

University of Oklahoma

Graduate College

Compliance vs. Restoration: Educators' attitudes, beliefs, and perceptions of restorative practices
as a response to student behavior

A DISSERTATION APPROVED FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL
LEADERSHIP AND POLICY STUDIES

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the

Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

By

SHARI GATELEY

Norman, Oklahoma

2024

Compliance vs. Restoration: Educators' attitudes, beliefs, and perceptions of restorative practices
as a response to student behavior

A DISSERTATION APPROVED FOR THE
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND POLICY STUDIES

BY THE COMMITTEE CONSISTING OF

Dr. Sarah Guthery, Chair

Dr. Edward Frick

Dr. Benjamin Heddy

Dr. Jenny Sperling

Abstract

The challenge for schools and districts across the country has been tackling issues of equity and inclusion that lead to closing opportunity gaps for students. With this in mind, districts have employed schools to find alternative approaches to discipline. One option districts and school sites have is the use of restorative practices as both proactive and reactive responses to student behaviors. In this study, I use both sensemaking and trust theory to examine educators' attitudes and beliefs of discipline and their perceptions of restorative practices and its implementation in their particular context. This study shows that while there is still work to be done in confronting educator beliefs about punitive discipline, educators do not lack the will to try a different approach to student behavior. As schools and districts move in their work toward restorative environments, they must continue to confront adult mindsets by challenging beliefs and confronting biases through a combination of ongoing professional learning and removing barriers to implementation.

Table of Contents

Introduction.....	1
Literature Review	6
Theoretical Framework.....	27
Research Design and Methods.....	41
Findings.....	55
Discussion.....	65
References.....	88
Appendix A.....	95
Appendix B.....	105
Appendix C.....	108

Introduction

The role of public schools in the United States is to provide quality education to all students regardless of race, gender, ability, religion, sexuality, socioeconomic status, or any other identifying characteristics (Gregory et al., 2016; Mansfield, Fowler, & Rainbolt, 2018). Because of this, districts are tasked with creating structures and systems that allow their site-level leadership to meet the needs of the individual students and teachers they serve. However, the role of a school leader is arguably one of the more complex positions within a school district. School leaders are tasked with creating and sustaining environments where all students can thrive. From providing teachers with working conditions conducive to productivity and student learning, being the lead teacher and ensuring sound instructional practices are in place, to managing and handling student behaviors, school leaders have many hats to wear to create safe and successful learning environments (Perry & Morris, 2014). Leaders today must do all of this in spite of additional mandates, decreased funding, teacher burnout and a dwindling workforce, and an increase in students who have experienced significant childhood trauma (Nguyen, Lam, & Bruno, 2022; Acosta et al., 2019; Bonell et al., 2014; Bonell et al., 2017; Bonell et al., 2018; Green et al., 2019; Warren et al., 2019; Ahmed & Braithwaite, 2019).

As the public has become more aware of systemic issues of oppression and marginalization in society, schools have also been asked to dismantle systems that continue to hold children back from fully participating in their education. This, coupled with the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic which disrupted consistent, in-person learning over the course of two years, and have created immense challenges for schools and their leaders beyond teaching reading, writing, and arithmetic (National Center for Education Statistics, 2021; MissionSquare Research Institute, 2021; Walker, 2021).

Additionally, issues of equity and inclusion have been increasingly talked about in all aspects of society, and education is not exempt from the need to address ways to create and sustain equitable and inclusive cultures. Districts across the United States have begun revamping their strategic plans, hiring directors of diversity and inclusion, and asking school site leaders to reimagine policies and practices to create more equitable environments (Limon & Sezgin-Nartgün, 2020). School discipline practices, specifically exclusionary discipline practices, are just one of the areas that have been identified as problematic, inequitable, and an example of systemic marginalization - specifically for students of color (Jabbari & Johnson, 2023; Acosta et al., 2019; Bonell et al., 2014; Bonell et al., 2017; Bonell et al., 2018; Green et al., 2019; Warren et al., 2019; Ahmed & Braithwaite, 2019).

Exclusionary discipline has often been coined as the “school-to-prison pipeline” which disproportionately impacts students of color and increases inequities in education. The practice of exclusionary discipline and out-of-school suspensions has been extensively researched throughout the last two decades as the push towards equity has taken center stage. During this time, schools across the country have seen a rise in student suspension rates that nearly double the rates of the 1970s. This is partly due to a paradigm shift in behavior and control stemming from the criminal justice system and the push towards mass incarceration (Jabbari & Johnson, 2023; Dhaliwal et al., 2021; Morris, 2016; Perry & Morris 2014; Magg, 2012). While suspensions have risen across the board, disparities in discipline (specifically exclusionary discipline) exist along race, gender, disability status, and class lines. African American males are more likely to experience exclusionary discipline than that of their white peers and students with disabilities serve as the second largest group of students who have experienced high rates

of exclusionary discipline (US Dept. of Ed., 2018; Bottiani, Bradshaw, & Mendelson 2018; McIntosh et al. 2016; Perry & Morris 2014).

The issues of equity and school discipline have also become a central focus for the Office of Civil Rights and a key focus for the reauthorization of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) (US Dept. of Ed., 2018; Gregory & Fergus 2017). Both the Office and Civil Rights and ESSA have a central focus of ensuring all students are served equitably and offered the same opportunities. Because of this focus, schools have started to measure and track disparities in school discipline based on identity factors of race, gender, and socioeconomic class (Dhaliwal et al., 2021; Mansfield, Fowler, & Rainbolt, 2018; Acosta et al., 2019). While extensive research has made clear the negative impacts of exclusionary discipline, there has been little research to provide long term, sustainable options for administrations as they look to find different approaches towards negative student behavior.

While school administrators have been asked to find alternative discipline practices to avoid the negative impacts of exclusionary discipline, they routinely deal with an immense amount of pressure from some educators and other stakeholders to “control” student behavior and support teachers as they work to “manage” classrooms to optimize student learning. The juxtaposition of these two competing ideologies and a lack of resources for alternatives creates additional pressure for administrators to guide educators through paradigm shifts in how they view compliance, accountability, and control (Jabbari & Johnsons, 2023; Robbins, 2021; Morris, 2016; Perry & Morris, 2014). One option that has made its way through education circles is the system of Restorative Justice through the use of Restorative Practices (RPs). Restorative justice is a system centered on restoration, repair, and integration while restorative practices are the strategies used within the system (Bradford & Lesal, 2021; Robbins, 2021; Acosta et al., 2019;

Kehoe, Bourke-Taylor, & Broderick, 2018; McCluskey et al., 2008). Because restorative environments place an emphasis on inclusion rather than exclusion, many educators are tasked with reframing their thinking about behavior and consequences. In most cases, and especially with more problematic behaviors, restorative practices take additional time and resources, making it harder for educators to see the immediate impact of the consequence (Hannigan & Hannigan, 2022).

Because restorative practices and their use has become a hot topic in education circles, research on their effectiveness, implementation challenges, and long-term sustainability is necessary in determining if RPs can offer a viable solution or if RPs are another education fad promising results it cannot deliver. While there is a growing body of research on restorative practices in education environments, there is a lack of research, specifically, about educator mindsets around restorative practices. Most research conducted on restorative practices dives into the long-term impact of RPs on exclusionary discipline numbers, office referrals, and negative student behavior with very little research into how those with “boots on the ground” (i.e. educators and administrators) perceive RPs as a response to student behavior. Further, the small amount of research that does address educator perceptions of restorative practices is limited in that it is 1) pre-COVID-19 pandemic and 2) mostly qualitative in manner meaning it is limited in scope. Research on perceptions of RPs post-COVID-19 pandemic is essential as educators have pointed to increases in negative student behaviors, lack of social/emotional skills, and increased mental health needs as students have returned to “normal” in-person learning environments (National Center for Education Statistics, 2021; MissionSquare Research Institute, 2021; Walker, 2021). Comparing previous research pre-pandemic to post-pandemic research

and expanding that research across states and regions of the country can shed light on how experience and conditions impact educator perception.

As previously stated, RPs require a paradigm shift in how educators think about compliance, control, and accountability versus punishment. The purpose of this study is to gain insight on how educators and school staff make sense of restorative practices as a response to student behaviors.

The research questions this study aims to answer are as follows:

RQ1: What are educators' attitudes and beliefs about discipline, racial discipline gaps, and RP?

RQ2: What are the most frequently reported hindrances to implementing RP?

RQ3: What are the perceived effects of implementing RP?

RQ4: How do educators' attitudes and beliefs predict their reported hindrances to implementing RP? And how do attitudes, beliefs, and reported hindrances explain the perceived effects of RP?

Because sensemaking theory suggests that attitudes and beliefs are predictors in how an individual experiences or enacts a new initiative (Weick, 1995), this study aims to not only understand those attitude and beliefs but see if school setting, racial make-up of the school, socioeconomic status of the school, age, certification pathway, and voluntary training vs. mandatory impacts survey responses in a post-pandemic environment.

Literature Review

Exclusionary Discipline and Discipline Disproportionality

As schools, districts, and the country grapple with the opportunity and achievement gaps among students based on race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status, research has highlighted one of the systemic issues leading to these gaps: exclusionary discipline. Exclusionary discipline is any school-issued consequence that excludes children from the learning environment which can include in-school exclusionary practices (in-school suspension) or out-of-school exclusion (suspension and expulsion) (Dhaliwal et al, 2021; Morris, 2016; Maag, 2012). Additionally, exclusion from the classroom does not just include days of in or out-of-school suspension or expulsion, exclusionary practices also occur as students experience classroom removal through office referrals (Jabbari & Johnson, 2023; Hannigan & Hannigan, 2022; Bradford & Lesal, 2021; Morris, 2016,).

The impact of exclusionary practices on issues of equity are notable, but exclusionary practices are still widely used despite their ineffectiveness on changing student behavior (Lustick, 2021; Lustick et al., 2020; Dhaliwal et al., 2021; Robbins, 2021; Morris, 2016; Kehoe, Bourke-Taylor, & Broderic, 2018; Mansfield, Fowler, & Rainbolt, 2018). Suspensions and other exclusionary practices have been linked to lower academic achievement, decreased student engagement, truancy, risky behaviors, dropping out (or being pushed out), and incarceration (Jabbari & Johnson, 2023; Lustick, 2021; Lustick et al., 2020; Dhaliwal et al., 2021; Robbins, 2021; Morris, 2016; Kehoe, Bourke-Taylor, & Broderic, 2018; Mansfield, Fowler, & Rainbolt, 2018). Exclusionary discipline is also linked to Jim Crow era policies centered around controlling Black populations and making it extraordinarily difficult for Black students to succeed by creating academic and psychological barriers that prevent students from engaging in more rigorous coursework (Jabbari & Johnson, 2023; Robbins, 2021; Irons, 2014). These

exclusionary approaches can be hard to negate as teachers find benefit and reinforcement in removing a student from class. As a student's behavior is perceived to impede the learning environment, a call for removal by the teacher can become an outcome that is negatively reinforced by potentially rewarding the student's desire to leave and the teacher's desire for a more controlled classroom. However, when students are removed from the classroom for unpleasant behavior nothing is done to improve student behavior (Maag, 2012).

Discipline disproportionality and a rise in exclusionary discipline has been a trend since 1975, and schools across the country have seen a rise in student suspension rates with more than 3 million students suspended from school in 2010, double the rates of the 1970s (US Dept. of Ed., 2018; Morris, 2016; Dhaliwal et al., 2021; Robbins, 2021; Perry & Morris, 2014). This is partly due to societal paradigm shifts in policing that pushed mass incarceration as a way of curbing crime (Morris, 2016, Perry & Morris, 2014). Further, increased suspension rates also occurred as a result of zero-tolerance policies that emerged in the 1990s through the Clinton administration's Gun Free Schools Act (1994), and later reinforced following the Columbine shooting in 1999 (Jabbari & Johnson, 2023; Morris, 2016; Robbins, 2021). These zero-tolerance policies as a response to gun violence on school campuses not only set an expectation of suspension and expulsion, they increased and normalized implementation of surveillance instruments and policies in the name of "safety" that have led to students of color being over-surveilled despite being the least likely culprits of school shootings (Morris, 2016; Robbins, 2021).

While suspensions have risen across the board, disparities in discipline (specifically exclusionary discipline) exist along race, gender, and class lines (US Dept. of Ed., 2018). Black students are two to three times more likely to face exclusionary discipline through out-of-school

suspensions or in-school suspensions compared to their peers. This remains true for students with disabilities who are twice as likely to face these same exclusionary practices (Lustick, 2021; Lustick et al., 2020; Dhaliwal et al., 2021; Kehoe, Bourke-Taylor, & Broderic, 2018; Mansfield, Fowler, & Rainbolt, 2018). The research focus of disproportionality has largely been about the disparity between Black males and their white counterparts, however, disproportionality among Black girls is rising at a higher rate than Black males (Morris, 2016). Black girls make up only 20% of female school enrollment, but they make up 54% of female students who receive one or more out-of-school suspensions (Morris, 2016; Patton et al., 2016; US Dept. of Ed., 2016). Between 2002 and 2006, the suspension rates of Black females increased by 5.3% compared to a 1.7% increase for Black males (Morris, 2016; Losen & Skiba, 2010). The rates across southern states are particularly elevated as Black females represent 24% of the female student population, but 75% of the female students receiving out-of-school suspension (Morris, 2016; Smith & Harper, 2015). The disparities alone are alarming and have led to increased scrutiny over equity and inclusion. Issues of equity have garnered attention in the United States since the passage of No Child Left Behind, and equity in regards to student discipline became a central focus for the Office of Civil Rights and a key focus for the reauthorization of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) (US Dept. of Ed., 2018, Gregory & Fergus, 2017).

Restorative Practices in Schools

According to Maag (2012) and Carr (2012), school administrators often use exclusionary approaches because of the attitude of control, compliance, and “get tough on crime” approach that is deeply ingrained in society. This is further evidenced as teachers ask for support, assistance, and consequences when students exhibit undesirable behaviors that lead to a disruption in the classroom learning environment (Robbins, 2021; Morris, 2016). Often this

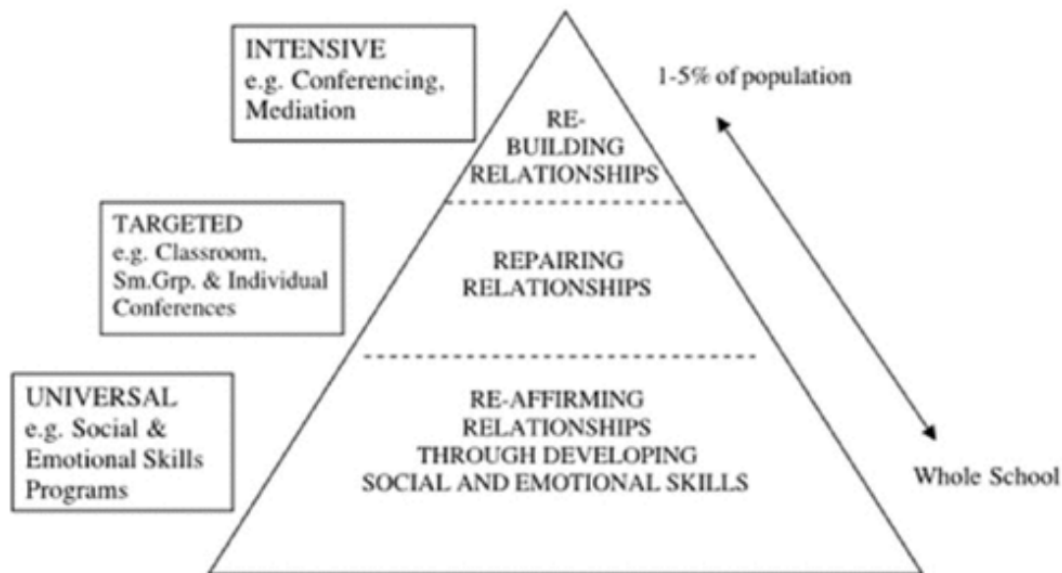
places school leaders in ethical dilemmas by wanting to do what is best for students (finding alternative approaches to discipline), but facing pressure from district leaders to meet the demands of state and federal accountability measures that are attached to funding (Maag, 2012; Carr, 2012) and from teachers who want to feel supported by their site administrators (Robbins, 2021; Morris, 2016). School leaders also struggle with the desire to maintain the perception of an orderly and controlled learning environment even when they believe in restorative approaches and will opt for exclusionary practices if it helps maintain that perception (Lustick, 2021). However, the push to move away from zero tolerance, removal and suspension policies, and towards more preventative practices has gained traction over the last decade as schools, districts, and states look towards preventative measures including restorative practices (RPs), social and emotional learning (SEL), and positive behavior interventions and supports (PBIS) (Lustick, 2021; Robbins, 2021; Lustick et al., 2020; Dhaliwal et al., 2021).

RPs are a school-based version of the criminal justice approach (restorative justice) that work to emphasize healing harm rather than punishing behavior (Kehoe, Bourke-Taylor, & Broderic, 2018; Mansfield, Fowler, & Rainbolt, 2018). According to Bradford and Lesal (2021), the goal of RPs is to “build, maintain, and repair relationships within a school or community (p. 20).” Within the RP framework are a plethora of behavioral support approaches that center on creating mutual respect, open communication, and understanding between all stakeholders in a school community (Winn & Winn, 2021; Robbins, 2021; Bradford & Lesal, 2021; Mansfield, Fowler, & Rainbolt, 2018). The RP framework provides support structured in a way that tiers elements for both preventative and responsive measures. Tier one includes schoolwide components centered on incorporating affective statements, creating a transparent and respectful school culture, and building meaningful relationships with students and their families (Lustick,

2021; Dhaliwal et al., 2021; Bradford & Lesal, 2021; Kehoe, Bourke-Taylor, & Broderic, 2018; Mansfield, Fowler, & Rainbolt, 2018). Tier two is aimed at repairing and healing relationships once an infraction occurs. This tier is targeted and includes a smaller group of individuals. Second tier interventions are both proactive and responsive. Proactive measures take a preselected topic and use smaller community circles to engage in dialogue and seek input. Responsive measures work to repair and heal harm for minor infractions and can happen within a smaller community circle setting as well (Lustick, 2021; Dhaliwal et al., 2021; Kehoe, Bourke-Taylor, & Broderic, 2018; Mansfield, Fowler, & Rainbolt, 2018).

The third tier is the most intensive responsive piece in RPs. This tier should be experienced by the smallest percentage of students, and tier three conferences are only facilitated by faculty members who have been trained in tier three restorative conferences which usually consist of an administrator, counselor, or social worker. The tier three conferences involve the author of harm, those who were harmed, and a supporter of each (teacher, parent, etc.) (Lustick, 2021; Dhaliwal et al., 2021; Bradford & Lesal, 2021; Kehoe, Bourke-Taylor, & Broderic, 2018; Mansfield, Fowler, & Rainbolt, 2018). Figure 1 highlights the three tiers and their purpose.

Figure 1. Hierarchy of restorative responses (Mansfield, Fowler, & Rainbolt, 2018).



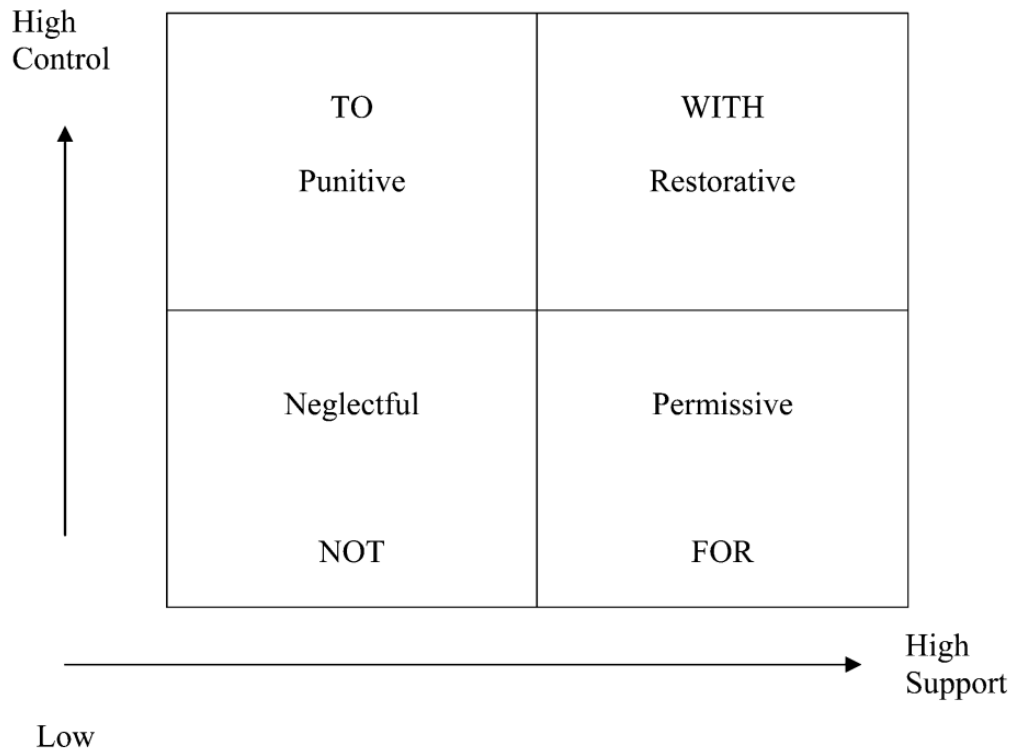
Additionally, the aim of RPs is not to exclude, but rather to include. According to McCluskey et al. (2008), restorative justice

seeks to provide, perhaps for the first time, a much clearer framework for restitution in which offenses can be punished, but within the context where the relationship damaged by the offense is the priority and based on the premise that this damaged relationship can and should be repaired and that the offending individual can and should be reintegrated, not only for the good of that individual but also for that community as a whole (p. 201).

Predicated on the theory that individuals are less likely to change their behavior when authority figures do things to or for them (Mansfield, Fowler, & Rainbolt, 2018), RPs work to create environments where changes in behavior happen with both the individual(s) who committed the harm and those who were victims of harm (McCluskey et al., 2008). In creating environments where changes in behavior happen, there is the added benefit of having more order and less chaos (Bradford & Lesal, 2021; McCluskey et al., 2018). The goal of RPs is to create environments that shift from neglectful, punitive, or permissive, to environments that are restorative. The focus is on working “with” an individual or community to repair harm or create more meaningful connection instead of environments where things happen “to” individuals

within the community (Wachtel & Wachtel, 2019). Figure 2 highlights the importance of involving individuals in decisions which affect them directly to create environments of high control and high support.

Figure 2. The social discipline window (Wachtel, 2005 after Glasser, 1969).



These types of environments that include both the author of the harm and the victim of the harm in the decision making are not the norm in environments centered on control and compliance. (Mansfield, Fowler, & Rainbolt, 2018; Perry & Morris, 2014; McCluskey et al., 2008). This requires a paradigm shift in how the school community engages in conversations around infractions and changes the focus from adversarial (shame and blame) to restorative (accountability and responsibility) (McCluskey et al. 2008). By creating environments where students take responsibility for their actions, RPs work to promote resilience in both the victim and the author of harm (Bradford & Lesal, 2021; Robbins, 2021; Kehoe, Bourke-Taylor, &

Broderic, 2018; McCluskey et al. 2008). Figure 3 highlights the difference between a community with an adversarial focus and one with a restorative focus.

Figure 3. Restorative justice vs. adversarial justice (McCluskey et al., 2008).

Adversarial	Restorative
Focus is in the past	Focus in past, present and future
Preoccupied with blame	Emphasis on resulting harm
Deterrence linked to punishment	Deterrence linked to relationships and personal accountability
‘For punishment and sanctions to be effective (in changing behaviours), they need to be delivered in a context that provides both meaning and relevance’ (O’Connell 2004)	

Philosophical Assumptions of Restorative Practices

RPs require a paradigm shift for the school community as student social engagement takes precedence over social control. The school community becomes solution-focused and requires educators and students to work together to set community goals and create environments of mutual respect (Lustick, 2021; Bradford & Lesal, 2021; Robbins, 2021; Lustick et al., 2020; Dhaliwal et al., 2021; Kehoe, Bourke-Taylor, & Broderick, 2018; Mansfield, Fowler, & Rainbolt, 2018). As a result, there are a number of beliefs, assumptions, and values that must exist for restorative practices to be done with fidelity. More specifically, RP comprises an array of tools school staff, faculty, and students use to “provide meaningful opportunities for social engagement that foster empathy and mutual responsibility for the well-being of individuals and the community” (Kidde, 2017, p. 4).

Relationships matter

Relationships have been shown to help students not only show up to school, but also persist in the challenges of school (Roehlkepartain et al., 2017; Blum, 2005; National Research Council and Institute of Medicine, 2004). School relationships can be identified in three categories:

1. A trusted adult - this can include anyone in the building that has shown interest or care in a student.
2. A healthy connection with a peer
3. Strong investment in school - this is typically the result of extracurricular activities (sports, art, music, etc.) (Roehlkepartain et al., 2017; Blum, 2005; National Research Council and Institute of Medicine, 2004)

Restorative practices are centered in relationships between both students and teachers, but also students and their peers (Acosta et al., 2019). Therefore, RPs assume a foundation of positive relationships as an essential component in building a community that is healthy and focused on preventing harm (Lustick, 2021; Bradford & Lesal, 2021; Robbins, 2021; Lustick et al., 2020; Dhaliwal et al. 2021; Kehoe, Bourke-Taylor, & Broderick, 2018; Mansfield, Fowler, & Rainbolt, 2018; Morris, 2016). This means schools who use RPs as their model to confront student behavior create environments where students are encouraged to develop empathy, actively listen, and seek to understand the perspectives of others (Acosta et al., 2019). These skills are essential in effective community-building circles which are a core restorative practice (Lustick, 2021).

Bradford and Lesal (2021) state:

When done correctly, it is a community-wide movement of accountability, vulnerability, equality, and, most of all, a movement based on the day-in, day-out building of positive and honest relationships that permeate all aspects of life (pp. 19).

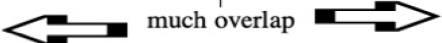
Relationships are the foundation of creating communities focused on connection where restorative practices are not a top-down initiative that is done to students, but where deep, authentic bonds are made that bring people together and who stay connected even after a harm has occurred (Bradford & Lesal, 2021, Wearmouth & Berryman, 2012).

Restorative approaches to school discipline also include the proactive continuum of prevention-intervention (Anyon et al., 2016). Relationships are a vital part of prevention because conflict is also a normal human experience. When relationships are maintained and centered around mutual respect, conflict can help relationships grow stronger and communities grow closer (Bradford & Lesal, 2021; Gottman, 2011).

Relationships within the framework of RPs center around two types of relationship building: restoring and relating. Restoring relationships focus on repairing harm done to relationships (peer-to-peer, student-to-teacher). It is important to note that restoring relationships must also exist amongst the staff who model the ability to manage conflict with their peers and still engage in meaningful relationships centered in mutual respect (Bradford & Lesal, 2021). Different from restoring relationships, relating relationships focus on the development and nurturing of relationships. These are the community building activities and approaches that happen within the school, and do the work of creating community (Hopkins, 2003). It is these relating relationships that allow restoring relationships to flourish, but that also serve as a preventative measure in reducing conflict and harm from the beginning (Bradford & Lesal, 2021). Both types of relationships are key for the type of school community that can engage in RPs, but they have different purposes (Hopkins, 2003). Figure 4 highlights the distinction between the two and the skills necessary for each.

Figure 4. Restoring and Relating Relationships (Hopkins, 2003).

	RESTORING (repairing harm done to relationships and community)	RELATING (developing/nurturing relationships and creating community)
P R O C E S S E S	A) undisputed responsibility: - restorative conferencing - family group conferencing - victim/offender mediation - sentencing circles	including: - Circle Time for staff (for planning, review, support and team building) - Circle Time for students - school council - circle of friends - peer counselling and mentoring - whole school development of relationship management policy (cf. behaviour management, which tends to be student-focused)
	B) disputed responsibility, conflict, mutual recrimination: - mediation - peer mediation - healing circles - no-blame approach to bullying	
	RELATIONSHIPS	
S K I L L S	skills include: - non-violent communication - active non-judgemental listening - conflict transformation - developing empathy and rapport - having difficult conversations - restorative debriefing after critical incidents - understanding and managing anger	skills include: - emotional literacy - developing and maintaining self-esteem - valuing others explicitly - assertiveness - acknowledging and appreciating diversity - constructively challenging oppression and prejudice - connecting across differences



Relationships are a proxy for trust, and trust is necessary for vulnerable restorative conversations that help the person who caused the harm take accountability for the harm they caused (Bradford & Lesal, 2021; Wearmouth & Berryman, 2012; Hopkins, 2003). However, the community must have a paradigm shift in the way harm is viewed and its [harm] impact on the community and its relationships. Bradford and Lesal (2021) state restorative practices require a shift of thinking from:

A rule has been broken, and something must be done about it.

TO

A relationship has been harmed within the community, and we must do something to repair it (p. 18).

This paradigm shift centers relationships as a key component to school community, and shifts away from an environment centered on compliance and control where relationships take a backseat to managing order (Robbins, 2021; Siddle Walker, 2021).

Accountability centered on building trust is key

Restorative practices lean heavily on individuals taking accountability and ownership for the harm they cause the community. Accountability and ownership stem from acknowledgement and acceptance of fault for the harm caused while also considering why the wrong occurred (root causes), so true restitution and reconciliation can take place (Menkel-Meadow, 2007). RPs do not shy away from acknowledging and confronting conflict, and it is not a simple “I’m sorry,” but a hard look at how to move forward, reintegrate, and work to prevent the harm from reoccurring (Morris, 2016; Robbins, 2021; Bradford & Lesal, 2021). Bradford and Lesal (2021) state that restorative practices:

Begins with a concern for the victims and how to meet their needs, for repairing the harm as much as possible...[and] involves a reorientation of how we think about crime and justice...RJ is not about a removal of consequences, permitting misbehavior, or stripping school staff of their safety or their ability to do their jobs. RJ as a philosophy, like every educator, is absolutely in support of (logical) consequences for harmful behavior, absolutely about supporting teachers and administration (and student) safety, and we want nothing more than to promote a healthy learning and work environment” (B &L, pg. 23)

However, accountability and punishment are terms that often become intertwined, but the purpose of accountability in RPs is different than simply providing consequence X for harm Y. Accountability hopes to “harness the commission of wrongful acts to the making of new opportunities for personal, communal, and societal growth through empowerment of both victims and offenders” (Menkel-Meadow, 2007, p. 164). Accountability in this context works to repair and restore so all parties can remain included in the community as valuable members (Bradford & Lesal, 2021).

Communication is essential

RPs require environments where relationships centered on mutual respect are a foundational component to the school culture. Mutual respect can only exist where communication and consistent dialogue are also central to the school culture (Bradford & Lesal, 2021). Communication requires all stakeholder voices, all perspectives, and anyone who has an interest in conflict to be heard. Conflict is a part of the human experience, and where there are humans there is the potential for conflict to arise. Teaching students and staff communication tools to deal with conflict and engage in meaningful dialogue empowers both the victim and the author of the harm while also developing a sense of agency in students and staff (Bradford & Lesal, 2021; Lustick, 2021; Robbins, 2021).

Community is central

Restorative practices assume social capital (trust, mutual understanding, shared values) exists and that communities have a shared responsibility to prevent harm and promote healing (Wachtel, 2016). This means participants in restorative communities are encouraged to work collaboratively to develop solutions addressing the underlying causes of harm and promote positive change (Menkel-Meadow, 2007; Hopkins, 2003). RPs create and sustain culture and create community knowledge that contributes to collective healing (Lopez, Dueñas,& Lopez, 2021).Because community is central to RPs, each student is given equal voice and equal access to community building opportunities (Siddle Walker, 2021).

Healing is possible

At the heart of RPs is not just that healing is possible, but a belief individuals can learn and grow from their experiences, be empowered to create new outcomes, learn new skills, and strengthen their community (Menkel-Meadow, 2007). Therefore, the focus is not centered on

punishing or pushing out the author of harm, rather acknowledging the author of the harm is still a valuable member of the community who needs to make amends (Bradford & Lesal, 2021; Morris, 2016). This acknowledgement moves communities away from a mindset of “you don’t belong here” to a mindset of “what you did was wrong AND we still want you here” (Bradford & Lesal, 2021, p.). For cultures entrenched in RPs, this message of healing is an underlying assumption that must be ingrained in all systems and structures dealing with student behaviors.

Impact of Restorative Practices

RPs and the impact of their use in schools is still a relatively new area of research with very little long-term research available to highlight the impact over time. However, the research does highlight some positive impacts in schools using RPs on behavior referrals, suspensions, and improved school climate and student connectedness.

Exclusionary Discipline and Office Referrals

Studies show participation in RPs or restorative interventions can bring positive results in the ability to manage behavioral problems and school discipline, and create a greater adherence to school expectations (Acosta et al., 2019; Bonell et al., 2014; Bonell et al., 2017; Bonell et al., 2018; Green et al., 2019; Warren et al., 2019; Ahemed & Braithwaite, 2019; Anyon et al., 2016; Gregory et al., 2015; Gregory et al., 2021; Gwathney, 2021; Ingraham et al., 2016; Kehoe et al., 2018). In schools where RPs are practiced, there is less misconduct and a reduction in aggression, violence, and bullying. Some studies even indicate a reduction in online misconduct that leads to issues of cyberbullying (Acosta et al., 2019; Bonell et al., 2014; Bonell et al., 2017; Bonell et al., 2018). Because misconduct reduces, the need for exclusionary discipline or office referrals also reduces and could, over time, have a positive impact on the school-to-prison pipeline (Acosta et al., 2019; Bonell et al., 2014; Bonell et al., 2017; Bonell et al., 2018).

While all of this seems positive, there is not a lot of research that indicates RPs closes equity gaps along race, gender, or disability lines. Lustick (2021) says of RPs, “implicit in this theory is the presumption that staff facilitating restorative practices will treat all students equitably” (p. 742). The schools that did see success in reducing the gap, although not completely eliminating it, did so when implicit bias and issues of disparity - particularly in regards to race - were central in their training and conversations surrounding RPs (Lustick, 2021; Lustick et al., 2020; Mansfield, Fowler, & Rainbolt, 2018).

Conflict Management, and Student Connection

Beyond having a positive impact in exclusionary discipline or office referrals, research indicates there are added benefits in RPs when it comes to conflict management, health-risk behaviors, interpersonal relationships, and overall well-being (Green et al., 2019; Warren et al., 2019; Ahmed & Braithwaite, 2019; Bonell et al., 2014; Bonell et al., 2017; Bonell et al., 2018).

RPs have demonstrated effectiveness in addressing various types of conflicts, including conflicts between students, students and teachers, teachers and parents, and school leaders and teachers (Green et al., 2019; Warren et al., 2019; Ahmed & Braithwaite, 2019; Bonell et al., 2014; Bonell et al., 2017; Bonell et al., 2018). Because RPs teach conflict management and conflict resolution, school staff is better able to resolve, manage, and respond to conflict without using punitive measures and work to curb future conflict or misunderstanding. Additionally, school staff have a better understanding of how to identify the needs of students and provide meaningful actions to resolve conflict and repair relationships (Green et al., 2019, Warren et al., 2019, Ahmed and Braithwaite, 2019, Bonell et al., 2014, Bonell et al., 2017, Bonell et al., 2018).

RPs and restorative interventions also create more positive peer-to-peer connections and adult-to-student connections that lead to students feeling more connected to their peers and the

larger school community. In these environments, students found themselves more engaged in school and more likely to engage in extracurricular school activities that promote community pride. Additionally, academic outcomes improved as a result as did student absenteeism (Green et al., 2019; Warren et al., 2019; Ahmed & Braithwaite, 2019; Bonell et al., 2014, Bonell et al., 2017; Bonell et al., 2018).

School Climate

Literature indicates a restorative approach is a tool used to promote a positive school climate and improve school safety (Acosta et al., 2019; Bonell et al., 2014, Bonell et al., 2017; Bonell et al., 2018; Green et al., 2019; Warren et al., 2019; Ahmed & Braithwaite, 2019). In schools that promote RPs, there is a more positive perception among school staff and students that the school is a more equitable environment, safe, supportive, inclusive, and the overall outlook of the school is more positive for internal and external stakeholders. A study conducted by Gonzalez et al. (2018), found the implementation of RPs promoted an environment centered on co-creation in the decision-making process between all school members which strengthened membership and promoted cultural competence of its membership.

School safety is an important topic as the number of violent events on school campuses have increased, and while there is not a lot of evidence that RPs can prevent violent events like mass shootings, there is evidence that RPs promote safety by creating a school climate of support (Acosta et al., 2019; Bonell et al., 2014; Bonell et al., 2017; Bonell et al., 2018; Green et al., 2019; Warren et al., 2019; Ahemed & Braithwaite, 2019).

Challenges with Implementation of Restorative Practices

Creating a school culture where RPs become the response to student behaviors is not always widely accepted by those who work in schools. Educators' perceptions, beliefs, and

attitudes about discipline disproportionality and the effectiveness of RPs impact the ability to create cultures where RPs are “how we do things” (Dhaliwal et al., 2021). While educators can buy-in to positive relationships with students and families, accepting RPs as a response to negative behavior comes with its own set of challenges.

Initiative Fatigue

Teacher burnout and initiative fatigue can have a real impact on the ability to adjust school goals, projects, or change school culture (Van Maele & Van Houtte, 2015). According to MissionSquare Research Institute (2021), over 50% of public school teachers in K-12 expressed experiencing low morale, exhaustion, additional stress, and burnout (MissionSquare Research Institute, 2021). Additionally, districts across the country are experiencing extreme teacher and staff shortages as they grapple with the changing landscape in student behaviors since the pandemic, the political unrest with education, and the increase in opportunity for teachers outside of the education field (Walker, 2021).

Amid these challenges, school leaders have been asked to improve educational outcomes for students while also dealing with increased student behaviors and increased social emotional needs since returning to full in-person learning following the COVID-19 pandemic (National Center for Education Statistics, 2021). The target for districts is constantly moving and teachers end up on the receiving end of every initiative passed down to meet the changing needs and changing goals of K-12 education (Limon & Sezgin-Nartgün, 2020). This creates what has been coined as the spiral of change fatigue: performance pressure, the need to change more and faster, chaos, and the difficulty of change (Scott-Morgan et al., 2001). This can make it difficult for school leaders to help their teachers view RPs as an extension of current positive practices (PBIS, SEL, etc.,) and not as a new “thing” or new initiative (Lustick, 2021, Acosta et al., 2020).

Moreover, school leaders who can help their staff identify RPs as an extension of current practices that promote positive relationship building have an easier job of getting their staff to view RPs more positively and not as a new program to be implemented top-down (Lustick et al., 2021, Acosta et al., 2020, Bradford and Lesal 2021).

Mindset Shift

Western society and schools in the United States have always operated through the lens of compliance and social control (Gregory & Fergus, 2017 Skibba, 2010). When behaviors do not meet the social norms and expectations of the particular community, it is normal and preferred by a lot of educators for that student to be removed as a distraction to the learning environment (Jabbari & Johnson, 2023; Morris, 2016). In many cases, removal becomes a positive outcome for educators (they no longer have to deal with disruption) and reinforces bad behavior by both students (they didn't want to be in class anyway) and adults (Maag, 2012). Even in environments where educators understand the impact of exclusionary discipline and desire better alternatives, many educators still identify exclusionary discipline as a necessary response to certain behaviors (Lustick, 2021). For low-level behaviors, restorative chats or community building circles are viewed as an acceptable practice, but for higher-level offenses (drugs, fighting, etc.), many educators feel RP interventions do not provide an adequate response (Lustick, 2021; Dhaliwal et al., 2021). Additionally, school leaders who desire to create equitable spaces for students often deal with the paradox of wanting to focus on restorative work while facing the external pressure and individual desire to maintain order and control. Principals are often conscious of their image of maintaining order to both their internal and external stakeholders, and, while often school leaders value or even prefer restorative work, they prioritize maintaining an orderly school environment (Jabbari & Johnson, 2023; Lustick, 2021).

If school leaders work to implement non-punitive measures without addressing school culture, schools become vulnerable to the argument that to increase safety we need more exclusionary practices and more police presence (Lustick, 2021, Bradford and Lesal, 2021, Lustick et al., 2020).

Once educators can move past Western perceptions of punishment, implicit bias plays a large role in making RPs a challenging shift in schools. Research indicates that adult bias plays a significant factor in the disproportionality of both Black boys (Skibba, 2010; Gregory & Fergus, 2017; Dhaliwal et al., 2021) and Black girls (Morris, 2016) experiencing exclusionary discipline and office referrals. School staff are more likely to view behaviors of students of color negatively because they lack cultural competence in the communities they serve (Bradford & Lesal, 2021).

Implicit in RPs, however, is the presumption that staff facilitating RPs will treat students equitably (Lustick, 2021). This requires a sincere effort by school leaders to address implicit biases and create cultural competency, especially in schools predominantly enrolling students of color where staff are more likely to allow biases to impact their perceptions of student behaviors (Morris, 2016; Lustick, 2021; Bradford & Lesal, 2021). Equity, therefore, requires adults to “do the work” of uncovering, confronting, and creating policies to eliminate the negative impact of adult biases (Bradford & Lesal, 2021). Doing this work not only requires educators to address areas of inequity, but to push towards educational freedom.

Freedom is first and foremost a public understanding among the members of a society to protect and defend any opinion that is unpopular or at odds with opinions held by those who actually exercise power and privilege. Freedom is the fragile flower that must constantly be protected— not from those at the bottom of the social order but from the whims and desires of those at the top (Marable, 1997, p. 272).

Further, a mindset or paradigm shift requires educators to consistently resist the temptation to fall into traditional notions of accountability and responses to student behaviors.

RPs is more about adult work and not about pushing students into compliance. As Bradford and Lesal (2021) state, “We cannot shy away from the fact that our job pertaining to discipline is not to extract compliance from students, but rather to create environments where students feel valued and included, and can grow into their best selves, even after making mistakes” (p. 63).

Fidelity and Sustainability

The work of implementation, however, gets harder when it’s time to talk about continuing implementation through sustainability measures and working through adult perceptions. Mansfield, Fowler, and Rainbolt (2018), conducted a study following a school in Virginia that saw significant decreases in equity gaps in regards to behavior referrals and exclusionary discipline practices over a five year period of implementing RPs. The particular school became a model for the larger district, but as success was demonstrated members of the initial implementation team began to get promotions to other positions. As new staff came in, buy-in waned at times. Additionally, funding for the program that had been so vital in paying for staff members to be trained and continue training was no longer available, so the level and quality of training of new staff members was not the same as those who initially encountered RP training.

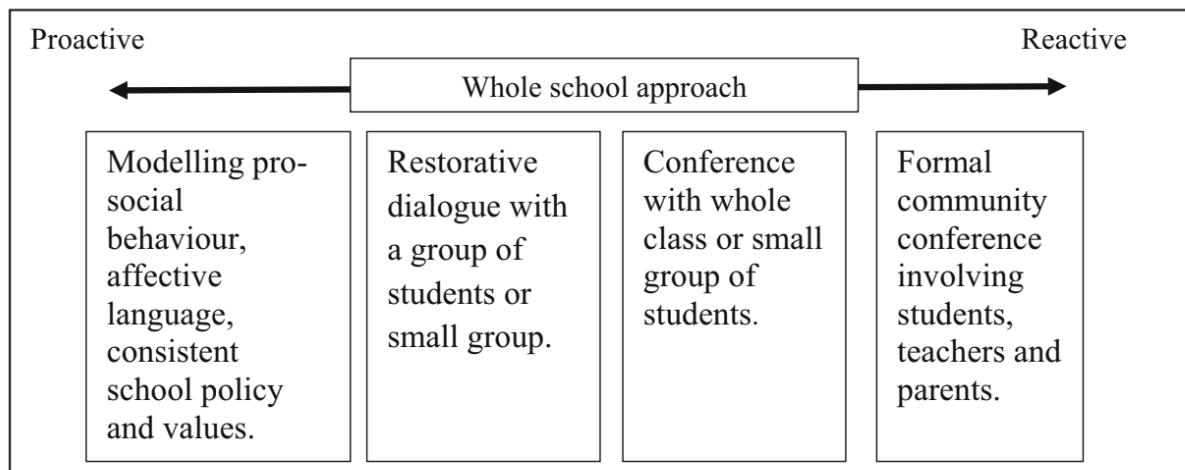
Questions of sustainability of implementation have been raised repeatedly throughout the literature on RPs. Initial implementation of RPs requires a significant amount of staff training most of which involves external experts to support students and staff in the management of RPs (Lustick, 2021; Dhaliwal et al., 2021; Kehoe, Bourke-Taylor, & Broderic, 2018; Mansfield, Fowler, & Rainbolt, 2018; Gregory & Fergus, 2017; Maag, 2012; Carr, 2012). Staff turnover also impacts the ability to sustain practices if the level of training offered to new staff is not as in depth as the initial training staff received from external experts in RPs (Acosta et al., 2019). This

can be increasingly complicated as turnover among school staff is continuing to increase as teachers experience burnout, fatigue, and are resigning in larger numbers than ever before (Walker, 2021).

When staff are adequately trained, the fidelity of implementation can also become a challenge. As previously mentioned, the presumption of equitable treatment of students is an underlying assumption of RPs (Lustick, 2020). Adult perceptions of the impact of RPs have been the focus of some research, although the research is limited. For classroom teachers, research indicates those who choose to adopt a restorative approach and self-select RP professional development are more likely to buy-in to the program (Dhaliwal et al., 2021). However, these same classroom teachers do not believe their colleagues are capable of implementing RPs with fidelity (Dhaliwal et al., 2021). Moreover, research shows that while administrators often buy-in to the concepts and potential impact of RPs, they often struggle with how RPs are perceived by the larger stakeholder community, the impact it has on their image, the perception of “control” and “order,” and teachers’ feelings of support (Lustick, 2021; Dhaliwal et al., 2021).

Asking all staff members to engage in all aspects of RPs could create fidelity issues and do more harm in creating a restorative culture than good, especially as RPs require the ongoing work of disrupting unjust systems and confronting biases (Robbins, 2021; Augustine et al., 2018). According to a two-year study conducted by Acosta et al., (2019), not all teachers will actively implement RPs or do so at the recommended level. A way to combat these issues is to engage all staff in the proactive approaches to RPs, but to only engage certain staff in the reactive approaches that require adults with a predisposition for effective mentoring (Robbins, 2021, Augustine et al., 2018). Figure 5 highlights the difference between proactive and reactive continuum of RPs.

Figure 5. The RP Continuum (Kehoe et al., 2015).



Potential of restorative practices

The issues of equity and inclusion have been increasingly talked about in all aspects of society, and education is not exempt from needing to address ways to create and sustain equitable and inclusive cultures. Districts all across the United States have begun revamping their strategic plans, hiring directors of diversity and inclusion, and asking school site leaders to reimagine policies and practices to create more equitable environments. School discipline practices are just one of the areas that have been identified as problematic, inequitable, and an example of systemic marginalization specifically for students of color. As states continue to adopt Multi-tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) that include a variety of positive initiatives such as PBIS and SEL, restorative practices become a logical extension and another tier of support (McIntosh et al., 2021).

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for this study will be a combination of sensemaking theory and trust theory because this study aims to understand mindsets, but also aims to understand how mindsets impact change initiatives explicitly in education circles. Sensemaking theory will be used to evaluate how educators make sense of initiatives when being presented with the same information, and trust theory will be used to evaluate how individual mindsets impact the trustworthiness of an initiative.

What is Trust in Schools

Creating and sustaining positive school cultures or schools that are centered on transforming student outcomes, providing equity and access, and/or disrupting historical systems of structural and institutional racism requires the creation of strong relational communities that exhibit a tremendous amount of trust and trustworthiness (Morris, 2016). The social construct of trust centers around the belief among members of the school community that they can rely on one another to act with integrity, competence, and good intentions. Trust in schools, or any organization, is an important component to disrupting the status quo or implementing change initiatives to improve outcomes for students and their families (Hanford & Leithwood, 2012; Daly & Finnigan, 2012; Tschanneen-Moran & Hoy, 2000). Trust, as defined by Bryk & Schneider (2002), is a shared interaction based on some equal expectations and that this process can “impact an entire organization in terms of decision-making, social support for innovation, and expanded moral authority” (pg. 22). Fukuyama (1995) argued that social trust is critical for an organization’s well-being and its ability to stay competitive, as high trust environments make systems more innovative. Because schools and the needs of students are constantly changing and

context dependent and specific, the most important kind of social capital is that which allows the creation of new associations and innovative organizational initiatives (Daly & Finnigan, 2012).

Trust is also an important aspect of school life for all stakeholders (teachers, students, families), and is consistently identified as a critical underpinning of well-functioning organizations, and, similarly, school health has been linked to organizational effectiveness and student achievement (Hoy & Sweetland, 2001; Hoy et al., 1991). School health, which is an important end in itself, is also related to other important outcomes for schools such as teacher efficacy, collective efficacy, principal efficacy, and more (Hoy & Sweetland, 2001). Therefore, trust and school health actually work cohesively to create environments where teachers want to work and where interpersonal relationships are trusting and healthy (Hoy & Sweetland, 2001, Daly & Finnigan, 2012). Furthermore, there is a reciprocal aspect to both school health and trust. Healthy school climates can facilitate the development of staff trust, but also faculty trust can promote a healthy school climate (Hoy & Sweetland, 2001; Daly & Finnigan, 2012).

Trust in schools is built through positive relationships between teachers, students, parents, and other members of the school community, and it plays an essential role in promoting academic achievement, social-emotional development, and overall well-being (Hanford and Leithwood, 2012). Foundational to these relationships is the understanding of the dynamic nature of trust. Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2000) found that school principals “must cultivate an atmosphere of trust” (p. 581) to foster collaborative and open communication. Trust is the foundation to which relationships are built, and is an important component to organizational health. According to Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2000), “creating an organizational culture of cooperation rather than competition is likely to have a significant impact on the trusting and

trustworthy behavior of participants” (pg. 573). To further emphasize this point, Bradford and Lesal (2021) suggest,

“...*relationship* is really just a proxy for *trust*...without trust we cannot be speaking about relationships or about being vulnerable and accountable as a community...it is communication *with* trust that makes us successful in a relationship with others” (pg. 27).

As trust is established between members of the community, it tends to build upon itself with the occurrence of more frequent trusting interactions between individuals, leading to more reciprocated relationships and potentially creating a sense of collective trust (Daly & Finnigan, 2012, Forsyth, Adams, and Hoy, 2011; Tschannen-Moran, 2004). It also allows for environments where vulnerability and accountability are used to build, nurture, and maintain positive relationships and relationships are not used to produce shame (Gottman, 2011, Bradford and Lesal, 2021). Furthermore, creating a thriving environment of trust can lead to increased parent engagement (Hoy and Tschannen-Moran, 1999; Daly & Finnigan, 2012). Trust does not just happen through one overt act, but requires ongoing, intentional work while working to build healthy relationships (Bradford & Lesal, 2021)

Fullan (2007) emphasized that building a culture of trust relies on educational leaders to support and value all stakeholders, and trust is one of the most important affective norms characterizing a community (Daly & Finnigan, 2012). Additionally, trust in educational settings is an important component of school improvement (Tschannen-Moran, 2004; Daly & Finnigan, 2012). Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2000) suggest that "trust is pivotal in the effort to improve education. And yet, trust seems ever more difficult to achieve and maintain" (p. 550).

Trust requires more than one party discerning the trustworthiness of the other, and is a critical and interactive process (Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Tschannen-Moran, 2004, Daly & Finnigan, 2012). Trust has a level of interpersonal independence and is embedded within

relationships (Hoy and Tschannen-Moran, 2003). According to Tschannen-Moran and Gareis (2017) trust has five distinct facets:

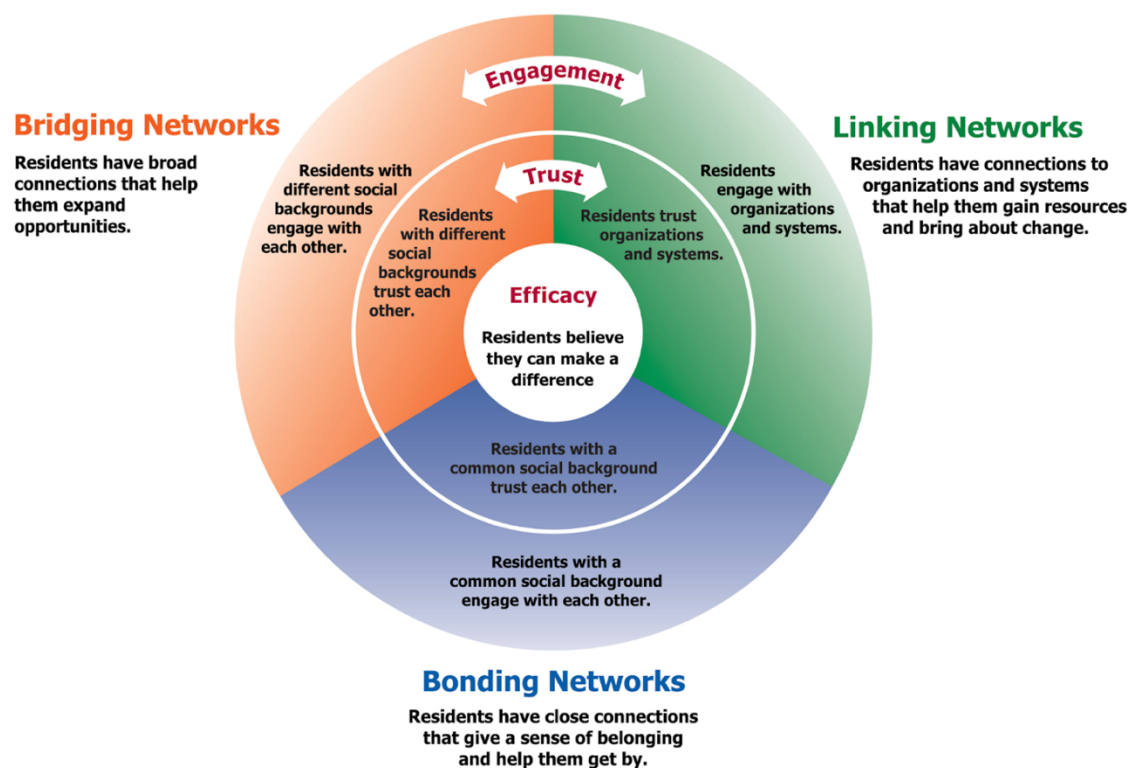
1. *Benevolence*: '[It] is characterized by a generalized spirit of goodwill and a willingness to extend oneself in support of the well-being of the other.'
2. *Honesty*: 'Correspondence between a person's statements and his or her deeds characterizes integrity.'
3. *Openness*: It entails the proper use of information in interpersonal relations. .
4. *Reliability*: '[It] means following through on decisions and promises. It entails a sense of confidence that one can rest assured that another person can be counted on to what is expected on a regular, consistent basis.'
5. *Competence*: '[It] is the ability to perform a task as expected according to appropriate standards.' (pg. 156-161)

Because of this, the social construct of trust is complex and multifaceted, requiring individuals or groups to be vulnerable to others based on their confidence the other party possess these five characteristics (Cummings & Bromiley, 1996; Hoy and Tschannen-Moran, 2003, Daly & Finnigan, 2012).

Furthermore, trust is a key factor in bridging connections and making communities stronger, especially as communities become increasingly diverse (Chazdon & Lott, 2010). As previously mentioned, trust is reciprocal and increases as relationships are developed. Trust also has the ability to create different networks that bridge differences, link organizations and systems, and bond communities (Chazdon & Lott, 2010). Chazdon and Lott (2010) refer to this as community social capital. Figure 6 illustrates the ways trust can help communities run more

effectively and bridge gaps between groups potentially limiting conflict. Image retrieved from: University of Minnesota Extension (<https://extension.umn.edu>).

Figure 6. Community Social Capital (Chazdon & Lott, 2010).



Trust and Transformation

Trust in educational settings is an important component of improvement (Tschannen-Moran, 2004; Daly & Finnigan, 2012). Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2000) suggest that “trust is

pivotal in the effort to improve education” (p. 550). The work of school transformation is difficult as it requires dismantling unjust or inequitable policies and systems (Bradford & Lesal, 2021; Robbins, 2021; Morris, 2016). Schools (and districts) that have histories plagued with systemic injustices, inequitable treatment of students, and poor student outcomes come with their own barriers to success that require additional layers of relationship building and intentionality with establishing trust (Bradford & Lesal, 2021; Robbins, 2021; Morris, 2016; Lustick, 2020; Griffen, 2019). Transforming the culture in any school environment, but especially those that are underperforming, unjust, or inequitable, requires leaders that can navigate the challenges of accountability policy and work to integrate relationships, trust, and the mutual exchange of knowledge (Griffen, 2019).

Trust plays a critical role in the work towards transformational change, and school leaders have the potential to forge socially just schools by focusing on building relational partnerships with all staff, families, and community members (Griffen, 2019) For school leaders to engage in this difficult task, they must first reframe their own thinking about designing a welcoming and inclusive school environment (Price-Mitchell, 2009). Understandably, this can be complicated by institutionalized ways of knowing (“how we’ve always done it”) coupled with a lack of knowledge about the local community (Griffen, 2019) This lack of knowledge could range from a lack of cultural competence to a misjudgment of community perceptions of just (or unjust) systems within the local school, district, or larger institution making it that much more difficult to build the trust necessary to transform school communities (Bradford & Lesal, 2021; Morris, 2016; Robbins, 2021). In order to create mutually empowering and beneficial relationships, school leaders must work to blur the boundaries between the administration, school faculty and staff, and parents, by acknowledging, inviting, and welcoming the strengths each

brings to the partnership (Griffen, 2019; Robbins, 2021; