which holds wrongdoers responsible to individuals who have been affected or harmed. This approach moves away from punishing offenders by requiring them to face the harm their actions have caused and seeks to find resolutions (Braithwaite, 2002, McCold & Wachtel, 2010 & Anderson, 2004). The passage of the SFUSD resolution was in response to the growing equity concern about the alarming rates of suspensions and expulsions for African-American, Latino, and Pacific Islander students. Thus, it is the intention of this policy to institutionalize fair, transparent, and equitable approaches to student discipline.

A number of schools around the nation have begun to use RJ as a means to institute a more positive school climate. For that reason, it reviews a few RJ programs being implemented around the nation and highlights and discusses commonly used indicators. The challenge lies in the fact that there is currently no standard of measurement, thereby assuring that success is guaranteed.

Since the passage of the Restorative Practice resolution, the district’s Pupil Services Department has begun a district wide implementation framework. These efforts are still in the early design and planning phases and staff expects to roll out multiple school pilot programs over the next two years. As a result, objectives and evaluation measures of this policy also in the early design and planning phase. The primary purpose of this report is to provide the San Francisco Unified School District’s Board of Education, district administrators, and program coordination staff a guide to developing a robust evaluation plan that will track district-wide implementation of restorative justice practices. In order to do so, clear measurable objectives were identified to help SFUSD staff begin to develop evaluation tools. It is particularly complicated in this case because there are a number of policy

documents that outline the desired outcomes. Both the strategic plan and the Board's RJ resolution provide clear outcomes that the BOE expect to see. In order for the RJ resolution to be successful, each objective should be in alignment with each other. Coupled on top of these challenges is the added element of implementing a Restorative Justice Program model designed by the International Institute for Restorative Practices. To resolve the possibility of misalignment, or conflicting goals I have identified four criteria that will be used as the foundation of each objective: 1) SFUSD's strategic plan 2) Board of Education Resolution policy components 3) IIRP's Safer Saner Schools program model components, and 4) Use of existing SFUSD evaluation techniques. From this foundation, the following objectives were identified:

- RJ Objective#1:** The district will make all discipline practices fair, equitable, and transparent
- RJ Objective #2:** All district personnel, including teachers, staff and administrators, are able to self monitor and assess their values toward student discipline
- RJ Objective #3:** District personnel are able to build and maintain respectful relationships inside and outside school community
- RJ Objective #4:** Teachers and school administrative will become more effective in their ability to improve classroom management, student behavior, and/or mediate conflict
- RJ Objective #5:** Students will learn to reason and seek solutions to conflict and enhance their ability to build positive relationships inside and outside of the classroom
- RJ Objective #6:** Teacher and Student will create participatory and inclusive learning environment
- RJ Objective#7:** Parents and guardians of students are included in the decision making process regarding their children's discipline

In order to avoid the pitfall of overlooking incremental progress, it is essential to collect specific measurable outcomes. These outcomes will act as indicators of any changes in conditions that have occurred after implementing the program. A list of measurable outcomes, units of measure and data collection sources have been developed for each the objectives mentioned above.

In order for the District to comprehensively assess the effectiveness of the RP initiative, data pertaining to both the organization and individual levels must be collected. The most useful information will come from both quantitative measurements and qualitative measurements. Additionally, this report recommends prioritizing evaluation design to ensure that all essential program activities are being monitored and reported; Beginning to compile baseline data by using

existing data sources and day-to-day program activities. Given that the program will be growing exponentially over the next few years, staff are recommended to commit to continuous program improvement effort. Assigning a designated staff member to the evaluation team will assist in collecting data over the first few years of implementation. Collaboration with local RJ efforts may make hiring an additional part time staff member possible, but will also support a local drive to create standards among the various RJ programs in the area.