

Spring 2021  
Volume 33

# J THE JOURNAL

OF JUVENILE COURT, COMMUNITY, AND ALTERNATIVE  
SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS OF CALIFORNIA

## IN THIS ISSUE:

- The Shift: Empowering Our Underserved Students in the Classroom
- From Compliance to Excellence: Effective Family Engagement in Alternative Educational Settings
- Data-Driven Social and Emotional Learning in the Contra Costa County Court Schools
- The History of JCCASAC
- Innovative Programs



## DEPARTMENTS

- 3 JCCASAC Mission and Goals**
- 5 Message from the Chair-Elect**
- 6 Superintendents Welcome**
- 38 John Peshkoff Awards**
- 41 JCCASAC Scholarships**
- 42 JCCASAC Teacher of the Year**
- 44 JCCASAC Teacher of the Year Nominees**

## EDITORIAL BOARD

**John Rice**  
 Santa Cruz County Office of Education  
 (831) 466-5724  
 jrice@santacruzcoe.org

## FEATURED ARTICLES

- 7 The Shift: Empowering Our Underserved Students in the Classroom By Kim Cope Tait
- 13 Adaptations in Scope and Intensity of PBIS in Alternative Settings By Kim Wood, M.A., BCBA, Placer County Office of Education and Luke Anderson, Ed.S., BCBA, Placer County Office of Education
- 22 PBIS: An Incentive Program in an Alternative Setting By Crystal Sousa M.Ed., Principal Valley Community School Atwater, Merced County Office of Education
- 28 Connections, Relationships, and Resilience—The Power of Kinship By Gretchen Rhoads, Principal, Metro Region, JCCS, San Diego County Office of Education
- 48 Trail of Tears: Low Academic Performance and the Incarceration of Native American Students By Dr. E. Scott Pierce
- 60 The History of JCCASAC by Bob Michels, Past President With Thanks to Ken Taylor and Jeanne Hughes
- 67 Building a Safe and Equitable Classroom: Integrating Restorative Circles into Content Delivery By Ryan Hinkle, B.A., Brianna Parker, M.Ed, Jina Poirier, M.Ed, Anne Wolff, M.Ed. Orange County Department of Education
- 84 Shakespeare Can Wait...and So Can My Ego By Kim Cope Tait

## INOVATIVE PROGRAMS

- 25 Finding a Home in Reading: The Alice M. Worsley Great Stories Book Club By Pamela McGee and Michelle Trevino, Fresno County Superintendent of Schools
- 30 From Compliance to Excellence: Effective Family Engagement in Alternative Educational Settings By Rami Christophi, Project Director I, Title I, Mark Newman, Teacher & Parent Liaison, and Jael Ovalle, Program Manager, Parent Education, Los Angeles County Office of Education
- 34 Leading at School and the Community: New leadership class at one. Charter - Academy of Visual and Performing Arts, Bianchi, is just getting started, San Joaquin COE
- 35 Make Your Bed, Change Your World: Academy Cadets Learning to Start Small and Go Far, San Joaquin COE
- 36 Present for Students: Educators and more come together for first Chronic Absenteeism Summit, San Joaquin COE
- 54 Implementing a Restorative Program- Our First Six Months By Angelica Genova
- 61 The Restorative Justice Garden: Cultivating Healing By Constance Walker and Megan Mercurio, Woodside Learning Center of the San Francisco Juvenile Justice Center
- 63 Stories with Style: Reaching Incarcerated Youth through Hip Hop Pedagogy and Storytelling By Edward Campos B.S., and Elizabeth Norris M.A. Kings County Office of Education
- 76 Creating a Critical Pedagogy of Place with JCCS Youth By Angela Gigliotti Ortiz, PhD San Diego County Juvenile Court and Community Schools
- 80 Data-Driven Social and Emotional Learning in the Contra Costa County Court Schools By Brian Murtagh, Elana Metz, and D. Lacy Asbill



## VISION

Under the direction of the County Superintendents, and as a sub-committee of the Student Programs and Services Steering Committee (SPSSC), JCCASAC is a professional educational organization dedicated to preparing students who are enrolled in county alternative education programs to become self-sufficient adults who lead healthy lifestyles and are competent, caring, and academically prepared for their futures.

## MISSION

The mission of JCCASAC is to support student success by creating a collegial network of County Office administrators who:

- Research and share best practices regarding new and innovative program options for at-risk students
- Provide training, support and assistance to new administrators
- Endorse and support legislation that advocates for the learning needs of all students
- Give input and guidance to the superintendents relative to the diverse needs of our student population

## GOALS

- Improve student achievement through research and sharing best practices
- Support special projects that enhance instructional programs
- Provide regular training for new county office administrators
- Conduct successful conferences with statewide representation
- Publish the JCCASAC Journal that informs superintendents, administrators, teachers, and affiliated agencies of the latest research, effective teaching practices, methodologies, and that showcases successful programs
- Provide scholarships to eligible graduating seniors in order to encourage life long learning
- Represent JCCASAC through participation in statewide committees
- Monitor legislation affecting County Office alternative education programs
- Advocate for legislation and policies that support the unique needs of our student population

# BOARD OF DIRECTORS

## OFFICERS

**Pam Coronado, Chair**  
Fresno County Office of Education  
(559)600-4950  
pcoronado@fcoe.org

**Jaosn Hasty, Chair-Elect**  
Los Angeles County Office of Education  
(562) 803-8450  
hasty\_jason@laoe.edu

**Katy Ramezani, Past Chair**  
Orange County Department of Education  
(209) 468-5944

**Joanne L. Finney, Secretary**  
San Diego County Office of Education  
(858) 694-4613  
joanne.finney@sdcoe.net

**John Rice, Treasurer**  
Santa Cruz County Office of Education  
(831) 466-5728  
jrice@santacruz.k12.ca.us

**Yvonne Evans, Ex-Officio**  
California Department of Education  
(916) 323-2039  
yevans@cde.ca.gov

## NORTHERN SECTION REPRESENTATIVES

**Mark Yost, Northern Chair**  
San Joaquin County Office of Education  
(209) 468-9079  
myost@sjcoe.net

**Rebecca Vichiquis, Northern Vice Chair**  
Contra Costa County Office of Education  
(925) 957-7267  
rvichiquis@cccoe.k12.ca.us

**Chris Devers, Northern Secretary**  
Monterey County Office of Education  
Phone (831) 784-4224  
cdevers@montereycoe.org

**Jennifer Izant Gonzalez, Northern Member at Large**  
Santa Cruz County Office of Education  
(831) 345-6723  
jizant@santacruzcoe.org

## SOUTHERN SECTION REPRESENTATIVES

**Carlos Rojas, Southern Chair**  
Kern County Office of Education  
(661) 636-4714  
carojas@kern.org

**Diana Velasquez, Southern Vice Chair**  
Los Angeles County Office of Education  
(562) 940-1864  
velasquez\_diana@laoe.edu

**Vicki Ford, Southern Secretary**  
San Bernardino County Office of Education  
(909) 387-8505  
chall@ocde.us

**Kenneth Ko, Southern Member at Large**  
Orange County Department of Education  
(714) 659-1757  
KKo@ocde.us



## A School with No Walls is Breaking Down Barriers.



With more than 20 years of experience in online education and curriculum development, FLVS Global has what every student needs to succeed.

FLVS Global provides flexible and full-time options for elementary, middle, and high school students. With 24/7 course access, a catalog of more than 125 award-winning online courses, and highly qualified, certified teachers, students can get ahead, stay on target, or get back on track.

For more information, visit [flvsglobal.net](http://flvsglobal.net) or contact [Rian Meadows at RianMeadows@flvs.net](mailto:RianMeadows@flvs.net)

**CTE INSPIRED**  
A VIRTUAL CONFERENCE HOSTED BY ICEV  
**JULY 27<sup>th</sup> - 29<sup>th</sup>**

Don't miss out on the largest Career and Technical Education virtual professional development event of 2021! Thanks to over 9,000 CTE educators and administrators in attendance last year, ICEV's first-ever virtual conference was a huge success.

This year, we're going even bigger with more speakers, more sessions and more prizes! So go ahead and mark your calendar, then keep an eye out for important updates as more details become available.

**LEARN MORE!**

[www.icevonline.com/cteinspired](http://www.icevonline.com/cteinspired)



**Jason Hasty**  
**Executive Director**  
Los Angeles County Office of Education

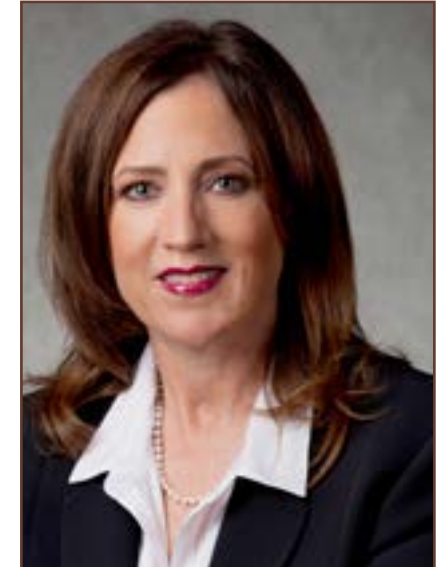
On behalf of the JCCASAC Executive Board, I want to welcome you to the 51st Annual JCCASAC Conference. JCCASAC is dedicated to preparing students who are enrolled in county alternative education programs to become self-sufficient adults who lead healthy lifestyles, and are competent, caring, and academically prepared for their futures. Throughout the last year, there have been many firsts for all of us, as we have strived to transform and innovate in the spirit of changing our students' lives while ensuring equity and access for all.

At the Los Angeles County Office of Education, we prioritize equity and access in administering educational programming, family supports, and overall social emotional wellness for our students. During this pandemic, our alternative students have suffered the most, being disproportionately affected. However, at the Los Angeles County Office of Education, we have been able to provide one-to-one laptops to all our students, we have developed an entirely new and secure juvenile court school online platform for virtual learning, and we have continued to grow our parent engagement. This past year alone, we had over 2,100 parents participate in parent engagement workshops and town halls. In many ways, students are connected like never before, but we, as many of you know, believe that there is no substitute for in-person instruction. Our at-promise students thrive on in-person, one-on-one engagement and positive relational interactions with adults in the classroom. This is the secret to success, creating positive learning environments where students are able to build upon pro-social skills that will help them succeed in life.

The JCCASAC believes that changing our students' lives while ensuring equity is paramount to all we do. As educators, it is our responsibility to relentlessly leverage resources to provide our students and teachers the most current research-based instructional, social emotional, and technological tools to support our students in achieving their dreams. During this very first virtual JCCASAC Annual Conference, we will highlight and celebrate the diversity and potential of our students as well as showcase the outstanding programs and best practices that promote innovation throughout California.

Our keynote speakers have been intentionally selected to inspire and motivate you to expand your thinking on what is possible in alternative education. We believe that all students are capable of learning and deserve educators who are fully committed to their success.

We are excited that you have chosen to participate and collaborate with your colleagues from throughout the state who share your passion to see students thrive regardless of the barriers they have had to overcome. We encourage you to connect with our Industry Partners. Their investment in the JCCASAC Conference supports this statewide virtual gathering to promote best practices within Alternative Education. Lastly, we hope that this conference supports you in your work moving forward, building you and your organization's capacity to continue to transform the lives of the students you serve.



**Debra Duardo, M.S.W., Ed.D.**  
Los Angeles County Superintendent of Schools

I am delighted to welcome you to the 2021 JCCASAC Conference and thrilled that the Los Angeles County Office of Education is hosting this inspiring virtual event.

The conference focus on ensuring equity in a digital world is timely and close to my heart. Campus closures forced by the pandemic more than one year ago have laid bare longstanding educational injustices and exposed the gaping digital divide.

Yet I see a silver lining and the chance to seize this moment to transform an education system that has persistently left behind far too many of our low-income students and young people of color. They include, of course, the students we serve in our Juvenile Court and Alternative Education programs — most of whom have fallen through the cracks in our public school system.

In a way, these young people have been lucky to be in our care during the pandemic given their prior disengagement in school. You have remained dedicated to providing high-quality specialized instruction in unique and already challenging learning environments. You have persevered throughout the crisis, pivoting to new ways of teaching and embracing emerging technologies as tools for positive transformation.

Over the past year, we have come so far in better meeting the needs of our at-promise students, offering the opportunities and access they deserve. My priority is to advocate for a collective investment in strategies that place priority on meeting the needs of the whole child and surrounding our most vulnerable students with the resources they need to succeed.

I look forward to working with our wonderful JCCASAC colleagues on this critical work — and hope this conference provides you fresh ideas, approaches and connections as you strive to help our students reach their full potential.

Please stay safe and well.

By KIM COPE TAIT

As an educator, my personal challenge in swinging between comprehensive public schools and elite, independent college prep schools for 25 years of my career was always in my commitment to giving every student, no matter the academic setting, the same thing: a quality education. To me that means meaningful learning experiences and the opportunity to practice and become adept at being an individual--like Kierkegaard's kind of individual, where "the individual must always be prepared to defy the norms of society for the sake of the higher authority of a personally valid way of life." It means teaching my students how to think, not what to think (which takes a lot longer and is a lot harder). It means providing real tools and opening real avenues for success...not only for success "in the real world" but in higher education should they choose to pursue it. None of these things should be the exclusive domain of the privileged, even though they are perhaps easier to deliver in settings that serve them.

Teaching my "low performing" students at a local comprehensive high school, for example, how to write a subordinating thesis statement or format according to MLA standards was not idealistic. It wasn't even hopeful. It was an act of respect, and it was my duty. To help students open every door for themselves and to cultivate in them the confidence to actually walk through them one day--that was my charge. I knew that I needed to be compassionate, flexible, and accommodating to students who had been given a raw deal--been traumatized even--but my compassion needed to take the shape of tireless work, endless energy given to scaffolding, reframing, explaining, indeed cheerleading as they ran the gauntlet of recovering credits and, more importantly, skills they had missed along the

ALTHOUGH I'D LOVE TO BE YOUR FAVORITE PERSON RIGHT NOW, I CARE MORE ABOUT GIVING YOU SOMETHING OF VALUE, AND SO I WILL NOT LOWER MY STANDARDS, WON'T GIVE UP ON TEACHING YOU THIS SOPHISTICATED CONCEPT, WON'T CONCEDE THAT THIS TEXT IS OUT OF YOUR REACH — THAT KIND OF LOVE—IT WINS OUT IN THE END.

path that landed them in my remedial classroom. But arguably most important of all, I needed to hold them accountable. In the same way that children and teens need, actually want, boundaries (know intuitively that these are tantamount to love and signify care), my students needed (and wanted) me to ask something of them. If I didn't--If I don't--ask something of my students, if I don't ask them to strive, to work, to produce--it is a clear expression of a lack of hope. Of some sort of collusion with a system that deems them deficient. Of a corroboration of their own belief that they don't have what it takes.

I was at SOS, which stood for Second Opportunity for Students, in Watsonville, California for precisely six months before I felt that we had made "the shift." I had come on at SOS in August of 2018. There I had the opportunity to create and run my own program and was put in charge of the academic life of 20 students who were critically credit deficient. In those first three weeks, ten of my students were from the old guard under their previous teacher. We managed to graduate five who were fifth-year seniors by December, and five of them were still with me after Christmas. The other 15 at that point had made their circuitous ways to me by referral, by knowing or being related to former students, and, as time passed, because they had heard about our program from current students who were beginning to appreciate (if not love) their little school. Some of that success was largely a function of size. Yes, being in charge of all academic subjects for students in grades 9-12 representing a wide range of academic backgrounds can be messy, but there were only 20 of them. This is a manageable number. It was also a function of the support and funding we had through the COE (County Office of Education). My

By KIM COPE TAIT

administrators at the county level were committed, inasmuch as it was possible, to saying yes to the things I asked for (a class set of a particular book, supplies for bookmaking, access to specific software, etc.). They seemed to trust my gut, and this made all the difference.

Still, it was not easy. The kids resisted me at first... hard. Fearful and distrustful, they were, in the simplest terms, cruel, and the progress we made in our first months came at great cost to me personally (10 extra pounds, lost sleep, many tears, to name a few). I kept going back to the drawing board, desperately searching for a way in. I thought I needed to do something different than what I was doing. But it turns out that steadfast love (the tough kind that says, Though I'd love to be your favorite person right now, I care more about giving you something of value, and so I will not lower my standards, won't give up on teaching you this sophisticated concept, won't concede that this text is out of your reach)—that kind of love—it wins out in the end.

If you keep giving it. Keep showing up to the challenge every day. Our student Mathew comes to mind—how many times did I say a bright good morning to him before he ever even acknowledged me? We're talking weeks here. How many times did I call on him, gently coax, stand my ground as all 6'2" of him postured and resisted, angry at me for even looking at him? This is the same Mathew who eventually became a leader among our students, began offering his ideas and responses willingly. Tested into the "higher English class" at Cabrillo College and came back to campus last week to tell me that in that class they're learning about something we talked about in ours: Joseph Campbell's concept of the hero's journey. It was so hard. But there we were.

And once that atmosphere was established, once everyone had learned once and for all that Maria, our senior instructional aide, and I (and the myriad other

individuals who came in and out of their weeks at SOS) were here, really here, for them, then I knew that space had been created for a dramatic shift: from a room full of kids who believed themselves somehow defective, academically and otherwise, to a room full of young people who were confident that they could learn, grow, comprehend, and communicate both persuasively and creatively. Of course, at the six-month mark we were still in the middle of that process. It was slow going if I'm being completely frank, but I saw evidence of it every day.

And what did it look like in real life? In December our students participated in what I called the first annual SOS Academic Symposium. It was just us (me, the students, Maria, and Takako, who was mostly in charge of lunches). It was low key in that way (I wasn't ready to invite anyone from outside our school, and neither were the kids), but it was meaningful. There were nine readers in the symposium, with thirteen of us rotating among the five tables to hear their papers. They were sharing their formal research assignments on environmental science topics that ranged from climate change to the use of fossil fuels versus renewable energy. Mathew shared his research paper on the self-selected landmark Supreme Court case "Mapp v. Ohio." It was the culminating project for his Government coursework. All of the papers were, in fact, formatted and cited according to MLA standards, and the rest of the students participated diligently by listening intently and writing down observations on the work of their peers. There was an air of formality, seriousness, and accomplishment around the entire event, and it felt like a turning point.

Other things we did that fall? We read Bradbury's Fahrenheit 451, we researched and presented Google slide presentations of candidates, propositions, and measures for the 2018 mid-term elections and then held mock voting. Afterwards we compared our results to those of the actual election and, having learned about the differences between liberal and conservative

positions on a range of issues, were able to identify the import of some of the changes happening in Congress in particular. Many of my students reported that they were able to help older siblings and parents understand the issues and vote effectively. There was great pride around that. "You learned this at your school?" one of the siblings asked incredulously. The response from my student was a resounding and happy yes.

We read *House on Mango Street*, created hand-made books with our own narratives taken through multiple drafts, and moved through a unit built around the film *Reel Injun*, which talks about the devastating impact of racial stereotypes in American film on the relationships between Native American and non-Native people in the United States. They wrote persuasive essays, employing the subordinating thesis statement and embedding relevant quotes from two Native sources presenting opposing views on the question: Should Native Americans and their symbols be used as sports team mascots?

This led to the introduction of a unit on race relations in the U.S., starting with Martin Luther King Jr., whom we honored that year with a day of service in the community; one group went to the local children's cancer support center and one to the food bank. Then we researched and basically demystified the Black Lives Matter Movement as a way in to understanding Ava DuVernay's acclaimed documentary film *13th*. The film chronicles the history of African Americans in the United States from the introduction of the 13th Amendment to the present day and suggests that the mass incarceration of minorities in the U.S. is simply an extension of slavery...the most recent in a long line of such iterations. It was intense, and the scaffolding was intense.

We prepared, framed, and researched for weeks before we watched a single minute of the film (which we did in 20-minute increments over the course of three weeks). But that's the thing. We were modeling how to gain access to content from which we would otherwise be excluded. Content around which we can't yet, by ourselves, effectively engage in dialogue or take civic action. I emphasize the yet. I wrote a film study guide for 13th. In opening the text for that handout, I pulled three paragraphs from the website of the Influence Film Club, a non-profit organization that promotes the use of documentary films in the classroom. These paragraphs are incredibly dense, difficult to read—for anyone. I could have watered it down, abridged it in some way—I've certainly done that before. But I didn't here.

I refused to. On the handout with the film study guide, just beneath those three paragraphs from the Influence Film Club, was an inserted and emboldened message from me to my students:

**ARE WE GOING TO LIE  
HERE AND WAVE OUR  
LITTLE LEGS AROUND, OR  
ARE WE GOING TO FLIP  
OURSELVES OVER AND  
FIND A WAY TO GET IN?**

*So this is pretty dense academic language. We probably don't understand it 100% the first time around. So do we give up having a handle on it? Just keep on*

*going? No. Let's look up some of this challenging language and see what kind of light we can shed on the content.*

It was the approach I always took with them. They'd seen me do this a lot: I would lean back and hold arms tucked in at my sides, wriggling my hands in a helpless gesture. It was my impression of a turtle on its back. It represented the learned helplessness I've observed in so many of my students. "Are we going to lie here and wave our little legs around, or are we going to flip ourselves over and find a way to get IN?" I asked them.

"Let's get at it!" They were starting to catch on at this point. They didn't think I was cool or anything; in fact, this was kind of the height of my dorkiness, but they'd come to count on that, and they had become willing to let me guide them. When we started reading a text, they would now automatically pull out a highlighter or a pen, so that they could read actively. They no longer rolled their eyes when I paused every few sentences to comment or check for understanding. They rolled up their sleeves and expected to work.

In those three paragraphs introducing the film, I had underlined all of the terms and vocabulary I thought would challenge my students. In groups, they had broken down each of these terms...into their multiple words (if applicable) and into their linguistic roots (to the extent that this was possible), and they took that work and looked back at the original sentences that contained the terms and began again to tap away at the barriers to their 'access.' Together, we secured our comprehension of each of these terms to ultimately make sense of the text as a whole. In those same small groups, the students completed the "Pundit Mini-Research Assignment" for their assigned pundits. And we didn't shy away from these words. "We might as well learn now: a pundit is a fancy word for expert," I told them, "and we're going to own it."

There are many pundits interviewed in *13th*. I wanted my students to recognize theirs and the ones reported on by their classmates when they saw them speaking on screen. I wanted them to know in advance what angle each pundit could be expected to take, what expertise they were bringing to the table. It was a loooooong process. It took forever. But what's the rush? It was SO worth it. Timelines become irrelevant when we're talking about actual results. When we're talking about what I will send my students into the world with. When we went back and reread those three paragraphs, when we finally watched that film, they had ACCESS to it. And they had gained that access on their own and in conjunction with their peers.

There are few (if any) more valuable tools I can give my students than this: not only the belief in their own ability to access elevated, challenging content, whether it's in an article, a newscast, or a tweet, but the tools with which to open that access for themselves. How otherwise can they impact the worlds in which they move? I cannot send them into the world empty handed. I won't.

At SOS I had eyes on 20 kids, not just my own eyes but those of my little team, and we SAW our students. We saw who they were, what they had to offer, what challenged them, and what lit them up. We saw when they were struggling and needed a moment, an attentive ear, a breath of fresh air. The structure was such that we could support them all. We didn't have 150 kids in and out through a revolving door (that was the number on my rosters at my last comprehensive school—150 students who could potentially hide in the slipstream and be lost and not discovered until it was too late). At SOS we could care for our students, really care for them, and make sure that their individual academic needs were met. So again, a manageable number is a seminal part of the equation.

SOS had become a pretty great place to be, and in the spring of 2019, the end of my second year there, I organized an "Expo" for the community (I invited administrators and anyone who was connected to our school in any way, and I invited my students' families). I remember thinking, Someone (beyond those of us who spend our days here) should know about these kids. The program included the exposition of a range of my students' creative and critical work (everything from essays and research papers to acrylic paintings and handmade books offering personal narratives) and the 'unveiling' of a mural designed and painted by the students. It also included the announcement of our school's new name (chosen by the students to reflect their sense of our community: El Nido, meaning "The Nest") and a play directed by our theatre teacher Adrian

By KIM COPE TAIT

Torres. I was able to bring Adrian in under a Teacher Artist Partnership grant through the Arts Council of Santa Cruz County, and his transformational work with our little group of students culminated in a live performance on the day of the Expo. It was a big day. Families came in droves, pushing strollers, holding the elbows of abuelas and the hands of little sisters and brothers. An incredible number of adults from the community also came, including our County Superintendent of Schools, Farris Sabbah, and the Director of Alternative Education, Johnny Rice. The kids were nervous but also thrilled that so many people, many of them their own loved ones, had come to see them perform.

We had set up the art room almost like a theatre in the round, with the stage area in the center of the space and the audience seated at round tables placed around the room (and standing in every other conceivable space). “Off stage” was out one of two doors into the hallway, so that actor entrances and exits were through these doors. Every single one of the students was involved, whether as actors or as stage crew in charge of lighting or sound; two were designated as stage managers. When it was finally time for the “action,” the students gave an incredible performance. The best they’d ever given. It was only six minutes long, but it was perfect. There were many moments in which members of the audience were drying tears...caught up in the emotion, both of the story and of the enormity of this moment for our kids. At the very end, the actors filed into the room, the “lighting specialists” shining flashlights on them to create tall, dramatic shadows on the white wall behind them. As the finale, each of the actors delivered a single line as they entered and took their place. “Life is a Challenge. Take it.”

FOR THE FIRST TIME, PROBABLY EVER, MY STUDENTS WERE SEEN AND RECOGNIZED AS SCHOLARS. LEGITIMATE ACADÉMIANS AND ARTISTS. THEY WERE FULL OF PRIDE...A LITTLE EMBARRASSED, YES, BUT PLEASED AS COULD BE THAT SO MANY PEOPLE, FROM ALL WALKS OF LIFE, WERE SO INTERESTED IN WHAT THEY HAD PRODUCED...AT SCHOOL!

“Life is Sorrow. Accept it.”  
 “Life is...” There were seven of them, and then it was our lead. His eyes flashed to mine just before he took his place and from memory delivered these lines with perfect intonation:

*In life, there is no Rewind. We have choices to make every day. All we can do is our best. If we try, even if we fail, it is enough. WE are enough. With the love of our family, we CAN.*

The next day, after a full day of refocused and re-energized academic work, I gathered the students together in the classroom, where the desks are always arranged in a big circle. “So...yesterday, huh?” And I couldn’t help but break into a huge grin. “I can’t tell you how proud I am of you all. I mean it. I want us to just have a minute to share out some highs from the day. We’ll just go around and

each person can say their favorite part of the day, okay?” It was a little corny, but they were used to me asking them to reflect like this, so they fell in without resistance.

They said things like “just performing,” and “having my family there” and “just the whole thing,” but there was a theme. Something that got repeated several times, and it was this: what stood out most to these guys was the way that people kept coming up to them during the reception and asking them questions...about their process in making their books. About how they prepared to give such a performance. Had they acted before, it was so good! About the research involved in writing such effective essays. This meant so much to them, and I saw it reinforced again: one cannot place too much value on the importance of being seen.

For the first time, probably ever, my students were seen

By KIM COPE TAIT

and recognized as scholars. Legitimate académians and artists. They were full of pride...a little embarrassed, yes, but pleased as could be that so many people, from all walks of life, were so interested in what they had produced...at school! And it happened to me, too. Everyone wanted to know how I did it. Our superintendent even asked if I had a name for my method in raising the academic bar. He asked this with a student research paper in hand, kind of shaking it up and down. Where could I begin?

It’s just such a monumental task to make that shift on a large scale. It often happens that in working with students who have suffered a trauma or who have been let down by their family or by the system, we just want to give them a break. As a result, alternative education can be filled with packets of busy work and boxes to check with very little meaningful learning going on. Not always. But sometimes. It comes from a good place. Someone should give these kids a break, right? But that’s just it. Compromising on their education, that’s not the break they need. More time? Sure. Fewer hoops to jump through? Absolutely. But not teaching them to think for themselves or to know themselves as effective participants in a community of learners? No. That’s not how we do it. It’s hard work, but it can be done. The students of El Nido are proof of that.

On that day after the Expo, I knew for certain. The students at El Nido (formerly SOS) were officially turtles no more. Once you have left that way of being, that way of orienting yourself to the challenges that you face, there’s no going back. What it amounts to is access, and access equals power. Power to move in one’s world with vision, understanding, and the confidence to engage in civic activities to effect change. It is possible to empower all of our youth in this way. What it takes is tenacity...and honoring. Honoring of the humans that they are and of the potential that is theirs—not just to be the recipients of a well-deserved “break,” but to rise to a high standard set gently and patiently by one who sees them as the competent and

intelligent beings that they undoubtedly are.

For me, I believe the pendulum has stopped swinging. The alternative education classroom is where I belong. For me, there is no greater reward in education than seeing young people awaken to their own potential. When we have kids who have become convinced, for whatever reason—discouraging or abusive families, negative/traumatic past experiences in school, barriers to staying focused in and out of the classroom (like hunger, homelessness, or crippling fear)—when they have become convinced that they are not capable learners, not smart or clever or effective, that is when we have to roll up our sleeves and work even harder. We have to be gentler and more patient than we’ve ever been, we have to be more creative and more inventive than we’ve ever been, and we have to shed our egos...entirely.

I’m willing to do this work, and I believe there are many who are willing to do this work. We might need some more training around trauma-informed practice—after all it’s a habit of mind to be cultivated, not a quick fix—but I believe that people who become educators want to take care of kids. Full stop. We want to lift them up. We have a long road ahead of us, but the change that will precipitate this shift toward empowering our underserved students involves raising the bar, not lowering it. It involves a lot of patience—a willingness to move in tiny increments and at what sometimes feels like a snail’s pace. And it involves insisting on the value of what we are sharing with our students—a willingness to keep showing up with the offering of education held out lovingly like a gift in our arms, for all the times that they reject it...until finally, they don’t. It’s exhausting, I know. But so worth it. May we merit the trust that is placed in us to steer our young people in a direction that will serve them and in so doing, may we serve their families and communities and the world beyond. May we give them all of ourselves for the time that they are in our care—every child deserves that. It’s some of the most important work on the planet.

