Restorative Practices Application

School: Murray Middle School

Name of staff member submitting proposal: Removed identifiable personnel data

Question #1: What are your school climate challenges and why?

Murray has articulated 4 areas addressing climate improvement efforts rather than an unbalanced approach in only looking at student discipline as the driver of school climate (Bridwell-Mitchell, 2013).

Staff/Adult Climate-This is consistency among classrooms in implementing collective agreements, norms, and values. Challenges include 3 teachers that comprise 25% of ODR’s. How do we support ALL adults in fostering relationships and equip them with strategies for interventions under a shared philosophy?

Student/Kid-Our challenge is in the area of academic personalism (teachers supporting students in achieving academic goals). Student perception data (5E survey) resulted in a neutral score for 2016 data.

External/Community-Our challenge in this area remains engaging with our community members that represent the diverse student body and families. Our Parent Advisory Council and School Climate Improvement Team are not representative of our demographics (current membership data). We have shown improvement in conference attendance for our families of color (sign-in logs).

Classroom/Instructional-Maintaining a guaranteed and viable curriculum with high standards and access for all. Our challenge remains that we have an achievement gap based on race. An over 40 percent gap in math has remained persistent (fall 2015 OLPA).

Question #2: What is your number one school climate challenge and why?

In 2013-2014, inadequate systems, inconsistency in approaches and a fractured vision for learners created an unpredictable environment and resulted in what could only be described as a blame and shame culture. Murray Middle School has experienced a major improvement in school climate. With a deliberate visioning process, adoption of a teacher-led PBIS team and intentional alignment of professional development created a predictable environment for behavior, classroom instruction, etc where dismissals from school have been reduced by nearly 60%.

In 2015-2016 school year, our climate challenge is that suspensions and office discipline referrals, though reduced still occur at rates that are disproportionate within our student populations (2014-15 data showed 66% of African American students were referred at least once). Offenses that are labeled as defiance are most likely assigned to African American students, at a rate of 6 times that of their white peers.

Question #3: What steps have you taken to create a restorative culture in your building?

Restorative practices are being used in many areas to create unified and sustainable school improvement. Our efforts are pro-social, peace building, and peace making.

Preventative or Pro-social- We deliberately teach students how to show up for school in pro-social ways through
school-wide lesson plans and collective agreements for students and adults. Relationships are the heart of our work. Through relationships we deliver a comprehensive teaching and re-teaching program scheduled throughout the year as well as new student orientation to support pro-social behaviors. A few strategies for relationship development include comprehensive Foundations curriculum, “Murray Values You” post-card program, the Murray Core-Values Program, and team-building days.

Peace-building-Our emphasis is on avoiding conflict, harm and lost learning through relationship development and early intervention. Teachers use strategies to intervene on “the small stuff.” If needed, a student is referred to the behavior specialist, where a restorative conversation occurs with equitable student voice in designing a plan for re-entering the class. From 2013 we have reduced fights by 90% (Campus data).

Peace-Making Murray has started using this process where students are able to repair harm through mediation and conferencing.

**Question #4: What have you done to address your number one school climate challenge?**

School climate is a goal area on our SCIP where we address teacher and leadership actions influencing the disproportionate data. Our strategy is full implementation of PBIS practices.

- Monthly all-staff PD for PBIS systematization.
- Collaborative meetings where behavior data disaggregated by race is reviewed 2x/month.
- Administrative review of ODR data by teacher to provide individualized supports.
- Student intervention planning by grade level teams.
- BIP’s loop with grade.
- Trauma-informed care training and information through School Social Workers

Data supports the above implementation practices. An external evaluation (PBIS SET) scored at 100% implementation and our referral of African American students has dropped by 10% (SWIS-2016).

We have a high functioning School Climate Improvement Team. This team, comprised of parents, teachers and administrators, assess climate using the 4 Essential Elements of School Climate (Center for Social and Emotional Education, nd), review data, (SWIS ODR, Academic and perception data-5E’s, and parent survey) set goals and implement strategies to support school climate. Examples include 8th grade exit interviews, community and student round-table events, and creation of a student leadership development course.

**Question #5: What specific action steps will you and your school take to implement the new strategies, improve school climate, and create a restorative school culture?**

**Year I**

2. Orientation of new staff and students to the “Murray Way”
3. Implementation of PD model.
4. Implement circle in groups, classrooms and Foundations for community-building and informal practice.
5. Set circle structure for staff meetings and PD.
6. Grade 6 staff and students will be trained for implementation of problem-solving circles, restorative conversations, conferencing and peer mediation for difficult behavior.
7. Develop community engagement, communication and training plan.
Year II
1. Maintain all year I elements, plus…
2. Grade 7 staff will be trained and students will be accessed to support training as they have experience as 6th graders in implementation of problem-solving circles, restorative conversations, conferencing and peer mediation for difficult behavior response.
3. Begin offender/victim circle training for coordinator, admin and behavior staff.

