

**PROVIDENCE ALLIANCE FOR STUDENT SAFETY**  
**PLAN FOR**  
**POLICE-FREE SCHOOLS**

June 2021

## **Table of Contents**

Introduction	3
We Demand Police-Free Schools	6
We Demand Schools that Support our Health, Well-being and Dignity	13
We Demand Restorative School Culture and Practices	26
Student Voices at the Lead in Police-Free Schools Policy	39
Budgetary Recommendations	47
Timeline	51
Glossary	54
Appendix	55

## **Introduction**

Our communities have been organizing for racial equity in our city's education institutions for years. The Providence Alliance for Student Safety (PASS) coalition launched in December 2018, comprised of youth-led organizations, Alliance of Rhode Island Southeast Asians for Education (ARISE), Providence Student Union (PSU), and Providence Youth Student Movement (PRYSM). In late 2020, three additional youth organizations became coalition members, Youth In Action (YIA), Rhode Island Urban Debate League (RIUDL), and Young Voices. These youth-led organizations came together under a common goal: to end the school to prison pipeline and fight for educational justice.

In 2020, our nation was re-awakened into action by the murders of Tony McDade, Breonna Taylor, George Floyd and countless other victims of police violence and white supremacy. This collective pain was only compounded by the devastating impact the COVID-19 pandemic had on communities of color. On Juneteenth of 2020, Youth from the P.A.S.S. Coalition led hundreds of Providence Public School District (PPSD) students and allies on a march from PPSP high schools to the steps of the statehouse to demand Rhode Island's leaders defund the police, remove police from schools, and invest in the health and well-being of Black students.

We envision a future where young people of color attend schools that lift us up instead of push us out, where school safety starts with care rather than punishment, and where our voices lead our communities forward. We believe in a world in which no child is criminalized and all Black, Latinx, Indigenous, Asian, immigrant, LGBTQIA+ and all marginalized youth receive education that empowers them to thrive in their true dignity. Now we are ready not just with a vision, but with a Plan for Police-Free Schools.

Over 90% of the Providence student body are students of color, so removing police from our schools is the critical first step in prioritizing the health, safety, and well-being of our youth. Nevertheless, our plan goes beyond removing police and into driving a racial equity transformation in our schools. We present the following Plan complete with budgetary recommendations, processes to center student voices, and a timeline to build schools where every Black and Brown student can thrive. We call on PPSP, RIDE, and Governor McKee to implement the following demands:

1. **We Deserve and Demand Police-Free Schools** — Police do not make students safer. Instead, our lived experiences and research show that the presence of police in schools causes the criminalization of Black, Latinx, Indigenous, LGBTQIA+ students and other marginalized student populations. Police presence has been shown to negatively impact our mental health and our ability to learn. We call for the immediate removal of police from our schools because we deserve a model of school safety that treats us with dignity and respect.

2. **We Deserve and Demand Schools that Support Our Health, Well-Being and Dignity** — School safety starts with student wellness. To thrive as students, we need professionals trained in anti-racist, trauma-informed social, emotional, and mental health care. We demand investment in higher staffing ratios of counselors, social workers, nurses, school safety coaches, and restorative specialists who are Black, Indigenous, P.O.C. and LGBTQIA+. A robust support system is the key to creating safe and nurturing school environments.
3. **We Deserve and Demand Restorative Culture and Practices** — Our schools need training and coordination to shift from punitive discipline to restorative practices. We call for strong district leadership, community engagement, innovative restorative staff positions, and funding for a 5+ year timeline to introduce a district-wide transformation toward restorative school culture and practices.
4. **We Deserve and Demand Student Voices at the Lead** — We propose that the District vest control over student safety and accountability in a committee of Youth Advocates and community allies, selected by youth. This youth-led committee will have control over school safety--abolishing punitive disciplinary policies, defining the actions schools will take to address disciplinary issues without the intervention of police, and guiding the design and implementation of transformative justice policies.

**Districts similar to ours show how our visions have already become realities – and many of the tools we need to get there are at our fingertips.** This plan provides resources for PPST to employ supportive school staff, restorative programs, guidelines for district policy, and models for youth representation in decision-making. We prioritize examples of resources that are anti-racist, anti-homophobic, anti-transphobic, anti-xenophobic, and anti-ableist. While no one peer district example meets all of our standards, we have chosen to highlight elements from multiple districts to show that what we create here in Providence can be an even more complete model of racial equity and educational justice.

**The Time is NOW:** We have the power and the responsibility to end a history of racist school discipline practices and build a future where all Black and Brown students can thrive. RIDE and the PPST hold the skill, the knowledge, the people, and yes, the investment power to make our visions a reality.

Alliance of Rhode Island Southeast Asians for Education (ARISE),  
Providence Student Union (PSU),  
Providence Youth Student Movement (PRYSM)  
Rhode Island Urban Debate League (RIUDL)  
Youth In Action (YIA),  
Young Voices

## SECTION 1: We Deserve and Demand Police-Free Schools

### WHY

Research shows that police in schools make schools less safe and less equal, and lower the chances of student success.



"The fact that we need law enforcement in a place where we're supposed to learn is unfortunate.

A lot of students' experiences revolve around cops, and they don't help control students; they make them feel unsafe and threatened." - PPSD Student

Although one stated intention of stationing police in schools is to make students safer, evidence shows that the presence of police in schools actually harms students' mental health, educational outcomes, and their safety. After decades of police involvement in schools, there is no data that measurably demonstrates that police improve students safety. Instead, Black and Brown students, LGBTQIA+ students, and students with disabilities have been shown to be most negatively impacted by the presence of uniformed, armed police officers in their schools; in Providence, Black and Brown students make up over 90% of the student body.

Key findings across the nation:

- Students of color are more likely to go to a school with a law enforcement officer, more likely to be referred to law enforcement, and more likely to be arrested at school.
- The presence of armed police officers has also been shown to correlate with a drop in students' academic success, most notable among marginalized youth populations.
- The presence of uniformed, armed officers in schools makes some students – particularly Black and Latinx students – feel unsafe.
- Historically, the growth in funding for police assignments to schools has been linked to media attention rather than research.

- **Police traumatize students:** Nationally, from 2007 to March 2021, there have been **152 school police assaults on students** where a school police officer tasered, pepper sprayed, injured or otherwise used force on a student.<sup>1</sup>

### **Assault At Tolman**

October 2015, Tolman High School in Pawtucket: A video went viral after SRO Boudreault body-slammed a 14-year-old student. Students claimed that SRO Boudreault had a history of "acting tough" with them, swearing at them on occasion, and even once shoving a student against a locker for taking a pizza that they had permission to take.

### **Assault at Narragansett**

February 2018, Narragansett High School in Narragansett: SRO Blanchette pinned a student down for several minutes before cuffing and then arresting them under a false claim that the student took an aggressive approach towards him. Video evidence proved the claim to be false. In fact, the student was walking away from him.

### **Unlawful Arrest at Goff**

Summer of 2019, Goff Middle School in Pawtucket: A 13-year-old student was arrested after a fight outside of school was settled by school staff and no one was hurt. The ACLU filed a suit for the "gratuitous and unlawful handcuffing and arrest of a 13-year-old African-American middle school honors student." The student's mother says, "My child went from outgoing to not wanting to go anywhere, to not wanting to talk to people. Every time she sees a police officer, she thinks she's going to be arrested." The student became so uncomfortable that their mother had to take a second job to get them into a private school.

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<sup>1</sup><https://www.npr.org/2020/06/23/881608999/why-theres-a-push-to-get-police-out-of-schools> Source: Advancement Project internal database on School Police Assaults. <https://advancementproject.org/>



“School resource officers (SROs) should not be in schools because they may use excessive force on students, and specifically on students of color. As a consequence, it can cause students to have trauma, anxiety, stress, and paranoia. Students may not feel safe in school, and because they’re constantly being attacked and they also may feel as if they’re being watched. Students may also lose trust in adults.

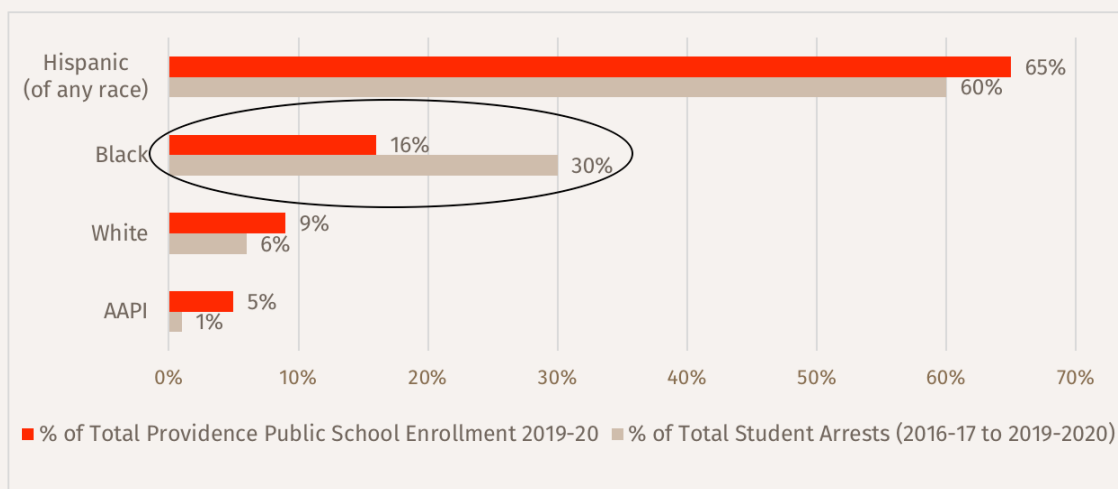
Schools should hire social workers instead of SROs because they can help with their mental health and anxiety. In my experience, social workers are there to listen and support students, unlike SROs.”

- PPSD Student

### Racial Equity and Policing in Providence Public Schools:

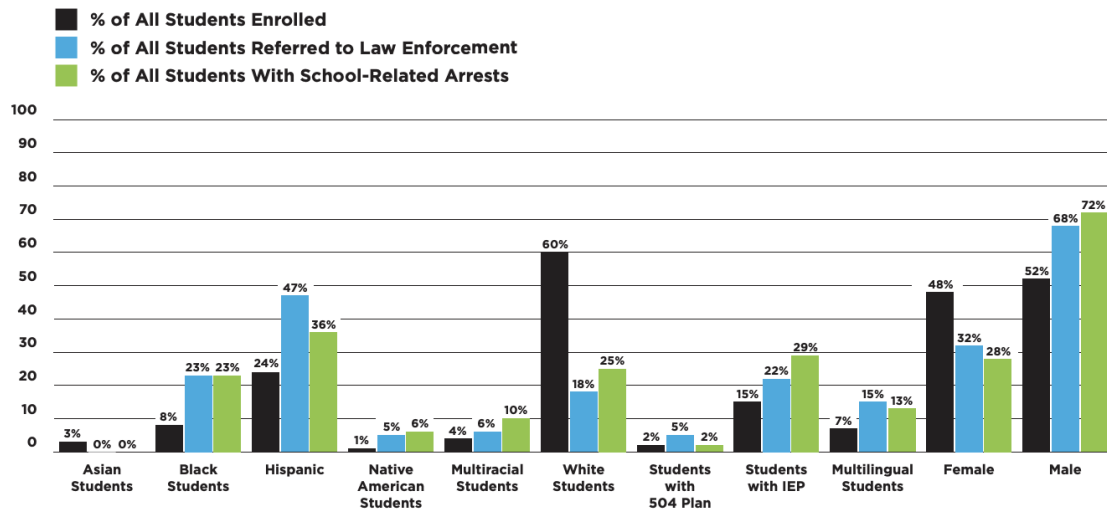
A [report](#) from the Center for Youth and Community Leadership in Education at Roger Williams University in partnership with P.A.S.S. reveals that school police officers contribute to racial inequities in student arrests in the Providence Public Schools: **Black students made up 16% of overall enrollment but 30% of all student arrests in academic years 2016-17 to 2019-20.** Of the eight schools with the highest arrest rates, all but one has an SRO stationed at the school, and in the 2019-20 school year, at least 60% of arrests were made by SROs.

% of Total PPSD Student Arrests (2016-17 to 2019-20) by Race/Ethnicity  
Compared to PPSD Student Enrollment (2019-20)



Source: City of Providence Public Records Request

### Bias in School Discipline by Race/Ethnicity, Special Education Status, English Proficiency, and Gender, Rhode Island, 2015-2016



Source: U.S. Department of Education, Office of Civil Rights, Civil Rights Data Collection, 2015-2016 school year.

This graph shows that Black, Latinx, and Native American, students as well as students with IEP's and multilingual students are referred to law enforcement and face school-related arrest at disproportionately high rates to their representation in the student population.<sup>2</sup>



"Honestly, I believe that cops do not belong in schools.

A school is a place where some kids come to feel safe. Students of color should not have to look over their shoulder all day because they don't know if a cop will cause serious harm or worse to them. IT'S NOT FAIR!!

There have been occasions where we thought we could trust the police officers to keep us safe in our schools, but that trust has been broken.

For example, one day two kids were fighting and the officer was more lenient towards the white student. The white student did not get in much trouble for the incident, but the Black student was slammed on his chest. That is when I knew I could not trust them." - PPSD Student

<sup>2</sup> Policies and Practices Supporting Student-Centered Learning in Rhode Island: School Climate. Rhode Island Kids Count, September 2020.



Reasons for arrest largely include behavioral incidents that can be addressed through social emotional support and restorative conflict resolution. **Over one-third (36%) of student arrests were for “Disorderly Conduct,” and 23% were for “Simple Assault/Battery,” which would be a schoolyard fight without serious injury.** Schools should be able to handle these kinds of instances without police intervention and without arresting students.

From school years 2016-17 through 2019-20, students as young as 11 years old have been arrested. **Students ages 11-13 account for about 19% of student arrests.**<sup>3</sup> Black male students in particular are disproportionately represented in student arrests. Black (non-Latinx/Hispanic) male students made up 8% of overall PPSD enrollment, and 19% of all student arrests from 2016-17 to 2019-20. Hispanic/Latinx male and Black female students are also disproportionately represented in arrests.