**Abstract**

*Despite significant advances in research and practices, student problem behavior continues to be the leading factor for exclusion from educational environments. When these exclusions occur, students are often placed into restrictive alternative educational environments such as Court and Community Schools, and restrictive Special Education programs. Because problem behavior was often the preceding factor that led to the placement of students into these restrictive environments, educators often assume that the structure of behavioral supports provided must be different in kind from those offered at a traditional school setting. In contrast to this widely held belief, this paper's authors will outline specific examples of how two important variables, intensity and scope, can be adapted to modify School Wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (SW-PBIS) to meet the unique needs of students being served in restrictive and alternative educational environments. Links to specific resources and examples are embedded throughout this article.*

**Introduction**

Contemporary American schools are asked to provide broad services and supports to meet the academic, social/emotional, and behavioral needs of their students. To meet these needs, schools have begun to develop and deploy intervention structures based on public health models where prevention and intervention efforts are organized into multiple tiers of support. Broadly, these structures are referred to as Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS). These tiered public health structures include prevention efforts for all students, targeted interventions for some students, and individualized interventions for those that need this level of supports.

When student needs cannot be adequately addressed within this prevention and intervention structure at traditional school campuses, there exist alternative school environments for providing a different, non-traditional school experience. In instances where school behavior or contact with the juvenile justice system represents significant barriers for school success, students are often encouraged or required to attend court and community school programs. Although court and community schools (and other non-traditional school programs) serve a student population that

typically would require the most intensive interventions at a traditional school site, these schools should also invest in developing structured multi-tiered prevention frameworks to establish effective environments for preventing and systematically intervening on educational problems experienced by their students.

One evidence-based framework for organizing and deploying these evidence-based interventions in schools is the Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) framework. According to the National Technical Assistance Center on the topic, PBIS “is an evidence-based three-tiered framework for improving and integrating all of the data, systems, and practices affecting student outcomes every day” (OSEP Technical Assistance Center).

According to data available at PBIS Apps from 2019, the most recent complete school year, PBIS is being actively implemented by over 3,000 schools in California with 170 of these sites being alternative education sites.

The goal outcomes of PBIS include ensuring the academic and behavioral/social success of all students at a school site. To accomplish this, PBIS interconnects three



important elements: data, systems, and practices. Each of the core elements, defined in detail later in this article, are deployed with the unique school ecology and needs in mind, and are grounded in several documents that outline [district](#) and [site](#) implementation. Each of these core elements provides an opportunity to extend and/or intensify PBIS to best meet the needs of students attending court and community schools.

Given that school behavior continues to be the primary reason for exclusion from traditional school, this opportunity for extension and intensification of PBIS represents a needed consideration for court and community schools. This need is further evidenced by the relatively poor student outcomes represented by those students who attend behaviorally focused alternative education schools (Wilkerson et. al., 2016).

With the above realities in mind, this paper will overview how the key PBIS elements of Data, Systems, and Practices can be modified to best achieve student academic and social success within California’s court and community schools. Specific examples will be provided from Pathways iCARE, a community school operated by the Placer County Office of Education (PCOE) in Northern California.

**Data**

A critical feature of school-wide or facility-wide PBIS implementation at any site is using “data to monitor effective and equitable implementation and to guide decision making” (OSEP Technical Assistance Center). To be optimally effective, PBIS data must focus on student outcomes as well as staff implementation of selected practices. At most comprehensive K-12 public schools implementing PBIS, student outcome data consists of collecting and analyzing behavior referral data for major and minor behavioral infractions. These recorded behaviors have been selected and defined for that site based on their local context and needs. Staff implementation data is commonly gathered by utilizing fidelity tools such as the Tiered Fidelity Inventory (TFI; [PBISapps.org](#)) and the School-Wide Evaluation Tool (SET; [PBISapps.org](#)). Some programs also include additional outcome and fidelity tools as part of their ongoing data analysis, including staff and student surveys related to school climate and school safety,

social-emotional-behavioral risk screening tools, or other related risk indicators such as student attendance or grades.

Regardless of which data sources are selected by alternative sites, it is recommended that teams ensure that their data systems are thoughtfully planned to be efficient, relevant, timely, and accurate, while considering their unique context (Schuermann et. al., 2015).

In alternative education settings such as court and community schools, it is valuable to increase both the scope and intensity of outcome and fidelity measures to support improved decision making and accurate implementation. Often, the student population in these settings consists of a higher percentage of students with at-risk behaviors, disconnected or negative school experiences, and/or history of engaging in unexpected or disruptive behaviors in the school setting, and thus, a broader range of data sources will be helpful in adjusting the site’s systems and practices accordingly. The following are considerations for data adaptations in these types of alternative education settings:

**1. Scope of behavior infractions recorded:** In an alternative setting, it may be necessary to document a wider array of behaviors that may interfere with students’ social and academic success. Alternative education teams may identify minor infractions which have a strong possibility of escalating to more major issues; by tracking these infractions and engaging in troubleshooting/action-planning around the minor issues, it may help to stop problems before they start. For example, the Pathways iCARE PBIS team agreed to document when students were leaving class without permission (e.g., going to the bathroom during instruction/tests), to determine patterns of when and where students may have been attempting to escape/avoid academic tasks. Analyzing these data within their team meeting, the team was able to develop action plans related to increasing classroom engagement strategies and modifying site-wide protocols to address this minor infraction. After the implementation of these strategies, the team was able to evaluate whether these actions had had an impact on students using the bathroom as a class avoidance tactic. Similarly, the program agreed to document instances of minor “shadow-boxing” behavior, as that behavior often led to more escalated



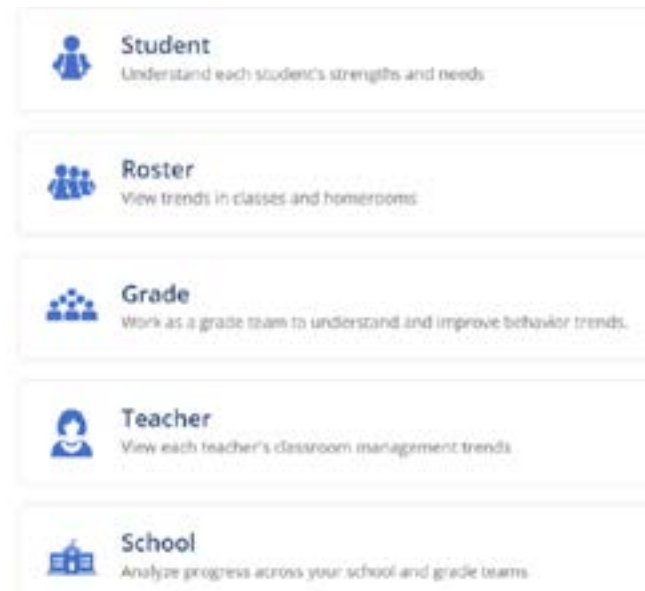
physical altercations. Documenting and analyzing “shadow boxing” trends allowed the site to quickly make decisions about practices to minimize this behavior, thus preventing more escalated incidents from occurring.

**2. Data on student acknowledgement:** Utilizing frequent, immediate, specific, and values-based social acknowledgement is a cornerstone of any effective PBIS program. However, many schools do not utilize their data on student acknowledgement as an information source. Alternative education sites can benefit several ways from analyzing and responding to student acknowledgement data. First, when staff are expected to track pro-social behaviors across students, it may serve to help increase staff focus on those positive skills and prevent teams from becoming focused only on challenging behaviors (Scheuermann et. al., 2015). Additionally, on an individual student level, these data can help the team troubleshoot and develop plans to support internalizing and/or externalizing behaviors by ensuring a rich and appropriate reinforcement schedule for the student. For example, if a teacher is concerned about a student’s disruptive behavior in class, such as swearing or off-topic conversations, it is beneficial to see how often the teacher is explicitly acknowledging the student for using school-appropriate language, raising their hand to be called on, and/or displaying self-control in class. If data indicates that the student is not being adequately recognized for their efforts or improvement in this area, then the team should enhance their use of acknowledgement strategies.

Similarly, acknowledgement data can be analyzed to determine class-wide and site-wide trends with respect to which behaviors staff are reinforcing most frequently. If staff are concerned with peer conflict or bullying, but the staff acknowledgements focus mostly on academic or on-task behaviors and not on peer support or collaboration behaviors, then the data support specific action planning steps related to targeted opportunities for acknowledgement.

Pathways iCARE community school utilizes the online student point system, LiveSchool, to deliver and track

points digitally, and to analyze student acknowledgement data ([www.whyliveschool.com](http://www.whyliveschool.com)). A variety of other online apps or programs are likely available which could also provide data on rates and types of social acknowledgement. Below is an image of the various data



dashboards available on LiveSchool.

When staff have access to their acknowledgement system trends, they can be guided through self-reflection and planning exercises that help them leverage the use of acknowledgement systems as a powerful classroom management tool. Click [here](#) for a link to an example self-reflection form utilized by PCOE's Pathways Charter schools.

**3. Data on student/staff engagement:** In alternative education settings, there are often many students who have a history of negative interactions with adults in the education system. Subsequent potential avoidance of adult educators can lead to a variety of academic or social-emotional-behavioral challenges. Students who do not feel seen or connected at school may be at increased risk for a variety of challenges and it is critical that staff at alternative education sites are vigilant about ensuring that all students feel seen, heard, and connected. One way to monitor this is utilizing staff survey data to track whether at least one staff member has had positive engagement and interactions with a student about something not

related to school. Each team needs to discuss and determine the frequency of this practice, based on their context as well as student population. Some sites do this at the beginning of each semester, by displaying pictures of all students in the staff meeting room, and having all staff put a sticker on the photo of every student that they know something personal about, or with whom they have had some sort of social connections. Other sites accomplish this by periodically filling out a spreadsheet, with each staff member checking off every student with whom they have had a positive social engagement about something unrelated to school. Either of these examples provide an easy visual reference for the team for which students may be overlooked socially and will allow the team to develop a plan to increase positive engagement with students. These data may also serve as helpful information when troubleshooting around students who are displaying attention-seeking behavior, in that it might lead the team to consciously increase their engagement with those students to even higher levels.

Another strategy for measuring positive engagement includes collecting data during classroom observations on the ratio of positive to negative/corrective interactions by staff through the day. This can be focused on interactions with individual students, or with the entire group. These data can then be utilized to inform coaching and training supports as needed.

**4. Student survey data:** All school sites should gather and actively respond to stakeholder feedback. Student feedback about school climate and culture is an essential data point for alternative education sites. [PBIS Assessment](#) (through the University of Oregon) offers student surveys which provide student input on categories such as school expectations, acknowledgement, discipline, safety, respect, and connections (School Climate Survey, Stakeholder Input and Satisfaction Survey: Student Middle/High). In addition, in California, schools have access to the California Healthy Kids Survey (CHKS; <https://calschls.org/>), which also provides student feedback in similar domains. On many of the survey items, the resulting data can be disaggregated by race/ethnicity and/or gender, allowing teams to drill down even further into perceptions across student groups. This data is helpful not only to teams as they pursue continuous

improvement within their programs, but it also provides a platform for discussions and action planning with the student body. Administration of these student surveys 2-3 times per year may be appropriate at alternative sites. This high frequency of survey use is especially important at court and community schools because there is often high student turnover, leading to shifts in the culture and perceptions of the student body. Working directly with groups of students to review their survey data, celebrate the strengths, and then solicit their feedback and suggestions, can be a powerful way to adapt program practices while providing students with a platform to be heard. An example of disaggregated student survey data can be seen [here](#).

**5. Frequency of analyzing student data:** Some alternative sites may serve a higher percentage of students with elevated social-emotional-behavioral needs compared to local traditional public schools. Therefore, it may benefit alternative education sites to review risk factor data sources on a more frequent basis to ensure timely connection to intervention supports. For example, Pathways iCARE community school holds intervention meetings where student data is reviewed 2-3 times per month, with an additional monthly “deep dive” intervention meeting that is reserved to talk about students with Tier III support needs. It may also be beneficial to utilize social-emotional-behavioral screening tools, such as the Student Risk Screening Scale ([SRSS-IE](#)), on a more frequent basis, as those tools may identify students with support needs who did not appear via other screening methods (e.g., attendance or behavior). In addition, some intervention data is shared with all staff on a daily basis, so that staff can provide celebrations and encouragement and/or modify supports in “real time” based on student progress, rather than waiting a week or more until an intervention meeting.

Another benefit of analyzing student data more frequently is that it allows for the detection of small improvements which can be shared with individual students. This practice of sharing data with a student helps to build momentum and provide timely recognition for their efforts. For example, for iCARE students participating in the Tier II attendance support intervention, or in the Tier II Check-In Check-Out (CICO) intervention, each student’s attendance data is reviewed with them every two weeks, and even the smallest improvements are celebrated. Similarly, for students who struggle with high rates of challenging behavior, their individual behavior referral data is

reviewed, and trends compared on a month-to-month basis. On a program-wide level, site data is analyzed monthly for behavior referrals, suspensions, attendance rate, and chronic absenteeism.

### Systems

Within the context of PBIS implementation, systems serve as the foundation to establish teaming structures, scheduling practices, staff selection, training and coaching procedures, and on-going data-based problem-solving routines ([OSEP Technical Assistance Center](#)). Thoughtfully planned and well-documented systems are the cornerstone to sustaining an effective PBIS framework at any school site. Due to the dynamic needs of the population served and the ongoing fluctuations in enrollment at alternative education sites, PBIS systems may need to be adapted in both scope and intensity. The following are adaptations to PBIS systems to be considered by alternative education sites.

**1. Frequency and content of team meetings.** Due to the higher percentage of students who demonstrate Tier II and III social-emotional-behavioral needs, many alternative education sites benefit from increasing the frequency and structure of their team meetings. This includes not only intervention meetings focusing on students who are requiring and receiving interventions, but also includes team meetings related to daily operations. In order to support all students in an alternative environment where changes occur daily, it is recommended that alternative sites develop a structure to ensure that all staff are informed about new information on a daily basis, and that they have a way to seek support in managing challenging or sensitive situations. For example, staff at Pathways iCARE meet each morning prior to school and follow a general structure during each of those meetings. Staff are expected to have reviewed the online Daily Briefing prior to the morning meeting, which includes information about new referrals, disciplinary actions, individual intervention supports, schedule changes, social-emotional-support needs of students, and reminders about action items discussed in PBIS meetings. The morning meeting structure includes a check-in with staff to see what supports they might need, opportunities for staff to ask clarification questions about information posted in the online Daily Briefing, and opportunities to share student successes and program support ideas. Staff were surveyed about their needs for ongoing communication and information prior to developing the structure for the Daily Briefing and morning meetings. A sample morning meeting agenda used by PCOE's community school can be

found [here](#).

**2. Team meeting participation.** At comprehensive school campuses, it is common to have a PBIS team where designated staff members participate in PBIS meetings and then are responsible for disseminating the information across other staff. However, in an alternative education environment, this is not always the best model. At Pathways iCARE, the team had initially set out to have half of the staff attend school-wide PBIS meetings, and the other staff attend the intervention meetings, with the expectation that all team members would be updated on the meeting that they did not attend. What this site discovered, however, was that each meeting was lacking information and feedback loops due to missing the voices of all key players. Additionally, there was often missing information leading to inconsistent practices being implemented across team members. Because of this, it is now standard practice to have all staff attend and participate in all PBIS meetings.

**3. PBIS Coaching Supports.** Procedural drift can occur at any school site, no matter the size or the make-up of the student body. However, alternative education sites may be more vulnerable to the possibility of drift as a result of high student turnover, as well as the challenges of supporting students with a higher level of need. Ongoing PBIS Coaching supports may need to occur on a more frequent and more individualized basis for court and community schools, due to their unique and fluctuating context. These sites may benefit from ongoing coaching supports related to fine-tuning the site's interventions, utilizing a variety of data sources for progress monitoring, determining when additional survey data may be required, and enhancing Tier I culturally responsive classroom management strategies. Staff collaboration with a PBIS coach may also be enhanced if the PBIS coach is familiar with the students and the context of the specific alternative program. For example, PBIS coaching has been enhanced at the PCOE community school when the PBIS coach is able to regularly spend time on site working with students and teachers within the program. Having a coach who is engaged with the student body and who understands the current school climate needs and issues is an integral part of effective and responsive PBIS coaching in alternative settings.



### Practices

With respect to the elements of PBIS, the practices represent the strategies that are deployed to support students at each tier of support ([OSEP Technical Assistance Center](#)). These PBIS practices center on a small set of research-validated strategies and include the defining and teaching of social expectations, the monitoring and acknowledging of these expected behaviors, and the prevention and response to problem behaviors (Sugai & Horner, 2002). As the level of student need increases, so does the intensity of these strategies and the extent that the practices will be selected based on systems and student-level data. More specifically, as student need increases, often so does the frequency, intensity, and the precision of these core practices. To put it another way, within contexts where student behavioral need is higher, practitioners will likely provide interventions more frequently, for longer periods of time, using more powerful reinforcers, and will rely on data to drive the use of strategies in a more precise manner. These changes can be seen within the context of Court and Community Schools in a number of ways and may include the following adaptations proposed by Simonsen and Sugai (2013) along with specific examples from the authors' practice:

#### Tier I Adaptations by Scope & Intensity

##### 1. Frequency of Teaching Behavior Expectations.

While it is common for traditional schools to explicitly teach social expectations at the beginning of the school year and after holiday breaks, Court and Community Schools will often need to teach and/or review these expectations at least weekly. This adaptation is due to two primary factors often observed in the Court and Community School setting: high baseline levels of unexpected or challenging behavior, and a higher rate of student enrollment and turnover throughout the school year. In addition, teachers at Court and Community Schools may need to engage in more frequent pre-corrections related to social expectations across the day (e.g., explicitly reminding students about expectations and options to handle potentially triggering situations, right before they occur). Although all students at

Pathways iCARE are taught the PBIS expectations in their initial enrollment, reviewing PBIS expectations as a group occurs at least once each semester, and targeted re-teaching occurs frequently throughout the year as indicated by behavior referral data.

**2. Scope of Behavior Expectations.** In addition to increasing the frequency of teaching, Court and Community Schools should also expand the scope of what is covered when reviewing social expectations. Often in traditional school settings, PBIS site teams will establish specific routines around teaching the site's behavioral expectations (i.e., three to five positively stated expectations) in a variety of settings and may also include specific social skill instruction. Within Court and Community Schools, the inclusion and systematic review of social skills and specific routines becomes even more necessary. Court and Community Schools deploying PBIS should explicitly define routines (e.g., entering the classroom and requesting help) and review and practice these routines on a set schedule and as data indicates. Behavior referral data can help inform the teams about what explicit behavior expectations should be defined and taught; for example, if many students in the program are receiving behavior referrals as a result of arguing with staff about assignments, then a specific behavior expectation to teach might be how to ask for clarification about a direction, or how to express displeasure in a manner which is appropriate for the school setting. Each teacher at a Court and Community site will likely need to outline their own specific classroom expectations, based on the structure and focus of their class.

**3. Student involvement in Tier I Practices:** One Tier I strategy that can be intensified in alternative education settings is the extent to which students are involved in problem solving and action planning related to PBIS practices and school climate. In addition to commonly utilized PBIS practices of having students provide feedback on school expectations, create signage about school rules, and participate in teaching expectations, it may also be helpful to deepen their engagement with the data analysis and problem-solving process. PCOE's

community school selects a variety of students for its leadership class, including students who may be struggling with behavior, attendance, or academics, but who are strong social leaders, and who are motivated to be involved in a positive manner within the school culture. Within that leadership class, students have been taught to analyze school behavior referral data and are guided to brainstorm potential solutions to the issues. In addition, leadership students are shown site-wide data related to which behaviors are most frequently reinforced, and asked for feedback about the implementation of the acknowledgement system (e.g., point values, what behaviors should be reinforced, suggestions about staff implementation, etc.). Leadership students are also responsible for developing lessons to present to the student body about site-wide expectations, and the rationale. Sample leadership class documents may be located here: [Introduction to analyzing behavior data, data analysis and action planning worksheet, guided project for students to develop an expectations lesson plan](#).

**4. School-wide reactive strategies focus heavily on Other Means of Correction:** Many students attending Court and Community Schools have a history of demonstrating unexpected, disruptive, or harmful behaviors in their previous school settings, which have resulted in exclusionary discipline practices. For many of those students, exclusionary practices have not served to remediate or change the pattern of maladaptive behaviors and have not built skills which are designed to address the issue. In fact, for many students, exclusionary discipline such as suspension may inadvertently reinforce the problem behavior, by allowing the student to escape/avoid the school context, and also to potentially access preferred activities while suspended. For these reasons, it is often beneficial for alternative education settings to focus heavily on other means of correction. Two of the other means of corrections frequently utilized by Placer County court and community schools include online social-emotional learning modules (<https://base.education/>) and structured facilitated conflict resolution and restorative conversations. These other means of

correction are also utilized as preventive supports in situations, with the intent of preventing a more serious situation from occurring. A description of how the BASE modules are utilized may be found [here](#), and a description of facilitated conversations may be found [here](#). In addition, disciplinary responses to some behaviors include loss of social privileges (e.g., student must sit in the office or the Learning Center during lunch or breaks), rather than consequences which exclude students from the academic environment, as these consequences are less likely to inadvertently reinforce academic avoidance behaviors.

#### **5. Specific student acknowledgement strategies:**

In addition to recognizing students for following school expectations, court and community schools often need to expand on specific pro-social behaviors that are strategically acknowledged. Due to a potentially higher frequency of challenging behaviors and potential social skill and performance deficits with some students in alternative programs, it can be beneficial to leverage the site's acknowledgement system to highlight targeted values and social skills. For example, if students are struggling with impulsive and off-task behavior, a prevention approach may include reinforcing students for instances of self-control when they are not displaying challenging behaviors. Or, if students are often challenging and arguing with teachers, they can be taught strategies for disagreeing in an appropriate manner and acknowledged for doing so rather than being combative. Since peer attention is often a driving force behind unexpected behaviors in the school setting, it can be beneficial to teach and acknowledge students for supporting their peers with positive behavioral choices, rather than encouraging their peers' maladaptive behaviors. In addition, student acknowledgement systems may focus on recognizing a growth mindset in students related to academic efforts and perseverance, because some students in these programs have not yet experienced high levels of academic success or fluency. Examples of specific behaviors which are recognized

and awarded points at PCOE's community school include: academic mentoring, behavior mentoring, demonstrating self-control, disagreeing in a respectful manner, integrity/above and beyond, no energy given to negative peer behavior, perseverance, academic excellence, active listening, asking for help, contributing to class discussion, in class on time and ready to work, being helpful, being on task, completing work, reading, writing, and raising hand.

Another adaptation of reinforcement strategies in Community School settings is to design group reinforcement contingencies specifically targeted to address behaviors which are maintained by peer attention. For example, behavior goals are set for groups of students, and the entire group earns an incentive or privilege when they meet the designated criteria. Sample group contingencies can be found here: [reduction in behavior referrals](#) and [reduction in tardies](#).

Lastly, in order to compete with the reinforcement history for challenging or unexpected behaviors (e.g., negative peer attention, task avoidance, etc.), it may be necessary to increase the frequency of reinforcement for targeted skills. At Pathways iCARE, students can trade in their school store points on a daily basis, in contrast with many comprehensive school sites where students can only exchange for items on a weekly or monthly basis. Additionally, the Pathways iCARE team observed more positive outcomes in student behavior when school points were directly exchangeable for items and privileges, rather than being utilized for drawings. Other positive behaviors are reinforced more frequently, due to being common opportunities for growth for some students; these include monthly perfect attendance breakfasts, and "Fun Friday" activities every two weeks for meeting the following criteria: passing all classes, no unexcused absences, and no behavior referrals during that time period. Students also intermittently are nominated for awards such as "Most Improved Class Grade," "Recognition for Improvements in Self-Control and Behavior,"

"Most Improved Attendance," and "Respectful Toward Staff and Peers". These types of recognitions provide opportunities to celebrate students who are making an effort in the right direction, but who may have not previously had experiences in a school setting where they received any kind of superlative award or recognition. Finally, all staff on site also commit to regularly calling, emailing, and/or sending "Great News!" postcards to students' parents, guardians, and/or probation officers to share positive feedback about their student's progress, striving for the goal that guardians will be contacted more frequently by the school to provide positive feedback about their student.

#### Tier II & III Adaptations

**1. Intensified elements of Tier II interventions:** For students with elevated levels of social-emotional-behavioral needs, *Tier II interventions* (i.e., interventions provided to a small number of students that are not fully benefiting from Tier I supports) may be warranted. In addition to the core features of Tier II interventions utilized at many schools, it is often effective to increase the intensity of Tier II intervention elements for students in alternative settings. For example, Check-In Check-Out (CICO) is a commonly-utilized Tier II intervention, where comprehensive schools often utilize the same feedback form and daily goals for each student, with brief morning and afternoon check-ins with a mentor and access to a standard incentive when a student meets their daily goal. However, in the context of a Community School site, Pathways iCARE staff have observed increased positive outcomes with CICO when intensifying some of the core features. Each student nominated for CICO works with a mentor to develop their own individualized goals based on the areas where they struggle the most. Expected behaviors related to CICO are also discussed and/or role-played with the student prior to launching the intervention; for example, a mentor/staff member might model options for responding to a lower score delivered by a teacher, and then role-play those

potential trigger situations with the student so it is less likely to be an issue if they receive disappointing scores/feedback. The student and mentor also discuss options for incentives which are motivating to the student; in addition to a standard choice menu of gradually more valuable incentives, students may also be given the option to earn rewards for them and a selected peer (e.g., if many of their challenging behaviors are an attempt to gain peer attention/approval), or, to earn a reward that provides a break in an appropriate manner (e.g., “break passes” for students who display escape/avoidance behaviors). For some students who demonstrate an extremely high rate of unexpected behaviors during the school day, their CICO may be modified to include a midday incentive for meeting their goal halfway through the day. There are also different levels of check-ins with staff, and more intensive progress monitoring options available. For example, students work with a staff member to analyze their CICO progress data, as well as analyze whether there is an improving trend with their behavior referrals since starting CICO. Students who are on probation are often encouraged to share data summaries of their progress with their probation officers and/or judge.

**2. Proportion of students who may demonstrate need for Tier II/III interventions:** Many of the students who are referred to Court and Community Schools are enrolled there as a result of displaying unexpected, disruptive, unsafe, or illegal behaviors in other environments. As a result, there may be a higher percentage of students at Court and Community Schools who require Tier II or III interventions. Therefore, the commonly described distribution of need described in PBIS programs in comprehensive settings is not a fit for many Court and Community sites; there will likely be more than 8%-20% of students who require Tier II and III supports. As a result, either there will be more students who are actively receiving Tier II or III supports, or the Tier I systems and practices may be adapted to include “pushing down” Tier II supports to Tier I (e.g., in the case of some

alternative education sites that implement CICO for all students). Even with intensive Tier I supports, it may be more realistic to expect that between 30-50% of students in alternative education sites may be in need of additional Tier II or III supports, and for the site to plan accordingly. The selection and design of specific Tier II and III supports must also be intentionally matched to the context of the current student body’s needs.

#### Summary

Court and Community Schools often serve students with higher social-emotional-behavioral needs compared to comprehensive school campuses. In addition, many of the students who attend alternative settings have likely had fewer positive academic experiences in their previous settings, which can lead to academic disengagement. Despite these challenges and support needs, PBIS’s three-tiered system of supports can be effective in serving all students, as long as the data, systems, and practices include adaptations in both scope and intensity.

For any questions regarding the information or examples provided in this article, please contact the authors at [kwood@placercoe.org](mailto:kwood@placercoe.org) or [luanderson@placercoe.org](mailto:luanderson@placercoe.org)

#### References

Scheuermann, Brenda; Nelson, C. Michael; Wang, Eugene W.; Bruntmeyer, Tichel. (2015) Monitoring Process and Outcomes for Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports in Residential Settings: Better Uses of Data, Residential Treatment for Children & Youth, 32:4, 266-279, DOI: 10.1080/0886571X.2015.1113455

Simonsen, Brandi; Sugai, George. (2013) PBIS in alternative settings: Positive support for youth with high-risk behavior. Education and Treatment of Children, v36 n3 p3-14 Aug 2013.

Sugai, G., & Horner, R. (2002). The evolution of discipline practices: School-wide positive behavior supports. Child & Family Behavior Therapy, 24(1-2), 23–50.

Wilkerson, K.; Afacan, K.; Perzigian, A.; Justin, W.; Lequia, J.; (2016) Behavior-focused alternative schools: Impact on student outcomes. Behavioral Disorders, 41(2), 81-94, Feb 2016

Prior to being asked to attend PBIS Tier I training with my district Leadership Team, I thought that PBIS was generally used in elementary schools. As I sat through the training, it quickly became apparent that while there would need to be adjustments made, many aspects of traditional PBIS could be incorporated into our Court and Community School environment. The focus for this presentation is our Student Incentive Program. Our goals in the development of the incentive program were to increase attendance and lower behavior incidents that led to students being removed from class.

#### Incentive Program:

We have a multi-tiered incentive program.

1. Staff use RedCritic as a platform to award points to students for meeting certain criteria. Each student is given an account that all staff members have the ability to award points to. Each teacher/staff member is able to give points and leave a message for the student letting them know what behavior earned them points. There are established school wide parameters:

- One point per attendance per period (teachers input)
- 10 points per day for leaving cell phone home (office inputs)

Otherwise, teachers have the flexibility to award students for behaviors of their choosing: work completion, citizenship, etc.

Support staff award points for anything that they witness that follow our school Matrix. Our Independent Studies program also uses RedCritic and awards points for work completion and attendance.

