Applying Restorative Justice Practices to Students Recommended for Expulsion: An Evidence-Based Model for Success

The Family and Youth Restorative Conference Program offered by the Legal Rights Center in collaboration with the Minneapolis Public Schools utilizes Family Group Conferences as a restorative intervention strategy for responding to serious behavioral incidents which have led to a recommendation for expulsion or administrative transfer.

The LRC and MPS partnered with the University of Minnesota’s Healthy Youth Development • Prevention Research Center to conduct a formal evaluation using pre/post surveys and school records data.

Participant Profile

Race/Ethnicity
- African American 55%
- American Indian 12%
- Latino 10%
- White 7%
- Multiracial 15%

Gender
- Male 63%
- Female 37%

Socioeconomic Status
- Family Income below 200% of Federal Poverty Level 92%
- Eligible for Free and Reduced Lunch 90%

Incidents Leading to Referral
- Middle School
  - Assault 55%
  - Weapons 27%
  - Other* 18%
- High School
  - Assault 41%
  - Weapons 30%
  - Other* 29%

*Other: drugs, theft, etc.

Exposure to Violence
- 78% Have seen someone get beat up, stabbed or shot with a gun

Highlights

“That they talked me into doing better. I love that program cause if it wasn’t for them I wouldn’t be where I am today.”

Program Satisfaction
- Would recommend the program to a friend
  - Parents 97%
  - Students 91%

Increased Protective Factors
- Parents
  - Talking to child about school (past month)
  - Knowing someone to talk to at school if there is a problem
- Students
  - Liking school
  - Making good choices about behavior, even when upset
  - Knowing someone to talk at school to ask for help when needed

Decreased Risk Factors
- Skipping school
- Fighting
- Average # of suspensions
- Average days suspended

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Evaluation Results
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Program Satisfaction

Students
- 91% I would recommend the program to a friend
- 95% I have followed through with my part of the restorative plan
- 98% My family members followed through with their part of the restorative plan
- 84% School staff have followed through with their part of the restorative plan
- 83% The program helped me be more successful at school
- 81% I have used new sources for help because of participating in the program

Parents
- 97% I would recommend the program to a friend
- 96% Satisfied with program
- 99% Followed through with restorative plan
- 97% School staff have followed through with their part of the restorative plan
- 89% Child followed through with restorative plan
- 61% Used new sources for help because of the program

Pre/Post Program Evaluation

Students

Significant Increases
- Liking school
- Talking to family about problem with friends or dating in past month
- Knowing someone at school to ask for help when needed
- Making good choices about behavior even when upset

Significant decreases
- Skipping school (whole day or class)
- Fighting

Parents

Significant Increases
- Talking to child about school in past month
- Likelihood of talking to child about solving a problem
- Frequency of talking with the child’s teachers
- Feeling that child is safe at school
- Knowing someone to talk to at child’s school if there is a problem
- Knowing community resources to help child succeed in school

School Records Data

School records of program participants demonstrate a positive trend for school attendance and academic progress, as well as decreases in school discipline (analysis based on participants with three years of available school records data).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Year Before</th>
<th>Year of</th>
<th>Year After</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>On Track to Graduate</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>40%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Attendance Days</td>
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<td>67</td>
<td>139</td>
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<tr>
<td>Average # Suspensions</td>
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<td>2.75</td>
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<td>Average Days Suspended</td>
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<td>Average # Suspensions per Days Attended</td>
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<td>1/24</td>
<td>1/101</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Contact
Sarah Davis
Youth Advocate Attorney
Legal Rights Center
1611 Park Ave. S.,
Minneapolis, MN 55426
(612) 677-2126
sdavis@legalrightscenter.org

Download the complete report at www.legalrightscenter.org