In a survey of 71 PPSD students published in a 2020 report by the Center for Youth and Community Leadership in Education at Roger Williams University, **72% of respondents** indicated that they were **not comfortable with SROs having guns in their school.**



“As a student of color I’ve always had to be cautious about who or what makes me feel safe. A middle-aged white man with a pistol and no basic understanding of what it means to be me was not one of those things.” - PPSD Student

### The School to Deportation Pipeline

Nearly 40,000 people in RI live with a family member who is undocumented.<sup>4</sup> School is supposed to be children’s escape from xenophobia, systemic racism, poverty and their chance to show their worth in their community and in society. Yet police presence puts students into situations that criminalize them and make them feel anxious or alienated walking through school halls. Nationwide, punishments for small issues at school can ultimately result in consequences such as detention and deportation for undocumented students and families. We

<sup>3</sup> Arrest data was sourced via a City of Providence Public Records Request and analyzed by the Center for Youth and Community Leadership in Education at Roger Williams University. For more information, see the report: [School Discipline and Student Safety in the Providence Public School District.](#)

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/research/immigrants-in-rhode-island>

can't tell immigrant students to build a new future for themselves in a system that can promptly strip that future from them.

“For immigrant students, even minor, non-violent incidents at school, such as truancy, can have devastating immigration consequences. Racial profiling and unaccountable policing in many schools contribute to a **school-to-deportation pipeline**, removing children from classrooms and keeping students from attending school through a climate of fear.”<sup>5</sup> - ACLU Northern California  
See Appendix 1 for more information on the School to Deportation Pipeline.



“When I was 15, in the summer of 2019, there were trucks and ICE officers all over RI, on what felt like a manhunt for undocumented people.

That included families and students that were living peacefully, like mine, it didn't really matter. The whole summer I spent looking at pictures and videos of ICE trucks as warnings of when people last saw them and to look out for them. Regardless of if you are doing anything wrong at all, it's you alone or your family against armed officials in a country where you feel like you're not supposed to be in the first place.

School is a very real and needed escape for students. At my current school, there are no SRO's, and I strongly believe the absence of them has reflected on the culture it has on undocumented students overall. I would've never felt safe enough to tell my advisor about my status and the obstacles that came because of my status if we had cops anywhere in the school. She never would've known many difficulties or missteps in my academic career were because of my status, and not because I was a bad student or came from a bad family. There are no bad students, there's a lot of students with difficult circumstances. But educators and schools will never know the difference as long as we are treated as criminals on a running clock. --PPSD Student

### ***The many Providence schools without police show that police aren't essential to school functioning***

There are seven middle schools and nine high schools in the Providence Public School District, with a total of approximately 12,000 students as of 2018-19, and just eight SROs who circulate among them. Six of the Providence Public schools and a handful of Providence charter and private schools have no school police officers. There is no case to be made that police presence is essential to student well-being, student safety, or even the maintenance of order and routine at any school.

<sup>5</sup> ACLU Northern California. <https://www.aclunc.org/blog/school-deportation-pipeline>

School shootings are often brought up as a reason why schools need SROs. But legally, police officers stationed in schools have no duty to protect students, teachers or staff, and according to U.S. law, can watch a person attack others and refuse to intervene. After the Parkland shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in 2018, a federal judge ruled that neither the school district nor the sheriff's office had any obligation to protect the students and staff killed or injured by the shooter.<sup>6</sup> If SROs are not necessary for ordinary school functioning and cannot be relied on in an active crisis, there is no case for their presence.

***Districts that have won Police-free Schools:***

- *San Francisco, CA- June 2020*
- *Hayward, CA- January 2021*
- *Los Angeles, CA - February 2021*
- *Richmond, CA- June 2020*
- *Sacramento, CA - June 2020*
- *Los Altos, CA - November 2020*
- *San Rafael, CA- September 2020*
- *Santa Rosa, CA- November 2020*
- *Madison, WI- June 2020*
- *Milwaukee, WI- June 2020*
- *Phoenix, AZ- September 2020*
- *Rochester, NY- June 2020*
- *Louisville, KY- June 2019*
- *Columbus, OH- July 2020*
- *Worthington, OH-July 2020*
- *Eugene, OR- June 2020*
- *Denver, CO-June 2020*
- *Boulder, CO-June 2020*
- *Oak Park, IL- October 2020*
- *Portland, ME- June 2020*
- *East Lansing, MA-June 2020*
- *St. Paul, MN- June 2020*
- *Winona, MN- June 2020*
- *Portland, OR- June 2020*
- *Charlottesville, VA- June 2020*
- *Edmonds, WA- June 2020*
- *Seattle, WA- June 2020*

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<sup>6</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/12/18/us/parkland-shooting-lawsuit-ruling-police.html>

- *Edmonton, Canada- September 2020*
- *Worcester, MA- February 2021*
- *Salem-Keizer, OR- March 2021*
- *Des Moines, IA- February 2021*
- *Motpelier, VT -February 2021*
- *Toronto, Canada- November, 2017*

**The pathway to racial justice is clear--it's time for Providence to join this movement. We need to remove police from our halls in order for students to learn, heal, and thrive.**

## **WHO**

SROs must immediately be removed from the Providence School District.

## **HOW**

**PPSD and RIDE must cancel the contract with the Providence Police Department and call on the PPD to eliminate SRO positions.** The Milwaukee School Board Resolution and the Oakland School Board Resolution provides an exemplary model resolution for the Providence Public School District.

**Police presence in schools costs the city money that research indicates is better spent on other support staff. We need to take SRO salaries and benefits out of the police budget and redirect those funds toward the city's education budget to contribute to the costs of the other changes detailed in this plan.**

## ***SECTION 2: We Deserve and Demand Schools that Support our Health, Well-being and Dignity***

### **WHAT**

Our schools must undergo a culture shift to go from seeing students of color as threats to seeing us as dignified humans. In order to create schools where all students feel nurtured and supported, we demand the District integrate anti-racism training into social emotional learning frameworks. Anti-racist school practices empower Black and Brown students as leaders in our classrooms and invaluable members of our school communities. The language, culture and practices of anti-racism are key to taking a trauma-informed approach to support student wellness.

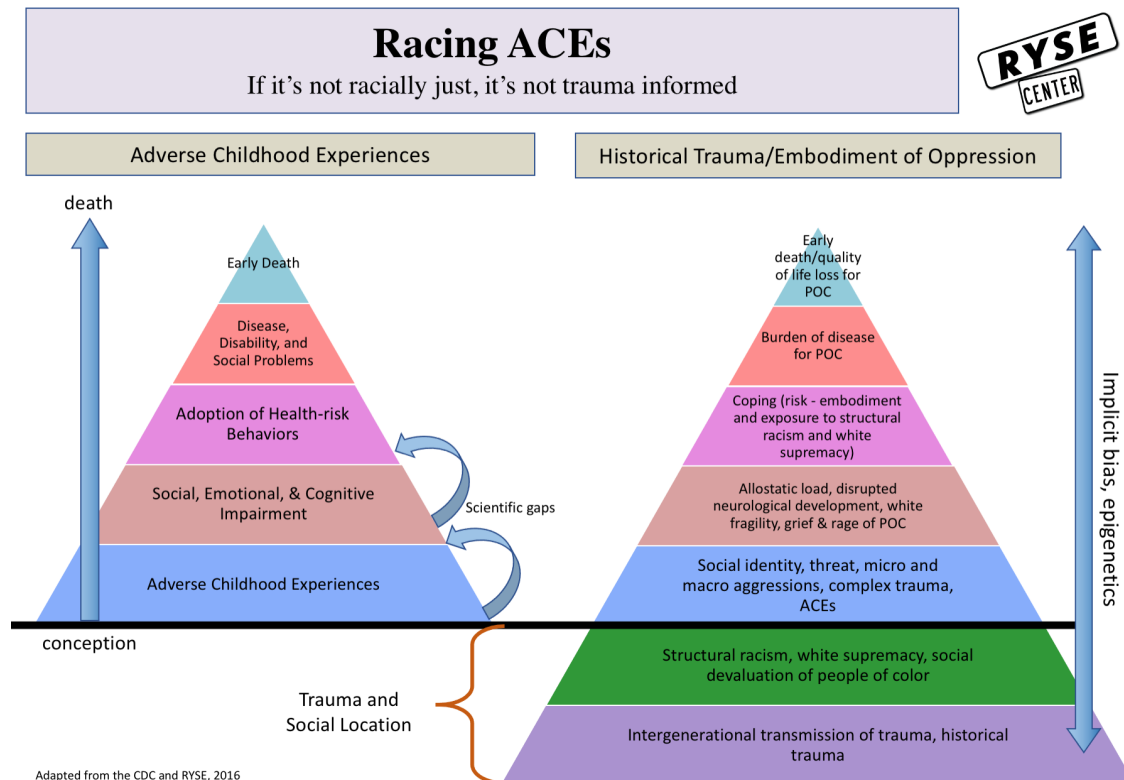
To make this transformation toward racial justice in schools, we need sufficient support staff, trained in trauma-informed social, emotional and mental health care. As students of color, we need support staff who are Black, Indigenous, people of color, and who speak the languages we speak. We demand a significant investment in more guidance counselors, school psychologists, social workers, restorative specialists and nurses, as well as innovative school support staff such as school safety coaches and Community Health Workers to create a network of proactive student support.

### **WHY**

Almost half of the children and youth in Rhode Island have lived through at least one traumatic event in their childhood, or Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE), with Providence students living through more of these experiences than students in RI as a whole.<sup>7</sup> Decades of research links ACEs to ongoing mental and emotional suffering, and difficulties in learning and working with others.

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<sup>7</sup> For example, compared to Rhode Island, Providence has over 10% more children exposed to abuse and neglect and over 50% more children with incarcerated parents. Brabeck, 20.



Students who are living with trauma need and deserve expert support in managing emotions and reactions, building systems of self support and compassion, dealing with grief and loss, and taking care of our bodies and minds because we deserve to be supported and healthy enough to learn.

For all students, schools are essential sites for mental health support.<sup>8</sup> School-based mental health professionals are usually the first, and possibly the only, line of defense for students who are dealing with trauma, experiencing depression or anxiety, or at risk of hurting themselves or others.

Beyond the immediate interventions, improving school-based mental health supports creates a ripple effect: studies find that investing in mental health professionals leads to improved attendance, lower rates of suspension and other disciplinary action, improved academic outcomes, and better graduation rates.<sup>9</sup> Other long-term effects include increased student engagement and stronger teacher-student and peer relationships.

<sup>8</sup> Kalina Brabeck, "School-Based Mental Health Support for Rhode Island Youth", Social Policy Hub for Equity Research in Education (2020).

[http://www.ric.edu/sphere/documents/MentalHealthReport\\_Final.pdf](http://www.ric.edu/sphere/documents/MentalHealthReport_Final.pdf)

<sup>9</sup> Brabeck, "School-Based Mental Health Support", 13.

## HOW

We call for four core elements to create schools that promote our health, well-being and dignity: **Restorative Justice Principles** (see Section 3, below), **Anti-Racism Training**, **Social and Emotional Learning Programs** and proper ratios of **Mental Health Support Staff** to students.

### *1. Anti-Racism Trainings*

**Integrating anti-racism training with social emotional learning programs is key to creating school cultures to support the health and well-being of Black and brown students.**

**Lifesaving:** Anti-racism training should work like First Aid Certification, because it is just as lifesaving for Black and brown students. Staff should retrain regularly to make sure they can be relied upon to treat students equitably. Anti-racism training, when deeply integrated into a school, can help Black and brown students lead more successful and empowered lives in the long term.

**Whole-school Approach:** All school personnel, students, and when possible, family members, should be periodically re-certified in anti-racism training and involved in multicultural school events.

**Recurring:** As our nation's dynamics of systemic racism change, so too should the content of anti-racism training, and the expectations on all school personnel to contribute to an anti-racist school culture.

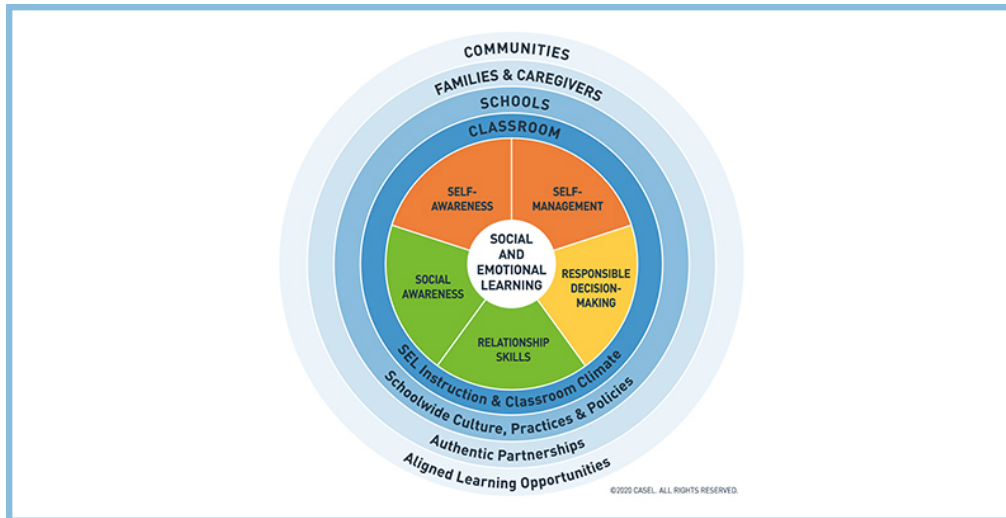
**Accountable:** Trainings should involve developing a collective definition of racism on both interpersonal and institutional levels. Schools should create metrics to show that school personnel are communicating with students in a way that is anti-racist.

**Student Voice:** Students need spaces to define anti-racism and be able to report and address behavior that is racist at any level.

See [Appendix 2](#) for examples of anti-racism training for the District to provide.

### *2. Teaching Social and Emotional Learning*

**Social and emotional learning (SEL) teaches students how to implement self awareness, emotional management, and relationship skills in their schools and communities. Schools and families need a unifying social and emotional wellness approach in order to adopt a common language, culture and practices that support student well-being, health and dignity.**



The **Children and Youth Cabinet of Rhode Island (CYC)** brings together residents, public systems, community based organizations and funders to deliver on shared outcomes for children, youth, and their communities. CYC builds from the desires and needs of residents and then focuses funding not just to run programs but to achieve communities’ intended outcomes.

Residents look at data and make decisions about what outcomes, risk and protective factors they want to improve—it is residents and families who decide what evidence-based behavioral health programs and staffing they want CYC to invest in.