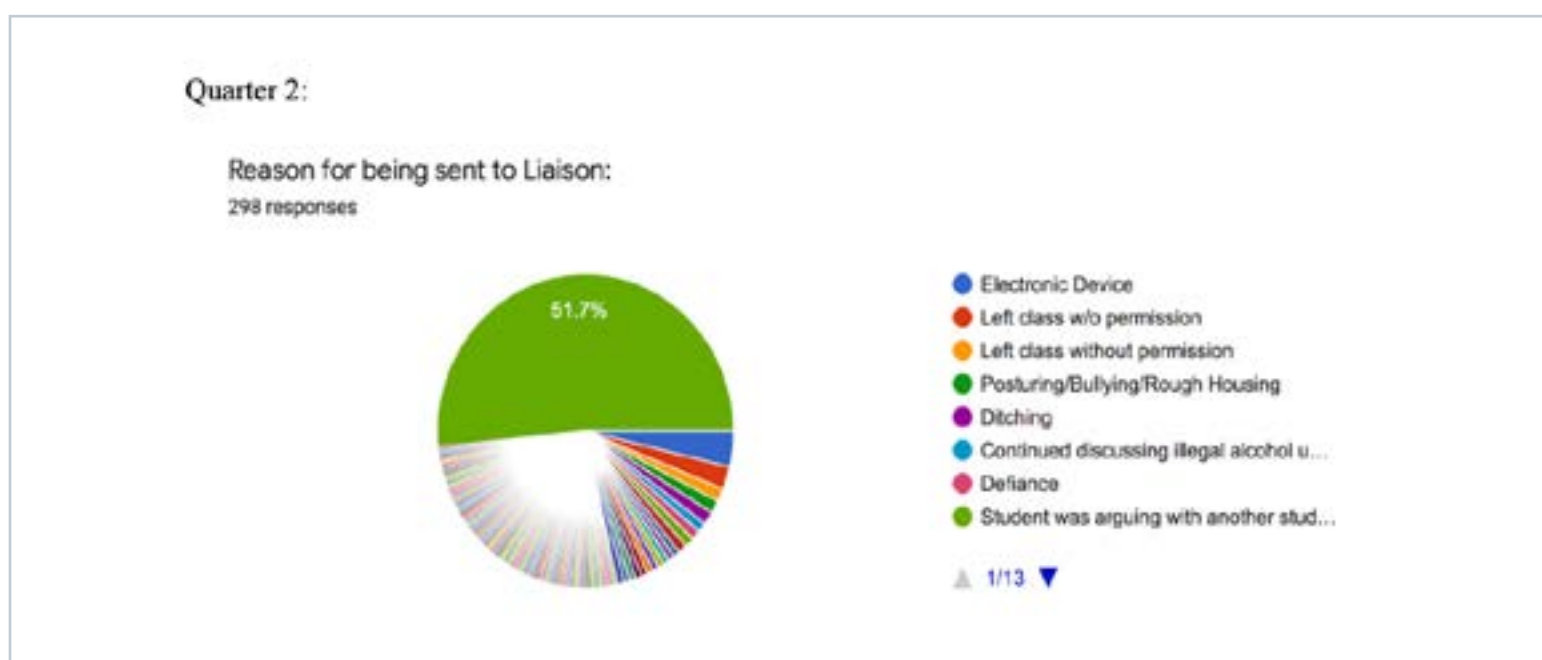
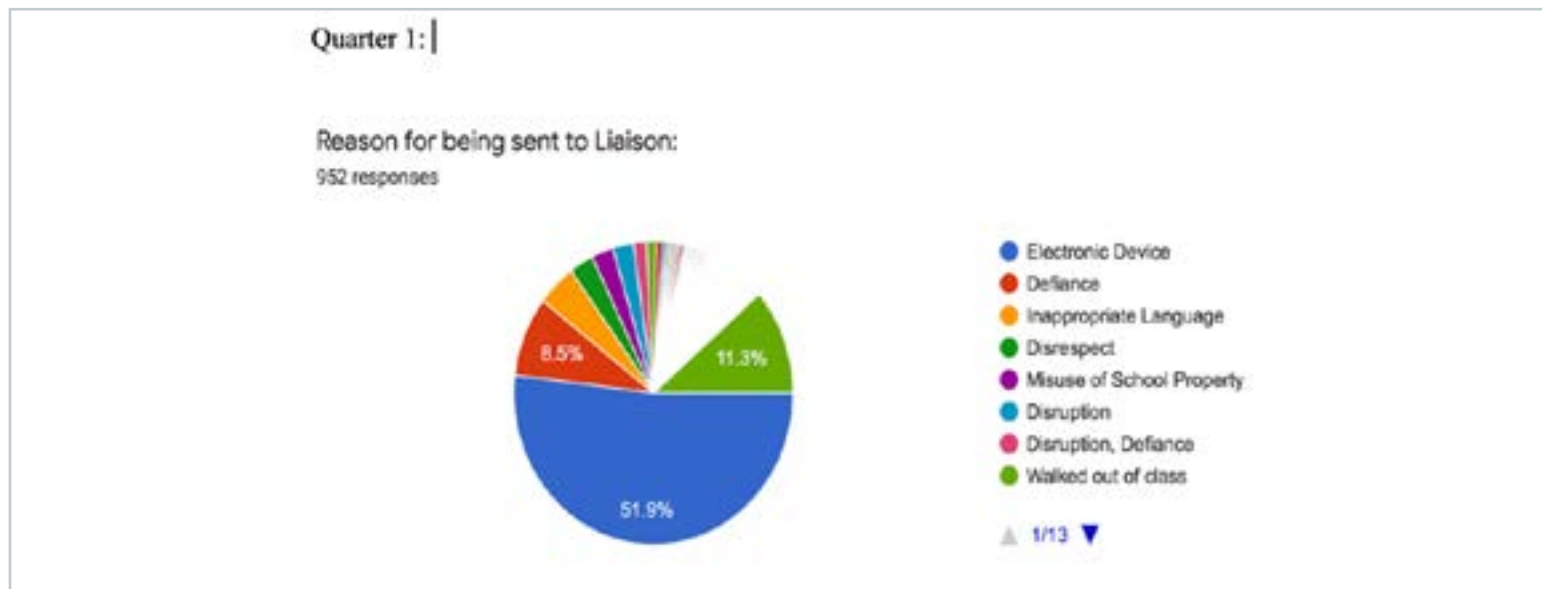
Every Thursday during their advisory period, students log onto their RedCritic account and order from our STRIVE Store using the points they have earned. They can order school clothing, such as STRIVE hoodies, beanies or t-shirts, as well as food items like Gatorade and beef jerky. Students can use their weekly points or bank them for items worth a higher point value such as a lunch delivered from a local restaurant. We fundraise to pay for most of the items in the student store. Time in the game room is an example of something students can purchase that does not have an ongoing expense. Students order on Thursday and have to attend school on Friday to receive their items. This encourages better attendance as an added bonus.

2. The second part of our incentive program is a quarterly field trip. Students who have a 2.0 Grade Point



Average, 85% attendance and no suspensions are invited to a field trip at the end of each quarter. There are separate trips for Daily High School, Middle School and Independent Studies students. We look for field trips like the Monterey Bay Aquarium, San Jose Tech Museum and the San Francisco Exploratorium that provide free field trips for schools.

3. Spinning wheel: Students who attend school Monday through Friday each week are able to spin a prize wheel. They spin the wheel on Fridays and receive their prize on the following Monday; they have to be at school to receive their prize. This encourages higher attendance on both Fridays and Mondays which have traditionally been days of lower student attendance for our school.



While it is Valley Community Atwater's first year of PBIS Implementation, we have already seen huge benefits in the areas of attendance and behavior.

Attendance has risen over 12% since incentives have been implemented, from Quarter 1: 56.87% to Quarter 2: 69.07%. Behavior incidents from 1st quarter to 2nd quarter when the incentive program was enacted went from 952 incidents to 298 incidents.

As evidenced by the graphs above, one of the most pervasive reasons for being sent out of the classroom in Quarter 1 was for misuse of electronic devices (mainly personal cell phones). The school developed a new cell phone policy that was implemented in Quarter 2 along with more targeted incentives for appropriate use of cell phones during instructional time. This led to a 68% reduction in students being sent out of the classroom, thereby keeping students in the classroom engaged in learning.

Ms. Alvarado, a veteran teacher and the current middle school teacher for VCS Atwater reported that RedCriter points and the spinning wheel have both been working well for her students. She also believes that the field trips are a great incentive.

During our January LCAP meeting, all students surveyed stated that they liked the incentive program we began this year. They, of course, had several suggestions as to how we can expand upon the program, and we are considering their suggestions as we assess this year's successes and begin planning our next steps towards increased student success.

**SPSSC**  
 Student Programs and Services  
 Steering Committee  
*Juvenile Court, Community and Alternative School  
 Administrators of California (JCCASAC)*

Pamela McGee is a 24-year veteran of the Office of the Fresno County Superintendent of Schools, which oversees Alice M. Worsley School located at the Fresno County Juvenile Justice Campus. She founded the book club along with Michelle Trevino, the Worsley Teacher Librarian, through a grant from the [American Library Association](#), which provides books and material for 10 students per club. Worsley received two club grants in 2018-19.

Finding a safe place to discuss books that stretched students' thinking and challenged their perspectives was a primary goal of the Worsley Book Club at the Fresno County Juvenile Justice Campus. We were looking for a way for students to learn the love of a good story and the power of reading to help us discuss important ideas of race, belonging, and perception of those different from us.

We also hoped for students to have a deeper and more self-guided experience with the books than they sometimes have with the ones that are assigned in class. We wanted students to WANT to come to each Saturday session, since each

was voluntary, and we wanted students to provide a positive incentive for students to maintain good behavior between sessions.

Over the past 10 years, the American Libraries Association (ALA) has sponsored a grant program titled "Great Stories Club," built specifically as a thematic reading and discussion program that engages underserved teens through literature-based library outreach programs. Alice Worsley School

participated in several past grant opportunities, including in 2007 and 2008, and the most recent cycle of grants in 2018-19. Worsley School wrote for and received two grants in that school year, providing the opportunity to serve students for a full year with



©Photo by Aleksandra Appleton, The Fresno Bee

Reading makes immigrants of us all. It takes us away from home, but more important, it finds homes for us everywhere.

—Jean Rhys

sessions on two themes: "Empathy: the Cost of Switching Sides," and "What Makes a Hero?"

The Book Club was a new iteration of Saturday School offering. The Club was designed as an enrichment experience, and students were exposed to a new expectation of completing all their reading and homework outside of class time to maintain status, a change from the daily class expectations, where all work is completed within the school day. We were proud of students rising to this more rigorous expectation to participate. Only for positive behaviors between sessions could students maintain their status to participate in the Club. This became a strong motivator for students who wanted to remain, which raised the profile of the Club and its status for students as we progressed through sessions. We had seven students who were released throughout the year, and each asked Probation if they could come by when we were both on campus, say goodbye, and receive their certificates of participation. Each has spoken of the substantial difference the program made for him or her.

#### Collaborators

The eight 3-hour Book Club sessions we held were mainly co-facilitated by Michelle Trevino, Teacher Librarian, and Pamela McGee, Director (ELA/ELD/

HSS), who also serves as an instructional coach for the site. Two additional site teachers, Bill Feaver and Rebecca Thao, assisted for two particular sessions. Bill, Michelle, and Pam are connected with the Freedom Writers Teacher Institute, and through this connection, the site coordinated a session with Erin Gruwell, Freedom

Writers Founder, to provide all students an opportunity to hear a presentation. Book Club students then shared lunch with Ms. Gruwell privately, talking to her about their experiences in the Book Club and in life. As part of this session, students received a signed copy of *The Freedom Writers Diary*, sponsored by our Court Schools PTA, which sponsored Ms. Gruwell's speaking fee, purchased additional books for the students in Book Club, and provided lunch for Ms. Gruwell and the students.

The two main co-facilitators planned and worked together to select activities and supplemental materials to

both teach the theme and to engage students in deeper discussions of the purposes of the authors. These activities included letter-writing to authors (*All American Boys*); reading informational articles on cerebral palsy (*Stuck in Neutral*), and lyric analysis (song "Birmingham Sunday"), as well as engaging in poetry-writing modeled on Walt Whitman and Langston Hughes (*March III*). Students also started the series with a Team Huddle activity to build trust, and created their own sketches following the style of the *All American Boys* cover, as a few examples of the activities in which students engaged. The training, guides, and resources provided by ALA and other grantees were



very helpful in finding a direction—we used some of these “as is,” but we more often built activities that we thought would resonate with our particular students, especially as we typically had the same students for each of the books and sessions. We created PowerPoints to focus the students initially, but most sessions also incorporated short writing and discussions of key questions about the content of the books. Our goal of simply widening the reading students were doing and facilitating what it meant to talk about more than the plot (the ideas) of a book was a guiding factor in the planning and collaboration for sessions.

**Impact**

From the first session on, we had a waiting list for entry into Worsley Book Club. Students routinely stopped the teacher-librarian in classrooms and in the halls to ask if they could participate. Probation staff also provided input on student recommendations, which enhanced collaboration between teaching and probation staff about the purpose and structure of the Book Club, a unique Saturday School offering. Students became more aware of our local PTA support, and could speak to others about the ways in which adults on campus were choosing to bring new opportunities to serve them. We routinely had students thanking us and asking if they could check out additional books that we mentioned or discussed during the Book Club, which continues to the present time. The positive “buzz” about the Book Club energized and increased discussion of reading, discussion, and the description of being “a reader” at our campus.

**Lessons Learned**

As we provided services to students during Saturday School sessions, we learned the importance of communication with the Probation staff about schedule conflicts for students in certain pods or who were entering new phases of programming during their stay with us. We were able to

experiment with widening the impact by splitting the Saturdays into two parts: one just for male students, and one reserved for female students. This helped us provide a more focused environment for both students and staff in terms of monitoring. Although we initially envisioned the Club staying mostly static in terms of membership, we learned that we would always have movement each session because of the nature of our population, so we became more proactive about checking release dates, conflicts, and student status to attend Saturday School in advance. We always also needed additional copies of books for this reason. Fortunately, through private and PTA donations, we were able to supply these extra books.

**Future Plans**

We do plan to apply for future grants, but we also want to make an alternative plan for Book Club enrichment regardless of grant availability. The Book Club has been such a positive incentive for our students that we are looking at ways to move it to an after-school program setting, or budget for it as a regular part of school offerings. For further information or locally-developed materials, please contact Teacher-Librarian Michelle Trevino at [mtrevino@fcoe.org](mailto:mtrevino@fcoe.org).

**How You Can Participate**

Schools and programs interested in receiving notification of future Great Stories Book Grants should sign up for the ALA e-Newsletter at <http://www.programminglibrarian.org/about/get-our-e-newsletter>.

To use free resources developed by the Great Stories Grant organizers and partners, visit <https://apply.ala.org/greatstories/resources>.

**Media Coverage**

We had a front-page article in The Fresno Bee about our program. Please access it here: <https://www.fresnobee.com/news/local/education/article224971120.html>

I was that child. You know me. I sat in all your classrooms. I was the one that was “too”—too social, too verbal, too disrespectful, too distracted, too smart, and too much. I challenged you every day. You talked about me in the staff lounge, and assumptions were made about my home life, my future, and my worth. These assumptions prevented my teachers from knowing me as an individual. Placed on the “girl track,” I took model office and home economics classes, no advanced academics. I had no choices and no voice.

Growing up in semi-rural Michigan, raised by a single mother, things were not easy. My family, part of the rustbelt movement from Tennessee, migrated north to be laborers on the assembly lines. Education wasn't valued. If I were lucky, I would be a bookkeeper at the gravel pit where my uncles worked. No one directed me,

supported my need for education, or taught me how to “do school.” Though my mother expected more for me, the educational disconnect existed both at home and at school. My mother trusted the system to prepare me for what she expected—college. My mother said, “You will go to college.” Then, Ms. Weber, you saw me. It was that relationship, that single interaction with a teacher, that made the difference for me. She gave me faith in my ability to learn, so I drove on, following my instinctive belief that education would give me the key to a future different than the one closing in on me. I was as surprised as everyone one when I was admitted to college.

Yet higher education was another foreign land with no roadmap. Again, I was lost in a traditional system with no choice or voice and unable to navigate. I was lost with a drive and a need to learn, ill-prepared, with no guidance. The dominant pedagogy of my professors was that I was a vessel in need of filling. If that vessel was filled, I was educated. I was not cut out for this.

Not surprisingly, I was asked to leave one college and graduated from another with an uninspiring GPA. I still wanted more. Ironically, I chose to teach. I found a program in Maine that offered a teaching credential and applied. I was rejected. This was the price for my disengagement. My mistakes limited my opportunities

to pursue my dreams. I told the admissions officer that I was coming anyway. She insisted I was not admitted. I called her daily as I drove from Minnesota to Maine, reminding her that I was

coming and expected to become a teacher. When I showed up, she applauded my perseverance and found a way to admit me. I graduated with a 4.0.

As a teacher, my first instinct when meeting a child is to build a relationship based on trust and respect. I see all that they are and all that they can become, including their hopes, dreams, and desires. I never felt fully educated until I was sure that I was seen and understood. In the house that is education, educators are the door, allowing students into the secrets of the nurturing yet structured interior. My students come

I was that child. You know me. I sat in all your classrooms. I was the one that was “too”—too social, too verbal, too disrespectful, too distracted, too smart, and too much. I challenged you every day. You talked about me in the staff lounge, and assumptions were made about my home life, my future, and my worth.

to school having experienced trauma to be addressed within our educational system with restorative practices. Students learn from mistakes if welcomed back into a school community. After all, none of our students should be judged by their worst day. Students need not fight for what is theirs. It is by making that connection with a child and knowing them inside and out that will change the dynamic from making decisions FOR a child—to WITH them.

As an educator, mentors have guided me. Mentors helped me tap into my strengths and frame my work. I learned from mentors to have difficult conversations; to discipline with kindness and compassion; to lead through

adversity; to create spaces worthy of our children. I hear them as I make decisions. I hear Cheryl telling me to hold people accountable. I hear Tom telling me all

fire drills are real. I hear Angela when I create culturally responsive lessons. I hear Father Boyle reminding me, "Real justice restores by loving people into their wholeness." Through in-depth conversation and action steps, I applied my learning to improve the schools I lead, creating space for equity and agency for my students and my staff. I have mentored many students over the course of my career and have seen them grow into strong and capable adults. Yesterday I heard from Dimitris, who was justice-involved and (like me) was "too," to say he'd been accepted into the Doctoral program at UC Davis in Educational Leadership. I am

committed to the educational power of mentorship.

Having been a disenfranchised and disengaged learner, I can spot my people. My ability to find the light in a child that will help them move forward is my superpower. My goal is to create learning environments and educational systems that don't require superpowers to reach students. We all have the capacity to bring light into a student's life. We must delve into students' needs, hear their voices, and support them, giving them choices as they find their way.

**Having been a disenfranchised and disengaged learner, I can spot my people. My ability to find the light in a child that will help them move forward is my superpower.**

All my work is motivated by my conviction that education is a fundamental right of all human beings. Empowering students with a substantive education should not require

superhuman strength. Instead, creating a system that applies morally smart, culturally responsive, and equity-based pedagogy structures is the house I call education. I do what I do for all the young people who are "too much" and have spent their entire educational life kicking down doors to meet their needs. I do this because I have kicked down my share of doors, demanded support, asked for help, and found my path. I do this because I don't want any child to feel that their "tooness" is a problem—it's their superpower.

By: Rami Christophi, Project Director I, Title I, Mark Newman, Teacher & Parent Liaison, and Jael Ovalle, Program Manager, Parent Education

Los Angeles County Office of Education  
February 24, 2020

"I am calling from Central Juvenile Hall with good news about your child!" is a phrase no parent of an adjudicated minor involved with the criminal justice system in Los Angeles expects to receive while their child is in custody; or, ever.

However, since 2016, families of every student under in Los Angeles Court Schools receive at least one of these positive calls from a teacher, a counselor or other staff from the school, every week. During these brief opportunities, schools connect with parents at a personal, intimate level. Over time, a student-centered relationship flourishes.

Today, parents in Los Angeles County Office of Education (LACOE) respond extensively to invitations to participate in classes, workshops and activities designed to support their student's academic achievement. These positive relationships have given direction to the work of the Parent Education and Consultation Program (PECP). Since its inception in 2016, PECP has implemented family engagement practices that result in constructive interactions with parents. Attendance to PECP learning opportunities has increased upwards of 350% each year. Parents are now collaborating with PECP to guide

its work of supporting families, writing curriculum for parenting classes, and providing professional development to educators on effective ways to work with families. All this, at a third of the cost of programs for family engagement contracted prior 2016.

### Effective Practices

#### Listening!

As schools become increasingly more diverse, they need to listen to what parents say is important to their family. This is true for all

**"I am calling from Central Juvenile Hall with good news about your child!" is a phrase no parent of an adjudicated minor involved with the criminal justice system in Los Angeles expects to receive while their child is in custody; or, ever.**

schools, but it is a priority in alternative education, where the household's priorities shift when their minor becomes involved in the juvenile justice

system. Parents with adjudicated students need specific skills and knowledge to navigate their new reality. Before the grandmother at a visiting center in a Juvenile Court School can think of her student's credit recovery progress, she has to decide what steps to take to advance her grandchild's court case.



PECP’s curriculum is the product of these listening sessions. During the needs assessment phase of the program, parents provided input on the topics that are relevant to them. It is no surprise to learn that their main concern is meeting their child’s and family’s social-emotional needs. Specifically, parents reported a need for hope, motivation, and resources on parenting strong-willed adolescents. They also wanted to become aware of social issues affecting their children’s behaviors, including how to monitor their social media presence, violence and substance abuse prevention, and learning to navigate the juvenile criminal system.

PECP incorporated this feedback into the curriculum to offer parents abundant events to acquire these skills and knowledge. There are over one hundred workshops scheduled every year, where families can meet their expressed needs. All caregivers receive invitations to participate in academic learning opportunities, where they plan for their student’s future college attendance, career and technical education, learn about the school’s academic counseling services, and receive information on credit recovery plans for their students. Parenting classes, specifically designed to support strong-willed adolescents are also available to all parents.

**Building Relationships**

Communication between school and home traditionally involves sending letters, e-mails and placing phone calls. However, parents with students in alternative educational settings have expressed a desire to build a sense of community, focused on building relationships and networks that support them as they navigate their student’s

cases and conditions. PECP is intentional in its efforts to develop relationships in support of family engagement. Teachers, counselors and other staff from LACOE’s alternative educational sites sign-up to become Parent Liaisons. They receive compensation of up to four hours per week at their current rate, to conduct parent education and consultation activities and place phone calls to develop relationships with families from their schools. Central office Title I funds support these functions. All parent liaisons participate in a weeklong professional development session every year, to equip them with evidence-based practices on building relationships with all caregivers. This includes collaborating with all other agencies that work with minors while they are in juvenile detention sites. These collaborative efforts are carried out by individuals with direct access to the students and can respond to the parents’ inquiries on the wellbeing of the minor under our care.

**Bringing the Experts**

While Parent Liaisons lead the work of engaging families in the education of their children, they are not experts on all the topics that are important to caregivers. PECP collaborates with community-based organizations, county agencies, local universities, the probation department and other stakeholders to book expert speakers to address families on specific subjects. For example, probation officers may be scheduled to speak to parents in attendance about protocols and procedures while visiting children. Parent Liaisons create a yearly calendar of events that includes at least two workshops a month. The calendar is balanced in topics: social-emotional, academic, parenting,

community services, after-care services, and resources. Additionally, these abundant forums offer opportunities to collect parents’ input on federal and state programs that mandate parent consultation.

**Accessibility**

PECP invites all families to participate in all workshops. These learning opportunities take place at different times and locations throughout the county to accommodate participants’ schedules and places of residence. A family whose student attends school in a distant location, may have the opportunity to attend a free workshop near his/her community. All workshops and classes take place in English and Spanish utilizing the bilingual skills of parent liaisons, school staff, or probation officers. PECP selects expert speakers who are bilingual; and when that is not possible, their organization provides a bilingual team member to support communication during the workshops.

**A Parent Liaison’s Perspective**

*Contributed by Mark Newman, Teacher and Parent Liaison for Renaissance Principal Administrative Unit (PAU)*

Becoming a Parent Liaison for an alternative learning site required additional duties and

responsibilities. It felt overwhelming to have the goal of engaging the families of our students in the education of their children, as our PAU extends hundreds of miles around the County of Los Angeles. However, a voice in my head reminded me that there was one main purpose to this new assignment: Building positive relationships with parents. It occurred to me, “Come from your heart, impact as many parents, families by bringing them to parent events and the rest will take care of itself!”

**I am part therapist, social worker, empathetic parent, teacher, outreach worker, and just another person who understands and cares.**

After two years as the Parent Liaison, I believe that my greatest impact and most profound moments are not individual or with one parent or family. My greatest success has come from connecting at a personal level with parents, grandparents, relatives and siblings.

It is not one moment or one event, but the culmination of hours of hard work and commitment to these families even when they seem to have given up and cannot see the light. It is reaching out continually and not accepting excuses or doubt. I could say I approach each family with ruthless compassion because I have seen what positive parent involvement can do in the lives of our students.

My outreach entails listening to their stories of pain and frustration, and wearing a variety

of hats. I am part therapist, social worker, empathetic parent, teacher, outreach worker, and just another person who understands and cares. Life is not always easy for these families. They are dealing with loss, incarceration, poverty, and school failure. I might be the only person who reaches out to them with a caring hand and a positive outlook. My message is simple: I might not be in your shoes, or know all your family's challenges, but together I promise we can make it better if you trust me and participate in our family activities. I will help you by opening the doors of our schools so you can be involved in educational, informational, rewarding parent events. That will be our starting point.

Yes, I give out flyers, make a variety of parent calls, engage in animated conversations about upcoming parent events, and even welcome them to the annual Parent Conference. Almost anyone can do that; but it is how you speak with and relate to parents. My goal is to understand them, to get to know who they are. When we speak, I am empathetic and compassionate; and I remind them that I care and that they matter. I think I am successful because I am genuine. During our parent events, I make sure to take time and welcome each participant. When they leave, I sincerely

thank them. There is appreciation on both sides and gratitude. Often long after the parent event is over and most families have left, I am still speaking with a family or two. The discussions range from helping them find a way out of the chaos their child has created, to supporting them in finding a counseling or drug intervention program. We stay in touch and I do my best to refer them where they need to go. What they do not often realize is this is only the beginning of our relationship and we are in this together.

I remind all the families that I am here in any way possible. We are in this battle together, for the long haul. One could say my position as Parent Liaison is more like a Life Liaison. I would not have it any other way!

We stay connected and each parent knows I am available long after the event is over and they have gone home. Some parents call with questions or concerns about help for their child or issues with the school. There is no

problem too small or unimportant. Making time for each parent, building connections with each family is my responsibility as Parent Liaison. Every parent, every family matters and every child counts.

I remind all the families that I am here in any way possible. We are in this battle together, for the long haul. One could say my position as Parent Liaison is more like a Life Liaison. I would not have it any other way!

At the Literacy and Book Fair Family Day at the Park in Stockton, they set up a booth to give young children a quick lesson in how to play the ukulele. They also spend most Wednesdays with a class of third-graders, helping the young students with their reading skills and leading them through art activities.

They are the leadership students at the one.Charter - Academy of Visual and Performing Arts, an alternative education charter school operated by the San Joaquin County Office of Education. They're in their first year in a new leadership class at the school and they are just getting started.

At their first school meeting of the third quarter at their school, which is on East Bianchi Street in Stockton, they brainstormed ideas of what they wanted to offer the community at the Stockton Earth Day Festival. They were leaning toward pulling together information about local hikes and were researching information on the health benefits of hiking that they would share with kids coming to their booth.

Students in the class say they've been honing their communication, leadership, and other skills, but there are lots of other reasons they've enjoyed this new experience.



It's fun, said Nisha. The 17-year-old junior said she thought it would be a good experience on her way to a career in child development, but that's not what's most rewarding about it. "It's just being with the kids and seeing them smile."

She was in a group of four leadership students planning art activities to do with their third-grade reading buddies at TEAM Charter School across the street to coincide with upcoming holidays. Nisha had Easter; Destiny was planning for St. Patrick's Day; and Aja

was in charge of Valentine's Day.

Aja, 17 and a junior, said the students and teachers at the school were already a tight-knit group. "We respect each other like family," she said. Being in the leadership class helps students in the class form even closer bonds, she

and her classmates said.

The leadership class was new at the school last year. Teacher Byron Clark got the students together for their first meeting, but it was the students, themselves, who chose how they would reach out and try to impact their communities.

It's important to teach students how to be good citizens and help them carry that into their adult lives. He said his students are learning about the work it takes to do that -- and why it's worth it.

A book inspired by a viral video is helping new cadets at the Discovery ChalleNge Academy to learn the ropes of the residential military-style program designed to put at-risk youth on the right path and give them the tools to stay on it.

Written by William H. McRaven, a former Navy SEAL and retired admiral, the book starts with a simple premise: Start each day by making your bed, because the little things can change your life.

"Make Your Bed" sprung from a commencement address McRaven gave at the University of Texas at Austin in 2014. The original video of the speech has since been viewed millions of times on YouTube.

It's also a philosophy that has a lot in common with the Academy, which functions as a collaboration between the California National Guard and the San Joaquin County Office of Education, where cadets don't earn the right to wear their uniforms until they learn, among other things, how to make their beds to the exact specifications of the Academy.

Mastering the initial tasks, learning to do them well, and having the discipline to do them every day -- it helps build the foundation beneath the cadets as they continue to grow toward their completion of the program and into the world beyond.

And Make Your Bed is a manual, of sorts, that they start reading in the early weeks of the 22-week residential program. All the SJCOE educators and Cal Guard cadre at the academy have already read it.

On a recent morning, cadets' beds had already been made and inspected by the time they filed into teacher Steve Filkins' English classroom.



He gave them a writing assignment based on the book. One question asked students to analyze a quote in the book and relate it to high school: "How you handle little tasks in life is a great indicator of how you will handle bigger, more important tasks later."

The question made Cydney, 17, think about how completing homework assignments can lead to getting better grades. "Because if you can get homework done, then you most likely will do well on final tests and complete the class with a high grade."

She can relate to the book, both to its message and to the author's description of the rigors of military training. Physical training is now a part of Cydney's daily routine.

"Oh, I read it in like a day. I love the book. It's really motivational," she said. It is helping me get through the program."

"The program requires the young men and women to have mental and physical toughness," Filkins, the teacher explained. "Teaching the book helps teach students to learn to rely on themselves and each other. And it allows us to use it as a stepping off point for the whole

experience here."

Norman, 16, described how cadets were taught to make their beds in the Academy barracks. "We had to go through classes to make our hospital corners. The first couple of times, it was complicated," Norman said. "Week by week, it got easier and easier. We get faster at it every day."

He said he feels the same sense of accomplishment McRaven describes about completing that first task of the day. The cadet said that's a good feeling.

Learn more about the Discovery ChalleNge Academy at <http://iamdiscovery.org/>.

To start the new school year at Shasta Elementary School (Manteca Unified School District in San Joaquin County), Principal Audrey Parker made sure she visited every classroom every day for several days to make every student feel welcome and let them know that it was important they were in class.

"We have a focus at our school: Every minute matters," she said. It helps students succeed, starting by stressing the importance of showing up in the first place. "I can't teach them if I can't reach them."

"The culture you create is critical. Children need to feel relevant in the environment that they are in. We find that it is critical that they feel noticed, that they feel that they are known, that when they are not there -- they are missed. When we get them to connect to the school community, then they have a place where they feel that they belong, and that celebrates them."

