

## **Restorative Practices Collaborative Frequently Asked Questions**

### **What is the goal?**

The Restorative Practices Collaborative merges the BSD Equity Council, Designated Employees, and Restorative Practitioners in order to align our work with BSD Goals.

Burlington School District's mission is to graduate students who:

- Value different cultures
- Engage with the community
- Communicate Effectively
- Think Creatively
- Skillfully solve problems
- Achieve at their highest academic, intellectual, and personal potential

Burlington School District's vision is Cultivating Caring, Creative, and Courageous People- Join the Journey!

Restorative Practices (RP) are rooted in relationship building and rebuilding to create a culture of equity and belonging that results in healing and learning. The Burlington School District, in partnership with the Burlington community, embraces Restorative Practices ensuring that all, including those who have been harmed, will have their needs and experiences recognized and acted upon, thus creating a supportive climate of empowerment for all.

### **How do we achieve these?**

Issues of behavior, suspension, equity, and the achievement gap are all tightly intertwined. The work we do going forward brings us together to deliver Professional Development in common practices designed to address the issues with a holistic approach that will include Professional Development across the district with a common message for all. We are taking a systemic approach to providing professional development that is grade appropriate, connected across all levels, and consistent in all our schools.

### **What is the connection between RP and narrowing the achievement gap?**

Social and emotional growth is directly connected to academic achievement. They are at least as important for our students being successful in school as they are for finding joy in their lives. RP are a trauma-informed strategy. Trauma, poverty and mental health are major barriers for students to remain in class and in school and thus are contributing factors in the achievement gap. The RP Collaborative is a key strategy to build a system that honors and recognizes the needs embedded in these social issues and how these needs impact academic achievement and success after high school for all students. RP also addresses biases which contribute to marginalized students being put out of class, thus impeding their access to education.

### **How does this work align with ESSA?**

The work we will be doing is aligned with ESSA in that the goal is to reduce our achievement gap while ultimately increasing equity for all students. Reducing the achievement gap will include reducing disproportionality in suspensions and discipline referrals, reducing the use of discipline options that separate students from their education, improving school climate and culture for all of us, and developing social and emotional intelligence in both youth and adults. As part of each school's ESSA plan, Restorative Practices will be a component.

### **What is the purpose of merging the Equity Council, Designated Employees, and Restorative Practitioners?**

Historically, Burlington School District has had several committees working on issues of equity, behavior, bullying and harassment, and student achievement in relative isolation from each other, commonly referred to as 'silos', with each committee putting demands on schools. We will be merging the work of these three groups to work toward a common purpose, using the resources of our district in the most beneficial way possible.

As the district moves towards full implementation of Restorative Practices being the foundation to address school climate, culture, and behavior issues, the members of these three groups, due to their commitment to these issues, are best suited to achieving that goal. Through cross training we will be better prepared to take new learning back to our individual buildings and departments that is aligned with the goals with the district.

### **Who are the trainers?**

The trainers will be by Jon Kidde, Lisa Bedinger, and Rachel Jolly with Daniel Baron, Sparks, and others' support through the year.

### **Who is needed to do the RP work from our schools?**

We will be approaching the work in phases. The initial phases are deep training in RP with a smaller group of Restorative Practitioners from each school, building a larger team at each school, and training the entire faculty of each school on a more basic level. The individuals needed for this work from each of our schools include a Designated Employee, an individual from your Equity Council, and one of the individuals who attended this summer's Restorative Practice training (or if no one from your school was able to attend, someone who wishes they could have gone). The vision is that this small group who attend the RP Collaborative meetings will return to your school meet with the other DEs, Equity Council members and Restorative Practitioners from your school and deliver Professional Development with your faculty utilizing 90 minutes of meeting time per month.

### **When will Professional Development for the RP Collaborative be done?**

The training for RP Collaborative will occur on the first Thursday of every month during school hours, beginning on November 2. The training will be from 11:45 to 3:30. This will likely necessitate a half-day substitute or the use of your building sub for the half day. Kelly Services has been notified about the additional need and the dates of this PD.

The rest of the dates are:

December 7, January 4, February 1, March 1, April 5, and May 3

**When will the Professional Development for each school's full faculty happen?**

The first full-day Restorative Practice training for the Elementary Schools occurred on October 20 and occurred last year for the High School.

We need to talk more about when and how this can happen for the Middle Schools, the Afterschool Programs, the Tech Center, Horizons & On Top, the Dining Services staff, Paraprofessionals, Mental Health Professionals and more. See the Summer Institute below for initial training for a smaller group. It is possible that some of this work can begin before the summer for the Middle Schools.

RP Collaborative members from each school are asked to bring back monthly training to your school meetings (such as faculty meetings or PLCs) beginning after the December RP Collaborative meeting. It would be helpful for the dates reserved for these trainings to be identified by each principal or team. This Professional Development is envisioned to take 90 minutes/month.

As we strive for a more systemic approach to this work, the plan for next year is to approach the Executive Council to have district calendar dates to embed RP in districtwide professional development that include paraeducators and a process to include students and parents. As our paraeducators are paramount to the successful implementation of RP, we must find a way to include them in trainings.

**Are Materials or Books needed?**

Many of the schools that had representation at the summer Restorative Practice training have at least one copy each of *Circle Forward*, (\$55) and *Implementing Restorative Practices In Schools* (\$36-49 depending on source). It will be helpful for all schools to have copies of these resources to assist us in this work together. We have grant funding to be able to purchase one copy of each of these for each school. Additional copies can be purchased by each school.

**Will there be a Restorative Practices Summer Institute this year?**

We just got word that our grant to fund a Summer Institute for participants from our middle schools and high schools (including On Top, Horizons, and the Tech Center) was awarded! The tentative dates are for this to occur over four days during the weeks of June 18th and 25th. The elementary schools participated in this Institute last summer.