**“The broad ask is to increase investment, but the real ask is that what we’re investing in speaks to the experiences of youth, it really has to resonate based on experience.”**

-Matthew Billings CYC Deputy Director

The Children and Youth Cabinet is the backbone agency of Evidence2Success, a collaborative action framework that increases capacity for evidence-based behavioral health programs in Providence schools starting in 2015:

In response to family needs the programs introduced include

***Examples of Behavioral Health Programs: :***

Cognitive Behavioral Intervention for Trauma in Schools (CBITS) is a school-based program to **reduce symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder among children and improve functioning, attendance and grades** that partners performance artists with mental health clinicians to facilitate group trauma therapy sessions. Youth who have



completed CBITS collectively experienced less post traumatic stress disorder symptoms, with 80 percent seeing a statistically significant reduction of symptoms.

Familias Unidas is an evidence-based family support program. Participants can talk with facilitators and other Hispanic and Latinx parents about some of the common issues adolescents and families face. This **culturally-specific family-based intervention** has been proven to improve adolescents' attachment to school and their communication with caregivers as well as reducing rates of substance use.

Strong African American Families is designed for African American families. This program has been proven to reduce behavioral issues, prevent substance abuse, improve school attendance, and strengthen family connections. It uses **culturally-specific techniques to address issues of substance use, racism, and school attachment while building strong family to family networks.**

Universal Trauma Systems Training is grounded in the data from over 4,000 trauma exposure screenings. This six-module suite of trauma trainings includes topics such as: Trauma 101, Asset-Based, Mind Set and Classroom Strategies, Self-Care and Secondary Trauma, Understanding Separation, Loss and Grief, Historical Trauma and Trauma Informed Instruction.

#### **Spotlight: Choose Love Enrichment Program**

Choose Love is a no cost, next-generation social and emotional learning (SEL) and character education program for Pre-K through 12th grades, designed to teach students, educators and staff how to choose love in any circumstance thereby creating a safer, more connected school culture. The program was created by the mother of a child who was killed in Sandy Hook shooting.<sup>10</sup> More than just a curriculum, it brings youth into a movement to exercise compassion, forgiveness, and learn how to Choose Love.



Choose Love has been implemented in West Warwick High School with notable success: “I feel like the whole vibe has changed,” said Isabella Santilli, a WWHS senior, “we’ll be sitting in class and somebody will say something, and another person will say, ‘choose love.’”

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<sup>10</sup> <https://chooselovemovement.org/at-school/>

Choose Love is a FREE SEL Resource for Educators Worldwide, created by educators for educators.

- Comprehensive Pre-K to Grade 12 curriculum
- Aligned with Common Core State Standards
- Aligned with American School Counselor Association Mindsets and Behaviors for Student Success
- Creative, Engaging Lessons that are FUN to teach
- Access to a multitude of resources that go beyond lesson plans
- Age appropriate
- Easy to customize

#### Choose Love Outcomes of Annual Educator Survey (2018-2019)

- 99% said that they have seen an improvement in classroom climate and in the students' overall behavior
- 73% said that their students get along better
- 81% said their students have a more positive attitude
- 62% have seen an increase in academic performance in their students
- 95% rated the program "good", "very good", or "excellent"
- 99% said they enjoyed teaching the program
- 96% said their students enjoyed the program



#### **School Spotlight: Paul Cuffee School A Maritime Charter School for Providence Youth**

Paul Cuffee School's Health and Wellness Policy defines the Health and Wellness Committee comprised of school personnel, community members, and students plans, which implements, and assesses ongoing activities that promote healthy lifestyles. Students and teachers alike have praised Paul Cuffee's use of SEL Programs: Responsive Classroom and Developmental Designs.

The Developmental Designs approach (tailored to middle and high school) offers a teaching and learning framework that helps teachers hear and respond effectively to the needs of adolescents. Classroom Practices include: Community-building advisory, goal setting, social contract, empowering language, pathways to self-control that emphasize student dignity, collaborative problem solving, power of play and more.

The Responsive Classroom approach (tailored to elementary school) gives teachers the tools to implement core concepts of engaging academics, positive community building, effective management, and developmentally responsive teaching.

### District Spotlight: Bridgeport Public Schools

Bridgeport was internationally recognized in 2019 for **integrating social and emotional learning into a public school curriculum** with great success and has a demographic makeup and size comparable to Providence.<sup>11</sup> In 2013, the Bridgeport School District partnered with Yale's Center for Emotional Intelligence to implement the **RULER** framework for teaching and learning emotional literacy, which stands for "**Recognize, Understand, Label, Express, and Regulate.**"<sup>12 13</sup>

Since the implementation of RULER:<sup>14</sup>

- out-of-school and in-school suspensions have declined
- instances of bullying have declined
- students report a more supportive school climate
- better student-teacher trust,
- increased sense of safety
- two years after implementation, 72% of teachers found RULER to be useful.

At the high school level, RULER is **combined with restorative justice principles**; as complementary skill sets that reinforce one another. In some schools, **students are trained as RJ Student Ambassadors** to facilitate the program and **train fellow students** in social and emotional learning. Two schools have implemented **mindfulness/"refocus" rooms** as alternatives to suspension.

Because Bridgeport still worked with SROs as of December 2020, adopting the RULER framework without other changes would not create a safe environment for students to learn, or satisfy our other demands. We point to Bridgeport not as a model we want to replicate due to the fact the district still employs SRO, but rather as a model to take elements from. Combining social and emotional learning frameworks like RULER (including appropriate training and staff) with SRO removal and an anti-racist framework can give us the safe and equitable schools we deserve, especially if, like Bridgeport, Providence makes it a funding priority.

### Funding Sources for Bridgeport Public Schools:

Bridgeport Public Schools have two main sources of funds: property taxes and an **Education Cost Sharing Formula (ECS)**, the method the Connecticut legislature uses to distribute \$2 billion dollars in education funds to public schools. **The distribution of funds is based on many factors including: concentrated poverty weight, number of English Language Learners, and cost per pupil.** As a result Bridgeport Public Schools received **around 26 million more dollars** than they would have originally in 2019 Fiscal Year.

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<sup>11</sup> <https://www.ctpost.com/local/article/Emotional-Intelligence-efforts-of-Bridgeport-13833114.php>  
[Bridgeport demographic information](#)

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.rulerapproach.org/>

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.ycei.org/ruler-research-projects>

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.ctpost.com/local/article/Emotional-Intelligence-efforts-of-Bridgeport-13833114.php>

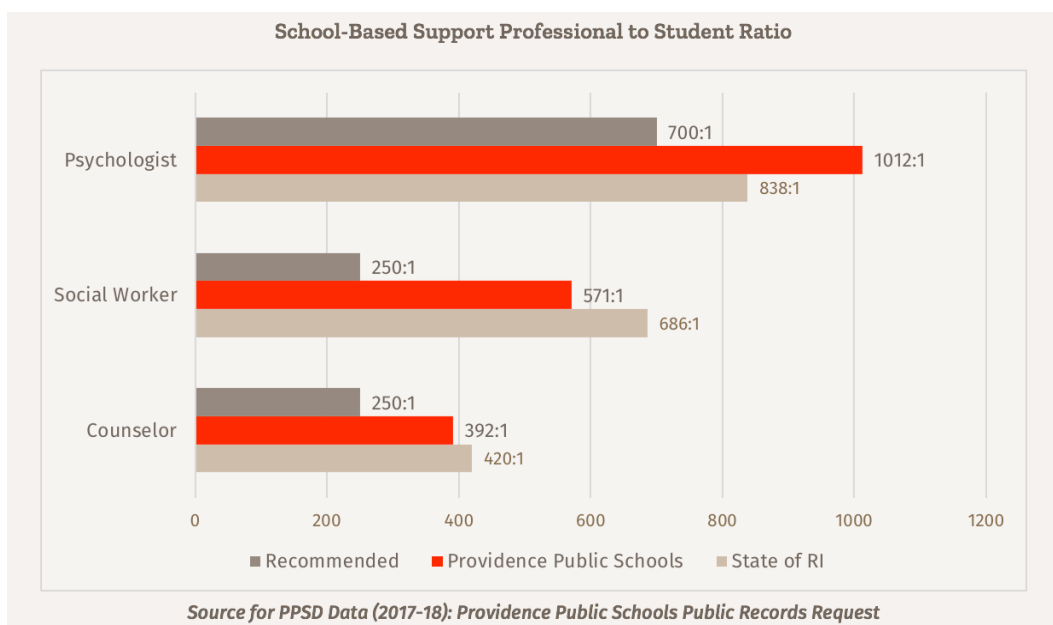
See [Appendix 3](#) for more information on program outcomes and a longer menu of Social Emotional Learning Programs for the Providence Public School District to review for application.

## WHO

### ***3. Hire more Mental Health and Wellness Staff***

We cannot expect our schools to drive a transformation toward anti-racist social emotional learning frameworks when they are understaffed. We deserve and demand proper staff-to-student ratios to transform our schools into places that support our health, well-being and dignity. We recommend the following Staff to Student Ratios --

- **School Psychologists 1: 500-700** - [\*National Association of School Psychologists\*](#)
- **Social Workers 1: 250** - [\*School Social Work Association of America\*](#)
- **Guidance Counselors 1: 250** - [\*American School Counselor Association\*](#)
- **Nurses** the [\*National Association of Nurses\*](#) recommends a needs-based formula approach for determining full-time school nurse-to-students ratio. For example:
  - **1: 750** general student population
  - **1: 225** in the student populations that may require daily professional school nursing services or interventions such as Special Ed inclusions
  - **1: 125** in student populations with complex health care needs
  - **1: 1** may be necessary for individual students with multiple disabilities



Source for graph: [School Discipline and Student Safety in the Providence Public School District, Center for Youth and Community Leadership in Education, Dec 2020.](#) PPSD continues to have worse staff to student ratios than national standards. While the need for social and emotional support staff in Providence is some of

the highest in the state, the ratio of psychologists to students in Providence is worse than the state average. In fact, the **rate of students to school social workers in Providence is more than double the recommended average**. See [Appendix 4](#) for details of these roles.

**“Staffing to help resolve conflict continues to be a problem. Counselors are not full time and are often in meetings.”- PPSD Teacher**

The [Providence Teachers Union](#) stands with P.A.S.S. to recommend that the district **“recruit and retain school psychologists, counselors, social workers and nurses, especially in schools with high turnover and schools with significant vacancies.”**

The Providence Public School District has **disinvested** from social emotional and well-being support staff for years. We only have to look as far as cities such as Bridgeport CT — with a similar size and racial composition to Providence — to see how deeply we’ve undervalued our students, and an example of what we should be spending.



“In [my] first year teaching [at a PPSD High School], we had a LICSW working as our Director of Student Support and working to implement restorative practices in the school. In the second year, the Director of Student Support position was removed from the school due to funding and the efforts to use restorative practices were essentially lost. We saw a dramatic increase in fights, absenteeism, low student morale and mental health, arrests and teacher burnout. [...]

**My experience informs me of the necessity for mental health professionals in buildings as well as appropriately funded and staffed systems for restorative practices.”**

- PPSD Teacher

**Representation Matters:** Psychologists and social workers can often be disconnected from the student community, especially when students feel like they won’t be able to relate. That is why the Children’s Youth Cabinet’s entire facilitator workforce is BIPOC from the neighborhoods where they work—clinicians, artists, facilitators, resident facilitators. CYC’s all-Latinx advisory guides the agency on implementation strategies within Latinx communities.

**Community Health Workers in schools** would provide a key resource of culturally competent support to students. CHW’s are rooted in the cultures and communities where they work and would use their existing relationships to bridge the needs of students and families with school

staff and community resources. Some CHWs already work in schools, and the [Community Health Worker Association of RI](#) and [Community Health Innovations RI](#) have expressed support in bringing more CHWs into schools with full-time well-funded positions. See the Appendix 4.

Some Providence public schools have even better mental health and wellness professionals-student ratios than those nationally recommended--all students deserve this level of social, emotional care.

### **School Spotlight: The Metropolitan Regional Career and Technical Center (The Met)**

A network of six state-funded career and technical schools in Providence and Newport, the Met's staffing structure prioritizes student well-being and growth. Every Met student has access to multiple points of contact from adults trained to provide social, emotional, and mental health support. Advisors, social workers, teachers, and school safety staff form a supportive team by regularly checking in on students and creating a safe space to share feelings, and address behavioral challenges. Students have a voice in which staff are hired and fired. The relationships of trust that staff are able to build with students and the restorative culture and practices in the school drives the Met's remarkably low rates of student discipline or school safety issues.

Here's what student support looks like at the Met:

- **1 Advisor for 16 Students:** Advisors work with students for all four of their high school years to help them meet their academic and professional goals and encourage their individual development.
- **1 Social Worker and 2 Social Work Interns for 144 Students:** Each Met social worker is supported by one or two social work interns through a connection with Rhode Island and Massachusetts Colleges. Social Workers address students' social and emotional needs and connect students to needed community resources.
- **1 School Safety Team Member for 144 Students:** School safety teams are made of people who come from similar communities and cultural backgrounds as the students. School safety specialists roles include:

- participate in student learning plans,
- maintain the safety of school buildings,
- participate in the behavior response process,
- provide SRT dept director w/ written self-evals,
- participate in Restorative Justice practices and de-escalation training.

The Safety Specialist position is accessible to the community as candidates only need HS Diploma or a GED to apply.

- **1 Principal (i.e. School Administrator) to 144 students** - In the words of Met administrators, “this makes a huge difference because all of these adults support the students which helps keep the respect and level of peace.”