Parker was just one of the educators and other community members at the first annual county Chronic Absenteeism Summit at the San Joaquin County Office of Education last August. She said she came to learn more positive strategies to increase attendance because the evidence and experience of educators for decades have shown the negative approach simply doesn't work.

"Creating a positive attendance culture by taking action -- that's really what we're here to do today," said Doug Silva, a director with SJCOE's County Operated Schools and Programs division, which organized the event with co-sponsors the University of the Pacific and the United Way of San Joaquin County.

It was clear there was a demand for a gathering like this. All available spots were filled up by representatives from local school districts, law enforcement agencies, and nonprofit organizations as well as others interested in the topic.

All have the same goals to improve attendance, but they don't always have an opportunity to share best practices and learn from one another, Silva said. "We don't really have a chance to sit down, collaborate, and connect. And there are great things going on all across the county."

Besides the information being shared during informal conversations, attendees also learned from each other during

breakout sessions. The offerings from school districts, nonprofits and other organizations included:

- Human trafficking (San Joaquin County District Attorney's Office)
- Why chronic absenteeism matters (Attendance Works)
- Transitional Age Youth Program (Child Abuse Prevention Council)
- The impact of trauma (Sow a Seed Community Foundation)
- PBIS and the Recovery Days home-visitation program (Stockton Unified)

Staff from the SJCOE presented on a variety of topics, from restorative practices to barriers to attendance specific to foster and homeless youth to parent classes to home visits, which are the cornerstone of the A-Squad. Organized through the SJCOE, the A-Squad is a multi-agency approach to combat truancy.

The keynote speaker at the event was Duane Spires, a motivational speaker who also operates after-school programs and summer camps for youth. He also moderated a panel of local students at the summit. The students shared their stories and the reasons why they struggled with attendance.

Throughout the day, presenters and attendees, alike, shared ideas and sought new knowledge.

"It is a team approach out there in Escalon," said Mike Gaston, Assistant Principal at El Portal Middle School (Escalon Unified School District). "All means all in our district. We don't want anyone to fall through the cracks."

A member on his district's SARB (School Attendance Review Board) and a participant in the A-Squad home visits, Gaston came to the Summit to learn more.

"Today I'm looking to see how other districts are handling chronic absenteeism, to see if there are resources out there that we aren't already utilizing that we could use in our district."

The summit will be back next year.





# The youth perspective

AT THE CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM SUMMIT ON AUG. 22, STUDENTS FROM THE DISCOVERY CHALLENGE ACADEMY (DCA) PARTICIPATED ON A PANEL TO SHARE THEIR PERSPECTIVE ON ATTENDANCE CHALLENGES. HERE'S MORE ABOUT WHAT THEY HAD TO SAY ABOUT THIS TOPIC.



**BERTHA, 17**

**WHAT HELP DID YOU NEED OR WISH YOU HAD TO HELP YOU GO TO SCHOOL?**

"Whenever any authority came around in my life, I would act as the person whom they expected me to be. If the teachers were to care more to actually try and talk to me and get on me about not being there, I probably would've been more motivated to do the right thing."

**WHAT ADVICE DO YOU HAVE FOR EDUCATORS?**

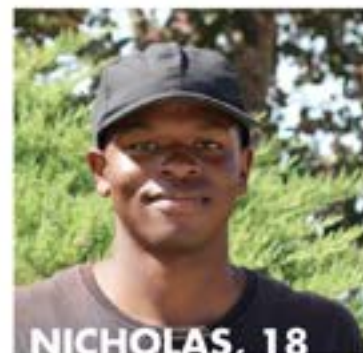
"As their teacher, don't treat them as a job or student. Treat them as a person because that's what they are. Build bridges with them to get to understand them. Entertain them. They aren't going to look forward to going to class for boring lessons."



**ELIJAH, 16**

**WHAT RESOURCES DID YOU WISH YOU HAD TO HELP YOU GO TO SCHOOL?**

"Someone that cared about my education and went the extra mile for students."



**NICHOLAS, 18**

**WHAT ATTENDANCE TIPS DO YOU HAVE THAT COULD HELP OTHER STUDENTS?**

"If you have a lot of siblings, get them ready for school first - bedtime, clothes, shower, etc. Once you finish your homework, start by getting ready for bed early so you can get used to waking up early. Taking the public bus will help you get to school faster instead of walking. And another thing you can do is find some music to help you get out of bed, not keep you in it."

**WHAT ELSE DO YOU THINK IS IMPORTANT FOR ADULTS TO REMEMBER?**

"Sometimes we are complicated because we're still finding ourself. All we want is honest help. Check in daily. We want to feel that little praise of good work. When we have that, you'll see change."



**LEONDRA, 16**

**WHAT ADVICE DO YOU HAVE FOR EDUCATORS?**

"I would say be there and listen. You never know what the person is going through."



**KOBE, 17**

**BEFORE ENROLLING IN DCA, WHY DIDN'T YOU GO TO SCHOOL?**

"I was unmotivated. I hung around the bad crowds and affiliated myself in things I shouldn't have. I had a lot of problems with family. The teachers also really didn't care about me."

**WHAT ADVICE DO YOU HAVE FOR EDUCATORS?**

"Try to help every kid you see struggling even though there may be 1,000 kids, each one has an importance as much as the other. If you know someone who struggles, like the class clown, the quiet one, the one who doesn't pay attention, or the one who shows up messy to class, these kids can be struggling."

THE PANEL WAS ALSO ASKED TO IDENTIFY THE TOP THREE BARRIERS TO STUDENT ATTENDANCE. IN NO PARTICULAR ORDER, THEY IDENTIFIED THE FOLLOWING:

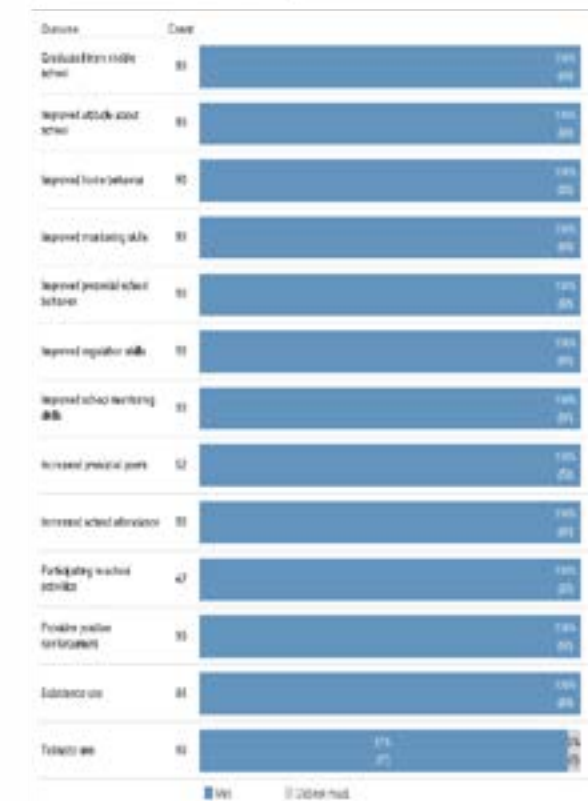
1. TRANSPORTATION
2. FAMILY PROBLEMS
3. LACK OF MOTIVATION

Studentnest is honored to have worked with County of Educations and Probation Departments for over 10 years in California. We also extend our appreciation for all you have done during the covid-19 pandemic.

WestEd.org review of Studentnest services to Riverside Probation. This 3<sup>rd</sup> party review identifies outcomes achieved by the youth receiving services. On average each youth improved at least 16% based on pre/post assessments.



Exhibit 123. StudentNest Youth Outcomes





## CONGRATULATIONS TO THE 2021 RECIPIENT

JANINE KAESLIN

SAN JOAQUIN COUNTY OFFICE OF EDUCATION

**John Peshkoff** (1935-2006) was one of the founding fathers of JCCASAC (then known as Juvenile Court School Administrators of California). John served as the JCCASAC president in 1977-78 and again in 1990-91.

He advocated for legislation and practices which support quality educational services for students in alternative education programs. He also served as a mentor, friend, and cheerleader to his peers and colleagues in the field.

The John Peshkoff Award is presented annually for memorable vision, service, leadership and commitment to JCCASAC students and programs.

It is with humility and great honor that I accept the 2021 John Peshkoff Award.

Thank you to my colleagues state-wide for this prestigious recognition. I didn't know John Peshkoff personally, but I have been involved with JCCASAC since becoming an administrator in 2003, and each year at the conferences, I was reminded either in small conversations or at the award's

ceremony, what an honorable man he was. What a beautiful legacy to be remembered for your leadership, vision,

and commitment to students, and that you were a true mentor, friend, and cheerleader to your peers and colleagues. Thank you again for such a notable recognition.



I began my career in teaching in the spring of 1993 at the San Joaquin County Office of Education. When I interviewed for the teaching position, I thought to myself that I had no idea what I was interviewing for - and I didn't. As luck would have it I was offered the position. With two other brand new teachers, I dove into creating an afternoon community school in the heart of downtown Stockton. I was presented with challenges from the

start as my second day of teaching a student threw a chair at me. I was able to dodge the chair, but my stamina and resilience were tested and there were many evenings I drove home in tears. Just a year and a half later I accepted a teaching position closer to home in a small K-8 school district. At first I felt a sense of relief to not have to juggle the challenges that my alternative education students brought to school with them daily. However, it didn't take long for me to miss them. I missed their smiles, their hunger for stability and insatiable desire for adults to see them, to hear them, and to believe in them. I missed my creative colleagues that developed and grew innovative programs, that wouldn't take no for an answer when they knew yes was the best decision for their students. I returned to SJCOE in 1997. I felt like I had come home.

I joined the JCCASAC Board as Member-At-Large for the Northern Region in 2008 and my circle of support and comradery grew exponentially. My time on the JCCASAC Board marks some of the most important years in my career. I grew as a leader through collaboration and sharing best practices. I was challenged to not just make decisions locally, but for alternative education programs state-wide, to step outside of my comfort zone and lead new administrator academies, and advocate for legislation

that met the needs of our programs and students. Working alongside passionate administrators not afraid to take risks for students and lead with conviction and hope for a greater tomorrow, has been invaluable. My time on the JCCASAC Board was a true adventure and I continue to believe JCCASAC is the most valuable resource we have for our alternative education programs.

I would like to acknowledge the support of the San Joaquin County Office of Education. I am blessed beyond measure to call each member of our administrative team my friend. We believe in each other, pick each other up when we fall, laugh together, cry together, and dream together. It's because of their unwavering support I was able to serve on the JCCASAC Board, facilitate a successful state conference in 2011, and dream some new dreams. I'm so glad I didn't fall flat during that interview back in 1993.

It has been an honor to be a member of JCCASAC. Through the John Peshkoff Award, I am humbled to represent all of you; our work, our programs, and most importantly, our beautiful students. It is with sincere gratitude I thank you.

Thank you!



# HONORING JCCASAC PAST PRESIDENTS

1970-71 Don Purdy Santa Clara	1982-83 Roy Savage Riverside	1992-93 John Stankovich Kings	2002-03 Jeanne Hughes Kern	2012-13 Deni Baughn Orange
1971-72 Chuck Lee San Diego	1983-84 Ken Kammuller Marin	1993-94 Bob Michels Santa Clara	2003-04 Jacqueline Flowers San Joaquin	2013-14 Gary Vincent Monterey
1972-73 Doug Booth San Mateo	1984-85 Wayne Toscas Santa Barbara	1994-95 Larry Springer Los Angeles	2004-05 Jeanne Dukes San Luis Obispo	2014-15 Monalisa Vitela Imperial
1973-74 Joe De Mello Contra Costa		1995-96 Claudette Inge Alameda	2005-06 Paula Mitchell Santa Clara	2015-16 Telka Walser Stanislaus
1974-75 Marshall Lomax Los Angeles		1985-86 Greg Almand Contra Costa		
1975-76 John Hull Sacramento		1986-87 Hedy Kirsh Orange	2006-07 Maruta Gardner San Diego	2016-17 Christian Shannon Kern
1976-77 Rocco Nobile San Diego		1987-88 Shirl Schmidt Shasta	2007-08 Peter Kostas Mendocino	2017-18 Wendy Frink San Joaquin
1977-78 John Peshkoff Santa Clara		1988-89 Chuck Lee San Diego	2008-09 Mary Lou Vachet Orange	2018-219 Katy Ramenzani Orange
1978-79 Jerry Matney Orange		1989-90 William Burns San Mateo	2009-10 Mary Bell Sacramento	2019-20 Pam Coronado Fresno
1979-80 Miltie Couteur Butte		1990-91 John Peshkoff Orange	2010-11 Sean Morrill San Diego	2020-21 Pam Coronado Fresno & Jason Hasty Los Angeles
1980-81 Marty Familletti Riverside		1991-92 Orene Hopkins Contra Costa	2000-01 Janet Addo Los Angeles	
1981-82 Joe De Mello Contra Costa			2001-02 Michael Watkins Santa Cruz	

# CONGRATULATIONS TO THE 2020- 2021 JCCASAC SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

## ABOUT THE JCCASAC SCHOLARSHIP:

Twice a year, the Juvenile Court, Community, and Alternative Schools Administrators of California (JCCASAC) offers scholarships to Court and Community School graduates who will be attending college or have passed the GED within the most current school year. The scholarship is intended to pay for tuition and/or books up to \$500. Four scholarships are awarded in the southern section and four in the northern section, annually. Each county may submit two applications per semester (for a total of four in a year).

## Congratulations to Our Scholarship Winners!

**Cristal Carillo**  
*Kern County*

**Elijah Dodson**  
*Contra Costa*

**Darlene G. Castro**  
*San Diego County*

**Jesse Ray**  
*Napa*

**Citlaly Pedraza**  
*Monterey County*

**Stiben Mijango**  
*Los Angeles*

**Michael B. Robinson**  
*San Francisco*

**Kejohn Spencer**  
*Los Angeles*



**SPSSC**

Student Programs and Services  
Steering Committee

*Juvenile Court, Community and Alternative School  
Administrators of California (JCCASAC)*

## CONGRATULATIONS TO RICHARD BERMAN

### ORANGE COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

JCCASAC board members are excited to announce the sixth annual JCCASAC Teacher of the Year award recipient and nominees. County operated school administrators from across California were encouraged to nominate one of their outstanding court, community or alternative school teachers for this extraordinary recognition. JCCASAC seeks to celebrate excellence and honor teachers who are exceptionally dedicated, knowledgeable, and inspire students of all backgrounds and learning abilities while carrying out the mission and vision of JCCASAC. These teachers are passionate, collaborative professionals dedicated to empowering students to become competent, creative thinking and caring adults who lead healthy lifestyles and are academically prepared for an ever changing and global economy.

Richard Berman currently is a Teacher for Otto Fischer school at Orange County Juvenile Hall and serves as Site Leader for the school as well. Richard is also the Probation Liaison with the Orange County Probation Department where he served on various committees representing the school program. Richard was instrumental in setting up our long distance learning plan for Court Schools, along with being a trainer and group leader with our Restorative Circles used in our Restorative Justice model with Probation. Richard has been nominated the ACCESS Teacher of the Year and has made the final cut for Orange County



Teacher of the Year as well. He has also earned the Probation Chief Award from the Probation Department and has served with their department on many presentations and training sessions focused on Restorative Practices. He is highly regarded by our collaborators as well as by our staff and students. He represents the school with integrity and honor, always putting others' needs first. Richard embodies our commitment to students and collaborators and is key to our success in preparing our students to be responsible citizens upon their release. Richard represents the best in us all!

## CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL OF OUR TEACHER OF THE YEAR NOMINEES.



### Carmen Sandoval-Palacios, San Bernardino

Ms. Carmen Sandoval-Palacios was born in a small town in the southern part of Mexico. She is the fifth child of eight siblings. Carmen first came to the United States at the age of five, then returned to Mexico during her sixth-grade year due to a family emergency. She later decided to return to the United States after graduating high school. Carmen's first job was in the restaurant industry where she learned it all, and by the age of twenty was managing a fullservice restaurant. Many of her regular customers were staff members from the surrounding school districts including the San Bernardino County Superintendent of Schools. Several SBCSS teachers who dined at the restaurant suggested to her that she should come and work with them in County Schools. They felt that she was good with customers, children, and families in general. After following the advice of several long-time customers and friends, Carmen became an Educational Assistant with San Bernardino County Superintendent of Schools. This is where her passion for teaching began. With the advice and encouragement of the two teachers that she assisted, she went on to further her education. While working as a Paraeducator and raising two sons with her husband, she attended Victor Valley Community College, and the University of La Verne. She completed her associate degree and then went on to finish her bachelor's degree in Liberal Arts, complete her teaching credential, and finish her Master's degree in Education. Carmen was the first generation in her family to attend college after once being an English Language Learner just like many of the students she teaches. She states that "Someone believed in me and now I am paying it forward." From the moment Carmen became a teacher, she knew it was the right thing to do. She now enjoys helping her own relatives, her students, and other students in the school see the pathway to success through education.



### Nicholas Abruzzo, Los Angeles

Nicholas Abruzzo is a secondary math specialist serving the Independent Study and County Community Schools of Renaissance PAU within LA-COE. He is also a LACOE-certified mentor consultant with the Beginning Teacher Program and a CalTPA assessor for pre-service secondary math teachers. He previously chaired the math department at LACHSA, where he was mentored by the late Dallas Russell (colleague of Jaime Escalante & 1994 Teacher of the Year), and spent several summers teaching Pre-calculus to at-promise students with the Jaime Escalante Math Program in residence at local high schools. His pedagogical approach harnesses innate curiosity about numbers to develop student intuition through scaffolded explorations and observations of mathematical phenomena that lie at the core of a function's behavior numerically and graphically, before considering formal definitions and theorems and applying them in thematically-relevant circumstances, the best of which have real-world context, affirm interdisciplinary connections, require productive struggle in an academically equitable and emotionally safe environment, cultivate joy, and feature student interaction, autonomy, and choice. He holds a Master of Science in teaching mathematics from the University of New Hampshire.



**Helen Prince, Fresno**

As a Resource Specialist at Violet Heintz Education Academy, Helen Prince works with students who have significant challenges. She has a unique ability to develop relationships and engage students in a way that allows them an opportunity to thrive academically and socially in school and beyond. She provides a calming presence to both staff and students. Helen is dedicated, creative, and enthusiastic. She regularly goes the extra mile for her students and colleagues, and her patient, can-do attitude is a source of tremendous support to the staff and students.



**Tracy Sneed, Kern**

Tracy Sneed has been teaching and working in the education field for over 10 years and has been the consummate professional since day one. She is currently the Teacher - Technology Specialist for the Kern County Court and Community School program. Her fellow colleagues share the following, "As difficult as this year has been for our staff, it would have been unfathomably worse if Tracy hadn't been as committed to her mission during the four previous years, laying the foundation with dozens of trainings, thousands of miles of travel between the sites, and innumerable meetings, both in-person and remote." Tracy provides ongoing support to small groups of students and staff in the area of instructional technology and models how to use technology as an instructional tool. Our students are exposed to far more technology than they were before Tracy came to Alternative Education. Tracy has helped the school staff give students the access, knowledge, and skills they need to be successful in our technology-driven world. Tracy is a great asset to students and staff alike.



**Scott Davis, Monterey**

Born and raised in Mansfield, Ohio, Scott moved to Southern California at age 21 and tried his hand at screenwriting. He graduated from CSU Northridge with B.A. in Social Science and single subject Social Science credential. Scott worked as an ESL teacher in Gumi, South Korea for 2 years, worked as a Special Education teacher, and as a Behavior Therapist. Currently and for the past 14 years, he has worked as Lead Teacher for the Monterey County Office of Education's Alternative Education Department. Scott is a professional musician and has been married to beautiful wife, Paula for 16 years.



**Annie Ziesmer, San Joaquin**

Annie Ziesmer-Camacho has been in the field of education for 14 years. She began serving the San Joaquin County Office of Education (SJCOE) in 2007 where she has taught in a variety of capacities in both court and community school. She earned her Master's degree in Curriculum and Instruction with a focus on technology integration in 2015. She returned to school to earn a second Master's degree in Educational Administration and is on track to graduate July 2021. Since the start, she has eagerly taken on an array of teacher leadership roles and is currently the WASC chairperson for SJCOE's charter school program. She believes that effective leadership, where teachers feel supported and cared for, will drive most teachers to exceed expectations. One day, she hopes to enter school administration where she can support and encourage the next generation of superhero teachers entering the world of education. Six years before Annie fell in love with SJCOE's student population and school program, she fell in love with her husband, Joseph. They have two boys and a girl who are each at different stages in life. Anthony attends Portland State University while working as a tattoo artist. Michael is a junior in high school and Mikayla is in kindergarten. Annie is absolutely crazy about her family, students, career, and colleagues, and does not take a single day for granted!



**Marlean L. Bravo, Stanislaus**

Mrs. Marlean L Bravo has been teaching since 1998 with a Multiple Subject, Special Education in Mild/Moderate and a Master's degree in Special Education. It is apparent that she enjoys her daily pilgrimage of mentoring, teaching, and counseling her students that reside in a maximum-security unit at Stanislaus County Department of Juvenile Justice. She brings imagination, creativity, and allows her students to explore youthful and fun activities with strategic and structured guidance that provides a safe and therapeutic learning environment for all students. She builds a trustworthy relationship with students, staff, and her colleagues by being a leader, a team member, and role model for all. Her motto for this month is "Lead by Example with Purpose" which she demonstrates daily to all who enter her unit by providing the best opportunities for her students to become successful and productive community members.



JCCASAC board members are excited to announce the sixth annual JCCASAC Teacher of the Year award recipient and nominees. County operated school administrators from across California were encouraged to nominate one of their outstanding court, community or alternative school teachers for this extraordinary recognition. JCCASAC seeks to celebrate excellence and honor teachers who are exceptionally dedicated, knowledgeable, and inspire students of all backgrounds and learning abilities while carrying out the mission and vision of JCCASAC. These teachers are passionate, collaborative professionals dedicated to empowering students to become competent, creative thinking and caring adults who lead healthy lifestyles and are academically prepared for an ever changing and global economy.

## CONGRATULATIONS TO DR. KELLY SCHWIRZKE SANTA CRUZ COUNTY OFFICE OF EDUCATION

Dr. Schwirzke has worked for the Santa Cruz County Office of Education as a Community School teacher since 2011, though she has been connected as a school partner or regional lead for much longer than that. Dr.

Schwirzke began her teaching career on an emergency credential in Visalia. After earning her credential, she became an English teacher in the San Lorenzo Valley School Unified District in Santa Cruz

County. It was there that Dr. Schwirzke noticed a conflict with some students in choosing between particular Career Education courses and a-g

courses. As an innovator and a problem-solver, Dr. Schwirzke created two courses, International Business and Marketing, that could be taken as CTE courses with a-g credit.



From SLVUSD, Ms. Schwirzke found her way to the COE as a Coordinator of Education Technology. It is in this position that she developed an interest in online learning platforms and blending

learning. Following a couple of years as a regional lead for the California Technology Assistance Project (CTAP), where she also earned her Ed.D with a

dissertation on Online and Blended Learning, Dr. Schwirzke returned to the COE as a teacher at Oasis High School on the Aptos Community College Campus.

As a teacher at Oasis, Dr. Schwirzke helped to create a culture of dual enrollment, communicating that all students are college material. This was a message rarely heard previously within our Court and Community School system here in Santa Cruz.

Dr. Schwirzke, always the humble teacher-leader, agreed to be a part of our Differentiated Assistance team last year, when our school Dashboard found us, despite noble efforts, to be in the Red for College and Career Readiness. As we dove deeper, Dr. Schwirzke helped to point out that while the rate of college and CTE participation, overall, was not terrible, the data indicated that our students of color and our students who are English Learners were experiencing a sizable gap in both participation and success when it came to college enrollment and a-g college readiness.

Dr. Schwirzke's response to this, was the creation of a plan to bring the Oasis school model to the southern part of our county, where the majority of the student population is LatinX and are often also, English Learners. She opened up shop in August 2019, using a couple of classrooms

leased from the community college on their Watsonville satellite campus and she put her marketing course skills to work, networking with educators and counselors at the local high schools to ensure the school's presence would be known. Calls flooded in, and Dr. Schwirzke took everyone. She insisted on the hiring of a second teacher, an intern math teacher, whom she had already mentored for years as an instructional aide and a social emotional counselor. Between the two of them, they have built an a-g, dual enrollment, hybridized learning environment, with mathematics at the center, and additional online blended learning opportunities.

Between the two of them they have a maximum student caseload of 60 students. 11 students graduated in January, and those student spots were filled immediately. Six out of six students successfully completed transfer-level college courses last semester. And an additional 11 are currently enrolled. Over 80% are first-generation college attendees.

When Dr. Schwirzke was asked how she gets all of her students to succeed at this level, she smiled and said simply, "I micro-manage everyone until they manage themselves." "I use google docs and google voice. I'm like a stalker, and I never stop talking about syllabi and calendars and what college success looks like."






**California's partner in K-12 online learning solutions**  
 Our online courses and supplemental learning solutions support California teachers and administrators in doing what they do best, unlocking student potential and transforming schools.

edgenuity.com | 877.7CLICKS



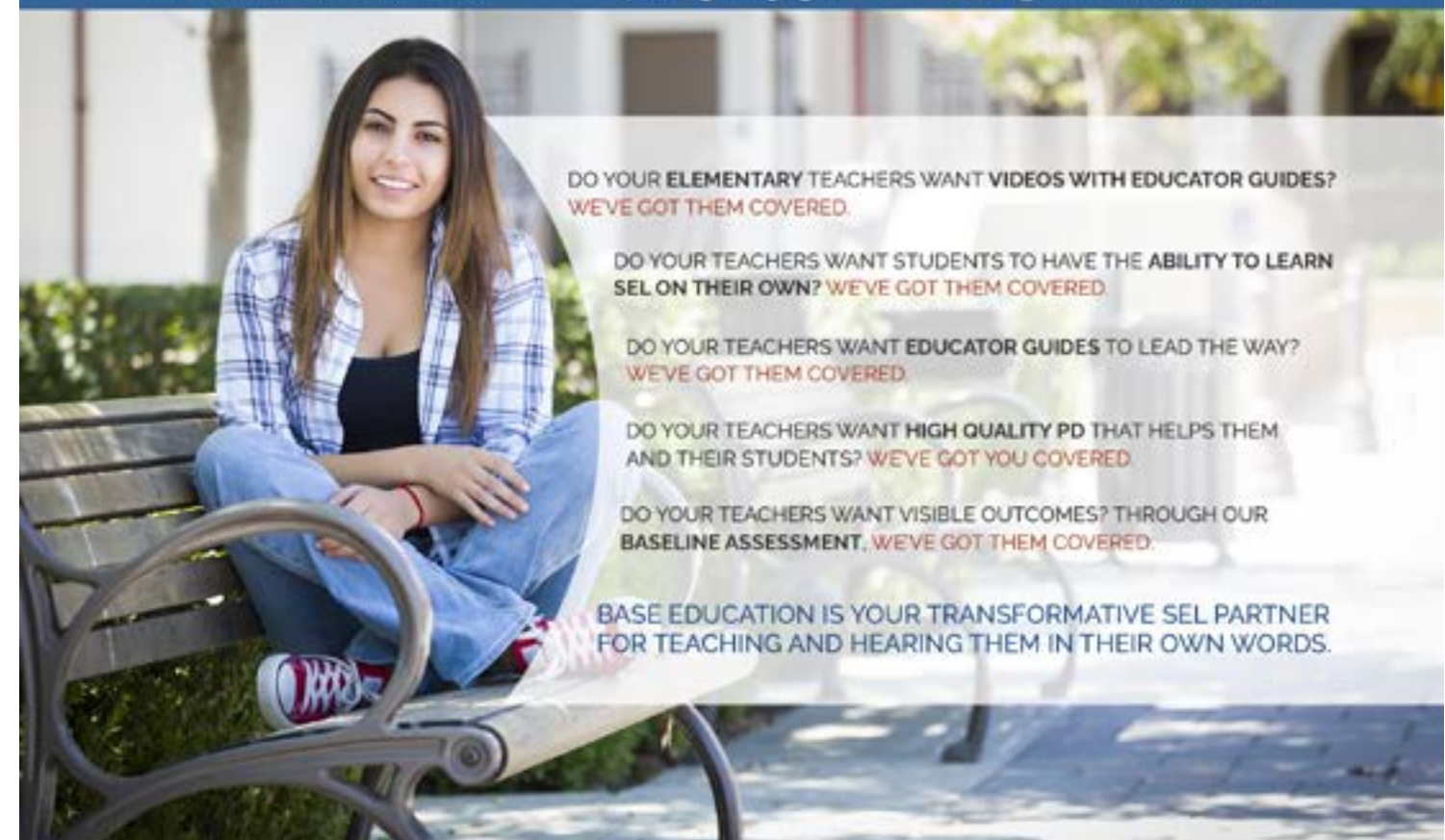
# RENAISSANCE

**ADULTS DO A LOT OF TALKING, BUT ARE WE LISTENING?**

**BASE EDUCATION IS CASEL APPROVED TRANSFORMATIVE SEL THAT ALLOWS YOU TO HEAR THEM.**

WWW.BASE.EDUCATION (720) 316-9156 INFO@BASE.EDUCATION



**DO YOUR ELEMENTARY TEACHERS WANT VIDEOS WITH EDUCATOR GUIDES? WE'VE GOT THEM COVERED.**

**DO YOUR TEACHERS WANT STUDENTS TO HAVE THE ABILITY TO LEARN SEL ON THEIR OWN? WE'VE GOT THEM COVERED.**

**DO YOUR TEACHERS WANT EDUCATOR GUIDES TO LEAD THE WAY? WE'VE GOT THEM COVERED.**

**DO YOUR TEACHERS WANT HIGH QUALITY PD THAT HELPS THEM AND THEIR STUDENTS? WE'VE GOT YOU COVERED.**

**DO YOUR TEACHERS WANT VISIBLE OUTCOMES? THROUGH OUR BASELINE ASSESSMENT, WE'VE GOT THEM COVERED.**

**BASE EDUCATION IS YOUR TRANSFORMATIVE SEL PARTNER FOR TEACHING AND HEARING THEM IN THEIR OWN WORDS.**

Dr. Pierce has spent his career working with marginalized students as a classroom teacher, site administrator, Curriculum Specialist and currently as the Learning Director for Tulare County Office of Education's Court and Community Schools. His work has focused on how to empower students to discover and cultivate their own unique voices in order to live the life they were destined to live.