Year III
1. Maintain all year I and II elements, plus…
2. Grade 8 staff will be trained and students will be accessed to support training as they have experience as 6th and 7th graders in implementation of problem-solving circles, restorative conversations, conferencing and peer mediation for difficult behavior response.
3. Offender/Victim circles will be fully implemented by year’s end.

**Question #6: How will you use data to drive decisions about future action steps?**

Information about how the school is doing is all around us; we need to intentionally locate, analyze, and leverage it for school improvement efforts. Our data comes in two parts: quantitative (hard data) and qualitative (soft data). Murray has structured and systematized processes for data review. This process has informed us through our current improvement efforts. We will continue to utilize this system and structure for data review in order to monitor our improvement efforts with implementation of the next level of restorative practices.

1. Twice per month grade level teams review discipline, attendance and academic data disaggregated by race, special education status, SES, and language acquisition status.
2. Admin, ELT, PBIS, Parent Advisory, SCIT review the same data from a school-wide level.
3. Perception data review through all structured teams. 5E’s, student surveys, parent engagement surveys, community round-table input, student round table input, 8th grade exit-interviews, etc.

Our data process is to transform information into action. We start data-review early, look for links between practices and results, adjust where needed, make our findings public (many groups and multiple perspectives push our work), we pay attention to historically underserved students, and plan scheduled dates for continuous analysis.

**Question #7: Please articulate up to three distinct SMART goals that you will use annually to measure your progress over the three-year pilot period.**

Murray Middle School will go from partial implementation to full implementation of school-wide preventative or pro-social practices in the restorative practices framework by Dec 2016.

- Relational Framework
- Circle practices for community-building in Foundations, classrooms and groups.
- Continue to fully implement collective agreements, routines and rituals with common expectations and responses.

Murray Middle School will go from disproportionate representation of students of color being referred to representative levels as measured by ODR through full implementation of restorative practices for managing difficult behavior for grade 6 in 2016-2017, grade 7 in 2017-2018, and grade 8 in 2018-2019.
• Problem-solving circles
• Restorative conversations
• Restorative conferencing
• Peer mediation

Murray Middle School will reduce suspensions and dismissals by at least 50% through going from no implementation to full implementation of restorative justice for intense interventions by fall of 2018.

• Offender/Victim full restorative circle

Question #8: Please provide how you will embed professional development into your restorative practices pilot and build capacity amongst staff.

Murray’s PD plan consists of a multi-tier approach:

1. School-wide:
   a. All staff will be trained in restorative justice and the circle process through 2016 PD for implementation of classroom practices and beginning implementation of managing difficult behaviors.
   b. Staff meetings and team meeting will model circle process throughout the year.
   c. PBIS team will continue PD in enhancement of relationship framework, consistent implementation of our collective agreements and enhancement of pro-social strategies

2. Targeted grade level and staff training.
   a. Fully train selected Restorative Justice Coordinator (RJC)
   b. RJC trains Behavior Intervention Personnel, Admin and Grade 6 Teachers in 2016-2017 for restorative practices to manage difficult behavior (see SMART Goal above)-Monthly PD as a whole group, circle observations, coaching sessions, PLC and team reflections on practices.

3. Multi-year implementation, refresher and new staff orientation
   a. RJC trains grade 7 in 2017-18, grade 8 in 2018-19.
   b. New staff orientation to school-wide and targeted behavior processes.
   c. Implement training for intense victim/offender circle

4. Community-Partner, volunteer, parent training, communication and information plan.

Question #9: How will you engage parents, community perspectives, and community-based partners in your restorative practices pilot site?

1. Develop an action plan to communicate restorative practices work to all stakeholders.
2. Continue and enhance our current community engagement (round-table events, home-visit project, PAC, SCIT)
3. Foster a relationship among district and community groups to help provide training to our parents, volunteers, after-school staff, coaches and community partners on restorative practices. Work to create a common framework for students in all aspects of their schooling experience.
4. Work with other schools to share best practices. We would look to specifically share across Area E schools to support transitions.
5. Engage all stakeholders throughout implementation to share lessons learned, successes, unaddressed
needs, etc (School board, district-level administration, other principals, community trainers, parents, community partners, etc)

6. Acknowledge and address our challenges in building community. Seek out and provide resources to our school team to continue to bring in varying perspective in parent and community leadership in informing school decisions.

**Question #10: Why should your school be selected as a restorative practices pilot site?**

Murray Middle School has demonstrated a mind-set and philosophy that aligns directly with a restorative approach. For us, people and relationships matter in our approach to discipline. We identify needs and obligations for all community members; we want to fully embrace that accountability is defined as understanding the effects of any offense or harm on the whole community, where all members (school, victim, offender, community) play direct roles in creating a learning environment, and offenders are held accountable in a way that repairs harm through community building and education, not just consequencing.

We are on the edge of fully realizing this level of implementation for our restorative practices work and believe the supports that come with being an identified pilot site will springboard our work into greater practices for all students. Additionally, we have 90% of our staff (March 8 meeting) and 100% of our SCIT (March 7 meeting) that have voted for pursuing this opportunity to enhance our efforts in full implementation of restorative practices.