Met Advisor Quote:

“We **build individual needs, traits and strengths into our learning plans** just as we do with academics. This allows us to develop strategies with the student that help them to face their challenges and frustrations while also **giving students the skills to communicate effectively and collaborate with and accept help from others.**”

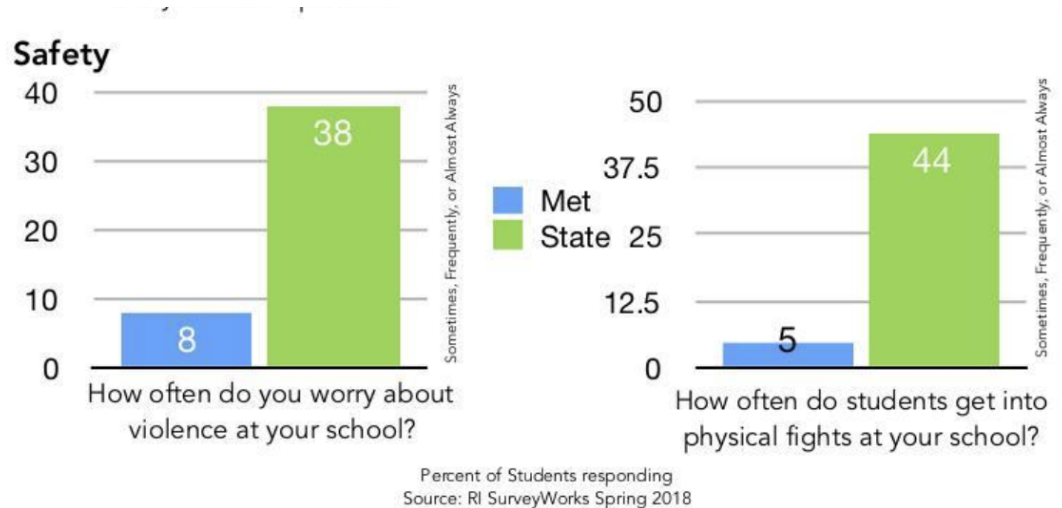
*A stark contrast with other PPSD schools:*

“**Our advisory system is not real** at [PPSD High School] and in fact it doesn’t seem real at any school that I have seen. I think having a real advisory system and time for it would help teachers and students. And by a real advisory system I mean **you can’t have one teacher with 29 kids. That just doesn’t really work.**”

-PPSD High School Teacher

### School Safety & Education Outcomes:

Evidence from the Met demonstrates how an investment in proactive student support creates safer schools. At the Met, fewer worry about school violence than average Rhode Island students, and the frequency of physical fights at the school is far lower than the reported state average. The investment in school supportive staff creates better outcomes for student well-being, school climate, and student success.





“As a black immigrant, I'm used to people having high expectations and prejudices against youth like me. That often didn't exclude school or my own home, where I'd be reminded that students like me can quickly fall into a cycle where punishments were the only way to address things. It became a trend for teachers to put students into "delinquent" roles. While a small group of students like me that solely went to school to "get it over with", doing my best academically without enjoying or retaining most of it. Often put into awkward situations where teachers compared students and made us feel like we were competing with each other. With a toxic social environment, I went to school scared to make small mistakes and accidentally fall out of favor with teachers who I knew weren't going to show any authentic concern or empathy. In comparison to my current school (The Met), where it's essentially been my safe space, the friendships with students and teachers I've had, have gotten me through most of my personal and academic struggles, and I've grown to learn more effectively than I've ever had before.” -PPSD Student



### ***SECTION 3: We Deserve and Demand Restorative School Culture and Practices***

#### **WHAT**

We need restorative practices to end the racist patrimony of punishment which has systematically criminalized Black and Brown students in the PPSD. We demand the District make a long-term commitment to a **restorative justice transformation** in order to create schools where all students, especially BIPOC students, can thrive.

Unlike punishment, restorative practices are trauma-informed: when community members participate in restorative processes, we recognize the role of past traumas while providing the opportunity for healing and “making things right.” Restorative practices improve school climate by giving students and staff the tools to address the root causes of conflict between members of the school community and develop lasting solutions. Most of all, restorative practices build a culture where everyone has a stake in the school community.

Restorative practices trace their origins among Indigenous peoples across North America, New Zealand, and West Africa centuries before they were integrated into schools.<sup>15</sup> Restorative practices have been shown to improve educational and health outcomes of Black, Indigenous, and P.O.C. students and to strengthen relationships between students, teachers, administrators, and the wider community. The success of restorative justice implementation has been demonstrated in schools and districts across the country, from Oakland, CA to Denver, CO to Holyoke, MA.<sup>161718</sup> It has also been tried in Providence, where teachers see its potential--but also recognize the need for massive commitment for a full transformation toward restorative school communities, cultures and practices.

Transformative Justice works to address the greater conditions that perpetuate harm for low income, immigrant, LGBTQIA+, disabled, and Black and brown youth at a structural level, and build long-term, sustainable solutions. **Transformative Justice means writing anti-racism and restorative practices into district policy to ensure that these practices are integrated and sustained in schools--no matter the changes in budgets, staffing, or political climate.**

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<sup>15</sup> Zehr, Howard. *Changing Lenses – A New Focus for Crime and Justice*. Scottdale PA: 2005, 268–69.

<sup>16</sup> [Restorative Justice in Oakland Schools: Implementation and Impacts.](#)

<sup>17</sup> [Three Denver Schools Provide National Model for How to Discipline Differently](#)

<sup>18</sup> [Pa'lante Restorative Justice 2018- 2019 Annual Report](#)



“SRO’s are there to remove a problem for a time, but not actually solve it.

Restorative justice practices are trying to solve problems long term - find the problem and actually solve the problem.” - PPCD Student

### Six Guidelines to Implement Restorative Justice in Schools:<sup>19</sup>

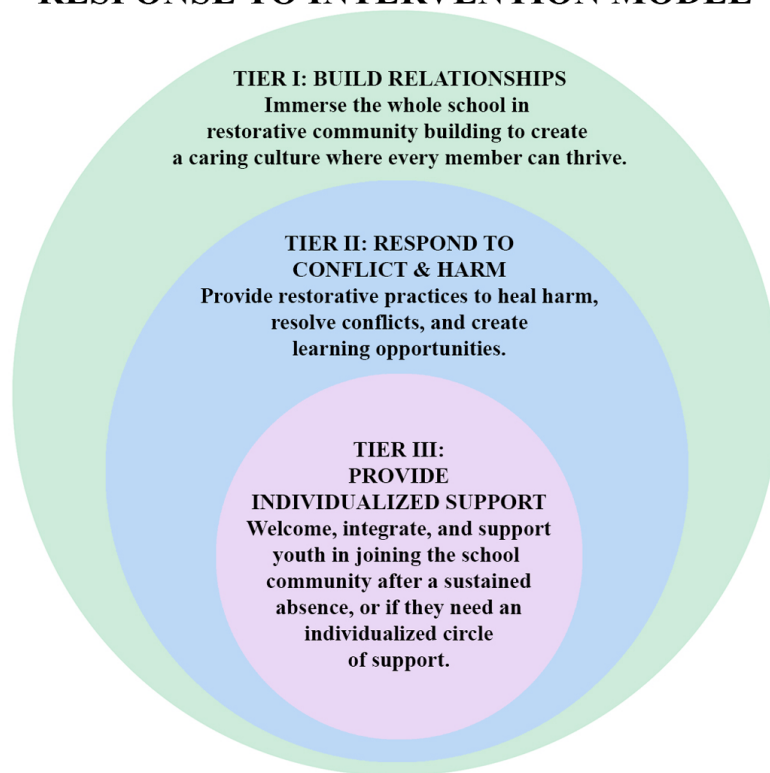
1. **Whole-school Approach:** All adults in a school community must be trained in restorative practices and a partner organization must provide on-going coaching and support to school staff. At least one school-based staff person should also be trained as an RP trainer to ensure the sustainability of restorative practices over time.
2. **Extended Timeline:** Shifting the culture of all school and district personnel towards restorative values and practices may require **three to five years**. Providence Public Schools should adopt an extended timeline of at least this many years when planning in training into school-based and city-wide professional development calendars.
3. **Proactive Community-building:** Restorative practices should be woven into everything that goes on in a school, and should not be used solely as a conflict resolution tool. About 80% of restorative practices should focus on proactive community building. Restorative practices may also be used in classroom lessons and to welcome students back to school after sustained absences. These practices should be combined with complementary existing practices that foster a positive school community.
4. **District Leadership:** The implementation of restorative practices requires school administrators and district leadership to be trained in RP by a partner organization and to communicate a strong and consistent restorative vision. A detailed district-wide implementation plan must align with the Providence Public Schools’ Turnaround Plan and other district mandates and practices.
5. **Student Leadership:** Students should be empowered as thought partners and guiding voices in planning and implementation of restorative school practices. School staff should create spaces for students to share their perspectives and experiences surrounding school discipline, as shaped by race, gender, sexuality and other

<sup>19</sup> Baltimore report

intersectional identities in the early planning stages. Schools should introduce restorative concepts to students before beginning to implement restorative practices into the school. Students should have opportunities to take on active leadership roles in implementing restorative processes such as being trained to lead circles and participate in designing actions to promote community accountability.

6. **Parent/ Guardian and Family Engagement:** Schools should familiarize parents with RP through meetings, materials, and when feasible, training. Parents, guardians and family members should have the opportunities to offer input into the planning and implementation stages, as well as students. Staff should be equipped to accommodate family members' schedules, languages spoken, cultural familiarity, and transportation ability to facilitate parent involvement in restorative circles and conferencing.

## RESPONSE TO INTERVENTION MODEL



Schools do the best job at implementing restorative practices by making changes at three levels or “tiers:” building positive relationships, responding to conflict, and providing individualized support.

### What do PPSD Teachers have to say about Restorative Justice Practices?

Responses from 19 teachers from PPSD High Schools, Middle Schools and Elementary Schools.

We need **time to train our staff--and not just one and done type of training--intentional training that is built in over the year** so that teachers/staff members who need support with implementing Restorative Practices can do so and feel like they have resources. **This needs to be an initiative that administration openly supports** and also engages with when working with students and other staff members. -PPSD Teacher

I think that our school could do a better job of **implementing real systems for how to handle conflict** between two or more community members. I think this would require **training** for implementation, but it would also require **A) providing teachers with an administrative / Restorative Justice period** if they are to be the ones leading circles, having conversations with students and teachers, etc. [and] **B) hiring people that are specifically designing and implementing these practices in the schools full time.**

-PPSD Teacher

We need clear **training** in restorative practices and guidelines. We would need **a restorative team** who is dedicated to strictly restorative practices throughout the school day. -PPSD Teacher

Our dean of students has done a remarkable job introducing restorative practices into our school community. I feel the rest of the **faculty could greatly benefit from professional development** in the area as well. -PPSD Teacher

Classroom teachers need to see it work. There are still too many teachers who think that punishment is the way to go, based on their own up-bringing. Once it takes hold school wide, **in two or three years**, the yelling stops, the kids are happy and the **whole culture is kid-focused. It takes leadership.** [...] Any positive reinforcement in our school happens to **a whole class working as a team**, not to individual children, unless they have a specific behavior plan in place, which is done privately.

-PPSD Teacher

### What does it look like when schools get it right according to teachers?

I am currently working at a PPSD Middle School, where we do not have an SRO or specific systems for restorative practices. However, there is a really **positive culture** in the school that incorporates much of what I know to be true about restorative: **student care and well-being is put first** thanks to caring teachers, social worker, administrators, and other school community members. Because we are a small community, teachers know their students well and are quick

to respond to any issues that they become aware of by connecting them with the **social worker or administrator. Students are given options** for what will work best for them **in times of crisis or trauma-responses**. Most of all, it seems that there are mostly **trusting relationships** between students and teachers. -PPSD Teacher

Quote from Advisor at the Met:

“The more that **staff sees students in a positive light** and helps them to see themselves and each other in a positive light, the safer all students will be. Schools often see relationship building as a waste of academic time, but **building a strong culture saves time and stress in the long run**. [...] At The Met we begin discussions as quickly as possible so that all voices are heard before the situation escalates. Having authority figures/disciplinarians who are also there to share feelings and moments of success/victory with struggling students is also vital.”

## Stepping Stones to Creating a Restorative School



## WHO

Restorative Justice cannot fall on the shoulders of a few designated staff people for it to be successful in a school. Sustainable school-wide integration will require the district to hire professionals trained in restorative practices to coordinate, facilitate, train, staff to implement school-wide approaches.

Within a school-wide approach, a core team makes sure everyone in the school is using restorative language and practices and oversees conflict resolution processes. Team members should have a reduction of other responsibilities within the school. People who are already responsible for school culture (see Appendix 4) may be good additions to this team.

### Building the Restorative Practices Team

An ideal team includes:

- **Restorative Practices Facilitator or Coordinator** (who does this as their main job), an administrator
- **2-3 teachers** with a history of choosing restorative practices “unofficially”
- **Member of the school’s safety team**
- **Counselor or clinician**
- **2-3 students**
- **School support staff** (classroom aides, learning specialists, etc.) and after-school program staff, if any

If it is not possible for the school to hire a full-time Restorative Practices Facilitator/Coordinator, a motivated staff person--an administrator, teacher, or counselor-- should be assigned and trained to do this work, and reduce their workload in other areas so that they will have the time and energy to manage the training and putting in place of restorative practices.

The team itself can use the talking circle process--the core of restorative justice practices--to hold their meetings. The [Oakland Unified School District Restorative Justice Implementation Guide](#) provides a more detailed breakdown of roles and responsibilities.

It is recommended that the Restorative Practices team meet every two weeks to:<sup>21</sup>

- Develop shared values
- Assess the school’s strengths and needs
- Create a plan to put restorative practices into action and evaluate their success

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<sup>21</sup>[Oakland Unified School District Restorative Justice Implementation Guide](#)

- Develop a training and professional development plan for staff and students
- Observe, record and ask about what is and is not working, and use the data to make changes and improvements

Some ways the RP team can evaluate success:

- Interviews with students and staff
- Counting and tracking different levels of interventions
- Observing student-student, staff-staff and student-staff interactions over time
- Formal observation tools like the one in the [Oakland Unified School District Restorative Justice Implementation Guide](#)



## Restorative Practices – Roles and Responsibilities

### Administrators

- Consistently models restorative practices
- Embeds time for use of proactive circles in the master schedule
- Sets expectation that all staff use RP in daily interactions
- Holds staff accountable for use of consistent RP through monitoring, gentle reminders, modeling, etc.
- Assists in District's RP assessment process
- Holds responsive circles and restorative conferences for more serious disciplinary matters
- Holds all parties accountable to fulfill restorative agreements made
- Uses proactive circles in staff meetings, parent, student, teacher conferences
- Communicates with with parents and community about whole school RP use
- Distributes parent communications (for example: letters, brochures, flyers) to stakeholders

### Staff

- Regularly implement proactive circles
- Attend and actively participate in RP training/coaching
- Regularly utilize affective statements and restorative questions
- Use small impromptu conferences
- Discuss successes and challenges with colleagues

### Students

- Participate in circles
- Use affective statements
- Receive training to lead proactive circles

### Families/Community Members

- Actively learn about restorative practices by attending informational and training events
- Support RP by participating in proactive and responsive circles and discussing with your children

### Professional Development

- Schools implementing Restorative Practices should meet at least monthly as a staff for professional development and problem-solving opportunities.
- At a minimum, monthly RP meetings allow for an opening and closing circle, a learning activity, and a problem-solving (brainstorming) session during which a specific concern/question is addressed by the group.

Who are some examples of key staff on the Restorative Team?

<sup>22</sup><https://www.osibaltimore.org/wp-content/uploads/City-Schools-Restorative-Practices-Implementation-and-Resource-Guide.pdf>

## 1. Restorative Specialists

The Central Falls School District employs a team of Restorative Specialists in each school whose role is to help all members of the school build, maintain, and restore relationships. Their role includes;

- Coaching and mentorship, maintaining a regular pulse check on students' well-being
- Facilitating restorative circles, mediations and conferencing.
- Connecting students to supportive services through school social workers, school psychologists, and to community-based organizations.

The Central Falls Restorative Specialists were originally trained by the Youth Restoration Project, and Central Falls school guidance counselors have expressed that more sustained support from YRP would help to thoroughly incorporate and coordinate restorative practices among all school staff.

## 2. School Safety Coaches

School Safety Teams--Metropolitan Regional Career and Technical Center High School

The Met High School in Providence and Newport employs School Safety Teams/Problem Solving Teams instead of police officers. The Met Safety teams members are representative of the communities that students come from, and their primary role is to foster trusting relationships with students. Their role includes:

- Coaching, **mentorship**, regularly checking in on students and provide a listening ear
- Provide **de-escalation** and safe physical interventions
- Lead **restorative circles** with all those who were involved in a conflict or altercation.<sup>23</sup>
- Maintain building security and safety.
- Wear **ordinary clothes**, rather than uniforms, **DO NOT carry weapons** or come to school in cop cars and are NOT referred to as "security officers."
- Participate in **community-building "pick me ups,"** at whole school morning meetings
- Work in collaboration with members of the **Problem Solving Team (PST)**: Instructional Building Leader, Student Advisor, Social Worker and Learning Specialist /Teacher Assistant to determine what interventions are needed, who will implement the intervention and how progress will be monitored.
- Participate in **home visits** to connect with family members as necessary.

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<sup>23</sup> See [Appendix 5](#) for more information on Restorative Circles.

### 3. Youth Peer Leaders

Youth Peer Leaders -Pa'alante Restorative Justice Program, Holyoke High Schools

Pa'lante is a youth-led transformative justice program at Holyoke High School in Massachusetts working to build youth power and dismantle the school to prison pipeline. Pa'lante's work centers around two core practices: indigenous circle practice and youth participatory action research.

**Student leaders use circle practice** to support the school community to address harm, grieve, solve problems, heal from trauma and oppression, as well as to celebrate victories. In addition to hosting circles, Pa'lante youth design a **Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR)** project each year, where they engage in critical action research to address a problem that is relevant to their lived experience at Holyoke High School. Most recently, students used their research as the foundation of a campaign to transform Holyoke High School's In-House Suspension Room into a Student Support Room, which is staffed by Peer Leaders, therapist interns, and a full-time coordinator.

- **Youth Advisory Board:** A small group of the many peer leaders meets each week to make decisions for the program and to plan peer leader meetings. This group rotates membership each semester.
- **Adult Allies:** Pa'lante's staff team and adult allies support student peer leaders to lead all aspects of the program. Each staff member closely mentors a small group of peer leaders by providing academic and social-emotional support
- **Community Advisory Board:** An amazing group of community leaders, parents, professors, and Pa'lante Alumni meets monthly to guide, support and advocate for the program.

Pa'alante is funded by a mix of Holyoke Public School Funding, Government

Grants, Private Foundations and Individual Donations. See their [Annual Report 2019-2020](#) for more details.



### HOW

Our communities have been training and practicing restorative justice for years. Providence has the organizational expertise for creating the change that is needed in our schools. Here we highlight two local restorative justice practitioners whose services are desperately needed in the PPSSD School system. Additional groups may support our efforts through consultation,

collaboration, technical support, knowledge-sharing, training, or evaluation. This expertise cannot be short-changed-- a transformation toward restorative practices demands a long-term investment and a holistic, student-centered vision.

**The Youth Restoration Project of Rhode Island** is the leading Rhode-Island based training and consulting group for Restorative Practices, working with organizations to help them build interpersonal cultures where all people feel heard.



**YRP works on transforming school culture**, shifting disciplinary systems to a restorative, healing model rather than rely on punishment, coercion, and “zero tolerance.” YRP has over ten years of experience providing training, consultation, and collaboration on restorative justice programs, and has worked with organizations as diverse as Rhode Island’s Department of Children, Youth and Families, social service agencies, arts groups and small businesses.

YRP trained Central Falls Public Schools in restorative practices through a multi-million dollar federal grant piloted in 2014 and implemented in 2015-2016. The training and materials help restorative staff facilitate family group conferences, employ communication methods and develop school policy to maintain a restorative school climate. Staff report that further training would help to integrate the practices school-wide and develop clear implementation plans. **We call for a long term investment for the Youth Restoration Project to drive a restorative justice transformation in the Providence Public Schools.**<sup>24</sup>



## SCHOOL-BASED PROGRAMS & WORKSHOPS

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<sup>24</sup>[https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/88936/implementing\\_restorative\\_justice\\_in\\_rhode\\_island\\_schools\\_0.pdf](https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/88936/implementing_restorative_justice_in_rhode_island_schools_0.pdf)

**CMCRI** - the only **community mediation** center in the state - offers a variety of trainings and workshops in conflict resolution, communication skills, and the facilitation of public dialogue and work groups. CMCRI helps faculty and students develop interpersonal communication and problem solving skills. The programs are highly interactive, engaging and practical, and provide participants with pragmatic tools they can use immediately. Each session can be customized to meet the school's specific needs, and is led by our highly knowledgeable and experienced trainers. Similarly to the Pa'alante model, **CMCRI has trained students to be Peer Mediators** and then **assist students and faculty to develop peer mediation programs** at their own high schools and middle schools.

### **The Need for Ongoing Support:**

Comparative studies of restorative practices implementation in schools and outcomes on student behavior and discipline show that **any school considering implementing restorative practices must build on-going coaching and support for teachers**. A one-time investment in restorative practices cannot achieve the goals needed to reduce punitive discipline and heal our schools. The Denver Public School District exemplifies a long-term commitment:

## **District-Wide Implementation Timeline**

The Denver Public Schools have been working for the past 15 years to make Restorative Practices part of every schools culture throughout the district. The District's efforts took a big leap forward in 2017, when they received a grant from the Colorado Department of Education to create a learning cohort of schools working together to deepen their practice of restorative justice.

<b><u>2005</u></b>	<b><u>2006</u></b>	<b><u>2008</u></b>	<b><u>2014</u></b>	<b><u>2015</u></b>	<b><u>2017</u></b>	<b><u>2018</u></b>	<b><u>Today</u></b>
Cole Middle School hires the first restorative practices coordinator in Denver Public Schools.	Using state grants, Denver Public School begins piloting restorative practices in one DPS high school and its three feeder middle schools on the North side of Denver.	Denver Public Schools passes Policy JK-R, a groundbreaking discipline policy reform that names restorative practices as its primary intervention.	The Collaborative on Racial Disparities and Discipline (DU, DCTA, DPS, PIU) is created.	The Denver School-Based Restorative Practices Partnership is created, adding national partners.	DPS receives a grant from CDE to create RP cohort and the Board of Education passes resolution to become a Trauma Informed District.	Restorative Practices and Trauma Informed Practices join forces.	100+ full-time RP coordinators work in Denver Public Schools.

**Source:** Barton Institute for Community Action: "Restorative Practices

#### **SECTION 4: Student Voices at the Lead in Police-Free Schools Policy**

Creating schools that truly support our health, well-being and dignity requires more than just removing police from the hallways--it requires community control over the way students are treated. We call for youth and community control over school safety policy and accountability for teachers, school administrators, and other school staff who continue to perpetuate the policing and criminalization of Black, Latinx, Indigenous, SouthEast Asian, LGBTQIA+ students and students with disabilities.<sup>25</sup> Our model owes its inspiration to the Madison Metropolitan School District Policy Proposal for Community Control over School Safety & Community Accountability by Freedom Inc. We advocate to adopt this admirable structure for community control here in Providence so that our voices can truly be heard.



#### **Youth Committee for Community Safety and Accountability (Youth Committee)**

In consultation with P.A.S.S., directly impacted young people and school community members, the District will create the Youth Committee for Community Safety and Accountability as a permanent body with complete oversight and control over school safety and accountability. The Committee will develop a youth-led model for school safety and an accountability process for staff employed by the PPSD who use police and/or exclusionary, anti-black, or discriminatory disciplinary practices.

##### **I. Membership and procedure**

The committee will:

- a. Include one adult representative from PASS and six Youth Advocates who have been impacted by policing, criminalization, an/or punitive school discipline practices. These students should be representative of the different PPSD High Schools.
  - i. Youth Advocates are eligible for elective credits for serving on the committee
  - ii. PASS coalition will support youth to be on the Committee by providing political education and leadership training
- b. Bridge Building/School Liaisons: Youth Advocates are representatives of the voices on their school's student governments, and other democratic student participation
- c. Youth Advocates will determine length of time members will be expected to serve
- d. With the support of the PASS adult representative, the Youth Advocates will develop a selection process for the addition of:

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<sup>25</sup> [Madison Metropolitan School District Policy Proposal for Community Control over School Safety & Community Accountability. Freedom Inc.](#)

- i. Two parents/ family members who have been impacted by policing and criminalization
- ii. Two community stakeholders with roles in antiracism work, mental health services, community organizing, education, or other fields excluding law enforcement

## **II. Committee Powers and Responsibilities**

The Committee will:

Have complete decision-making power over school safety and accountability policies within PPSD including:

1. Abolishing existing policies or practices that discriminate against or have a disproportionate negative impact for Black, Brown, LGBTQIA, immigrants, students with disabilities and all other marginalized groups.
2. Directing the implementation of new policies and practices that center a transformative justice approach and address harm through non-punitive, restorative measures that includes developing a school-level student-led resolution teams to facilitate restorative processes
3. Determining when police are permitted on school grounds and the specific protocols they must follow when on school grounds

The Committee should source student input for the above measures 1-3 through voting, surveys, or other forms of student input, framing questions in positive view of what students want in our schools going forward.

The Committee will also be responsible for:

1. Developing accountability mechanisms for mental health-based crisis response in schools
2. Overseeing complaints filed against staff for reasons of racism and discrimination
3. Establishing a process for protecting students from retaliation by school staff for complaints of discrimination or racism
4. Overseeing district implementation of accountability protocols around police intervention such as written reports for the reason that police were called.
5. Reviewing and monitoring data on calls to police, reporting students to police or referrals to police, and determining whether police involvement was necessary for each case in which police were called into the school building.
6. Establishing protocol for addressing harm done to a student or family in the event of police involvement including academic services and mental health support
7. Publishing a public report on the district's implementation of school discipline and safety protocols.

## **IV. Communication with RIDE and PPSD**

1. RIDE and PPSD communicate on a monthly basis with the youth-led Committee with an extensive Q and A discussion period.

### **III. Committee Resources and Implementation**

1. Every Committee member is paid a monthly stipend of an amount no less than \$300 per month to compensate them for their time, labor and service on the Committee with the final amount to be decided by the committee- see the Madison Resolution.
2. The District provides two support staff funded positions
3. The District provides a safe, private meeting space with transportation, childcare, internet, accessibility.
4. The District begins implementation of any plan or process voted on by the Committee within 30 days and final implementation shall be completed within 60 days

The Youth Committee for School Safety and Accountability will direct and oversee the implementation of Police-free schools policy. Below we provide guidelines:

#### **Guidelines for Police-Free Schools Policy** Informed by the Dignity in Schools Campaign

1. Remove Police from Schools.
2. Refer to the Youth Committee for instances when law enforcement may be permitted onto a school campus
3. Ensure that schools rely on alternative first responders to stabilize emergency situations such as transformative or restorative justice coordinators, behavioral health clinicians, and restorative specialists and community outreach workers.
4. Set strict limits on what law enforcement personnel can and cannot do in the event that they are called to schools, including notifying the school before entering school property, requiring that school officials immediately contact a student's parents or guardians when law enforcement is called, and whenever possible, before law enforcement is called, and requiring caregiver notification before interrogating or questioning of students.
5. Prohibit law enforcement from approaching, interrogating, questioning, fining, ticketing, responding to warrants, or arresting students on school grounds for all instances aside from those mentioned in guideline 2.
6. Eliminate the ability of law enforcement to listen to the questioning or interrogation of students by others (such as school officials).



7. Ensure that students are made aware of their rights and have an opportunity for consultation with counsel and/or another trusted adult selected by the student prior to any interrogation by the police.

8. The Committee will review all instances where the police were called and determine if police intervention was necessary. If the Committee determines the intervention unnecessary the Committee will:

- a. Meet with the impacted student and family members to make a collective decision on the best accountability measures for the staff member
- b. Provide opportunities for those impacted to participate in restorative processes with a community partner- such as the Youth Restoration Project or the Center for Mediation and Collaboration.
- c. Offer funded wellness support to the youth and family members

Issues of school safety and community accountability are only one component of our vision for a full racial equity transformation in the PPSD. We call on the District to implement a holistic Anti-racism policy with robust community leadership, transparency and accountability:

### **Anti-racism Policy**

Anti-racism policy creates structures in our educational institutions for a sustainable and active commitment to student equity and educational justice.

The policy brief “Reducing Racism in Schools: The Promise of Anti-Racist Policies” analyzes 25 equity or anti-racist policies from schools across the U.S. and in Australia, South Africa, Ireland and the U.K. From this analysis we recommend that the PPSD Anti-racism Policy address racism through these five areas:

1. School environment,
2. Incident reporting,
3. Staffing,
4. Data analysis, and
5. Funding

The Anti-racism Policy should:

1. Define the Youth Committee roles and responsibilities as written above
2. Provide a clear and accurate definition of systemic, structural, and interpersonal racism for all participants in implementing the policy

3. Devise a plan for how to communicate the objectives of the policy to the broader community
4. Identify the connections between anti-racist policy and other school policies,
5. Outline how to leverage partnerships with external organizations committed to increasing equity
6. Accessibility: Make policies and equity tools easily accessible to staff and the public alike online and through social media platforms. Example: Indianapolis Public Schools ["Say Their Names" Toolkit](#)

### **Our Recommendations for PPSD Anti-racism Policy:**

#### ***School Environment: Creating an Anti-Racist/Equity-Oriented Culture and Climate***

- Commit to building anti-racist school climate and culture. The [PPSD policy on racial and ethnic equity](#) should incorporate anti-racism training.
- All digital media, hallway displays, communications, and curricula should represent multiple racial and ethnic backgrounds. Students should be confident to speak, hear or read in their home language in school and have their names accurately recorded and correctly pronounced by teachers.
- Students should be involved in curriculum development and incorporation of anti-racism in school culture. This work should be supported by youth-identified role models to lead discussions of race and diversity within classrooms and during school-wide events.

#### ***Reporting: Developing a System for Reporting Racial Incidents***

- The Youth Committee will implement a student-led system to address incidents of racism and discrimination. This will include specific procedures for responding to an incident including requiring a written report, timeline for resolution, documentation of resolution, and family notification. Specific guidelines should include requirements that:
  - Schools will report out on incidents and require PPSD review of cases within 30 days.
  - The Youth Committee will notify families when racial incidents occur and ensure that families are given access to case files. Families should be included in the discussion of the case from the beginning of the investigation.
  - The Youth Committee will ensure that those involved can participate in restorative conferencing at the school level facilitated by the student-led resolution team. Support will include incentives for student training and participation.

#### ***Staffing: Recruiting, Hiring, and Retaining Diverse Staff with Equity/Anti-Racist Mindsets***

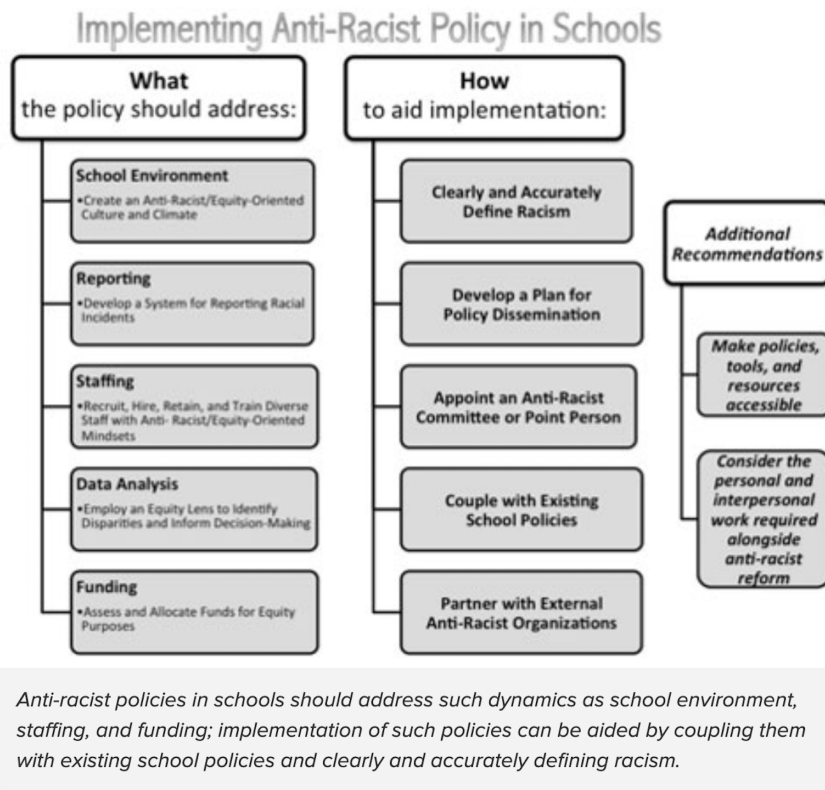
- The District should commit to a policy of recruiting and promoting teachers and administrators from diverse backgrounds that reflect the identities of PPSD students. Because teachers and administrators contribute to safety in schools, the Youth Committee should be involved in the evaluation of potential hires and their commitment to anti-racist, restorative, and student-centered approaches.
- The District should establish ongoing anti-racism education, community growth groups, and affinity groups for teachers and staff that are reimbursed with professional development credit.
- The District should provide opportunity for existing teachers, administrators, and staff members to contribute to the Plan's implementation and building anti-racism practices through internal recruiting and added compensation.
- The District should implement restorative practices in the termination process, building on practices laid out by the Youth Committee. The Committee should have the authority to submit a formal recommendation for termination in cases of discrimination without remediation.

#### ***Data Analysis: Employing an Equity Lens to Identify Disparities and Inform Decision-Making***

- PPSD should commit to a transparent, equity-oriented review of data across student demographic groups in access, performance, and discipline to identify racial equity priorities.
- The District should build capacity for consistent reporting of student data in these categories, with an emphasis on discipline, broken down by race, gender, sexuality and ability.
- This Data should be presented to the Youth Committee on a regular basis and to the broader community in a way that is accessible and readily available to all.

#### ***Funding: Assessing and Allocating Funds for Equity Purposes***

- Ensure that purchasing/procurement practices provide access and economic opportunities within communities represented by students of color, low income and immigrant communities.
- The District and individual schools allocate funding in line with the previous objectives such as: capacity for student leadership, equitable hiring, training, and data analysis resources.



## Implementation: The District Working Group

We call on Commissioner Infante-Green, Superintendent Peters, and the Providence Public School District to create a youth and community-led working group with the responsibility to oversee the design and implementation of all elements of this Plan for Police-free Schools. The format, membership and procedure are quite similar to the Youth Committee for School Safety and Accountability. However, this group's focus would be broader-- to oversee all components of Anti-racism policy and the implementation of the three core demands in this proposal.

It is critical to us that this District Working Group does not give or take power, but allows all parties to wield their individual power equally, especially youth. The power of any position is left at the door, but the experiences and knowledge learned from them are not. We demand that Youth participate on an equal plane in the high level vision of the transformation process from the budget, to staffing, hiring, school environment, data and reporting--with direction over all influence phases of implementation. One of the core responsibilities of this Working Group will be establishing the Youth Committee and creating the environment where they can work uninhibitedly. From there, the District Working Group will cede full power over all matters related to school safety and accountability to the Youth Committee.

Beyond the youth and community participants, the Working Group should source community input through events, polls, and google forms sent out to ALL students. The Working Group should also communicate progress with the greater PPSD community through biweekly emails, pictures, and documentation. Real community leadership and transparent communication is the only way we can create schools where students feel empowered.

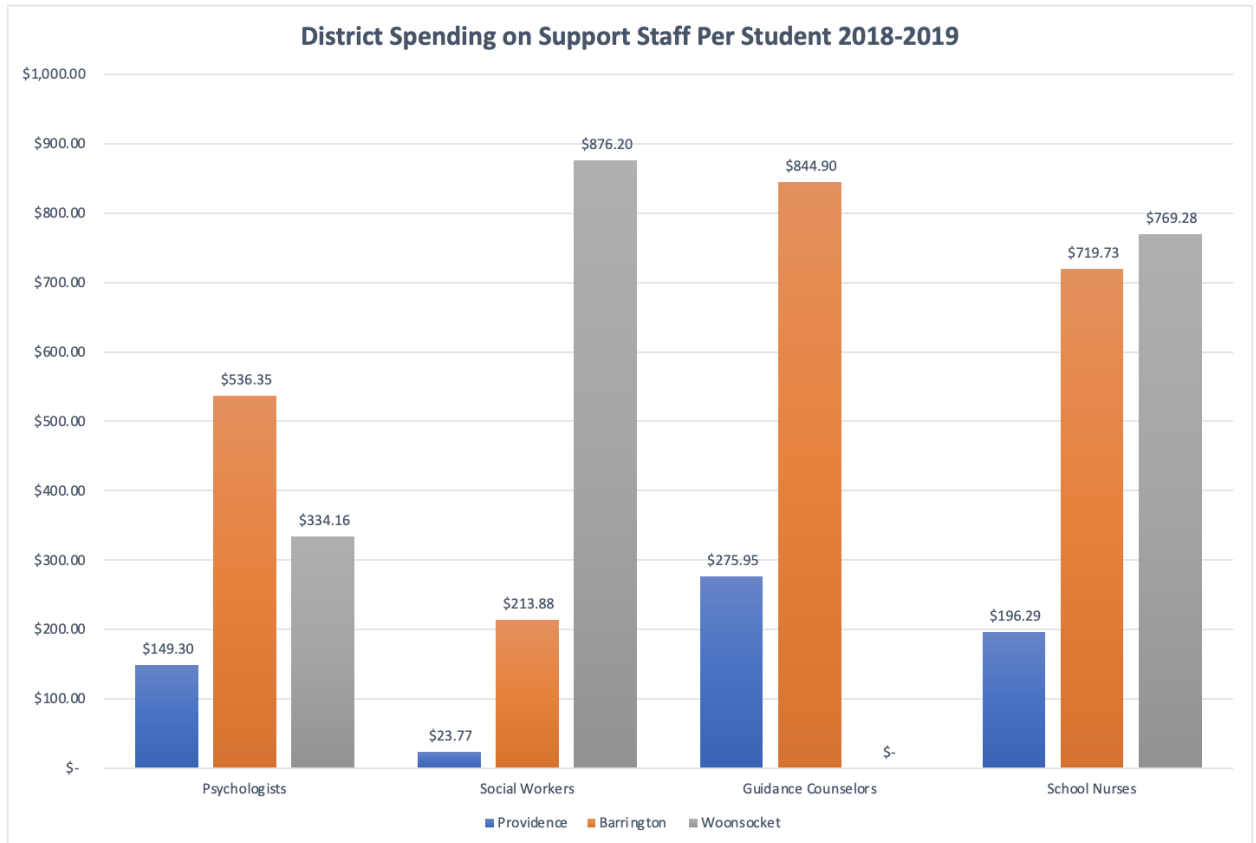
### ***Budgetary Recommendations***

#### **Funding for Police Free Schools:**

##### **Counselors Not Cops**

Over several years the City of Providence has committed funds to having police officers (SROs) permanently assigned in some, but not all, Providence Public Schools. Funds for policing in schools are allocated through two distinct City budgets. The City budget includes funds for six SROs to be assigned to Providence Public Schools. In addition, the 2020-2021 school department budget includes approximately \$100,000 for police details (temporary assignment of police officers for events). Thus the combined City of Providence (through the Public Safety budget and the School Department budget) investment in police in schools is, at a minimum, \$585,850. This investment reflects the costs of six Student Resource Officers placed in six different Providence High Schools and one Middle School.

We call for a reinvestment of the funds now being spent on the continual policing of students, and we demand the shift of these funds towards investments that keep us safe and invest in our well being as people, not as participants in a carceral system that disproportionately criminalizes and incarcerates young people of color. Providence spends significantly less on social, emotional and mental health staff than other districts in Rhode Island. We demand that Providence level up to reach parity with other municipalities in investing in the well-being of public school students.



See [Appendix 6](#).

As this graph shows, Providence Public Schools, in blue, spend significantly less per student on Psychologists, Social Workers, Guidance Counselors, and Nurses than Barrington or Woonsocket. We demand PPSD schools hire support staff to meet or exceed the nationally recommended ratios of staff to students (see p. 20 of this report), and pay these staff members a competitive wage.<sup>26</sup>

### Who we invest in MATTERS.

These are average salaries--but we know that in order to attract and retain BIPOC support staff, we need to compensate them with salaries that honor the value of their work with graduated steps proportional to experience. The following recommendations are a minimum baseline funding requirement.

School Social Worker RI average salary: **\$54,000**

School Psychologist RI average salary: **\$77,000**

School Guidance Counselor RI average salary: **\$55,000**

<sup>26</sup> <https://reportcard.ride.ri.gov/>

School Nurse RI average salary: **\$54,000**

School Safety Coach recommended average salary: **\$50,000**

Community Health Worker recommended salary: **\$48,000**

Restorative Specialist recommended salary: **\$55,000**

Culture and Community Coordinator recommended salary: **\$55,000**

#### **Minimum Baseline Staffing Requirements for Providence Public High Schools**

<b>PPSD Staff Position</b>	<b>Minimum Recommended Number</b>	<b>Minimum Recommended Cost (salaries only)</b>
Social Worker	31	\$ 1,674,000
School Psychologist	15	\$ 1,155,000
Guidance Counselor	31	\$ 1,705,000
Nurse	15	\$ 810,000
School Safety Coach	15	\$ 750,000
Community Health Worker	20	\$ 960,000
Restorative Specialist	23	\$1,100,000
Culture and Community Coordinators	10	\$550,000
<b>Minimum Recommended Total:</b>		<b>\$8,869,000</b>

Based on national recommended staff ratios and student census per school: see [Appendix 7](#).

A **minimum investment of \$8-9 million** is a baseline requirement for the salary costs needed to hire enough social, emotional and restorative staff in our school district. Additional staff and funding is needed to support students with mental health needs, disabilities, and students with IEP's--investments should be proportional to the actual needs of the students in each school.

The needs-based formula used to recommend the number of school nurses per student may be a good guide: where student populations “have complex health care needs,” the recommended ratio for students to nurses rises from 1:750 to 125:1.<sup>27</sup> Where a high percentage of students have complex social, behavioral and learning health needs, a corresponding ratio of support staff would make maintaining their well-being easier. The American Educational Research Association and the American School Counselor Association recommend **1 social worker for every 50 students with intensive needs (2012)** in order for these staff to have a reasonable workload.

The salaries used are average salaries that do not include the cost of the benefit package--**salaries should increase with experience and the district should include benefits. We need to retain and value our BIPOC support staff which means a competitive wage.**

**We are calling on our state to see the worth and importance of Restorative Specialists, guidance counselors, social workers, and innovative support staff as the solution to safe and healthy schools. Not police.**

#### **Example: This Takes Serious Investment**

*The California Endowment invested in restorative programs in 14 California cities, as part of its initiative “Building Healthy Communities.” How much did they invest? \$1 billion over 10 years.*



#### **Leveraging Available Funding Sources**

**There are many funding opportunities available to the District that could easily pay for these services if our leaders are willing to make this a priority.**

Nationwide, successful school districts **layer federal, state, and local funding with private agency funding**. Groups like Annie E. Casey Foundation, Racial Equity 2030, United Way, the Rhode Island Foundation and a host of other large private funders also have a role to play in this transformation.

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<sup>27</sup>

<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/21291082/#:~:text=NASN%20recommends%20a%20formula%2Dbased,interventions%2C%201%3A125%20in%20student>



- **Federal Example: PPSD is receiving over \$228 million in Elementary & Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) funds, which can be used to support mental health and health care.** PPSD and the City of Providence have the funds to provide the mental health professionals in schools that we need--and everything we call for here.

**It's time to invest in our futures.**

## Timeline

Spring 2021 Semester (to June)	Establish public commitment to police-free schools ( <i>by end of school year/semester, 6/18</i> )	Publicly express intent to remove police from schools and adopt transformative, anti-racist policy and practices
	Remove SROs from Providence Schools	Take necessary steps to remove PPSD police presence by end of this school year (2020-2021)
Summer 2021 (June - September)	Build foundation (June-July)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Begin youth-led process for assembling the District Working Group (DWG); relationship and coalition building</li> <li>● Youth leaders in Working Group establish the framework for the Youth Committee for School Safety and Accountability</li> <li>● Centralize disaggregated data on suspensions, referrals, school culture, etc.</li> <li>● Working Group begins to draft Anti-racism Policy</li> <li>● Working Group details a 1st, 2nd, and 3rd year implementation plan for the Police-Free Schools demands and Anti-racism Policy</li> <li>● Working Group establishes strategy for community input and transparent communication</li> </ul>

	Build on foundation and develop momentum (July- August)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Present a hiring proposal to stakeholder groups with student participation, with goal of hiring permanent staff for 2022-2023 (add'l support staff, coordinators)</li> <li>● Working Group finalizes Anti-racism Policy and establishes Youth Committee for School Safety and Accountability</li> <li>● Vet and select organization(s) to provide restorative justice and anti-racism consulting/training</li> <li>● Engage regularly and communicate with the community and reach out to other districts for best practices.</li> <li>● Recruit and hire alternative school safety staff using SRO budget and other funds</li> </ul>
Fall 2021 Semester (September-December)	Pilot and configuring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Alternative school safety staff introduced into schools</li> <li>● Non-punitive changes in disciplinary policy are implemented</li> <li>● Youth Committee is fully established</li> <li>● Train initial cohort of pilot middle schools and high schools in anti-racism and restorative practices</li> <li>● Finalize budgeting for 2022-2023 hiring proposal and training contracts</li> <li>● Continue data review, surveys, community accountability</li> </ul>
Spring 2022 Semester (January-June)	Continue pilot, training and recruitment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Training in pilot schools continues as schools begin restorative practices implementation</li> <li>● Working group concludes with this proposal's visions on school safety</li> </ul>

		<p>and hands over the work to Youth Committee.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Youth Committee is operational</li> <li>• Tweak and redesign unsatisfactory or unnecessary components of RJ implementation based on data and community survey results</li> <li>• Recruit staff to fill Youth Committee-proposed positions for 2022-2023 school year</li> <li>• Implement youth interviews with potential new hires, on a school and district level</li> </ul>
Summer 2022 (June-September)	Professional development, process review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Train all new staff recruits through Youth and Community-led PD Days</li> <li>• Review restorative justice pilot process to inform expansion district-wide</li> </ul>
Fall 2022 (September-December)	Full school and district implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expand Pilot across district and grade levels</li> <li>• Implement all components of Anti-racism policy- funding, staffing, data review, school environment, reporting</li> </ul>
Spring 2023 (January- June)	Implementation and evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continual training and evaluation</li> <li>• Supplemental hiring for support roles</li> <li>• Continual sourcing of student and community input</li> <li>• Continual control over community safety in the hands of the Youth Committee</li> </ul>

		<i>Community and working group together decide the ongoing function of District Working Group.</i>
2023-2025	Maintenance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Periodic hiring and retraining of educators, school and district staff by contracted restorative justice team</li> <li>● Periodic evaluations of whole-school and whole-district policies, practices, potentially led by Working Group</li> <li>● Periodic evaluations of Youth Committee and their work by PASS and youth</li> </ul>

## Conclusion

We present this report to you with the understanding that these policies and programs will not be easy to implement. We know it is easier to write off the experiences of Black and Brown youth who lead this work, even in their communities. It is easy to continue to permit a destructive, punitive system of safety in schools, regardless of what statistics and testimony tell us. It is easy to look at a report like this one, disregard all of the time, energy and care poured into it, and cast it aside as the pipe dreams of the inexperienced. However, there is a crucial difference between what is easy and what is right. The path less traveled tends to lead us the highest, giving us the perspective to lead those following in our footsteps. We need leadership that chooses not only to collaborate with and champion our community, but to walk with us, side by side, as we embark on the journey of righting the wrongs of our past. This report, with the immediate and permanent removal of all eight of Providence's SROs, is the vital first step.

As you are reading this, our elected state officials are attempting to strip our perspectives away from classrooms across the state, in the name of not "dividing" more privileged communities. At the same time, these same officials are moving towards permanently instating the funding of SROs, which as dissected above, leads to further the trauma and criminalization of children. These bills seek to continue, and in some ways amplify, the disenfranchisement of our youth and community.

Although there's a lot to be desired, we recognize that RIDE and PPSD have begun the work of addressing the systemic inequities that impact our communities and destroy our futures. You must realize that all of the work that has been put into shifting the narratives of marginalized youth and our home here in Providence is at stake, including yours. The only way we'll be able to survive these transgressions is together, on an united front. Swift, decisive and transformative action is the only worthwhile response.

These aren't quick fixes to what is, or retreating back to what was. We are creating what should be, in hopes that one day, this work will no longer be needed. Until then, we will be here, on the path less traveled, fighting for our future. We choose to do the hard work, because we know we are responsible for doing what is right.

What will you choose to do next?

Forwards until Freedom,  
Providence Alliance for School Safety

## Glossary

**School Resource Officer (SRO)** : A law enforcement officer responsible for safety and crime prevention in schools, with the aim to create a safe environment for both students and staff. SROs are similar to regular police officers in that they have the ability to make arrests, respond to calls for service, carry weapons, and document incidents.

**BIPOC:** Black, Indigounous, People of Color. An acronym that umbrellas all peoples and diasporas facing systemic oppression because of their race or nationality. Although we recognize that each group of people faces their own battles, we also recognize that we are fighting the same beast in different shapes.

**Equity:** justice according to morals or natural rights, freedom from bias or favoritism

**Accountability:** an obligation or willingness to accept responsibility or to account for one's actions

**Community Health Worker:** Someone who comes from a similar cultural background as students who can walk and talk with students, be a listening ear, and be a bridge between school and community resources.

**Guidance Counselor:** Someone who is a listening ear to students, guidance through academic trajectory and postsecondary education or career opportunities, helps resolve conflicts, participates in restorative processes.

**Patrimony:** anything derived from one's father or ancestors (heritage)

**Transformative:** causing a marked change in someone or something.

**Restorative justice:** A theory of justice that emphasizes repairing the harm caused by injurious behavior, accomplished through cooperative processes that allow all stakeholders to meet, emphasize and support each other. - Center of Restorative Justice

**Restorative Specialists:** teach kids and adults how to use restorative practices, circling up with one another to resolve their own conflicts; walk and talk with students to get to the root of the problem and help students handle situations constructively; be the “eyes on the street” building

relationships and understanding the social and cultural dynamics of the school; work to create an overall restorative climate and culture.

**Social and emotional learning:** "the process through which children and adults acquire and effectively apply the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions." - CASEL

**Social Worker:** A staff person trained to help students access social emotional mental health care they need. Social Workers should NOT police students or unnecessarily refer students to DCYF.

**Marginalize** - treat (a person, group, or concept) as insignificant or peripheral.



## ***Appendix***

A non-comprehensive collection of role descriptions, reference materials, further readings, and useful resources.

### ***Police Free Schools***

#### ***Appendix 1***

##### ***School to Deportation Pipeline***

“School arrests can lead to students being referred to ICE for deportation. Arrests can even have effects on students’ future attempts at gaining citizenship.” -The Praxis Project

“Even if the arrest does not show up when a background check is performed (in some cases, due to protective state confidentiality laws), the student must disclose the arrest on any immigration application, where it will be considered for discretionary purposes and could even be used as evidence of bad conduct in order to deny the youth’s application for status.”

-Immigration Legal Resource Center

“No one is certain how broad the school-to-deportation pipeline is since there are no quantitative studies. Advocates suspect it happens more often than is reported.” -Learning for Justice

##### ***Schools that Support Our Health, Well-being and Dignity***

#### ***Appendix 2***

##### ***Anti-racism trainings***

Unlearning racism and removing it from teaching and other school practices is an indispensable part of maintaining students’ health, well-being and dignity. Here are some example trainings PPST could and should provide:

- 1. Undoing Racism: The People’s Institute for Survival and Beyond**

“Through Undoing Racism®/Community Organizing Workshops, technical assistance and consultations, The People’s Institute helps individuals, communities, organizations and

institutions move beyond addressing the symptoms of racism to undoing the root causes of racism so as to create a more just and equitable society. Through dialogue, reflection, role-playing, strategic planning and presentations, this intensive process challenges participants to analyze the structures of power and privilege that hinder social equity and prepares them to be effective organizers for justice.”

## **2. Center for Racial Justice in Education**

“Center for Racial Justice in Education offers trainings, consultation, and in-depth partnerships to educators, schools, and educational organizations who want to advance racial justice. Because children don’t only learn in one place, Center for Racial Justice in Education works with PreK-12 educators of all kinds—from classroom teachers and principals to teaching artists and parents. Trainings provide educators with a framework to understand the context, history, and manifestations of racism, as well as tools to build an anti-racist practice. We work with educators to identify, examine, and disrupt systems that perpetuate racism—often in their very own institutions.”

## **3. Diversity Talks and PR(ism) Resistance Coalition Virtual Anti-racist Training**

“A virtual space for internal reflection so that we can begin to move the conversation from what it means to be non-racist to one that is focused on being actively anti-racist” including “strategies for engaging in racial equity conversations and taking actionable steps in your communities.” Specifically geared toward white people.

### ***Appendix 3***

Additional model Social Emotional Learning Programs for PPSD and RIDE to consider implementing throughout the District:

#### **Caring Community**

a.

*A large body of research confirms that building a safe and caring school community and attending to social and emotional learning (SEL) are essential to students’ overall success.*

***A focus on the whole school community:*** Community must include everyone: students, parents, school leaders, teachers, custodians, cafeteria staff, and support staff.

***Relationships matter:*** Relationships underpin teaching, learning, and prosocial development. Building relationships and fostering a sense of community are hallmarks of the program.

***Comprehensive leadership guidance:*** The program includes everything a leader needs for a successful implementation, including step-by-step guidance and resources to help plan for, launch, and support implementation.

***A unique stance on discipline:*** A focus on community, not compliance. Caring School Community builds on the powerful insight that when students have strong relationships within their community, they are more likely to acquire self-discipline and feel a sense of responsibility to themselves and to others.

***Creating calm, orderly learning environments:*** Through consistent use of effective classroom management practices and structures that build relationships, the program helps teachers create calm, safe classrooms that are more conducive to learning

### Second Step

Evidence for effectiveness at all levels of development:

- Improved emotional learning, empathy, executive function, and social skills in kindergarten - elementary school. Reduced violence, aggression, and bullying; improved relationships for older students.
- These effects lasted for months - years after second step/ social emotional learning. Improved academic performance as well.
- Estimated that SEL programs return \$11 for every \$1 invested.

Has been used in Central Falls for young children (kindergarten age) with substantial recognition.

- The presence of a school social worker and social work intern, and the partnership with Rhode Island College to deliver Second Step has resulted in excellent outcomes. The Captain Hunt School in Central Falls where it was implemented achieved RIDE Comprehensive Early Childhood Approval (CECE), the highest achievement for a preschool classroom in Rhode Island.
- The Evidence2Success Youth Experience Survey found that “schools do not have sufficient human or financial resources to address all the challenges that students face,” which resulted in the need for external funding sources and partnership to apply these programs in a small number of schools. There is tremendous need for these programs, which are evidence-based not only in other parts of the country, but here in Rhode Island as well.

Annie E. Casey Foundation 2018 Report on Second Step in Providence Public School District

### Positive Behavior Intervention and Support (PBIS)

- An evidence-based three-tiered framework for improving and integrating all of the data, systems, and practices affecting student outcomes every day. It is a way to support everyone – especially students with disabilities – to create the kinds of schools where all students are successful.

[Open data on Bridgeport's RULER implementation](#), including methods and results.  
[2018 Report on SEL at Bridgeport](#) for more information on funding sources, implementation and outcomes as well as the 2016 [Yale Report on initial findings](#).

#### ***Appendix 4***

The following personnel will collaborate with teachers and students to support social, emotional and behavioral health in Providence Schools, and with anti-racist and restorative practices (RP) training and support may also form key parts of RP teams.

**School psychologists** are credentialed mental health professionals with advanced training in both the fields of psychology and education. They work with children of all ages in order to promote emotional wellbeing and mental health, improve academic achievement, and cultivate safe, supportive school climates. School psychologists specialize in helping students navigate social and emotional challenges, mental health concerns, and educational hurdles. They are trained not only to directly serve students, but to work with families and school administration as well. They provide crisis intervention and conflict management, strategies to build culturally-responsive relationships with families, and school program design and evaluation. [Research](#) spanning several decades demonstrates how the presence of school psychologists improves student emotional health and education performance while improving school climate and reducing violence and bullying. National professional standards [recommend](#) at least 1 school psychologist for every 500-700 students. A [recent study](#) carried out by researchers at Rhode Island College found that 70% of Rhode Island students with mental health concerns do not receive treatment. Of those who do receive treatment, 80% access services through their school. However, nearly 20% of Rhode Island youth are in schools with police but no mental health professionals, and the Providence schools that have psychologists often have [double or more](#) the recommended ratio of students to professionals. Attaining adequate staffing of school psychologists would not only provide a short-term improvement in education and school climate, but may also have a long-term public health impact.

**School counselors** are licensed educators who are trained to provide comprehensive academic, emotional, and social support to students. They advocate for students of all ages to address needs both inside and outside of school. School counselors provide direct social and emotional counseling and provide referrals for students with long-term mental health needs. School counselors are trained to evaluate services and promote equity while addressing issues of access. There is a large literature base demonstrating the academic, social, and emotional benefits of school counselors. The American School Counselor Association has recommended no more than 250 students per counselor and that counselors have 80% of their time dedicated

to direct student services. There is a direct, linear relationship between the number of students per school counselor and disciplinary incidents (Carrel & Carrel, 2006)<sup>28</sup>. In other words, improving the ratio of students to school counselors will directly improve school climate, student safety, and emotional wellbeing. Most PPSD schools do reflect the recommended ratio, so the district should focus on building anti-racist and restorative practices competencies among school counselors to ensure that Black and Indigenous students and students of color can fully benefit from their services.

**School social workers** are mental health professionals whose training and practice focus on the way school pressures and challenges interact with family, community, and personal pressures and challenges.<sup>29</sup> They help students develop ways to stay well and interact well with others, help parents support students' learning and school life, and connect students and families with other resources to meet their needs. They are trained to provide crisis intervention and assist with conflict resolution and anger management: they can step into an unfolding crisis involving one person (like a meltdown) or more people (like a fight) and, later, help the people involved figure out what went wrong and how to address it. They also help to develop learning plans for students with disabilities, involving families, teachers, and staff, and connecting families with programs that support disabled students.

School social workers make important connections among the conditions that *create* students' trauma and struggle, the systems that exist for *addressing* those conditions, and ways to *handle* trauma and struggle in the moment. They can collaborate or intervene at the level of the student, the school, the community, and the city or state. To do this well, there need to be enough of them consistently present in a school to know and build relationships with the students, families, teachers, and staff. In the 2017-18 school year, no PPSD high school was even close to the 250:1 ratio of students to school social workers that national professional associations recommend<sup>30</sup> for student access to support. At Classical High School, one social worker was available for over 5000 students--conditions that aren't fair to that person or to the students whose well-being and learning they were hired to support.

**Community Health Workers (CHWS)/ Navegantes** Community Health Workers (CHWs) function in a variety of roles and community settings, from hospitals to housing agencies to social service

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<sup>28</sup> Carrell, S. E., & Carrell, S. A. (2006). Do lower student to counselor ratios reduce school disciplinary problems?. *The BE Journal of Economic Analysis & Policy*, 5(1).  
<https://www.schoolcounselor-ca.org/files/Advocacy/Lower%20Counselor%20Ratios%20Equal%20Less%20Discipline.pdf>

<sup>29</sup> <https://www.sswaa.org/school-social-work>

<sup>30</sup> National Association of Social Workers Standards for School Social Work Services.  
<https://www.socialworkers.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=1Ze4-9-Os7E%3D&portalid=0>

organizations where they provide outreach, health education, linkages to programs and services, advocacy, and hands-on enrollment assistance.

Some CHW's already work in schools, and the Community Health Worker Association of RI and Community Health Innovations RI have expressed great interest in creating more funded full-time positions for CHW's in schools.

CHW's in schools would operate as connectors--bridging the needs of students and families with school staff and community resources. Rather than being planted behind a desk or installed in an office, CHWs would circulate freely and regularly in school hallways and cafeterias to build proactive relationships with students, and promote a supportive and empowered school environment.

Some of their roles in schools would include:

- Provide cultural mediation among students and staff
- Advise staff on culturally appropriate approaches to health, wellness and life skills education
- Promote a school and district-wide approach to parent and community engagement in schools
- Support peer-to-peer mentorship (with appropriate confidentiality protocols)
- Support shadowing and/or apprenticeships as part of career development

Example:

Community Health Worker, Damaris Rosales in Roger Williams Middle School

Funding:

CHWs must be paid a wage that honors the value and importance of their work to provide culturally relevant accessible support to students and families. We recommend at least \$22/hr and a 50% bonus for working overtime.

All students or recent graduates engaged in apprenticeships to acquire the necessary skills to become CHWs should be paid a salary of at least \$15 an hour.

**Culture and Community Engagement Coordinators** were originally part of the PPSD Turnaround Action Plan's commitment to "redesign the roles of school staff (i.e. dean of students, coaches, culture and climate coordinator) in social-emotional learning with clear and consistent implementation of SEL curricula and initiatives." Culture and Community Engagement

Coordinators leveraged community partners for additional in-school and out-of-school assistance, increased leadership opportunities for students and offered greater levels of social-emotional support. In particular, coordinators were tasked with implementing restorative justice practices that use facilitated conversations and community service to understand and repair harm.<sup>31</sup>

However, in a reshuffling of positions, the District laid off the middle school Culture Coordinators in June 2020, the same month that the Turnaround Action Plan appeared. Rehiring for this role would complement the staff providing clinical services and provide more staff for whom implementing restorative practices is a major component of their role.

### **Nurses**

The Rhode Island State education Commissioner recently announced the creation of three SMART centers (School Health Model for Academics Reaching All and Transforming lives) within Providence public schools. SMART centers are healthcare and wellness centers that provide physical and behavioral health services to students, families, and staff. At SMART centers, students can receive health services such as assistance with mental health needs, counseling, a referral to primary care, routine vaccinations, medical prescriptions, and more. Research has found that providing students with health resources improves academic achievement and the school environment. After SMART centers were implemented in other parts of the country, attendance and academic performance improved, while school suspensions decreased.

- Cost of the first center: \$1.5 million, shared by the RI Foundation, Partnership for Rhode Island, and CVS Health Foundation
- At Mount Pleasant, a team of two nurse practitioners, a social worker, a wellness coordinator and an outreach manager will be able to diagnose, treat and prescribe, and then follow-up with the child or family for additional services.

### ***Restorative School Culture and Practices***

## ***Appendix 5***

### **The Tools to Implement Restorative Practices**

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<sup>31</sup> <https://www.providenceri.gov/providence-hires-school-culture-coordinators/>

Race and gender equity conversations are an essential part of assessing school culture and moving it in a more restorative, anti-racist and equitable direction.

## START RACE & GENDER EQUITY CONVERSATIONS AT YOUR SCHOOL

Our goal is to create a school climate that is inclusive and feels welcoming to all persons, regardless of race, culture, or sexual orientation.

Use the following process to determine whether discipline at your school is impacting one racial group disproportionately compared to others.

- 1. Analyze the Data:** Gather recent school discipline data to analyze. (Data like this is available from the Restorative Justice District Office.)

### SOURCES OF DATA YOU CAN COLLECT:

- Discipline handbook
- School improvement plan goals
- Annual Action Plan for meeting school-wide behavior support goals
- Social skills instructional materials/ implementation time line
- Behavioral incident summaries or reports (e.g., office referrals, suspensions, expulsions)
- Other related information

As a group look for the following patterns in your data:

- Are students of a certain race, gender, or age disproportionately represented?
- Are behavior issues occurring in a particular teachers' class, or at a particular time of day?
- Are students who struggle in some times/classrooms more successful in other times/classrooms?

- 2. Build Staff Comfort Discussing Race:** When staff feel uncomfortable or scared to talk about race, it can be swept

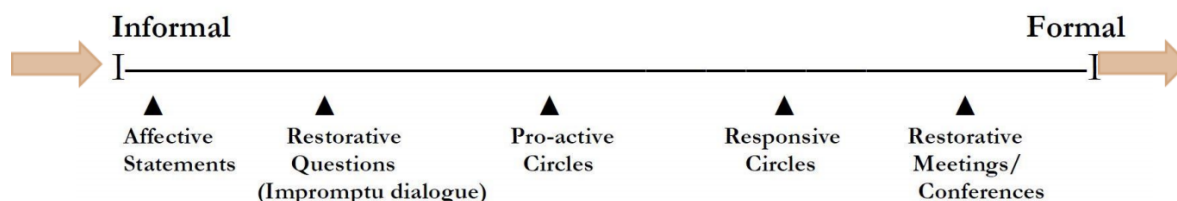
under the carpet, but racial disparity is rampant in Oakland Public Schools. We can only address it by first accepting it. Organize Circle conversations to explore feelings about race before a conflict or troublesome incident occurs. Using talking Circles to address race and gender equity issues in a preventive way is very important.

Use the agenda templates in the appendix of this guide to get your school's race and gender Circle conversations started. These templates are drawn from *Circle Forward: Building a Restorative School Community*, Carolyn Boyes-Watson and Kay Pranis, Living Justice Press (2015).

- 3. Make the Time!** Try your best to allot enough time for these difficult conversations, especially when getting them started at your school.
- 4. Consider launching a series of Circle race conversations.**

As the RJ Coordinator, you can support teachers to build their comfort and skill to bring intention to making all people feel included and welcome!

## Restorative Practices Toolkit





**Affective statements** involve non-judgmental listening and expression of feelings and impact. For example, rather than saying \_\_\_\_\_ insert command a teacher can say “I am frustrated that you aren’t listening to me.” They can be used to express appreciation as well (e.g., “I am elated that you did so well on that test – your hard work paid off!”).

**Restorative questions** are generally used to swiftly address wrongdoing by asking people on both sides of the issue certain questions. An example of a restorative question is when both parties are asked what it would take to make things right. One practical way of using these questions is to incorporate them into a **reflection sheet** that a student must complete when they have been referred for behavior.

**Proactive circle discussions** are part of community building. They create space for a group to get to know each other and allow for the development of mutual respect, trust, care and concern. These circles can also be used for classroom discussions that enhance understanding of new concepts, readings, current events and other education content. Topics that arise in circles can also serve as themes for future lessons.

**Responsive circles** should ideally account for no more than 20% of circles used in a school, used to address more serious conflicts. Schools that routinely use proactive circles are much more successful in utilizing responsive circles when conflicts arise.

**Formal restorative conferences** are used less frequently than any of the other techniques and are reserved for the most serious incidents of wrongdoing and most often involve a clear “victim(s)” and “offender(s).” These conferences represent the most formal of the restorative processes and are NOT a routine class process. A trained, objective facilitator who was not involved in the incident meets with all parties beforehand and facilitates a meeting that involves a scripted approach. At the close of a successful conference, the participants reach an agreement and each person signs a contract. Additional follow up circles may be held as needed.

## **USING THESE TOOLS**

### ***Tier 1: Proactive Community-building***

All members of the school community (teachers, administration, staff, and students) are involved in naming and choosing common values (what’s important) and guidelines (how to maintain those important things). Input into these guidelines means that they will be shaped by everyone they affect, and everyone will have more of a reason to abide by them. Race and gender equity conversations are also part of this process.

*Tier 1 tools: Affective statements, proactive circle discussions.*

### ***Tier 2: Responding to Conflict and Repairing Harm***

When conflict arises, and the people directly involved in it are not able to de-escalate it, adults whose job it is to *respond to and mediate* conflict step in to de-escalate and prevent anyone from being hurt or hurt further. With their help, everyone who was *directly involved in* the conflict can speak to what happened and figure out who needs to do which things differently in order to resolve the conflict, make amends for any harm they caused, and leave everyone feeling safe and fairly treated.

*Tier 2 tools: Affective statements, restorative questions, reflection sheets, responsive circles.*

### ***Tier 3: Individualized Interventions and Support***

If someone has seriously hurt someone else, physically or emotionally, adults and students on the RP team talk with everyone who was directly involved in the conflict, sometimes separately, sometimes together. Their goals are to make sure the person who has hurt someone doesn't hurt that person more, or hurt anyone else; to help them make amends to the person they hurt; to understand and help them understand their reasons for acting with unkindness or violence; and to provide them with the support they need to behave differently toward the people around them. This applies whether the person who has hurt someone is a student, teacher, administrator or staff person.

*Tier 3 tools: Restorative questions, responsive circles, formal restorative conferences, one-on-one support.*

### **A Model RESOLUTION for PPSD from Oakland Unified School District.**

## **Appendix 6**

Summarized below is an analysis of how Providence compares to other school districts both within and outside of Rhode Island in both investments in police in schools and the countervailing investments in social and emotional support to students. Through this comparison it is clear that Providence has significant work to do to reach parity with other municipalities in investing in the well-being of public school students.

Rhode Island Comparison  
2018-2019 Budget <sup>32</sup>

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<sup>32</sup><https://www.ride.ri.gov/FundingFinance/SchoolDistrictFinancialData/UniformChartofAccounts.aspx#18211862-budget-files> amounts include contracted/outside vendors for each category

Position	Providence, RI	Barrington, RI	Woonsocket, RI
Psychologists	\$3,427,752.54	\$590,525.81	\$501,243.43
Social Workers	\$5,546,638.59	\$235,486.32	\$1,314,305.93
Guidance Counselors/Placement Officers	\$6,346,926.53	\$930,242.56	Not Available
School Nurses(Grades Pre K-12)	\$4,514,678.77	\$792,420.36	\$1,153,927.22

Investment in Staff **Per Student** by School District  
2018-2019 Budget

Position	Providence, RI Student Population: 23,000	Barrington, RI Student Population: 1,100	Woonsocket, RI Student Population: 1,500
Psychologists	\$149.03	\$536.35	\$334.16
Social Workers	\$23.77	\$213.88	\$876.20
Guidance Counselors/Placement Officers	\$275.95	\$844.90	Not available
School Nurses (Grades Pre K-12)	\$196.29	\$719.73	\$769.28

## Appendix 7

### Minimum Recommended Social, Emotional and Mental Health Support Staff by PPST High School based on national recommended Ratio

<b>PPSD High School</b>	<b>Number of students</b>	<b>Social Workers</b>	<b>School Psychologists</b>	<b>Nurses</b>	<b>Guidance Counselors</b>
360 High School	256	1	1	1	1
Central High School	1215	5	2	2	5
Classical High School	1095	4	2	2	4
DR. Jorge Alvarez High School	765	4	2	2	4
E-Cubed Academy	365	2	1	1	2
Hope High School	949	4	2	2	4
Mount Pleasant High School	894	4	2	2	4
PCTA	639	3	1	1	3
Times2 Middle/High School	344	2	1	1	2

William B. Cooley, Sr. High School/ Providence Academy of International Studies High School	394	2	1	1	2
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**Minimum Recommended Number of Restorative and Community Well-being Support Staff per Providence Public High School**

<b>PPSD High School</b>	<b>Number of students</b>	<b>Safety Coaches</b>	<b>Community Health Workers</b>	<b>Restorative Specialists</b>	<b>Culture and Community Coordinators</b>
360 High School	256	1	1	1	1
Central High School	1215	2	3	4	1
Classical High School	1095	2	3	4	1
DR. Jorge Alvarez High School	765	2	2	3	1
E-Cubed Academy	365	1	1	1	1
Hope High School	949	2	3	3	1

Mount Pleasant High School	894	2	3	3	1
PCTA	639	1	2	2	1
Times2 Middle/High School	344	1	1	1	1
William B. Cooley, Sr. High School/ Providence Academy of International Studies High School	394	1	1	1	1