### Abstract

The number of incarcerated Native American male students in comparison to other sub-groups is significant as Native American students comprise 1% of the student population but are the second highest group of incarcerated youth. Furthermore, Native American students are the second lowest scoring subgroup in both Reading and Mathematics. This article will examine the direct correlation between low academic performance and incarceration. It further examines the common traits of incarcerated youth, culturally biased academic measurements, and culturally based academic interventions. It will also introduce Tribal Critical Race Theory as a framework for future research on the topic of poor academic performance and the incarceration of Native American male students.

The incarceration of juvenile offenders is well documented to have a direct negative impact on the academic achievement of the incarcerated, exacerbating the achievement gap between non-incarcerated and incarcerated students. It is estimated that 85% of incarcerated youth are functioning at lower academic levels than their non-incarcerated peers, with 70% of these students being identified as illiterate (Katsiyannis, Ryan, Zhang, & Spann 2008; Baltodano, Harris, & Rutherford 2005). In a 2003 Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) Special Report on Education and Correctional Populations, a statistical analysis of education attainment of both Federal and State prison inmates revealed that 68% of incarcerated individuals did not receive a high school diploma and that 1 in 6 inmates dropped out of school due to being incarcerated as a juvenile offender. Furthermore, over a third of inmates reported dropping out of school due to academic difficulties. This correlation between low academic achievement and incarceration requires an in-depth examination of who is being incarcerated and how Juvenile Court Schools provide access and equitable distribution of quality instruction, specifically in literacy to reverse this trend.

The 2015 National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) study on the disparity of academic performance documented that 280 per 100,000 male students are currently incarcerated. Additional data from the Census

of Juveniles in Residential Placement (CJRP) highlights the breakdown of the NCES data by subgroups, revealing that 312 per 100,000 Hispanic/Latino, 486 per 100,000 American Indian and 733 per 100,000 Black male students comprise the largest populations of incarcerated youth. Young male students of color represent a disproportionate number of incarcerated in our juvenile justice system, thus making them more at-risk to dropping out of high school, increasing their odds of recidivism, thus leading to adult incarceration.

Drawing on the data of the 2014 National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) report on projected school enrollment of students in the United States and a 2003 report by the Bureau of Justice Statistics, the data highlights that Native American students comprise 1% of our current student body populations, yet are the second largest group of incarcerated adolescent males (486 per 100,000). Furthermore, the NCES reports that Native American male students are the second lowest scoring subgroup in both National Reading and Math scores and have a 35% drop out rate. This is a problem as it not only contributes to the high number of incarcerated Native American adolescent male students in comparison to other subgroups, but also limits their opportunities to pursue a higher education and gain the necessary skills to be successful in a diverse modern society. Therefore, the following will address the academic and societal

problem rooted in the correlation between the low academic achievement and the incarceration of our Native American male students.

### What Research Reveals

Research has revealed three major topics related to low academic performance and the incarceration of Native American male students: 1) Common Academic Characteristics of Incarcerated Juvenile Offenders; 2) Culturally Biased Academic Measurement; 3) Culturally Based Education Interventions. Although the literature presented here has been applied in a variety of disciplines and to a variety of problems and issues, this review focuses primarily on the literature's application to the problem of the correlation of low academic achievement and the incarceration of Native American adolescent students.

### Common Academic Characteristics of Incarcerated Youth

Incarcerated youth share key common characteristics that reveal why academics plays an integral role leading to their incarceration. A significant common trait amongst incarcerated juveniles is that a disproportionate number of incarcerated juvenile offenders are struggling readers. In their review of the impact of academic achievement and incarceration, Katsiyannis, Ryan, Zhang, & Spann (2008) noted that 85% of the 2.2 million incarcerated youth in the United States were functioning at a lower academic level in reading and math than their non-incarcerated peers, revealing a majority of incarcerated youth had experienced academic struggles and failures. When reviewing statistics on the demographics of struggling readers and incarcerated youth across five states, (Arizona, Hawaii, Missouri, South Carolina, and West Virginia) Krezmien, Leone, and Achilles (2006) indicate a disproportionate number of Black, Latino and American Indian students were both identified as struggling readers and incarcerated. Furthermore, study of 204 male youth inmates at the Adobe Mountain School revealed that in some juvenile jurisdictions in the Arizona Department of Juvenile Corrections, 70% of incarcerated youth are illiterate (Baltodano, Harris, and Rutherford 2005). Gregory,

Skiba, and Noguera (2010) confirmed this common trait by noting the direct correlation between academic performance and incarceration amongst minority adolescent males. Low literacy skills not only contribute to overall poor academic performance, but as the research points to, it is a significant factor leading to juvenile incarceration.

Katsiyannis, Ryan, Zhang, & Spann's (2008) comparisons between incarcerated and non-incarcerated students noted significant gaps between the two groups with 66% of incarcerated students struggling with reading compared to 12% of non-incarcerated, 59% of incarcerated students struggling with spelling compared to 8% of non-incarcerated and 50% of incarcerated youth struggling with math compared to 16% of non-incarcerated. Furthermore, the study revealed that 40% of incoming incarcerated youth had not earned any high school credits, thus increasing the likelihood of dropping out of high school. The literature clearly demonstrates that there is a direct correlation between the shared traits of low academic performance, especially poor literacy skills, and juvenile incarceration. When examining the low performance of Native American male students, there are some key culturally biased academic measurements that may reveal why these students struggle academically.

### Culturally Biased Academic Measurements

The low academic performance of Native American adolescent male students reveals how the current academic paradigm does not address the academic needs of Native American youth. Contemporary researchers fail to take into account the fact that Native Americans have critical questions they need to find answers for, but find that they are at a disadvantage when organizations outside the Native American community determine how these questions can be approached and answered, primarily through our current educational system (Smith 1999). In our current educational system, standardized testing is how we measure and compare success between subgroups, but is this an equitable method (Demment 2005; McKinley & Brayboy 2005; Ginwright, Cammarota, & Noguera 2005; Battiste 2002)?

William Demmert's (2005) research calls into question the validity of standardized testing, such as the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) results in Language Arts and Math. By examining external influences of culture, environment, attitudes, context, and perspectives, the article argues that our current academic/instructional practices are inadequate and that the means in which we measure academic performance is culturally biased (Demmert 2005). This has led to a new branch of Critical Race Theory known as Tribal Critical Race Theory, a theoretical framework in which to address the issues that Native Americans face, such as language shifts and loss, the lack of Native American students graduating high school, colleges, and universities, and the over representation of Native Americans in Special Education (Brayboy 2005). Viewing Native American student performance through the lens of Tribal Critical Race Theory brings into focus how the bias of a Eurocentric educational system dismisses Indigenous knowledge and calls for the "transformation" of Native Americans by replacing their knowledge and language with hegemonic cultural norms (Brayboy 2005; Battiste 2002).

Brayboy's (2005) Tribal Critical Race Theory closely mirrors Ginwright, Cammarota, and Noguera's (2005) application of Critical Race Theory that addresses the needs of students of color in urban settings, in which the same five elements emerge: 1) Native American and other students of color are viewed as Second Class Citizens; 2) Native American and other students of color are seen as problems to be fixed; 3) Native American and other students of color are seen as possibilities for development; 4) Native American and other students of color exist and interact within a context (Reservations and Urban settings) and must maneuver the politics of blame; 5) The use of Social Justice Pedagogy to empower youth to be change agents within their community and context. The first four elements of Brayboy's (2005) and Ginwright, Cammarota, and Noguera's (2005) research reflect the issues that Paulo Freire (1970) brings attention to in his seminal work, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. Freire's (1970) work outlines ten attitudes and practices that Western teachers exhibit when interacting with

students that relegate the educational experience from empowerment of students to making them dependent recipients of the system. Two of the key attitudes that Freire (1970) points out are: 1) that teachers choose the content and the students must adapt to it and 2) teachers confuse authority of knowledge with their own professional authority. These teacher mindsets create opposition to the freedom of the students, thus always putting the teacher in a position of authority that cannot be questioned or challenged. If one cannot challenge the authority figure, then one must consider his cultural knowledge as being inferior to the dominant hegemonic culture (Battiste 2002). Freire (1970) ultimately calls for the empowerment of students, which serves as the basis for Ginwright, Cammarota, and Noguera's (2005) and Brayboy's (2005) assertions that the current means in which we measure academic success is grounded in Eurocentric cultural bias. However, there is literature that supports that if schools were to implement culturally based education interventions, it could lead to academic success for Native American male students (Christle, Jolivette, & Nelson 2005; Ginwright, Cammarota, & Noguera 2005; Brayboy 2005; Demmert and Towner 2003; Battiste 2002).

#### **Culturally Based Education Intervention**

Implementing culturally based education interventions that promote access and equity for Native American students is an effective means to address this social injustice. In order to implement culturally based education interventions, Demmert and Towner (2003) identify six critical elements for culturally based education programs for Native American students: 1) Recognition and use of Native American (American Indian, Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian) languages; 2) Pedagogy that stresses traditional cultural characteristics and adult-child interactions; 3) Pedagogy in which teaching strategies are congruent with the traditional culture and ways of knowing and learning; 4) Curriculum that is based on traditional culture and that recognizes the importance of Native spirituality; 5) Strong Native community participation (including parents, elders, other community resources) in educating children and in the planning and operation of school

activities; 6) Knowledge and use of the social and political mores of the community. However, in order to implement these six critical elements, educational researchers and leaders must understand how Native Americans view themselves and their relationships with the Federal Government (Brayboy 2005; Battiste 2002; Smith 1999).

Brayboy (2005) identifies nine tenets of Tribal Critical Race Theory that align with the six crucial elements of culturally based education programs. The nine tenets are as follows: 1) Colonization is endemic to society; 2) U.S. policies toward Indigenous peoples are rooted in imperialism, White supremacy, and a desire for material gain; 3) Indigenous peoples occupy a liminal space that accounts for both the political and racialized natures of our identities; 4) Indigenous peoples have a desire to obtain and forge tribal sovereignty, tribal autonomy, self-determination, and self-identification; 5) The concepts of culture, knowledge, and power take on new meaning when examined through an Indigenous lens; 6) Governmental policies and educational policies toward Indigenous peoples are intimately linked around the problematic goal of assimilation; 7) Tribal philosophies, beliefs, customs, traditions, and visions for the future are central to understanding the lived realities of Indigenous peoples, but they also illustrate the differences and adaptability among individuals and groups; 8) Stories are not separate from theory; they make up theory and are, therefore, real and legitimate sources of data and ways of being; 9) Theory and practice are connected in deep and explicit ways such that scholars must work towards social change (Brayboy 2005). When examining the nine tenets of Tribal Critical Race Theory, it brings to light the distrust that Native Americans have for the current education system and illustrates the disconnect between the Eurocentric educational system and the "traditional" Indigenous Knowledge of Native Americans (Brayboy 2005; Demmert & Towner 2003; Battiste 2002). To further complicate the issue, Eurocentric educational systems rely on data and written reports stored in a database or library compared to Indigenous Knowledge that is passed down through the collective experience of the oral tradition, modeling, practicing and animation (Battiste 2002). Since Native Americans view the education

of their children as the continuation of the colonization and forced assimilation, educators and researchers need to familiarize and enact the six critical elements of culturally based education interventions and the nine tenets of Tribal Critical Race Theory to successfully implement these interventions.

A multi-method study by Christle, Jolivette, and Nelson (2005), suggested that school level characteristics of supportive leadership, dedicated and collegial staff, school-wide behavior management and effective academic instruction minimized the risk of student delinquency. In their study, student connectivity to the school was a critical factor in ensuring student success. Attendance rate was negatively correlated to academic performance and disciplinary action, therefore making student connectivity a priority for increased attendance, academic achievement and overall improved experience with school (Christle, Jolivette, & Nelson 2005). There is a growing body of literature and research that supports effective academic interventions that increase academic performance and reduce the risk of delinquency, but in order to address the specific needs of Native American students, Demmert and Towner's (2003) and Brayboy's (2005) work needs to be integrated with these findings. (Christle, Jolivette, & Nelson 2005; Ginwright, Cammarota, & Noguera 2005; Wald & Losen 2003; Archwemety & Katsiyannis 2000).

#### **Importance of Solving the Problem**

It is important to solve this problem because culturally biased pedagogical practices and measurements of academic performance create an unjust educational system that contributes to the incarceration of Native American youth. In a Eurocentric academic system, the focus is on building a competitive system in which the individual strives to outperform the other individuals compared to Indigenous knowledge that values a holistic communal experience (Brayboy 2005; Battiste 2002). Furthermore, when analyzing the issue through the lens of Tribal Critical Race Theory, the historical conflict between Native Americans and the United States Government, which includes both the educational and juvenile justice systems, it is clear that our current system sets up Native American

male students to fail, leading to the significantly increased likelihood of incarceration (Katsiyannis, Ryan, Zhang, & Spann 2008; Krezmien, Leone, & Achilles 2006; Baltodano, Harris, & Rutherford 2005). William Demmert's (2005) research calls into question standardized assessments by examining external influences of culture, environment, attitudes, context, and perspectives that these exams fail to measure.

### Recommendations

#### Culturally Based Academic Instruction and Interventions

With extensive academic and behavioral research that indicates that targeted interventions have a significant impact on student achievement, there is a growing base of literature that signifies that culturally based academic interventions garner similar results (Katsiyannis, Ryan, Zhang, & Spann 2008; Krezmien, Leone, & Achilles 2006; Baltodano, Harris, & Rutherford 2005; Brayboy 2005; Demmert & Towner 2003; Battiste 2002)

Brayboy's (2005) and Battiste's (2002) work through the lens of Tribal Critical Race Theory, provides a framework in which to develop culturally based academic interventions that can focus on empowering Native American students and providing an alternative means in which to measure academic growth and honor the "traditional" Indigenous knowledge. Thus, it is important to examine the six critical elements of culturally based pedagogy and apply those concepts when developing academic interventions (Demmert & Towner 2003). Furthermore, given that our current education system is based on the hegemonic Eurocentric cultural values, professional development for policy makers, administrators and teachers needs to be created focusing on the nine tenets of Tribal Critical Race Theory.

Jacob et al. (2018) advocate that the teaching of Indigenous knowledge is a protected right of Native American students and, much like the findings from research on ethnic studies, benefits all students. Therefore, Jacob et al. (2018) recommend that culturally

based instruction/interventions include using Native languages and Native knowledges, increased contact and interactions with elders, exposure and participation in Native American traditions and customs, and accurate curricula of Native American histories, including the effects of colonialism and racism on Native American cultures.

#### Continued Research

Although there is a large body of literature on Critical Theory and Critical Race Theory, the introduction of Tribal Critical Race Theory has provided a framework in which to examine the issue of poor academic performance and incarceration of Native American male students (Brayboy 2005; Battiste 2002). A key point that Battiste (2002) makes in her literature review is that written records are not a cultural value of Native American nations. Moreover, she states that in Indigenous Knowledge the record of knowledge, cultural values, and experiences are the shared collective knowledge passed on from generation to generation and that the very act of creating a literature review is an oxymoron in Native American culture (Battiste 2002). Although there are a growing number of Native American scholars who are creating opportunities to meld the Indigenous Knowledge with the Eurocentric educational system, there is much work to be done. An area that was not addressed in this research paper is the effect of Zero Tolerance policies that are culturally biased and have a tremendous impact on students of color. The body of literature that examines Zero Tolerance Policies strongly supports the claim that students of color are disproportionately targeted and receive higher rates of discipline actions and expulsions (Ginwright, Cammarota, & Noguera 2005; Wald & Losen 2003). Many of these articles include Native American students in the data collection, but the primary focus tends to be on African-American and Hispanic male students and their experiences with Zero Tolerance Policies.

A key academic question that Brayboy (2005) attempts to answer in the development of Tribal Critical Race Theory is why are there a disproportionate number of

Native American students identified as in need of Special Education services? When reviewing Brayboy's tenets and Battiste's literature review, it could be argued that Native American cultural norms may be a significant cause for misdiagnosis for Special Needs services. Although not addressed in the literature review, there is a large body of literature and research on the significant number of incarcerated youth who are Special Education students. Therefore, it would be beneficial to explore the process in which Native American students are assessed and identified for Special Education services.

#### Conclusion: A New Framework

As scholars and educators grapple with this significant issue, Brayboy's (2005) Tribal Critical Race Theory provides a new framework that allows for the examination of how we collect data on academic performance and evaluate that data based on cultural competencies. In a system that disproportionately sends young men of color to juvenile hall, and eventually prison, policy makers and educators need to examine how we construct not only pedagogy, but the systems which we have in place that perpetuate this injustice.

#### References

- Archwemety, T. & Katsiyannis, A. (2000). Academic remediation, parole violations, and recidivism rates among delinquent youth. *Remedial and Special Education*, 2(3), 161-170.
- Baltodano, H.M., Harris, P.J., & Rutherford, R.B. (2005). Academic achievement in juvenile corrections: examining the impact of age, ethnicity and disability. *Education and Treatment of Children*, 28(4), 361-379.
- Battiste, M. (2002). Indigenous knowledge and pedagogy in First Nations education: A literature review with recommendations. Ottawa: Apamuwek Institute.
- Brayboy, B. M. J. (2005). Toward a tribal critical race theory in education. *The Urban Review*, 37(5), 425-446.
- Christle, C.A., Jolivet, K., & Nelson, C.M. (2005). Breaking the school to prison pipeline: identifying school risk and protective factors for youth delinquency. *Exceptionality*, 13(2), 69-88.
- Demmert Jr, W. G. (2001). Improving academic performance

among native american students: a review of the research literature.

Demmert Jr, W. G., & Towner, J. C. (2003). A review of the research literature on the influences of culturally based education on the academic performance of native american students.

Foley, R.M. (2001). Academic characteristics of incarcerated youth and correctional educational programs: a literature review. *Journal of Emotional and Behavioral Disorders*, 9(4), 248-259.

Freire, P. (1970). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. Bloomsbury Publishing.

Ginwright, S., Cammarota, J., & Noguera, P. (2005). Youth, social justice, and communities: Toward a theory of urban youth policy. *Social Justice*, 32(3 (101)), 24-40.

Gonsoulin, S., Zablocki, M., & Leone, P.E. (2012). Safe schools, staff development, and the school-to-prison pipeline. *Teacher Education and Special Education*, 35(4), 309-319

Gregory, A., Skiba, R.J., & Noguera, P.A. (2010). The achievement gap and the discipline gap: two sides of the same coin?. *Educational Research*, 39(1), 59-68.

Harlow, C.W. (2003) Bureau of justice statistics special report: education and correctional populations. U.S. Department of Justice

Jacob, M. M., Sabzalian, L., Jansen, J., Tobin, T. J., Vincent, C. G., & LaChance, K. M. (2018). The gift of education: How indigenous knowledges can transform the future of public education. *International Journal of Multicultural Education*, 20(1), 157-185.

Katsiyannis, A., Ryan, J.B., Zhang, D., & Spann, A. (2008). Juvenile delinquency and recidivism: the impact of academic achievement. *Reading and Writing Quarterly*. Vol. 24

Krezmien, M.P., Leone, P.E., & Achilles, G.M. (2006). Suspension, race, and disability: analysis of statewide practices and reporting. *Journal of Emotional and Behavioral Disorders*, Vol. 14. 217-226.

National Assessment of Educational Progress. (2015). National Report Card. <http://www.nationsreportcard.gov>

Smith, L. T. (1999). *Decolonizing methodologies: Research and indigenous peoples*. Zed books.

Wald, J. & Losen, D.F. (2003). Defining and redirecting a school-to prison pipeline. *New Directions for Youth Development*.

Angelica Genova has been with the Kern County Superintendent of Schools, Alternative Education division for 14 years. She has worked as a paraprofessional, Visual Arts teacher, Special Education teacher, and as a Behaviorist in Support Services. She recently started her administrative journey as a vice principal for an elementary, junior high, and high school alternative program.

The Community Learning Center provides classroom instruction to elementary and junior high students as well as an Independent Studies program for high school and junior high students. The Community Learning Center serves both expelled and non-expelled youth, and are referred via a number of avenues including parent referral. If a student enrolled in the classroom setting has exceeded the behavior referral STEP policy, then administrators discuss the current behavioral concerns and determine the appropriate interventions for the student. The team may decide to place the student in the Restorative Classroom. The length of a student's placement in the Restorative Classroom can range from 10 to more days.

Prior to the creation of the Restorative Classroom, when a student exceeded the behavior STEP policy, students would be dropped from our program and parents would have to schedule a conference to re-enroll and the consequence would be minimal, resulting in the student missing school. Therefore, the Restorative Classroom was created to help students develop a toolbox with a collection of Social Emotional Learning (SEL) tools that will help the students regulate their behaviors when they return to their homeroom rotation. The key parts to creating our Restorative classroom involved these components:

**Restorative Class Contract**

**Restorative Class Objective:** Students will learn to display behaviors that will help them be successful in the classroom rotation.

**Requirements needed to return to regular class rotation:**

- Behavior**
  - Students must follow all PBIS expectations in the Restorative Class
  - 10 days without a Behavior Step or Referral
- Attendance**
  - Minimum of 10 full days of class attendance. Any absences excused or unexcused will not count.
  - Tardy past 9:00 will not count toward a full attendance day. If work is completed that day, they can earn a 1/2 day.
- Performance**
  - 70% or better in all classes: Language! Live, Math 180, and Odysseyware
  - Participation in Morning Meetings, Quiet Reading, and Elective group work

**Daily Expectations:**

- Students will complete daily Check-in
- Students will complete their daily quiet reading
- Students will participate in the Morning Meeting
- Students will complete 40 minutes of Math 180: 5 minutes on Brain Arcade and 35 minutes on lessons
- Students will complete their daily journal and 30 minutes of Language! Live
- Students will complete Odysseyware, Base Ed., or History/Science lessons as assigned 45 minutes

Specific Behavior identified to be worked on: \_\_\_\_\_

Failure to meet daily expectations will result in an additional day being added to their minimum 10 day requirement and loss of PE for that day.

Student: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian: \_\_\_\_\_

### Start With a Behavior Contract and Daily Behavior Card

On the first day of the student's enrollment in the Restorative Classroom, a conference is held with the student, Restorative teacher, and/or administrator. The Restorative Class Contract is reviewed and the student must agree to the expectations of the document. In order for a student to successfully complete the Restorative Classroom, the student must complete 10 total positive days in the Restorative classroom. The student's behavior is monitored through a daily calendar called the Sharks Behavior Card. The student's daily behavior is coded by color.

Behavior Color Codes	
Blue Shark	Outstanding
Purple Shark	Excellent Choice
Yellow Shark	Great Effort
Green Shark	Ready to Learn
Orange Shark	Think About It!
Pink Shark	Make a Better Choice
Gray Shark	Parent Contact

The Behavior Color Codes help the student identify the days that behavior improved, and the days that required more support. The goal is for a student to earn 10 Green days to transfer back to their former homeroom rotation.

### Positive Behavior Intervention Supports

The Classroom Contract and Daily Behavior Chart are aligned with the PBIS expectations. Students are taught daily the expectations and held accountable to each area: **Respect, Exercising safety, Accountability, and Being a Leader.** We ask that each student learn the "Be REAL" attitude, so they develop skills to help them return to their comprehensive school.

CLC 34th Daily Behavior Chart

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Sign Date: \_\_\_\_\_

February 2020

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30
1	2	3	4	5	6

Behavior Color Codes

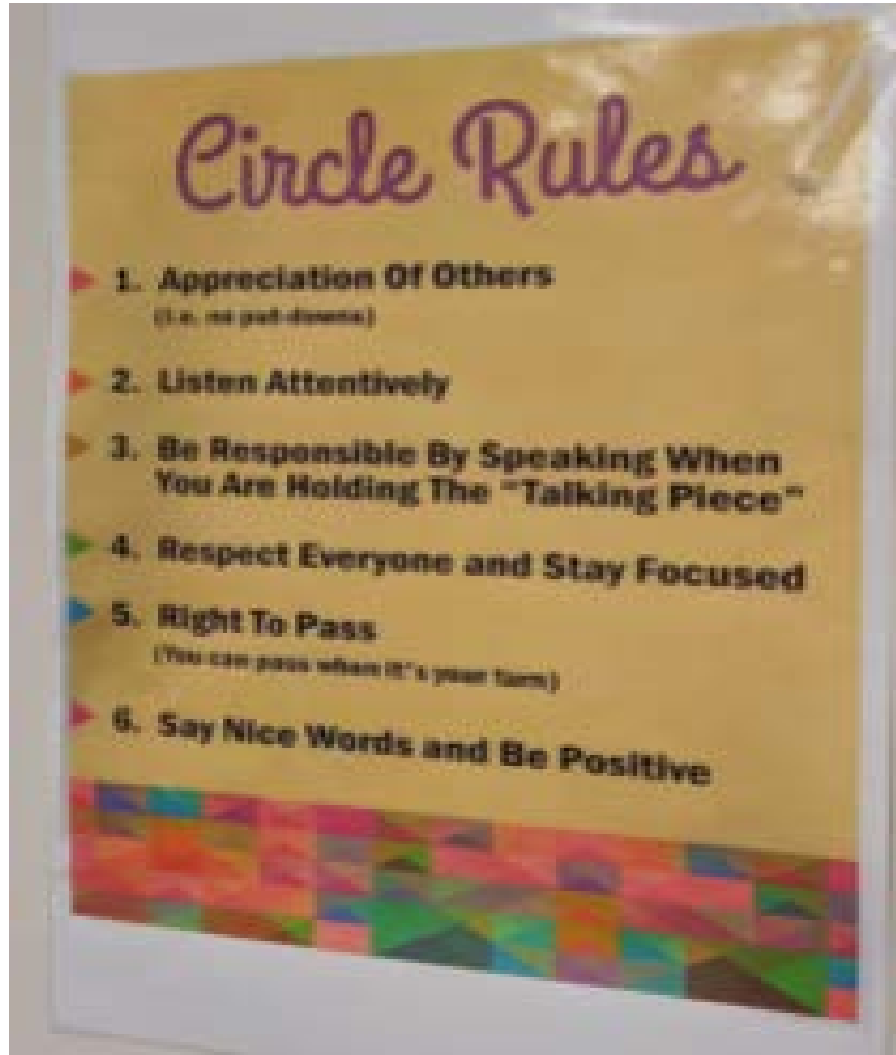
Blue Shark	Outstanding
Purple Shark	Excellent Choice
Yellow Shark	Great Effort
Green Shark	Ready to Learn
Orange Shark	Think About It!
Pink Shark	Make a Better Choice
Gray Shark	Parent Contact

\* Students will start each day Ready To LEARN  
 \* Extreme behavior earns student an extra day  
 \* 10 days of Blue, Purple, Yellow, or Green Sharks = 1 STEP Removal!

### Restoring the Relationship between Student and Educators

The mission of the Restorative Classroom is to help students contextualize the importance of restoring their relationship with teachers, paraprofessionals, support staff, administration, and peers.

Meaningful daily interactions with their teacher, paraprofessional, school social workers,



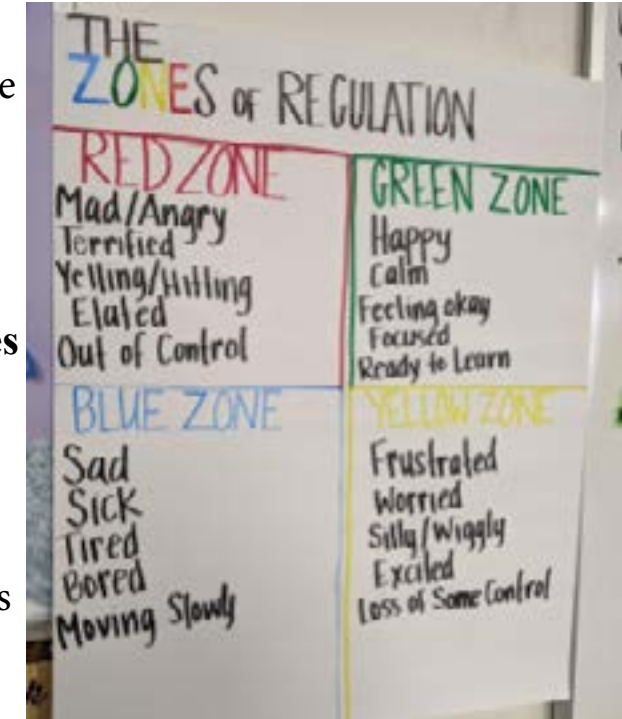
mentors, administrators and counselors are vital in the restorative process. When a student is placed in the Restorative Classroom, they must participate in the Morning Meeting and complete their assignments and/or computer based learning programs (Language Live, Math 180, Odysseyware, and SEL curriculum BASE education). In addition to their assignments, the student is constantly facing challenges that will occur in the next 10 days. Such challenges are often with their peers, stress from their home life or probation, or lacking the ability to communicate their needs in an appropriate way. All the while they have to learn to trust the restorative learning process guided by their teacher, school staff, mentors, social workers, and

peers. One of the tools used to build that trust with their peers is a Morning Meeting. Circle Rules are explained at the beginning of each meeting and the use of a talking stick guides the discussion. The depth of questions posed during the discussion begin light and eventually delve into deeper topics that correlate with the topics discussed during Anger Management class. The transition to the classroom is in constant change, students are constantly being added to the roster and others are transferred out because they have graduated from the Restorative Class in 10 or more days. Before the student completes the ten days of good behavior, the student meets with the Restorative Classroom teacher for an Exit Interview. During this interview, the student reviews areas that they have worked on, and the areas they are apprehensive about when they return to the classroom

rotation. A follow up meeting is also set up with the administrators to support the student after they leave the Restorative classroom. Trust is constantly being re-established and maintained as the student cycles through the different programs.

### Daily Monitoring of Emotions by Using the Zones of Regulation

The Zones of Regulation is a curriculum that helps the student identify the different states they are feeling and helps them increase behavior control and problem solving skills. At the beginning of each class period, students check in during the morning meeting. Students examine how they are feeling upon arrival at school. The four zones and their identifying words are: **RED** zone (Mad/Angry, terrified, yelling/hitting, elated, out of control), **GREEN** zone (happy, calm, feeling okay, focused, ready to learn), **BLUE** zone (sad, sick, tired, bored, moving slowly), **YELLOW** zone (frustrated, worried, silly/wiggly, excited, loss of some control).



