

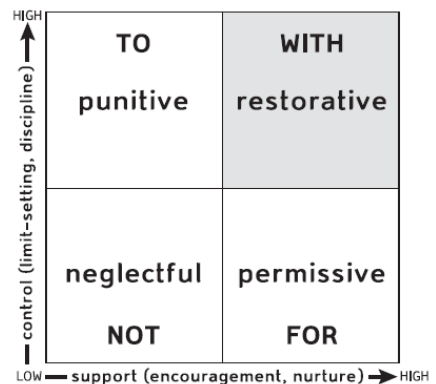
Human Rights, School Climate and Discipline

Every young person has the human right to a high quality education and to learn in a safe, respectful school environment that protects human dignity. Research has shown that punitive, zero-tolerance approaches to discipline do not prevent or reduce misbehavior, but actually have negative impacts on learning.ⁱ Instead, school discipline should be part of the educational process to support students’ full development. Growing numbers of schools are using positive approaches to discipline that improve school climate and learning.

Restorative Practices

Restorative practices (or restorative justice) is used to build a sense of school community and resolve conflict by repairing harm and restoring positive relationships through:

- Using regular classroom circles to work together with students to set academic goals, explore the curriculum, and develop core values for the classroom community;
- Training teachers and staff in classroom management to increase communication and work with students to reflect on how their actions impact others; and
- Using small group circles, fairness committees and peer juries when disciplinary issues happen to talk with students involved about the causes of the issues and identify positive solutions to repair the harm done to the community through responses such as mediation, community service, conflict resolution, etc.



Social Discipline Window

(From the International Institute for Restorative Practices – www.iirp.org)

Restorative practices are about schools doing things *with* students, rather than *to* them or *for* them.

What the Data Show

Denver Public Schools adopted new discipline policies in 2008-2009 that use restorative justice, resulting in a 68% reduction in police tickets in schools and a 40% reduction in out-of-school suspensions.ⁱⁱ

West Philadelphia High School was on the state’s “Persistently Dangerous Schools” list for six years. But after one year of implementing restorative practices, the climate has improved dramatically:

- Suspensions were down by 50% in the 2007-2008 school year,ⁱⁱⁱ and
- Violent acts and serious incidents dropped 52% in 2007–2008, and another 40% by Dec 2008.^{iv}

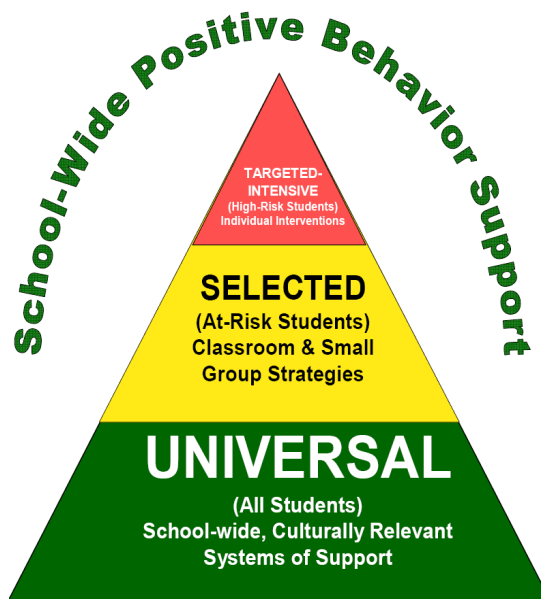
Chicago Public Schools adopted a new student code of conduct in 2006 incorporating restorative practices. Over 50 high schools in Chicago now have restorative peer jury programs. As a result:

- Over 1,000 days of suspension were avoided in 2007-2008 by referring students to peer jury programs for violating school rules, keeping them in the learning environment,^v
- At Dyett High School, student arrest rates decreased by 83% one year after implementing a restorative peer jury program.^{vi}

Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports (PBIS)

Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports (PBIS) is a system for improving school climate and preventing and reducing disciplinary incidents. Using PBIS, schools develop school-wide discipline plans that include:

- Developing core values for the school community;
- Training teachers and staff in classroom management and positive behavior support strategies to recognize and reward positive student behavior;
- Using positive interventions when disciplinary issues happen, such as counseling, conflict resolution, mediation, and team interventions;
- Using data to monitor and improve discipline policies to meet the needs of teachers and students.



Three Tiered Approach to PBI
From the Los Angeles Unified School District
<http://Disciplinepolicy.lausd.net>

What the Data Show

In Illinois, there are over 600 schools implementing PBIS with positive results, including reduced disciplinary referrals and improved academic outcomes for students:

- At Carpentersville Middle School, after implementing PBIS, office disciplinary referrals fell by 64% from 2005 to 2007. During the same period, the number of students that met or exceeded standards for 8th grade increased by 12.3% in Reading and 44% in Math.^{vii}
- In 12 Chicago public schools, the number of students who received six or more disciplinary referrals fell by more than 50% over three years after implementing PBIS.^{viii}

In Florida, a study of 102 schools using PBIS found that after one year of implementation:

- Office disciplinary referrals fell by an average of 25%,
- Out of school suspensions fell by an average of 10%.^{ix}

The Los Angeles Unified School District passed a district-wide policy in 2007 to implement school-wide positive behavior support in every school in the district.

- During the first 2 years of implementation, overall suspensions dropped by 20%, but African American students continue to be suspended at higher rates.^x

ⁱ Russell Skiba et al., "Are Zero Tolerance Policies Effective in the Schools?," American Psychological Association Zero Tolerance Task Force, 2006.

ⁱⁱ Advancement Project, Stop the Schoolhouse to Jailhouse Track. <http://www.stopschoolstojails.org/padres-jovenes-unidos-denver.html>

ⁱⁱⁱ Caralee Adams, "The Talk It Out Solution: How can you promote safety? Try getting rid of the metal detectors," *Scholastic Administrator*, November/December 2008. See video: "The Transformation of West Philadelphia High School: A Story of Hope" <http://www.iirp.org/westphilahigh/>

^{iv} Sharon Lewis, Ed., "Improving School Climate: Findings from Schools Implementing Restorative Practices," International Institute for Restorative Practices, May 19, 2009. <http://www.iirp.org/pdf/IIRP-Improving-School-Climate.pdf>

^v Bradley Olson and Judah Viola, "Chicago Public Schools High School Peer Jury Program Evaluation Report," DePaul University, September 2007.

^{vi} Chloe Wiley, "Peer juries reduce suspensions, increase attendance at Chicago public schools," *Windy Citizen*, May 23, 2008.

^{vii} Illinois Positive Behavior Interventions & Supports Network, 2006-07 Progress Report. <http://www.pbisillinois.org/>

^{viii} Illinois Positive Behavior Interventions & Supports Network, 2005-06 Progress Report. <http://www.pbisillinois.org/>

^{ix} Florida's Positive Behavior Support Project Annual Report 2007-2008. <http://flpbs.fmhi.usf.edu/index.asp>

^x CADRE, Redefining Dignity in Our Schools: A Shadow Report on School-Wide Positive Behavior Support Implementation in South Los Angeles, 2010.