
ANNOTATION:

Overall, results from the case study analysis indicated that the school district has experienced a number of positive outcomes since embracing restorative justice practices, including reductions in suspensions, expulsions, and behavioral referrals. Overall attendance has increased as well. Implementation challenges were noted as minor and included problems with providing appropriate training for staff on restorative justice principles, providing holistic approaches, and with identifying and supporting advocates. Results of interviews and focus groups revealed that while some teachers had concerns about the amount of time required to implement restorative justice practices, most teachers and students had positive reactions to the programming and believed that the restorative practices had improved the school climate.

DESIGN: Research methodology involved a case study analysis of the South St. Paul School District, which had implemented a range of restorative justice practices beginning in 1996 and had collected pre-and post-initiative data measuring the impact of the programming in five main areas: suspensions, expulsions, attendance, academics, and school climate. Other data concerning implementation challenges were obtained through observations, interviews, and focus groups. Limitations of the study include the absence of a comparison school district in Minnesota.