Day	M	T	W	Th	F	Date _____
<b>Morning Zone Check-In</b>						
I am in the <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> zone.						
This morning I feel _____						
because _____						
_____						
<b>Afternoon Zone Check-In</b>						
I am in the <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> zone.						
This afternoon I feel _____						
because _____						
_____						

At the end of the day, students complete an afternoon check in with their teacher. This has taught the student to express and identify how their body is feeling from the day's events or any stressors that occurred throughout the day. The teacher and student then discuss strategies that can help the student overcome those challenges when they encounter them again.



### September 2019

On the first day of opening the Restorative Classroom in September of 2019, five students were placed on the classroom caseload. The first few months would be a work in progress, but administration put together their resource team: one school counselor, two AmeriCorps Mentors, one school social worker, a social worker intern, and partnership with a behavioral health program. Administration created schedules for each student to meet with one of the resources throughout the day, support was provided for the teacher in using Google classroom and web-based curriculum, students were assigned BASE education components, and incentives were implemented. The Restorative team met twice a week to discuss the structure of the students' day, behavioral concerns, and behavior strategies. Often administrators would meet once a week with the Restorative teacher to discuss

concerns and strategies to support the teacher in their classroom.

The structure of the classroom was still being established. As a team, they were still running through what was working and what was not. It was a very reflective process. Students were still having difficulty understanding the value of being part of the Restorative Classroom. Within the first 30-60 days of the students' placement, one student was assaultive toward several students and staff, another made threats to the campus, and the other broke a classroom window and made threats to staff. The two other students completed the Restorative Classroom, however only to return after assaulting another student, and the other received numerous behavior referrals. Administration decided to make changes the following semester.

### January 2020

At the end of the semester, the Restorative Classroom was restructured. There was a negative perception of the Restorative Classroom amongst the other students. So changing the perception of the students and staff was important. Administration encouraged teachers to avoid describing the Restorative Classroom as a punitive consequence but rather as a classroom to reset. When administration met with students and families, it was emphasized that

the Restorative Classroom is a place where students can understand their anxieties and build a toolbox of strategies to help them be successful for when they return to the general rotation of classes. Additionally, administration decided to alternate the teachers who would be teaching the Restorative Classroom. Administrators met with the new teacher and explained the current structure and trusted her to make changes that she wanted to experiment with. Administration wanted the teacher to structure the classroom and individualize each plan for each student that transferred in and out of their classroom. The new teacher began to take ownership in creating an individualized restorative plan for all new students. She began to think about how to implement restorative practices throughout her lessons and incentives to maintain appropriate behavior. All with the same goal of the student completing the Restorative classroom with a stronger awareness of themselves and a toolbox of strategies to help them make healthier behavioral choices.

Currently, the school has 11 students participating in the Restorative Classroom. Within less than 30 days of our updated Restorative Classroom, four students have completed, and within eight days of graduating from the Restorative Classroom one student has returned back because of a physical altercation. When a student returns or a concern is still apparent, the Restorative teacher and administration meet to discuss next steps in supporting the students' transition back to the classroom rotation.

The learning process of developing the Restorative program was being shared between teacher and administration. Along with looking back and not being afraid to restructure, the Restorative team refined the communication and resources available to the new teacher and increased the number of successes for the students. Every student's restorative plan is individualized so that the student can identify their internal obstacle that prevents them from making healthy behavioral choices. As an administrative team, we can only keep refining our methods and support our teachers and students to learn from failure.

### Next Steps

Looking forward to 2020-2021 school year planning, administration hopes to add more restorative practices such as: Yoga, mindfulness, full implementation of the PBIS supports, a Sensory Pathway for elementary and junior high students, and implementing Restorative Circles in each classroom. As the 2020 school year comes to an end, more data will be collected to determine areas needing improvement, and areas that can be celebrated.



# THE HISTORY OF JCCASAC

BY BOB MICHELS, PAST PRESIDENT

WITH THANKS TO KEN TAYLOR AND JEANNE HUGHES

Before we can discuss JCCASAC, it is important to discuss the history of Court and Community Schools in California. Fifty years ago the responsibility for operating court schools in county operated detention facilities was that of the California Youth Authority, today known as the California Division of Juvenile Justice, a division of the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation. Generally, CYA would assign the responsibility to the probation department, who generally contracted with the local district or districts. The educational services that would result were often fragmented, lacked a focus on the unique needs of the Court School student population, and often became a simple extension of a nearby K-12 school program. A common result was an educational program that was generally substandard and often forgotten. At best, students received a satisfactory education. At worst, students received little or no education and the education they did receive was unsatisfactory.

There were a number of counties that had developed strong working relationships between the county probation department and county office of education relative the education of incarcerated youth. As early as 1971 and 1972, legislation was introduced to shift the educational responsibility of students housed in county operated detention facilities from the California Youth Authority to the County Board of Education. These early efforts by the Santa Clara County Office of Education failed. In 1976, a bill was introduced and passed that shifted the responsibility from CYA to the County Board of Education. Court Schools were the first mandated instructional programs that were the responsibility of the County Board of Education.

County Offices of Education (COE) were now able to hire their own teachers for Court Schools and provide appropriate curriculum to meet the needs of the students. The COE operated programs were in juvenile halls and ranches and group homes and day centers.

The creation of Community Schools was much easier. Fifty years ago, the status offender (W&I Code 601) who was a runaway, a truant, or out of control was commonly locked up and served through the educational programs within the juvenile detention facilities. Assembly Bill

3121 (1975) decriminalized these status offenses for juveniles and changed the entire structure of the juvenile justice system. When the law was changed to eliminate the use of detention as a tool for dealing with the status offender, there was an immediate need to serve this population. One answer was the requirement that each county establish nonsecure crisis resolution centers for these students. Another answer appeared in the form of legislation that Los Angeles and Santa Clara Counties were instrumental in getting introduced in 1976 that was known as the Community Schools Bill.

The organization that is now known as JCCASAC (Juvenile Court, Community, and Alternative School Administrators of California) was founded in 1969 as JCSAC (Juvenile Court School Administrators of California). The organization began as a group of professionals with a common interest that was instrumental in the development of the early court school programs. Its first major success as an organization was seen in 1976-1977 when it supported the efforts of key Northern and Southern California counties in the passage of legislation establishing Court and Community Schools. With each passing year, the organization matured and took on new dimensions. It was not until the late 1980s that the organization changed its name to JCCASAC and included "Community" schools in its title.

What was once a stand-alone organization operated by JCCASAC administrators now works as a sub-committee of the California County Superintendents Educational Services Organization (CCSESA).



# THE RESTORATIVE JUSTICE GARDEN: CULTIVATING HEALING

CONSTANCE WALKER, MEGAN MERCURIO

WOODSIDE LEARNING CENTER OF THE SAN FRANCISCO JUVENILE JUSTICE CENTER

*Constance Walker is an exceptional needs specialist who is a National Board Certified Teacher specializing in inclusive instruction at the Woodside Learning Center in the San Francisco Juvenile Justice Center for 22 years.*

*Megan Mercurio is an adolescent to young adult English language arts teacher who is National Board Certified and teaches English full-time at the Woodside Learning Center in San Francisco's Juvenile Justice Center for 13 years.*

All of our students suffer from various degrees of distress; being locked up inside the institution does little to alleviate this. To address the inherent stresses of incarceration, we have incorporated a weekly garden class into our curriculum to give students access to fresh air and nature. The Juvenile Justice Center Restorative Justice Garden (JJCRJG) began as a result of our student-led, participatory-action research project in 2010. Study results indicated that students feel a need to be in nature, and wanted the opportunity to nurture living things.

In a literature review, we found several examples of the benefits of incorporating nature-based programs into the curriculum.

Rohde and Kendle found that the psychological response to nature involves feelings of pleasure, sustained interest, 'relaxed wakefulness,' and a reduction in negative emotions, such as anger and anxiety.

For our own garden project, we sought the expertise of pioneers in the field of eco-literacy in education at the Center for Eco-literacy in Berkeley, CA. They provided us with invaluable guidance that helped us plan and negotiate for an outdoor, restorative-learning environment in the middle of our incarcerated setting. We planted a pilot garden in a tiny courtyard. Five years

later, our program occupies a spacious outdoor area, involves many more students, and integrates a popular culinary arts component. We have also collaborated with students at our sister program, Log Cabin Ranch, to build the planter boxes and picnic tables.



The JJCRJG program strives to bring gardening knowledge and traditions from past generations of African-Americans to the current generation of urban youth. Their grandparents and great-grandparents demonstrated self-sufficiency with their backyard gardens, and we seek to reconnect some of these seemingly lost values to our students. "...African, African Diaspora and Afri-

can-American cultural traditions have long embraced the kitchen garden as an essential piece of daily life. Don't let the new crop of food advocates and activists fool you—this is a tradition that our Ancestors established, cultivated and fought for..." (Twitty, 2012).

We consider the lack of access to affordable, nutritious food free of chemicals, additives, or GMOs to be a social justice issue. We understand that nutrition and access to nature can relieve symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder, ADHD, and other environmentally induced illnesses.

Students widely express their love for the garden class. Birds, plants, fresh air and cooperative learning experiences, within a relaxed atmosphere, provide a welcome escape from the anxiety and fear that dominates their waking hours. The garden class concludes with a student-prepared offering of harvested produce, herbs and fruit, all grown by the students. Each week, students learn a new recipe that rivals dishes at any restaurant in the city. Students share the meal family style in the open air. One student said, “I like gardening because whatever you put in you get back. Planting plants is like you are making a life. I am learning about how a community works as a whole. Together, as a group we are one. I like gardening; it takes a lot of things off my mind.”



We observe that students write reflectively about themselves, inspired by their time in the garden. They incorporate themes of cultivating and caring for living things, and analyze patterns of life, death, and rebirth in a naturally balanced system. One of our students, Ariel Romero, reflected on the value of the garden in his current existence in a nature journaling assignment: “Sun glows, birds sing, the wind slightly pushes bright flowers and their neighbors. Surrounded by freshness, I take in everything once I step out from behind these cement walls into the garden; it’s a big transformation. Inside is



so pale, lifeless and grey: too stuffy, too dusty, and unpleasant. I enjoy the garden program at JJC because it makes me feel somewhat free, since it’s a big open space. I read that people with low levels of vitamin D are likely to report signs of depression. I think this really explains why I get happy when I step out.” In her book, *Culturally Responsive Teaching and The Brain*, Zaretta Hammond writes, “This might seem like an odd suggestion in a book about culturally-responsive teaching but it is actually in keeping with the cultural practices of collectivist cultures— spending time in nature keeps us grounded and centered during challenging times. It is part of our resilience strategy” (Hammond, 2015 p. 55).

teaching and the brain: promoting authentic engagement and rigor among culturally and linguistically diverse students. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin, a SAGE Company.

**Works Cited**

(2012, March 15). If You Want to Grow a Healthy African American Kitchen Garden— Here are Your Marching Orders. Retrieved from <https://afroculinaria.com/2012/03/15/if-you-want-to-grow-a-healthy-african-american-kitchen-garden-here-are-your-marching-orders/comment-page-1/>

Hammond, Z. (2015). *Culturally responsive*

“It was all a dream...”  
 – The Notorious B.I.G.

The idea was hatched, as many are, during a worldwide pandemic. The event was Dr. Sheldon Eakin’s *Hip Hop Ed Summit*. As speakers such as Dr. Emily Wells, Dr. Shaun Woodly, Dr. Jason Rawls, and Dr. Courtney Rose expounded on the importance of hip hop pedagogy, a team began to dream of a project that would allow students in alternative education settings to share personal stories through hip hop and media arts in Kings County, California. What started as a passion project that seemed destined to be placed on the backburner, moved into reality in August of 2020. The state provided funding to address the root causes of learning loss, including the need for social emotional support for students.

The location of this funding windfall: J.C. Montgomery School, which serves students incarcerated within the juvenile justice system. J.C. Montgomery School primarily serves high school students. These students attend the school anywhere from one day to the majority of a school year and the population served is 100% socioeconomically disadvantaged. Many of the students have experienced generational trauma and poverty. Over 90% of the students are BIPOC. The majority of the students are behind on high school credits and report being disengaged from the school system.

The Kings County Office of Education team behind the idea: Elizabeth Norris, principal at J.C. Montgomery and literacy consultant, Ed Campos, technology, science, and math consultant, and Morgan Tigert, special education consultant. This idea was supported by Kings County Superintendent of Schools, Todd Barlow, Educational Services Program Director, Joy Santos and Leadership Services Director, LaVonne Chastain.



Stories with Style piece designed by Erik Gonzalez, Urbanists Collective

“Here’s a little story that must be told from beginning to end.” – Common

Once hatched, the idea grew exponentially. Originally, the plan was to provide a series of ten lessons that facilitated student storytelling through writing, visual design, and sound. The lesson series would be planned around

English Language Arts and Media Arts standards and designed around culturally responsive and hip hop pedagogies. Students would have the opportunity to write a rap or a spoken word poem. Then, the team decided that because they were far from experts with hip hop education, they should bring in experts through interview clips. Derrick “Black Aesop” McElroy of rap group *Living Legends* and Melvin Jenkins, former principal and current Nearpod Senior Brand Ambassador provided insights into storytelling, education, and hip hop culture. Jenkins shared the story of his own education. “It’s always good to know and hear things from other perspectives...When I was going through the K-12 school system I really didn’t like school. As early as middle school I found myself saying I can’t wait to get out of here...it had a lot to do with how some of the adults in the school building treated me as a student...I was a class clown, but a lot of adults had a hard time separating me- child versus me- adult, and it made for a horrible, long school experience...for me, hip hop is life. When I found hip hop music I was in middle school, my late middle school years and it’s been with me ever since. I don’t think I would have finished traditional schooling if not for hip hop. If not for the talent shows, the teachers who were open to me doing assignments using rap music...” It quickly became clear that this project had the potential to significantly impact students within Kings County. The scope of the project grew as well – the Region 7 Visual and Performing Arts Committee decided to license the series for free use by teachers across the region. The team decided that student

input and input from others in the hip hop community were imperative to make the lessons authentic.

The team sought input from John Gill of Beats, Rhymes, Life, an organization that provides therapy through hip hop music in the Bay Area as well as training throughout California. Gill gave insight into allowing authentic voice within a school setting and ideas on how to structure writing and recording sessions. The team also connected with Allison Frenzel, California Department of Education Program Lead for Arts, Media and Entertainment and Secondary Arts programs, including the Hip Hop Education and Equity Initiative. Frenzel was able to provide resources and connections for the project. One of those connections was Martha Diaz, founder of the Hip Hop Education Center. She helped the team to center the work around the history and impact of hip hop, including its roots in the Bronx. Her commitment to the history of hip hop shaped many areas of the work. Additionally, the team turned to social media and gathered information from the #HipHopEd community on Twitter, including insights from Dr. Chris Emdin of the Teachers College, Columbia University, who frequently facilitates the weekly chats from the #HipHopEd community as well as sharing resources on bringing hip hop into the classroom. Finally, the team conducted research from authors such as Adam Bradley, whose publisher gave permission for use of an excerpt from his book *Book of Rhymes: The Poetics of Hip Hop*. Author William Jelani Cobb's text *To the Break of Dawn: A Freestyle on the Hip Hop Aesthetic* also contributed hugely to the project. As the team navigated the rabbit hole of hip hop culture, history, and pedagogy they became aware of how much there was to learn. "When you take on a project like this, you have to be willing to put aside control and let others, including your students, take the lead. You also have to be respectful that this is not simply a project-based assignment. It is a culture that is deeply valued by the hip hop community and the students we serve," shared Elizabeth Norris.

It became clear that the project would grow in impact the more it was led by voices living hip hop culture

every day. The team brought in Josh Levine aka Optx – a rapper, producer, and filmmaker from Jay Matthews Creative who lives in the Central Valley. He became integral to the project, first by guiding the team through the purchase of mobile recording labs to be used during the project and later working directly with students. Levine shared the following after the project was completed: "Music is an amazing outlet for anyone, a sort of meditation, and music has the power to bring out all emotions. I saw firsthand the eyes light up when the students were allowed to record on the industry quality recording equipment purchased for the program. For many kids getting to record in a studio is only a dream, much less when incarcerated. By giving them a chance to hear themselves on a song professionally recorded is something they will take with them for the rest of their lives. I could only imagine the potential if this was a semester long program. Students from all walks of life would benefit from this storytelling class." The team also brought in Erik Gonzalez of Urbanists Collective, a graffiti artist whose organization serves the community through art and public engagement. He worked with students on the concept of using art to tell the stories that lie beneath the surface and also provided the project with its name: *Stories with Style*.

**"Love yourself and your expression, you can't go wrong." KRS-One**

In January, 2021, the team felt the first iteration of the project was ready to bring to students. English teacher Jorge Hernandez was happy to let the team "take over" for the lesson series. From day one, students were told that their feedback mattered and were asked for brutal honesty. "We let students know that this kind of program wasn't happening at any other school in our area, let alone a juvenile facility...that they were co-crafting these lessons with us...that the changes they suggested would benefit future students at JCM and throughout the county and state," recalled Ed Campos. The lesson series began by sharing Janay Kelley's spoken word poem *The Death of Hip Hop*, provided students with the history of hip hop's origin in the Bronx, and then delved into the

idea of poetry and rap as vehicles to tell stories. Tupac Shakur's ability to tell both personal and societal stories was introduced through his poetry, interview clips, and a segment of his song, *Changes*. His status as an iconic figure resonated with students. The need to further deepen the historical impact of hip hop also rose to the surface. The series was off to a good start. It was also apparent that there were areas that learning could go deeper and where the pace might slow. Bringing lessons in a sort of "rough draft" form to students was paying off – their feedback was spot on and the team was learning with and from the students.

The next lesson brought in the concept of persona. Rather than recreating the wheel, the team used Dr. Chris Emdin's materials from his lesson, *How to Write a Rap*, which are available for classroom use through Houghton-Mifflin. Erik Gonzalez zoomed in and led students through the idea of persona in artwork. He utilized familiar marketing



logos, hip hop logos, and the concept of an iceberg as a metaphor for the stories that lie beneath the surface. Students had access to art materials and support from Gonzalez as well as classroom teacher Dawn Sanger, who holds a degree in art. One student worked collaboratively with Gonzalez to create a metaphor for his life through the use of an abandoned house – damaged, but still standing. Sanger shared, "For some students, the writing portion wasn't their strong suit, so the art was used as a jumping off point. The art gave them the opportunity to show the personality that went along with their writing. Music, writing, and art allowed students to tap into their emotions to express their life stories."

On days three and four, Josh Levine co-taught the lessons around the concepts of rhythm, flow, and rhyme. He

introduced students to Sound Trap for creating beats and walked them through his own thinking process when creating a beat and writing down ideas. Students were provided with journals to take back to their rooms and each had Sound Trap installed on their classroom device. Students were immediately drawn to Levine for his experience in the field and his ability to relate to them as



Ed Campos, Officer Contreras, and Josh Levine

individuals. A disruption to the lesson series occurred due to a move to distance learning, so the team regrouped and worked to bring the remainder of the lessons to students in February.

During the remaining lessons, students learned to analyze and apply the literary devices used in rap and spoken word pieces. They also began to trust the process and one another. At the beginning of the project, students wrote about being in gangs. Their raps were fact based, but shared little of their own feelings about living their own stories. By the end of the project, students began to collaborate with one another and became comfortable enough to be vulnerable and share some deeply personal feelings and fears. Levine continued to support them in recording their work and taught them some tricks of the trade. Probation staff, including Deputy Director Dan Luttrell came to watch students record their

pieces. Lutrell shared, “So many of our kids come to us with unspeakable emotional wounds and they’re frequently unable to articulate their thoughts and feelings as they work toward healing. Music, and rap in particular, offered the kids an outlet to share their stories in a way such that others could clearly understand and empathize. Watching the kids muster the courage to write, practice and perform their lyrics in front of each other and the staff was absolutely invigorating and fostered an environment that was filled with feelings of positivity that lacked any tension whatsoever. In a detention facility, that type of feeling in the air is rare; especially in the context of youth freely sharing and processing their thoughts and feelings. The digital storytelling curriculum is one of the most beneficial programs I’ve seen in 29 years.”

*Looking at the sky,  
Only thing about time  
I know I'm gonna shine like a beacon  
don't get the glow because  
that's really phony*  
-JCM Student

*I just wanna buy a ring and get married to you  
baby would you be there for me if they ain't care  
about me  
lot of stuff on my mind but I can't share about it  
I keep on pushing because I know I'm tryin' to  
stand by it  
Yea, ay..  
just how to step back  
you got a baby girl  
on the way, I gotta be there  
why you fakin'*

*look up in your eyes,  
yea I see squares,  
and I see squares.*  
-JCM Student

To wrap up the project, Ed Campos took students back through the purpose and structure of the project and then highlighted the work created by students. Kings County Superintendent of Schools, Todd Barlow, Educational Services Program Director, Joy Santos, and artist Erik Gonzalez attended the showcase of student work. One student shared that the project provided him with an opportunity to tell his own story, not the one that adults told for him. As of this publication date, students are still writing and asking when they can record again.

**“You’ve got to always go back in time if you want to move forward.” Snoop Dogg**

The team already has several next steps planned before the lessons are realized and the second iteration is brought to J.C. Montgomery. First, they will be polishing the lessons with the help of teacher Amanda Sandoval, who is an expert with instructional design. They will also be working with Niccolo Go, Creative Director for Go Creative Group to tell the story behind the project through media arts and social media. The lessons will be revised based on student feedback and input from those who observed or led the lessons. The final product will delve more deeply into the history of hip hop and the innovators within the culture. At J.C. Montgomery, the team plans to make the project fully immersive next year – learning about sound waves in science, the math behind composing beats, and a deep dive into the history of hip hop starting from its roots to today and exploring all elements of hip hop. They will continue to reach out to those working in the field of hip hop artistry and hip hop pedagogy to refine the lessons. They also plan to bring in other cultures represented in the student population and explore how storytelling impacts those cultures.

Olivia slid into her second row seat as she usually does on most days and pulls out the book, *Refugee* by Alan Gratz. Olivia’s teacher, Mr. Logan, unbeknownst to her, chose the book not only because he thought it was of high interest, but also many of the kids in the class had been experiencing injustices within their own lives. Although Mr. Logan thought he understood the fears of possible deportation of his students and/or their families, or the societal injustices they faced, did he truly understand? Do his students feel safe in HIS class to truly express their thoughts, feelings, and fears? Most importantly, have his students ever been provided a space that supported an opportunity to express equity, self-reflection, empathy and sympathy? Olivia can’t remember a time in school where she felt a part of something, much less comfortable enough for her voice to be heard, especially her raw inside voice.

Imagine you are Olivia, sliding down into the uncomfortable desk chair in the second row listening to the words roll off Mr. Logan’s tongue as he reads a section from *Refugee*. The characters, Isabel and her family, have just been forced to leave their homeland of Cuba in order to survive. They must leave all they have ever known due to the social injustices of the Cuban government. This move is life or death for Isabel’s family. As a quiet and introverted student who rarely shares her voice, this story, this connection, triggered an emotion Olivia had not felt before and definitely not towards a book! Although this story may not have resonated with every student, it clearly did with Olivia. Using circles first and foremost to establish strong, supportive relationships among students has a significant academic impact in the long run (Costello et. al. “Restorative Circles in Schools” 23). Imagine if the classroom community had already established a culture of support for Olivia. If Mr. Logan intentionally began reading each day in a restorative circle, it would offer a voice to ALL students. The circle would foster a protected space for students to dialogue openly about emotions that may arise.

Creating an effective educational climate that provides safe, equitable, and accessible learning opportunities is a liberty of ALL students. While many people use restorative circles for problem solving alone and believe circles are something that happen only when educational goals are impeded, it is undoubtedly clear by now that we advocate the integration of circles into the basic structure of teaching. Teachers have many different means and techniques for delivering course content, including lectures, small group activities, discussions, tests and quizzes, videos, projects and games. “Think of the circle as adding another string to a teacher’s bow, a versatile technique capable of serving multiple functions” (Costello et al. “Restorative Circles in Schools” 40). Our belief is that if we are *PROACTIVE* and *RESTORATIVE* in our approach to daily content instruction, this inclusive and collaborative learning environment is possible!

#### **Restorative Practices and Restorative Circles**

In order to discuss the relevance of incorporating Restorative Practices (RP) into content instruction, we must first have a common understanding of the meaning. Ted Wachtel, founder of the International Institute of Restorative Practices (IIRP), states that “RP is a social science that studies how to build social capital and achieve social discipline through participatory learning and decision-making” (Wachtel). Restorative Practices (RP) and Restorative Justice (RJ) sometimes are used synonymously. However, the two practices are not synonymous. The IIRP views RJ as a subset of RP. “RJ is *REACTIVE*, consisting of formal or informal responses to crime and other wrongdoing after it occurs. The IIRP’s definition of RP also includes the use of informal and formal processes that *PRECEDE* wrongdoing and those that *PROACTIVELY* build relationships and a sense of community to prevent conflict and wrongdoing” (Wachtel). That said, RP is a powerful tool to implement in support of building a safe and equitable classroom-community.

As the late Rita F. Peirson shared in her inspiring

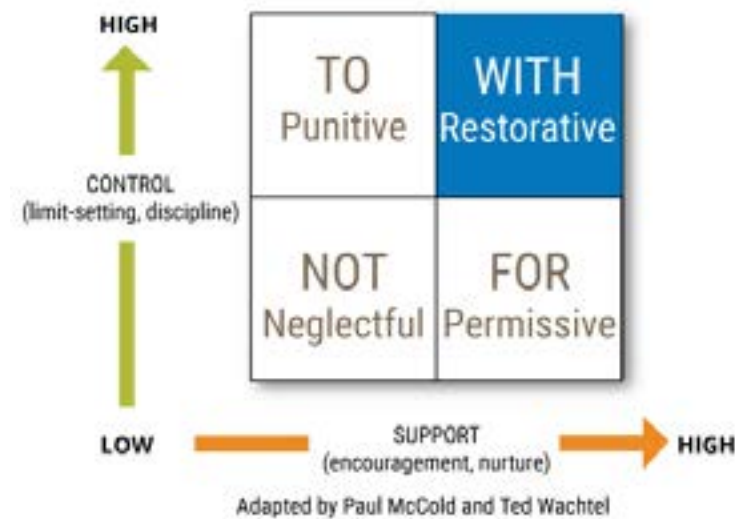
TedTalks, “Kids don’t learn from people they don’t like” (Pierson). We would argue that this stands true for not just *KIDS* but *ADULTS* as well. Successful teachers are champions of building relationships with students in support of classroom management, safety, and academic instruction. As we have discussed, RP is a social science looking at how to build social capital through inclusiveness, collaboration, and equity of voice.

The ability to build social capital, relationships, and maintain social discipline with our students is an invaluable skill. “Everyone with an authority role in society faces choices in deciding how to maintain social discipline: parents raising children, teachers in classrooms, employers supervising employees or justice professionals responding to criminal offenses” (McCold and Wachtel). Historically, we have operated from a punitive perspective when it comes to managing classrooms and schools. We continue to look at things in a “let the punishment fit the crime” kind of way. Through RP the offender, victim, and school staff all play a role in finding an answer. Until recently, Western societies have relied on punishment, usually perceived as the only effective way to discipline those who misbehave or commit crimes (McCold and Wachtel). There is a paradigm shift in our thinking when it comes to consequences in school today. We are looking at the *WHOLE CHILD*, taking into account trauma, socio-economic background, past experience, etc. In order to truly comprehend RP, we need to look at multiple parts: the Social Discipline Window, Fair Process, and the Psychology of Affect.

*The Social Discipline Window*

It is essential to have an understanding of the Social Discipline Window to continue our discussion on defining RP. Costello and Wachtel assert that the fundamental hypothesis of RP is that “human beings are happier, more cooperative and productive, and more likely to make positive changes in their behavior when those in positions of authority do things *WITH* them, rather than *TO* or *FOR* them.” (Costello et al.

“Restorative Circles in Schools” 40). The concept of the Social Discipline Window is illustrated in the picture below. Students are more inclined to take ownership of their learning when teachers are in the *WITH* or *RESTORATIVE* corner of the window. Students, and arguably staff as well, will thrive in an environment where they have a voice!



*Fair Process*

Another function of RP is to promote an inclusive, cooperative and participatory community. As discussed, when we do things *WITH* people rather than *TO* or *FOR* them, the outcome is typically more positive. This idea was dubbed “fair process” in an influential article that appeared in *Harvard Business Review* (qtd. in Costello “Restorative Circles in Schools” 14). The idea of Fair Process consists of three parts: “*Engagement* - involving individuals in decisions that affect them by listening to their views and genuinely taking their opinions into account; *Explanation* - explaining the reasoning behind a decision to everyone who has been involved or who is affected by it; *Expectation Clarity* - making sure that everyone clearly understands a decision and what is expected of them in the future” (Costello et al. “Restorative Circles in Schools” 14). Fair process takes into consideration that some people will not ever agree

upon a decision. Overall, when people (e.g., students or staff) are involved in the process, and genuinely feel like their voices have been heard, they are more likely to accept changes or get involved. That said, when a classroom implements a fair process, students are inclined to be engaged and active learners.

*Psychology of Affect*

According to Wachtel and Costello, the most critical function of RP is restoring and building relationships. “The late Silvan S. Tomkins’ writings about the psychology of affect (Tomkins, 1962, 1963, 1991) “asserts that human relationships are best and healthiest when there is free expression of affect -- or emotion --*MINIMIZING* the *NEGATIVE*, *MAXIMIZING* the *POSITIVE*, but allowing for *FREE EXPRESSION*” (Costello et al. “Restorative Circles in Schools” 16). This free and mutual expression of ideas, emotions, and feelings is a prominent argument for integrating RP and restorative circles into our daily instruction. Providing a protected space for students to exchange ideas, share emotions, think critically, and most of all grow through failure is our duty as educators! Examining the Social Discipline Window, Fair Process, and Psychology of Affect will enable us to accomplish a safe and inclusive learning community.

**Restorative Circles**

Moving forward with a shared understanding of RP and restorative circles, we can agree RP elements provide community-building opportunities. For instance, “one of the essential RP elements is the ‘Proactive Circle’ in which teachers use structured group discussions and meaningful exchanges while sitting in a circle” (Costello et al. “Restorative Circles” 40). Circles by their very nature convey equality, safety and trust, responsibility, facilitation, ownership, and connections. The simple act of introducing a new topic in a circle rather than in the typical assigned seats can be powerful. Think about it. . . circles have been a tool for bringing people together for centuries (e.g., Knights of the Round Table, Native Americans).

There are several different types of restorative circles, all of which lend themselves to creating and maintaining a safe space for the expression of ideas and emotions. Academic circles develop student voice, promote critical thinking, create equal opportunities for ALL students to be heard, and check for understanding. Community circles can be utilized to build relationships, gain trust, connectedness, and give a safe and equitable space for open discussions. There are literally endless possibilities when looking to implement a restorative classroom-community through use of circles.

Restorative circles in the classroom organically solicit sharing based on the shape of a circle alone. When conducting a lesson or discussion in a circle, all participants are on equal footing. Facing one another, they have frank and open discussions about academic topics (e.g., their academic goals for the day or the semester), emotional topics (e.g., their experiences being the target of teasing), and classroom-specific topics (e.g., what norms of respect they would like to establish in the classroom). The types of topics and specific content are limitless, yet the goal is similar: provide an opportunity for students and teachers to learn about one another (and thus respond more appropriately to one another) (Gregory et al.). A teacher who inclusively sets up a restorative classroom-community utilizing circles daily is arguably prepared for most obstacles.

**Limitation of Restorative Practices**

At this point, I hope we can all agree that punitive school discipline systems are ineffective and simply do not work. In most instances, punitive or zero-tolerance policies can actually increase discipline issues and create a school community and culture that is not only unhealthy but downright toxic. Furthermore, “we know that punitive discipline policies are disproportionately applied to students identified as visible minorities, students with physical and academic disability labels, and other students who are marginalized because they don’t fit inside certain socially prescribed boxes” (qtd. in

Zehr).

As a reaction to the zero-tolerance policies of the past, many states, districts, county offices of education and/or classrooms have implemented some form of RP to deal with discipline issues in hopes of creating a community that promotes egalitarian relationships. Unfortunately, many school communities, in their zeal to replace a system of zero-tolerance, have executed RP policies and procedures that are ineffective or *restorative-ISH*. While we would agree that *restorative-ISH* is a better system than zero-tolerance, we also know firsthand that an ineffective program creates a culture of mistrust and frustration that hinders buy-in from school staff and students.

This is not to suggest that all RP are ineffective. In fact, we have found a number of programs both nationally and internationally that have promoted a restorative system that does what it's supposed to do. However, in our research we have also identified a number of schools who are frustrated with RP and actually feel that it has created a classroom environment that is more dangerous and less controlled than before these practices were enacted. Not surprisingly, most complaints fell into the following categories: implementation, lack of research, and resistance to change.

#### *Implementation*

How many times in your career have you been bombarded with a new policy, procedure or initiative that was promised to be the next revolutionary development in education? You attend a training in a large room with a plethora of staff, watch someone read to you from a PowerPoint Presentation, then leave expected to be an expert in your classroom without any follow-up or retraining. Sound familiar? It is the way it has always been done so it must be effective right? Unfortunately, this model, while efficient, cost-effective and at times appropriate, will not work with the implementation of RP. RP is not a traditional form of curriculum. It is a whole-school culture rather than

a linear type program. Therefore it must be approached in a different fashion. Many programs and districts across the globe have attempted to implement school-wide RP with great intentions. Regrettably, this has not happened and the restorative programs currently in place throughout The United States and beyond vary so widely it's difficult to ascertain their effectiveness.

As mentioned above, school communities were so eager to implement a program that was contrary to the traditional zero-tolerance policy, that most went a little rogue and developed a design that was *restorative-ISH*. In a study of eighteen schools that had implemented RP, the researchers found that "implementation across schools varied substantially, which they argued may have been somewhat due to fundamental ideological differences between RP programming and more traditional beliefs and practices about how to manage student behavior" (McCluskey, et al.).

The various methods of implementation were not the only mistake the schools have made however. Again, RP is a change in culture rather than a linear type of curriculum. Many districts and schools, due mainly to financial issues (Song & Swearer) have not afforded adequate training, follow-up and in-class support. Even advocates of RP have agreed that schools had moved too quickly and in-turn created programs that were less effective than those who took the time to change a school culture (Barshay). Samuel Song and Susan M. Swearer, in their article entitled, *The Cart Before the Horse: The Challenge and Promise of Restorative Justice Consultation on Schools*, point out the difficulties in RP implementation and training. RP is a "way of being in the world, and therefore, there is no way to practice it that can be captured adequately in a manual" (Song & Swearer). Most programs that have been successful however, tend to have two things in common: how they are trained and the support they receive thereafter.

Large group environments are not an appropriate method

for RP trainings. Rather, the initial setting needs to be in small groups where each member feels comfortable enough to share honestly and from the heart. The core of RP is building social capital and maintaining social discipline through participatory learning. When facilitating an RP training with an enormous amount of participants, there is not much "air time" for all to share. Furthermore, the RP trainings themselves need to be conducted in a way where all involved have a voice in the direction and make-up of the training. There is no empowerment available if it's simply a mandated requirement from an administrator. Again, this is a culture; not curriculum. When building a restorative school culture, we also want to stay true to the goals of RP and be all inclusive. A restorative school community will not flourish unless ALL staff is trained and on board. This will start with the first person the student interacts with on campus. If this is the enrollment office then this entire staff will need to attend RP training and have ongoing support.

The need for follow-up training and support is integral to the success of RP in any school. RP can be a tremendous sea change not only for our students but the staff as well. You cannot expect an administrator, teacher or staff member to become an expert at RP after one training any more than you would expect a student to gravitate towards it after their first experience. This is a process that takes time, initiative and the space to become comfortable with the theory and practice of effective RP. Furthermore, the inclusion of RP experts or "in-house consultants is critical for any lasting effects in schools." (qtd. in Song & Swearer)

Lastly, simply calling something restorative does not make it so. Introducing alternatives to suspensions are great but not necessarily restorative. RP "doesn't work as an add-on. It requires us to address the roots of student "misbehavior" and a willingness to rethink and rework our classrooms, schools, and school districts. Meaningful alternatives to punitive

approaches take time and trust. They must be built on schoolwide and districtwide participation" ("Restorative Justice: What it is and what it is not"). All too often we have witnessed or researched schools that wanted to embrace RP without putting in the time and effort necessary for a prosperous program. RP cannot be a band-aid on a broken leg or a finger in the dike. As John D. Rockefeller said, "Don't be afraid to give up the good for the great."

#### *Lack of Research*

Another major flaw with RP is the lack of available research which, as discussed above, is not surprising when so many programs are implemented in a variety of ways. This is of major concern as we have no clear picture of RP's effectiveness and thus cannot use that data to drive its implementation and growth. Researchers have found that RP has been "under-studied, especially in schools. This is concerning because practice appears to be far ahead of the research on effectiveness and successful implementation and sustainability, when in fact, research should be facilitating data-based decision making" (Song & Swearer). It's like assigning a student an algebra book before performing a qualified diagnostic. Furthermore, much of the prevailing research is not peer-reviewed, usually takes place at only one school and does not follow acceptable rules and procedures associated with professional research (Song & Swearer).

Research has also been misleading when RP's effectiveness towards attendance and behaviors is concerned. RP in programs is increasingly popular due to its promise to address the school-to-prison pipeline identified some twenty years ago (Wald & Losen). For example, Los Angeles Unified School District posted a 92 percent decrease in the number of days lost to suspensions (Szymanski) since their adoption of RP as an alternative to traditional, punitive-based policies.



However, this statistic, which is common among schools, can be very misleading as it does not track student behavior. Simply stating that RP is working due to a decrease in suspension is not surprising when most schools have given directives not to suspend students in favor of a restorative solution. While this sounds good in theory does it truly decrease the behavior issues in the classrooms? Isn't this the true measure of RP's effectiveness? It's like stating that arrests for marijuana possession has decreased in states where it is now legal. Of course it has decreased! The true measure is whether or not marijuana consumption has increased or decreased in legal states. Regardless, any significant decreases in suspensions and increases in attendance should always be applauded.

*Resistance to Change*

Change is difficult! In our twenty years in education we have seen so many different initiatives, theories, practices and procedures; there is no way that we can remember them all. We know in education some of these things are great, some are so-so, and others are downright forgettable. We were not alone with our skepticism when we were first presented with RP in our County Office of Education. Truthfully, we thought RP was some ineffective, touchy-feely nonsense that had no place in the classroom. Change is difficult. However, after we witnessed RP in action in a colleague's classroom we were hooked. We could not believe the level of community and relationships that our colleague had with his students. Not only did behavior issues decrease within his classroom, but he felt a bond with his students that he had been missing for years. It was

truly remarkable!

Unfortunately, not everyone was on board. Not only in our area, but throughout the nation, teachers exposed to RP had similar concerns. 1) Teachers felt that the program lacked accountability. For many, accountability is defined as punishment which is why they would feel a lack of accountability within RP. But RP actually has accountability in its framework when conducted correctly and stresses the importance of self-responsibility and reparations. 2) RP is too emotionally draining. Teachers are often turned off by the prospect of RP as the practice itself can be burdensome to some, especially at the beginning. Proponents of RP however would argue that constant behavior issues in the classroom can be far more draining than a well-constructed circle. 3) Teachers feel that RP makes it harder to remove problematic students from the classroom (Szymanski). This is by far the most common critique and fear associated with RP and is a valid concern. In areas where RP or RJ has not been implemented with fidelity, schools and teachers have actually witnessed an increase in behavior issues (Sperry). Yet, other schools have found the exact opposite. In one Pittsburgh district, teachers reported that "their school environments felt safer, rebutting critics who claim that reducing suspensions means chaos in the classroom" (Barum). Perspective is a powerful view to those who choose to see; however, it can also be limiting. Is RP's fidelity measured through perspective? Maybe.

Another major issue is the way in which RP is presented to staff. Administrators need to be honest about the expectations and demands expected from staff when implementing a program that is not a "one and done." Remember, "the type of educational changes we are hoping for cannot be accomplished in a few hours or 3-day-long sessions. And yet, due to funding issues, lack of understanding of RJ, and an emphasis on standardization and accountability, three days of RJ

training are about as much as most principals are willing and/or able to give up" ("Restorative Justice: What it is and what it is not" ). Administrators also need to demonstrate a willingness to accept RP by including teachers in the decision-making and planning process. Much like students who take ownership of their learning, buy-in is far more likely when a collaborative environment has been created.

**The Value of Restorative Circles as a Pedagogical Tool**

As teachers, we universally design our content and differentiate our instruction, so that all learners have access to grade level material. However, we must remain mindful that students often have barriers that may not be readily visible, or appear on an academic diagnostic. Social emotional obstacles such as anxiety and/or trauma will best be supported through the PROACTIVE planning of building a safe and equitable climate. While research of RP tends to be lacking at this point, one thing that seems to be universal is the importance of building a community. While there are a number of ways in which RP is conducted, all programs aim to "build a community and to foster the kind of student-to-student and educator-to-student relationships that lead to supportive classrooms" (Flannery). Our objective therefore, should be the establishment of a whole-school culture that fosters RP. Oftentimes, schools use RP as a construct that is separate from the traditional academic curriculum. We argue that RP should be an integral part of every teacher's curriculum.

There seems to be a troubling trend among some schools that have enacted RP as a separate entity from their curriculum. In Pittsburgh Public Schools, academic achievement, especially with African American students, actually fell when exposed to RP compared to students at schools who were disciplined as usual. While research is inconclusive at this point, "one explanation for the uneven test results might simply be that teachers diverted time from academics, causing students to be less prepared for exams (Barnum). Cristine Cray, an

official at Pittsburgh Public Schools, wants "teachers to see how restorative practices can be used to complement academic instruction and not replace academic instruction."

The implementation of RP can be a daunting task, as many novel endeavors tend to be. Teachers are nervous about a new program and in turn their anxiety affects the students and the overall environment of the room which may lead some to abandon RP all together. "Some teachers fear they are being asked to become therapists, because they know that circles have been used in therapeutic settings and because circles are a forum for the free expression of affect. But as great teachers know, teaching is much more than conveying facts and information alone. There is a significant interpersonal dimension to teaching (Costello et al. "Restorative Circles in Schools" 24). Furthermore, RP "requires a high degree of student buy-in. Students cannot be forced to talk about their grievances face-to-face with their classroom enemies. It's a voluntary process and not every kid wants to talk" (Barshay). Rather than attempting to reinvent the wheel or biting off more than you can chew, start off slow and get comfortable with RP in the classroom.

**Conclusion**

Imagine that you are an English teacher and your students have to read pages 15-30 together as a class. Which do you think works better: "Take out your books and read?" Or, create an anticipatory conversation with your class that relates to some topic or theme in the day's reading where students can respond in a comfortable, safe environment? Circles have their value in RP, but imagine an RP approach in a circle with academic content as the topic. Lower the affective filter, create a connection to the content, and encourage students to communicate in a safe non-judgemental environment. Students need to feel safe with their teachers and with their peers in order to ask questions, admit confusions, and try new skills. Creating a safe classroom and school environment is a foundation for academic achievement

(Boyes-Watson and Pranis 69).

Circles as the “opener” for academic lessons can bridge the gap between presence and engagement. Furthermore, these anticipatory openers help create an environment where students’ backgrounds and interests connect to the curriculum. This is not simply related to English courses only. This is appropriate for ALL core curricula. Let’s reflect on Olivia, the student who never wanted to stand out, wanted to blend in and never felt connected to her curriculum, until her teacher Mr. Logan began a lesson that preceded the daily readings of *Refugee*. Olivia had already been struggling with an internal connection to Isabel because of their similar experiences. The circle provided a safe and equitable environment for her to process and discuss her internal thoughts and feelings. Olivia was provided an opportunity to develop connections with classmates and her teacher within the circle, thus connecting students’ vast interests and backgrounds. Mr. Logan designed his lessons with intent and provided opportunity and space for Olivia and all his students’ voices. The equitability of the circle can do much more than resolve conflict, it can also allow students to create connections, graces, and understandings of those they may not have spoken to or pursued on their own.

The schools that implement Restorative Practices with fidelity are experiencing an overwhelming positive change to their school discipline and culture. Although the published research has valid arguments for and against the practices of RP, in schools in particular, it is apparent that not only the students, but also the staff and community are positively benefitting from the practices. RP and academic content instruction should not be considered separate entities, rather they should be seen as productive sidekicks. Partners. Comrades that work in unison to achieve the ultimate goal for our students: an effective educational environment that provides safe, equitable, and accessible learning opportunities for ALL students.

### Works Cited

Barnum, Matt. “Major New Study Finds Restorative Justice Led to Safer Schools, but Hurt Black Students’ Test Scores.” Chalkbeat, Chalkbeat, 4 Jan. 2019, [chalkbeat.org/posts/us/2019/01/04/the-first-gold-standard-study-of-restorative-justice-is-out-heres-what-it-tells-us/](http://chalkbeat.org/posts/us/2019/01/04/the-first-gold-standard-study-of-restorative-justice-is-out-heres-what-it-tells-us/).

Barshay, Jill. “The Promise of ‘Restorative Justice’ Starts to Falter under Rigorous Research.” The Hechinger Report, 6 May 2019, [hechingerreport.org/the-promise-of-restorative-justice-starts-to-falter-under-rigorous-research/](http://hechingerreport.org/the-promise-of-restorative-justice-starts-to-falter-under-rigorous-research/).

Boyes-Watson, Carolyn, and Kay Pranis. *Circle Forward: Building a Restorative School Community*. Living Justice Press, 2015.

Costello, Bob, et al. *The Restorative Practices Handbook: for Teachers, Disciplinarians and Administrators*. International Institute for Restorative Practices, 2009.

Costello, Bob, et al. *Restorative Circles in Schools: Building Community and Enhancing Learning*. International Institute for Restorative Practices, 2010.

Flannery, Mary Ellen. “How Restorative Practices Work for Students and Educators.” NEA Today, 13 June 2019, [neatoday.org/2019/06/13/how-restorative-practices-work-for-students-and-educators/](http://neatoday.org/2019/06/13/how-restorative-practices-work-for-students-and-educators/).

Gaudreault, Arlene. “Limits of Restorative Justice - Victimsweek.gc.ca.” Victims and Survivors of Crime Week, Proceedings of the Symposium of the École Nationale De La Magistrature, 2005, [www.victimsweek.gc.ca/symp-colloque/past-passe/2009/presentation/pdfs/restorative\\_justice.pdf](http://www.victimsweek.gc.ca/symp-colloque/past-passe/2009/presentation/pdfs/restorative_justice.pdf).

Gratz, Alan. *Refugee*. Scholastic Inc., 2017.

Gregory, Anne, et al. “The Promise of Restorative Practices to Transform Teacher-Student Relationships and Achieve Equity in School Discipline.” *Journal of Educational and Psychological Consultation*, vol. 26, no. 4, 4 Nov. 2014, doi:10.1080/10474412.2014.929950.

Lyubansky, Mikhail. “Nine Criticisms of School Restorative Justice.” *Psychology Today*, Sussex Publishers, 7 Mar. 2019, [www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/between-the-lines/201903/nine-criticisms-school-restorative-justice](http://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/between-the-lines/201903/nine-criticisms-school-restorative-justice).

Mccluskey, Gillean, et al. “Can Restorative Practices in Schools Make a Difference?” *Educational Review*, vol. 60, no. 4, 2008, pp. 405–417., doi:10.1080/00131910802393456.

Mccold, Paul, and Ted Wachtel. “In Pursuit of Paradigm: A Theory of Restorative Justice.” 12 Aug. 2003, <http://www.iirp.edu/pdf/paradigm.pdf>.

Morris, Allison, and Gabrielle Maxwell, editors. *Restorative Justice for*

Juveniles: Conferencing, Mediation and Circles. Hart Publishing, 2001.

Pierson, Rita. “Every Kid Needs a Champion.” TED: Ideas Worth Spreading, 3 May 2013, [www.ted.com/talks/rita\\_pierson\\_every\\_kid\\_needs\\_a\\_champion?language=en](http://www.ted.com/talks/rita_pierson_every_kid_needs_a_champion?language=en).

“Restorative Justice: What It Is and Is Not.” Vol. 29, no. 1, 2014, <https://www.rethinkingschools.org/articles/restorative-justice>.

Smith, Dominique, et al. *Better than Carrots or Sticks: Restorative Practices for Positive Classroom Management*. ASCD, 2015.

Song, Samuel Y., and Susan M. Swearer. “The Cart Before the Horse: The Challenge and Promise of Restorative Justice Consultation in Schools.” *Journal of Educational and Psychological Consultation*, vol. 26, no. 4, 21 Nov. 2016, doi:10.1080/10474412.2016.1246972.

Sperry, Paul. “How Liberal Discipline Policies Are Making Schools Less Safe.” *New York Post*, New York Post, 14 Mar. 2015, [nypost.com/2015/03/14/politicians-are-making-schools-less-safe-and-ruining-education-for-everyone/](http://nypost.com/2015/03/14/politicians-are-making-schools-less-safe-and-ruining-education-for-everyone/).

Staff, IIRP. “Defining Restorative 4.5. Compass of Shame.” IIRP, 1998, [www.iirp.edu/defining-restorative/compass-of-shame](http://www.iirp.edu/defining-restorative/compass-of-shame).

Staff, IIRP. “Defining Restorative 4.4. Nine Affects.” IIRP, 1998, [www.iirp.edu/defining-restorative/nine-affects](http://www.iirp.edu/defining-restorative/nine-affects).

Staff, IIRP. “Defining Restorative 4.1. Social Discipline Window.” IIRP, 2005, [www.iirp.edu/defining-restorative/social-discipline-window](http://www.iirp.edu/defining-restorative/social-discipline-window).

Szymanski, Mike. “Restorative Justice Program Drastically Lowers Days Lost to Suspensions in LAUSD.” *LA School Report*, 24 Mar. 2016, [laschoolreport.com/restorative-justice-program-drastically-lowers-days-lost-to-suspensions-in-lausd/](http://laschoolreport.com/restorative-justice-program-drastically-lowers-days-lost-to-suspensions-in-lausd/).

Wachtel, Ted. “Defining Restorative.” International Institute for Restorative Practices, 2016, [www.iirp.edu/restorative-practices/defining-restorative/](http://www.iirp.edu/restorative-practices/defining-restorative/).

Wald, Johanna, and Daniel J Losen. “Defining and Redirecting a School-to-Prison Pipeline.” *New Directions for Youth Development*, 2003, [www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/14635431](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/14635431).

Woerkom, Marieke van. “Building Community With Restorative Circles.” *EduTopia*, 12 Mar. 2018, [www.edutopia.org/article/building-community-restorative-circles](http://www.edutopia.org/article/building-community-restorative-circles).

Zehr, Howard, and Kathy Evans. “Restorative Justice in Education – Possibilities, but Also Concerns.” *ZEHR Institute for Restorative Justice (BLOG)*, EMU, 26 June 2014, [emu.edu/now/restorative-justice/2014/06/26/restorative-justice-in-education-possibilities-but-also-concerns/](http://emu.edu/now/restorative-justice/2014/06/26/restorative-justice-in-education-possibilities-but-also-concerns/).

# WANTED: INNOVATIVE PROGRAMS

This is an opportunity for  
you to tell others about the  
successes

-OR-

innovative programs you,  
your  
students, staff and programs  
have had in your  
schools, districts, and  
counties.

Submit articles to ...  
**John Rice**, Editor *JCCASAC Journal*  
Phone:(831) 466-5724  
[jrice@santacruzcoe.org](mailto:jrice@santacruzcoe.org)



### Introduction

Drawing from my work as an artist, researcher, and Community School teacher in Barrio Logan, I will share some of the place-based educational practices I engage in with my students. I will also present the theoretical underpinnings of the work as a critical pedagogy of place. Through the “work” of art, poetry, and music, students are encouraged to analyze their situations and share stories that veer from the dominant narratives often present in deficit models used with “at risk” youth. Spaces are offered for students to share their stories as narratives of resistance. Concepts of attachment and belonging, including how these concepts affect community cohesion and solidarity, are fundamental to this pedagogy as a place-based educational practice and more specifically as a critical pedagogy of place.

### Place-Belongingness

The concept of place-belonging is tied to the notion of emotional bonds towards places. Tuan (1990) coined the concept of ‘topophilia’ as the ‘affective bond between people and place or setting’ (p. 4). This emotional bond to place is created through a ‘steady accretion of sentiment’ and what starts out as mere ‘space’ becomes ‘place’ as we give it value and acquire deep meaning through our experiences (Tuan, 1977, p. 33). As a teacher in the San Diego County Juvenile Court and Community Schools, I have witnessed these deep attachments to place, or topophilia, which unfortunately, can also result in gang violence over attachments to neighborhoods, barrios and blocks. The violence, resulting from these attachments to place, is analogous to what Manzo and Perkins (2006) describe as the ‘shadow’ side of place attachment that can ‘entrap or create territorial conflicts’ (p. 337). However, it is also critical to acknowledge the positive side of place attachment and that neighborhoods and barrios are also places of enduring memories and sites of pleasure, comradery, family, culture and love. To omit those qualities distills the “hoods” and barrios to stereotypical crime ridden places.

Attachment to place includes the concept of belonging and is central to place-based educational practices. The concept of belonging is also tied to identity. Frederickson and Anderson (1999) explain that, ‘it is through one’s interactions with the particulars of a place that one creates their own personal identity and deepest-held values’ (p. 22). Through emotional ties, our loyalty to and awareness of our homeland or place is encouraged (Tuan, 1977) and, as Manzo and Perkins (2006) argue, through ‘shared emotional ties to places’ community action and social relationships are strengthened (p. 344). The notion of emotional ties to place is apparent in the work of artists, poets, musicians and activists in Barrio Logan, especially towards Chicano Park which holds historical, political and spiritual significance. The iconography in the murals of Chicano Park reflect the place-based identity of Aztlán that distinguishes Chicana/o art and that has been passed down through generations. We are emotionally tied to Chicano Park as a place and through these emotions our identities as Chicanas/os are enhanced.

Shared experiences of change and conflict also contribute to our sense of place-belongingness. Tuan (1977) explains that emotion towards a place draws on and extrapolates from ‘the direct experience of the particular parts— when the neighborhood is perceived to have rivals and to be threatened in some way, real or imagined’ (p. 171). The fight for the creation of Chicano Park made Barrio Logan a significant site for Chicana/o resistance and empowerment. Today, resistance to forces of displacement in the name of ‘urban renewal’ dominate the struggles. These emotional forces have manifested in community action over gentrification and threats to Chicano Park’s murals contributing to a strengthened sense of community and offering opportunities for political action and empowerment. Manzo and Perkins (2006) explain that through these types of struggles affective bonds are made stronger as people are inspired to take action and defend their communities.

### Place-Based Practices

Offering a space for students to voice an interrogation and resistance towards threats and forces of violence contributes to a sense of belonging and personal agency and are central to this practice. Artifacts from this work were gathered over a two-year period as part of my practice-based research and culminated in an art show at a Barrio Logan gallery. The photographs, poems and artworks were displayed and included printed excerpts from conversations to share with the community in the gallery space. The students were positioned as both artists and curators as a method to engage beyond the aesthetics of the artwork; they were encouraged to think about the possibilities of community interaction with their work. The photographs included images of the students as activists in the community, depicting their work organizing a toy drive, speaking at a forum for prisoners’ rights and participating in political marches and protests. Images of cultural significance were also shared, including videos from Dia de los Muertos celebrations and photographs of Chicano Park murals. In addition, the students organized open mic events in the gallery to share their poems and rap music. Although I have completed my practice-based research, I have continued to engage in these practices with my students as a Community School teacher. The students have weekly art, poetry and music recording sessions within the classroom and in community spaces. The images and words students share are by their own choosing and offer openings for narratives to emerge as counter stories to those often portrayed of youth in the barrio.

As a place-based educational practice, engagement in the community is necessary. McInerney et al. (2011) point out, the study of place contributes to worthwhile learning experiences that have the potential to transform the lives of youth as they develop a sense of empowerment to take positive action. The outcomes of place-based curriculums have educational impacts within and beyond the classroom as students interrogate power structures in their community and within the global context. Gruenewald (2003) explains that ‘reading the world

radically redefines conventional notions of print-based literacy and conventional school curriculum’ (p. 5). The ‘texts’ of this practice include works of art in the form of drawings, paintings, photographs, videos, music and poetry, as objects to decode, and are chosen by the students or as Gruenewald (2003) characterizes they are ‘images of their own concrete, situated experiences with the world’ (p. 5). For example, decoding images of the murals in Chicano Park contributes to the formation of our identities as Chicanas/os through conversations about history, activism and the spiritual aspects of our past and present situationality. These narrative practices can occur in the community through public events and in the classroom as students share their poems, art, and rap music with classmates and staff.

### Critical Pedagogy of Place

The goal of this section is to outline the key aspects of this practice as a critical pedagogy of place. As an aspect of critical pedagogy, the inquiry of this practice is ‘critical’ and ‘connected to an attempt to confront the injustices of a particular society or public sphere within the society’ (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011, p.164). Pointing out that critical pedagogy and place-based education are mutually supportive, Gruenewald (2003) argues for ‘a conscious synthesis that blends the two discourses into a critical pedagogy of place’ (p. 3). For a pedagogy to be critical it must center on constructing narratives of identity, resistance and transformation (Gruenewald, 2003; McLaren and Giroux, 1990). In addition, as Gruenewald (2003) explains, the focus of a critical pedagogy should be on ‘people telling their own stories (reading the world)’ (p. 5).

Within the conversations of this practice, power structures are interrogated as students are encouraged to reflect on their lives and on the power structures present in the community. McLaren (1995) explains it is with the use of narratives that we make sense of ‘our social universe’ (p. 89). Furthermore, as critical pedagogues we should seek personal narratives from our students because, as McLaren (1995) argues, ‘not all narratives share a similar status and there are those which exist, highly devalued, within society’s rifts and margins’ (p. 91). Uncovering these stories on the margins and stories of place that have not been deemed valuable by the educational systems are essential to this practice.

As a critical pedagogy of place, the practice of careful listening must take place to hear what students have to say about issues in their lives and to frame those issues within the larger context of the barrio and beyond. Making this engagement possible is an unconditional dialogue that Freire (1998) terms to 'speak by listening' (p. 104). Drawing from the work of Freire (1998, 2000), to call ourselves critical pedagogues we must pose problems with students and question the systems of oppression together, rather than positioning ourselves as experts (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011). This relationship is reciprocal because every teacher is a student and every student a teacher.

The use of community spaces to share student artworks, including open mic sessions for poetry and rap, is central to building this work as a critical pedagogy of place. The process of sharing new life narratives and engaging in dialogues with the community also positions the students as artists, poets, musicians and activists and demonstrates a form of empowerment. I draw from Rappaport's (1987) definition of empowerment, as 'a mechanism by which people, organizations and communities gain mastery over their affairs' (p. 122). The stories and conversations that emerge from student artwork, poetry and music are also vehicles with the potential to challenge binary thinking and injustices. Camangian (2008) points out it is the relevance to daily struggles that makes a difference in the work we do as youth practitioners because youth are often 'turned off' by methods used to 'improve their lives' (p. 53).

The use of narratives in this practice opens a space for students to share their histories and draws upon their own personal experiences. In doing so, it also serves to disrupt dominant narratives and oppressive forces. Historically Chicana/o poetry has been closely related to the development of Chicana/o political activism, awareness and militancy (Sedano, 1980). The tradition of articulating these cultural forces has been carried out since the Chicano movement of the 1960s and across genres including poetry, literature and theatre (Delgado, 1998, p. 97). Rap music is also a significant cultural force in the barrio and as Cleary (1993), explains 'rap has always had a political bent' (p. 77). Abrams (1995) characterizes rappers as 'organic intellectuals' as they create lyrics that reflect the needs of the community and as they 'attempt to construct a counter-hegemony through the dissemination of subversive ideas' (p.3). Chicana/o rappers' discourses, as those associated with African American

rappers, question the dominant ideology of America (Delgado, 1995; Saldivar, 1991). The synthesis of Hip-Hop culture with themes of Chicana/o pride is expressed in lyrics written by the students. The use of Aztlán, as a 'significant ideograph' in Chicana/o rap and other cultural forms connects 'modern-day Chicanos to an Aztec heritage' (Delgado, 1995, p. 452). Writing and performing rap music contributes to a critical consciousness through the process of interrogating and reflecting on personal knowledges.

#### Conclusion

Within this practice, Barrio Logan as place was the educational context for a critical pedagogy of place that was intergenerational, involved the community and existed in real-life situations. The conversations contributed to new stories of Barrio Logan and to the building of empathetic connections. The practice of re-imagining stories of place is essential to creating a critical pedagogy of place. It is also the praxis of putting theory into action because segregation and repression—all historically present in the barrios, can be interrogated through these practices. Furthermore, engaging in these educational practices, alters our perceptions. Through careful listening, as a pedagogical tool, spaces are opened for conversations and for bits of untold stories to emerge.

I argue that engaging in these practices, as a critical pedagogy of place, is a source of empowerment for students, especially those who have been adjudicated and marginalized by the traditional school system. Interrogating the social and political forces affecting the lives of youth and those forces that impede their aspirations, is crucial to positioning this work as a critical pedagogy. Exploring the effects of poverty, gentrification, and the uneven distribution of resources, is vital to nurturing a sense of personal agency in students. The examination of hegemonic forces, as a critical pedagogy of place, is a step towards dismantling the forces that have and continue to leave imprints of trauma within the community.

Through this practice, the boundaries between school and neighborhood— between formal and informal learning environments are crossed. Encouraging and valuing the work of students in the community has the potential to create positive connections with other people and organizations. This is especially important for Juvenile Court and Community School students who often internalize the labels placed upon them by teachers, law enforcement, family members and others in their community and beyond. Engaging in a critical

pedagogy of place with youth makes learning relevant and contributes to a sense of attachment and belonging to the barrios and neighborhoods in which they live.

Angela Gigliotti Ortiz, PhD., teaches at Bayside Community School in San Diego. Dr. Ortiz recently earned a PhD in Educational Theory and Practice with a specialization in Critical Studies, Youth Development and Art Education from the University of London, Goldsmiths. She has been a JCCS teacher in San Diego for 24 years.

#### References

- Abrams, N.D., 1995. Antonio's b-boys: Rap, rappers, and Gramsci's intellectuals. *Popular Music and Society*, 19(4), 1-19.
- Bennett, J., 2005. Empathic vision: Affect, trauma, and contemporary art. Stanford University Press, Stanford.
- Camangian, P., 2008. Untempered tongues: Teaching performance poetry for social justice. *English Teaching: Practice and Critique*, 7(2), 35– 55.
- Cleary, R.M., 1993. Rap roots and its political connections: An annotated bibliography. *RSR: Reference Service Review*, 21(2), 77-90.
- Delgado, F., 1995. Chicano movement rhetoric: An ideographic interpretation. *Communication Quarterly*, 43, 446-455.
- Delgado, F., 1998. Chicano ideology revisited: Rap music and the (re)articulation of Chicanismo. *Western Journal of Communication*, 62(2), 95-113.
- Denzin, N. & Lincoln, Y., 2011. Critical pedagogy and qualitative research: Moving to the bricolage. In *The sage handbook of qualitative research*. Sage Publishing, Thousand Oaks, CA, 163–178.
- Frederickson, L.M. & Anderson, D., 1999. A qualitative exploration of the wilderness experience as a source of spiritual inspiration. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 19(1), 21 39.
- Freire, P., 1998. *Teachers as cultural workers*. Westview

Press, Boulder.

Freire, P., 2000. *Pedagogy of the oppressed*, 30th Anniversary Edition. Continuum, New York.

Gruenewald, D.A., 2003. The Best of both worlds: A critical pedagogy of place. *Educational Researcher*, 40(4), 3–12.

Manzo, D. & Perkins, D., 2006. Finding common ground: The Importance of place attachment to community participation and planning. *Journal of Planning Literature*, 20, (4).

McInerney, P., Smyth, J. & Down, B., 2011. Coming to a place near you? The politics and possibilities of a critical pedagogy of place-based education. *Asia-Pacific Journal of Teacher Education*, 39(1), 3-16.

McLaren, P. & Giroux, H. 1990. Critical pedagogy and rural education: A challenge from Poland. *Peabody Journal of Education*, 67(4), 154– 165.

Rappaport, A., 1987. Terms of empowerment/exemplars of prevention: Toward a theory for community psychology. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 15(2), 121–43.

Saldivar, J.D., 1991. *The dialectics of our America: Genealogy, cultural critique, and literary history*. Duke University Press, Durham, NC.

Sedano, M. V., 1980. Chicanismo: A rhetorical analysis of themes and images of selected poetry from the Chicano movement. *Western Journal of Speech Communication*, 44(3), 177-190.

Tuan, Y., 1977. *Space and place: The perspectives of experience*. University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis.

Tuan, Y., 1990. *Topophilia: a study of environmental perception, attitudes, and values*, Morningside ed. Columbia University Press, New York.

**Background Context.**

In July of 2019, the state of California announced its support of the development and implementation of Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) standards in all classrooms throughout the state. For the first time, the theory of “Whole Child” education was given structural support from the state of California. Partnering with the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL), California is lending their support to the group of 14 states who are championing this work. The five guiding principles of this program are: 1) Adopt Whole Child Development as the Goal of Education, 2) Commit to Equity, 3) Build Capacity, 4) Partner with Families and Community, and 5) Learn and Improve.

At Mt. McKinley School, we have been championing these 5 core principals since the beginning of the 2018-2019

school year. As a school, we asked ourselves the question: How could we implement Social and Emotional Learning in an incarcerated facility and build the capacity of our students, staff, and community stakeholders, ensuring a fair and equitable program?

**About the School.**

Contra Costa is one of nine counties in the San Francisco Bay Area; serving 178,000 students, it has the 11th largest public-school population in the state. Mt. McKinley School is run by the Contra Costa County Office of Education and serves students who are incarcerated in the Juvenile Detention Center (Martinez) and the Orin Allen Rehabilitation Facility (Byron). During the 2018-19 school year, we educated 552 students over the course of the year. Our main campus in Martinez has five general education classrooms, a transition classroom, Special Education support, tutors, a school garden, and a computer lab. Our campus in Byron houses a smaller population with three classrooms, a school tutor, special education support, a computer lab, a school garden and a residential construction shop. The majority of CCCOE students

identify with racial groups that have been historically subject to systemic inequities in the education and justice systems. While African American students comprise only 9% of students in the county, 49% of Court School students are African American. This disproportionality speaks to the larger systems of racism and inequity that young people of color face.

**Our Approach to SEL.**

At the start of the 2015-16 school year, the Mt. McKinley Schools adopted the Positive Action curriculum to address

AS A SCHOOL, WE ASKED OURSELVES THE QUESTION: HOW COULD WE IMPLEMENT SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING IN AN INCARCERATED FACILITY AND BUILD THE CAPACITY OF OUR STUDENTS, STAFF, AND COMMUNITY STAKEHOLDERS, ENSURING A FAIR AND EQUITABLE PROGRAM?

the social emotional needs of our students. This curriculum consisted of weekly prepared lessons provided to teachers, which engaged staff and students in the Positive Action philosophy of identifying the connections between the thoughts, actions, and feelings of our students.

Beginning in the 2018-19 school year, our team embraced a two-fold approach to teaching SEL: we provided direct standalone SEL instruction to all students on a weekly basis, and embedded SEL into our daily English Language Arts and Social Studies instruction through adoption of an SEL curriculum featuring culturally relevant novels and SEL themes.

In the fall semester of the 2018-19 school year, the Mt. McKinley School committed to 180 minutes per week of designated standalone SEL instruction, in addition to the daily SEL-integrated English Language Arts and Social Studies curriculum which was delivered for a 90-minute block, four days a week. On Wednesdays, which are minimum days, all students receive two 90-minute blocks of instruction focused solely on the development of students’ SEL skills. One of our general education teachers created and distributed lesson plans to all school staff to implement in their classrooms. Students across both school sites participated in the same lessons each week. Staff were also provided with corresponding lessons from the Positive Action curriculum to supplement the self-curated

content and to further engage students in the reflective process of how their thoughts, actions, and feelings are interconnected.

In addition to these standalone lessons, the Mt. McKinley Schools also partnered with Moving Forward Institute and adopted their *Reading with Relevance* English Language Arts curriculum, which is the only CASEL-certified program that integrates SEL, cultural relevance, and academic instruction. During the 2018-19 school year, our student population was 49% Black, 38% Hispanic, 7%

White, and 6% Other. Our previous English Language Arts curriculum was centered around traditional high school novels such as *Of Mice and Men* and *The Hobbit*. These novels were not reflective of the cultures and experiences represented in our student population.

*Reading with Relevance*

provided us with an SEL-embedded curriculum based on novels that resonate with our students, like *The Hate U Give*, *The Sun is Also a Star*, the graphic novel *March*, and *Street Life: Poverty, Gangs, and a Ph.D.*

**Our Process for Continuous Improvement.**

As is the case with many plans, the move to full implementation identified stress fractures, structural needs, and bottlenecking events. This is the story of how the Mt. McKinley Schools started an SEL program based on qualitative observation, and through collaboration, reflection, and the implementation of data driven decision making, created a quantitative plan to develop the SEL needs of our school community.

The first phase of Mt. McKinley’s SEL plan involved the self-curating of content and lessons across five social/ emotional themes: Discovery, Resilience, Transformation, Empowerment, and Community. Each theme correlated with one of the five academic quarters during our school year. Each quarter, all ELA and SS content were aligned to the overarching theme. During quarter 1: Discovery, our

students read the novel, *The Sun is Also A Star*, and linked the text with self-curated Social Studies content around California-based immigration stories. All our weekly SEL lessons revolved around that theme, too. The first lesson of this quarter began with both staff and students completing an online Meyers-Briggs self-assessment of their personality style. Subsequent lessons built upon this personality assessment and explored themes which focused on humanizing the struggles immigrants across the world faced.

THIS IS THE STORY OF HOW THE MT. MCKINLEY SCHOOLS STARTED AN SEL PROGRAM BASED ON QUALITATIVE OBSERVATION, AND THROUGH COLLABORATION, REFLECTION, AND THE IMPLEMENTATION OF DATA DRIVEN DECISION MAKING, CREATED A QUANTITATIVE PLAN TO DEVELOP THE SEL NEEDS OF OUR SCHOOL COMMUNITY.

As the year progressed, ad-hoc SEL committees were formed monthly to create lessons for the upcoming weeks. These committees involved a rotation of staff members encompassing, eventually, the entire population of our school staff by the end of the school year. Our goal,

by involving all staff members in this content creation, was to have them serve as small-scale Professional Learning Community to better understand the design and focus of our SEL Wednesday curriculum.

As we progressed through the year, we identified underlying concerns with our plan that would hinder its full implementation. First, we needed to support our staff with the WHY and HOW of SEL. *Why* are we overhauling our weekly school schedule to teach these standalone lessons, and most importantly, *how* do we teach this content to our students without creating further harm by ensuring we create classroom learning environments that are supportive to student needs? Second, we needed a way to measure what our student population’s overall SEL needs were as well as the impact our instruction was having on our long-term students.

In May of 2019, Mt. McKinley School administrators met with Elana Metz, the Director of Moving Forward Institute, to reflect on the first-year implementation of our program and to create a systematic approach to professional

development for the 2019-20 school year. At this meeting, we reflected on how we could measure the impact of our program on our students, and how we could measure the existence of a supportive classroom community. From this meeting, we set our focus on two specific areas for the upcoming school-year: How can we provide targeted professional development for our staff so that they can implement our SEL content with fidelity, and how can we create a measure of student SEL needs so that we can assess student progress in these content areas? From this meeting, we set our sights on transforming our qualitative SEL program to a quantitative, responsive one. Our task was to discover how we could create metrics within our program to measure our success, our needs, and map out the future of our program.

Our plan for the 2019-20 school year centered around reading *The 57 Bus* with our students in the fall. We knew that in order to reach this goal, we had to give our teachers the support needed to address the content of this complex and timely novel, which centers around themes of social inequality and discrimination. This would come in the form of professional development for our staff members centered around the theme of “Having Difficult Conversations with our Students.” Staff members and members of the Moving Forward Institute team engaged in a half-day professional development and one full staff meeting around this theme. We regularly captured staff feedback about this work. At the forefront of staff concerns was the need to understand how to deal with pushback from students. Staff also identified the need to have a deeper understanding of the curriculum and how to utilize teaching strategies to engage all students. The foundation of this work, we emphasized, was relationship-building with students. How can we, in an incarcerated facility, build relationships with students who often have transient enrollment patterns? We knew that reading *The 57 Bus* would require our staff to hold their ground in conversations with students on challenging topics such as gender identity and racism. During professional development leading up to the novel, staff were provided with different strategies to engage students in conversations on difficult topics, how to ensure that the conversation was pro-social, how to respect all student opinions, and how to

center classroom conversations around students’ voices.

Several hours of professional development was simply not enough, though, to ensure that we created safe classroom environments to have these important conversations around the SEL themes in this novel. With the support of our school and county office administrators, Mt. McKinley Schools were able to provide staff with coaches to work with them on creating intentional classroom culture and having difficult conversations. Utilizing the Improvement Science model of “Plan-Do-Study-Act” that all CCCOE’s administrators underwent training for, coaches have been working with our staff throughout this school year on creating supportive learning environments and building positive relationships with our students. Some of the practices that have come from these coaching sessions are greeting students at the door, tracking how many positive statements teachers made to students throughout the day, and having restorative conversations between staff and students to build relationships that have been impacted negatively by student discipline.

While these actions helped support the relationships between staff and students, we still had to address the transition from a qualitative program to a quantitative program. Our first step was to adopt an SEL student assessment that all students would take on their first day of enrollment during the 2019-20 school year, as well as at the mid-point and end of the school year. Over a series of 23 questions, covering the five CASEL SEL Core Competencies, students rate themselves on a Likert-scale of Very Difficult to Very Easy to represent their comfortability in each area. The initial survey was administered as part of our first SEL Wednesday curriculum of the school year. Due to the nature of our program and the fact that we receive new students daily, we decided that all new students would be assessed in their homeroom classrooms on their first SEL Wednesday after enrollment. Under this practice, we were able to assess 78% of students enrolled between August and December. The reason several of the students were not assessed was that they were only enrolled for a few days and missed their first assessment cycle. While this was a great improvement, we knew we could do better. Starting

at the beginning of our second semester (January), all students began completing the assessment with our school tutor. This allowed us the ability to assess students faster and control the environment in which the assessment was completed. We found at times that students were being given a laptop on their first Wednesday and being told to take this test before they could start the work with the rest of the group. If we want valid answers to the assessment, we needed to ensure that each student was being given the assessment in a standardized environment.

#### Using SEL Data to Drive Instruction.

Initially, the feedback from the students showed that they rated themselves lowest in the SEL Competency of Self-Management, although the lowest rated question overall was “Sharing What I’m Feeling with Others.” Out of a possible 4 points, the average response for this question was 2.32 (n=75). The area students rated themselves highest was the SEL Competency of Self-Awareness, specifically “Being OK with Who I Am,” which resulted in a 3.61 average in the same number of responses. Overall, our students initially scored highest in the Self-Awareness competency and lowest in the Relationship Skills competency, suggesting they needed increased practice and exposure to opportunities to communicate clearly, listen well, cooperate with others, resist social pressure, negotiate conflict constructively, and seek and offer help when needed.

Using this data, we began intentionally to create weekly SEL lessons which focused on building students’ capacity in Relationship Skills, by focusing on activities that allowed them to share their feelings with others. Students participated in poetry exercises, identified language to build I-statements (When you do this, I feel...), and worked on better understanding their peers and the journey of their peers when dealing with conflict.

At our December mid-year assessment, we had a total of 42 students who had been enrolled longer than 90 days. We identified this subgroup within our assessment data to see the impact of our targeted SEL approach on students who had received a consistent treatment dosage since the beginning of the year. At this time, 32 of those

students had either increased their self-rated score on this question or remained consistent in their response. Overall, students had a higher average reported score on twenty of the twenty-three questions. The only items that showed declines in the response average at the mid-year check-in were, “Admitting when I have made a mistake,” and “Being OK with Who I am.” These have become targeted areas of focus for our second semester SEL activities. Among our long-term enrollees, students showed growth across all five major SEL competencies, with the largest area of growth coming in the Social Awareness competency.

This data has helped us quantify the benefits of our SEL program, which will help drive our continued growth. We can show our school staff that their efforts are making a concrete difference. Students who are enrolled with us long-term are getting better at identifying their SEL needs, communicating their feelings, recognizing when they are making mistakes, understanding their community, and making better plans for their future.

#### What’s Next.

As we continue this SEL work throughout the school year, we have begun implementing staff and student surveys focusing on the relationships between those two groups. These are parallel surveys: the staff survey is focused on how they feel they have built relationships with their students, and the student survey is focused on how students feel their teachers have built relationships with them. As we go forward this spring, we will be using this data, in generalized formats, to guide our PDSA cycles with staff to address identified areas of potential growth.

#### Closing.

In the course of a year, Mt. McKinley has transformed its SEL curriculum from a qualitative, instinctive approach to a quantitative, data-driven approach--with clear results. Having the data on student needs, student feelings, and teacher beliefs allows us as an administration to create targeted interventions for our students in the areas where they may have the most impact.

By KIM COPE TAIT

I've been reading *The Body Keeps the Score* again... by Bessel van der Kolk. After a two year hiatus. That's how I read non-fiction, at intervals. And also I know that things come back into my scope of awareness again for a reason, so I try to pay attention to that...when exposure to something begins to feel like a spiral. What's been tugging at my consciousness more than anything else this go 'round with *The Body Keeps the Score* is the enormity of the issue of childhood trauma. And how it's not about not feeling safe or secure in your community or your society at large. It's about not feeling safe and secure in your *home*. Worse yet, it's about having the people who are meant to provide care for you being the very ones who threaten your safety, who hurt you and who fail to protect you. That's where childhood trauma comes from, and it affects so many more people than we ever knew.

Plus, it's cyclical. People who are the victims of child abuse, whether it's sexual, physical, emotional, or straight neglect, are much more likely to be involved with abuse as adults, either as perpetrators or as victims. Some of the statistics available in Van der Kolk's book are incredibly eye opening, but the thing that maybe stands out the most to me (so far) is the concept of ACE scores and their broad implications. These are numbers that came out of a monumental investigation of Adverse Childhood Experiences, a collaboration between the CDC and Kaiser Permanente, with Robert Anda, MD, and Vincent Felitti, MD, as co-principal investigators.

It was focused on the 17,421 Kaiser patients (out of 25,000 asked) who agreed to provide information about childhood events and whose responses to 10 carefully developed questions were then compared with the detailed medical records Kaiser kept on all patients. This was in 1990.

"The ACE study revealed that traumatic life experiences during childhood and adolescence are far more common than expected. The study respondents were mostly white, middle class, middle-aged, well educated, and financially secure

**EVERY TIME WE TAKE A TRAUMA-INFORMED APPROACH, WHETHER IT'S WITH A CHILD OR WITH AN ADULT, WE HEAL SOMETHING IN THE UNIVERSE. THERE IS SO MUCH PAIN OUT THERE. PEOPLE, YOUTH, ARE TAKING THEIR OWN LIVES. IT'S A CRAZY TIME. WE JUST HAVE TO DO WHAT WE CAN. FOR EACH OTHER. IN THE CLASSROOM, SHAKESPEARE CAN WAIT. AND SO CAN MY EGO.**

enough to have good medical insurance, and yet only one-third of the respondents reported no adverse childhood experiences" (147). The questions were things like "Did a parent or other adult in the

household often or very often swear at you, insult you, or put you down?" (one out of ten responded yes to this one). Also, "Did an adult or person at least 5 years older ever have you touch their body in a sexual way?" and "Did an adult or person at least 5 years older ever attempt oral, anal, or vaginal intercourse with you?" (over 25% said yes to each of these!). For each of ten questions, a positive answer equals one point. So, for example, two "yes" responses out of ten gives you an ACE score of 2. With ten questions in the study, the score is out of 10.

It was a pretty comprehensive study of a pretty homogenous group (imagine the impact of things like poverty, lack of access to education

By KIM COPE TAIT

and healthcare, and systemic colonisation on these numbers; based on what I have seen in my classrooms, I'm guessing it would be staggering). What was perhaps most surprising to me was that in this study group, "87 percent scored two or more. One in six people had an ACE score of four or higher." What was observed was that "when sorrows come, they come not as single spies but in battalions" (that's Shakespeare, rather than Van der Kolk). Essentially, the sorts of abuse that our youth endure don't happen in a vacuum. Most kids who experience trauma are experiencing multiple varieties of trauma at once. "And for each additional adverse experience reported, the toll in later damage increases."

And guess where the effects of this childhood trauma first become evident? At school, of course. "More than half of those with ACE scores of four or higher reported having behavioural problems [at school], compared with 3 percent of those with a score of zero" (148). Of course. It is part and parcel of a trauma-informed approach that one does not start with the question, "What is wrong with this kid?" but rather with, "What has happened to this child?" And yet, in the classroom, where teachers are taxed with too-high rolls and not enough support, how often does this really happen? How often is it considered that the behaviours that are so disruptive to the learning of one's class are incredibly accurate indicators of trauma? How often do teachers have the opportunity to truly consider this? And by opportunity, I mean the time, the wherewithal, the training, and the simple support of another adult to take over with the other children while s/he addresses the problematic behaviour in a compassionate, meaningful, trauma-informed way.

And then, how much opportunity is there for follow up? And how effective can that follow-up be? Our teachers are not trained therapists or clinicians. With these statistics, one teacher would be looking at having at least four kids (in a classroom of 24) who are experiencing FOUR OR MORE varieties of abuse. Take it to the middle and high school

levels, where rolls are upwards of 30 to 35 kids in a classroom, we're talking more like 5 or 6 individuals. Will she have the time and wherewithal to follow up on each one (remember, she has 5 classes, so make that 25 to 30 kids and their families)? And maybe most importantly, will she have the courage? How exactly does a teacher, trained to manage students and to teach specific curriculum, say English or Science, approach a family about the potential that their child is experiencing abuse? It's daunting, to say the least, and at the risk of sounding repetitious, I don't think it's quite fair to simply relegate this responsibility to the teachers of the world. And yet, if it's in the home that these abuses are being perpetrated, but time and again, research has shown that children do better left in their homes than taken out of them, even in cases of abuse.... Do you see what's keeping me up at night?

And here's what four or more varieties of abuse in childhood (an ACE score of 4 or higher) looks like in that child's adulthood: a 66% prevalence of chronic depression for women (35% for men); a 7 times greater likelihood of becoming an alcoholic; a 33% percent likelihood of being the victim of rape (as opposed to 5 percent for those with an ACE score of zero). How about an ACE score of 6? For those with an ACE score of 6 or more, the likelihood of IV drug use was 4,600% greater than for those with an ACE score of zero; they were also 5,000% more likely to attempt suicide than those who scored zero. And the list of high-risk behaviours associated with a high ACE score—you know, ones that can actually be predicted by the experience of a high level of trauma during childhood and adolescence?—it's shocking: smoking, obesity, unintended pregnancies, multiple sexual partners, and STDs. And there are crazy correlations between high (6 or higher) ACE scores and straight-up health problems in adulthood (things like chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), ischemic heart disease, and liver disease): over 15% more than for those with an ACE score of zero. No pressure to identify and treat childhood abuse, but—**PRESSURE!**

It's overwhelming, really. Dr. Anda, in presenting the results of this study, declared that "the gravest and most costly public health issue in the U.S. is child abuse. He...calculated that its overall costs exceeded those of cancer or heart disease and that eradicating child abuse in America would reduce the overall rate of depression by more than half, alcoholism by two-thirds, and suicide, IV drug use, and domestic violence by three-quarters" (150). And here's the kicker (that's right, we haven't even gotten to the kicker yet): there is NO DIAGNOSIS in the DSM-V (*The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*) for childhood trauma. Such a diagnosis is what allows a patient to receive effective treatment, not to mention have their condition recognised and paid for by their health insurance, if they are lucky enough to have it.

This is why when I look at the referrals for my students on remand (caught up in the youth justice system and in the custody of the State) I see a laundry list of diagnoses that are really more explanations for ("surface phenomena" describing) the many behaviours that scream *childhood trauma*: ADHD, oppositional defiant disorder (ODD), intermittent explosive disorder, disruptive mood dysregulation disorder, and on and on and on. No child is born this way. Adults create this. And these are labels that the youth themselves have absorbed, and the language of these diagnoses punctuates the dialogue I have with them about their behaviours. Rather than address their victimisation, the best the mental health profession has been able to do (through no fault of individual practitioners but of the pervasive systems of which they are a part) is give these youth some labels that categorise their behaviours and indeed themselves. I would say these are band-aids, but it's worse than that. They are obfuscations, veils laid over the fact of real hurt and real suffering that, if not addressed, will likely transmute itself into more violence in the world. It's not their fault, but the risk is real.

And yet those who are not trauma-informed in their approach (which is simply a matter of a lack of training—everyone can learn this) insist that these youth are "getting away with something," "not being held accountable for their actions," or (and this is my favourite), "laughing at us." I have to say, no one is laughing. And if there is laughter in this scenario, it is devoid of mirth. So I have come to realise, over my many years of working with kids in an educational setting, that what has to go is EGO. It just has no place in education, especially the education of at-risk youth. In my tiny educational space at the moment, progress is incremental. I am patient. I see some of the other adults in that space inwardly disagree and question my approach, which is one of infinite patience. It's gentle. Compassionate. Soft. Could it be (and will it likely at first be) perceived as weakness by my students? Yes. Probably. But I can't care about that. My job is to provide a corrective emotional experience (let's call it a CEE). If such an experience, one of healing, comes, at least in the short term, with the cost of "respect"—the kind that silences a child or makes them behave a certain way—then so be it. Real respect, the kind that develops out of gratitude and understanding of one's character—that comes in time. And if it happens that I never see it, So. Be. It. That's not why I'm here.

I can't erase what for some of my students are years of hurt and suffering. I can't even provide therapy or direct mental health treatment. But I can acknowledge them. I can SEE them. For the individuals that they are (ones who sometimes lash out, sure, or who sometimes have trouble focusing, but as ones who are creative and sentient beings with infinite potential, too? Absolutely). Moment by moment, I can replace those experiences that have involved an adult who didn't see them, who punished instead of investigated, who yelled instead of soothed, with experiences that build trust and ultimately confidence in a system that has largely failed them. Am I completely overwhelmed by

the task? Of course I am. I'd be a fool if I wasn't. But I have to keep trying. And this is the thing: I am undoing damage. What if this approach were taken (and supported) across the board in schools everywhere? I don't know that it would be possible to eradicate the need for a role like the one I currently occupy (educating kids who have committed criminal acts and are now in the custody of the State), but it seems worth trying. I'd find another job. Seriously. We should try.

And in trying, I have to be honest. I don't even know exactly where to start. The problem with the American Psychiatric Association rejecting a clear and well-supported proposal to include "Developmental Trauma Disorder" in its manual of legitimate diagnoses is one that is well beyond my scope of influence, and yet I know that "if you pay attention only to faulty biology and defective genes as a cause of mental problems and ignore abandonment, abuse, and deprivation, you are likely to run into as many dead ends as previous generations did blaming it all on terrible mothers" (167). So I don't have control over the fact that young people are going to continue to arrive at my little school with multiple diagnoses that amount to a limiting set of observations about their behaviours and don't allow the larger issue of their childhood trauma to be addressed. I have to, for now, let that go. What I do have control over is the inflection in my voice. My response to impulsive or even outrageous behaviour. My patience in moving toward more academic material. If I'm patient, we'll get there. Shakespeare can wait. What is needed is slow progress facilitated by one corrective emotional experience at a time. What's my rush? These are human lives we're talking about. Someone's babies. And quite frankly, someone's future parents, too.

If I can help even one of them heal themselves enough to function "normally" in the world—that is, without hurting anyone else, including their own

eventual offspring, who is to say how many people I can impact? Potential victims no longer potential recipients of behaviours that have grown out of abuse and neglect. Their families. The families of the youth themselves. It's kind of endless. I always say in the classroom that we can't know a shadow history. The strand of history that would have unfolded had one single thing (one act, one decision or word) been different. We can only know the history that is, the one that unwinds out of our actual actions and words. And yet, those shadows exist. We have to keep dragging each other out into the light. Away from the shadows of ignominy and suffering. This is one way to do it. Midwives and doulas who help babies to be birthed peacefully...they do it. Teachers who see their students as full of infinite possibility and who address "misbehaviour" with compassion and inquiry...they do it. Bosses who seek to understand undesirable behaviours rather than punish them...even they do it.

Every time we take a trauma-informed approach, whether it's with a child or with an adult, we heal something in the universe. There is so much pain out there. People, youth, are taking their own lives. It's a crazy time. We just have to do what we can. For each other. In the classroom, Shakespeare can wait. And so can my ego.

I recommend Van der Kolk's book, for sure. I have learned so much by reading it. You could also start by checking out the Ted Talk by Dr. Nadine Burke Harris called "How Childhood Trauma Affects Health Across a Lifetime." It's a good one. We just have to keep sharing these things, right? As they come into our scope of awareness. Pluck the things out of the air that seem to keep circling back on you. It could be it's time to listen.

# Call For Papers

Due: February 19, 2022

We invite you to submit original articles, research papers, and student/program success stories related to: Legislation, Goals, Programs, Best Practice, Instruction, Management, Professional Development, Information Technology Solutions.

## Criteria:

- Write with administrators in mind as your audience.
- Combine research based management, instructional theory, along with field practice.
- Write in clear, straight forward prose.
- Submission is result, not proposal oriented.
- Use active voice.
- Use third person when possible; some use of first person is acceptable when related to the readers' experience.
- If the submission was previously printed, include permission to reprint.
- Include short biographical sketch of twenty-five words or less about the author.

## Article Format:

- We only require a WORD of Google document of the article, single spaced and Times New Roman 12 point Font. If you have charts, figures, pictures and/or tables, please embed them as a PDF at the appropriate point within the text, rather than being placed at the end of the article.
- There is no page limit or minimum to the length of the article.
- The title should be directly related to the essence of the article. Please also include a running title for subsequent pages.
- Please ensure the author's name is written how it is to appear in the journal. If there are several authors, please list all names. Please include proper academic nomenclature as desired before or after the author's name.
- Please make sure you give proper recognition to the works of others if you plan to use them in your article.
- If you plan on using photos in your article, please ensure you have the proper permissions and releases to use the image.



**Save the Date:** We look forward to seeing you in May of 2022 at the Balboa Bay Resort in Newport Beach

JCCASAC Journal



**SPSSC**

Student Programs and Services

Steering Committee

*Juvenile Court, Community and Alternative School  
Administrators of California (JCCASAC)*



**SPSSC**

Student Programs and Services  
Steering Committee

*Juvenile Court, Community and Alternative School  
Administrators of California (JCCASAC)*

Juvenile Court, Community, and Alternative School Administrators of California



**SPSSC**

Student Programs and Services  
Steering Committee

*Juvenile Court, Community and Alternative School  
Administrators of California (JCCASAC)*