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%

- **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
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>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>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attendance Days</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average # Suspensions</td>
<td>2.38</td>
<td>2.75</td>
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<tr>
<td>Average Days Suspended</td>
<td>4.88</td>
<td>11.53</td>
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<tr>
<td>Average # Suspensions per Days Attended</td>
<td>1/54</td>
<td>1/24</td>
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</tbody>
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Download the complete report at www.legalrightscenter.org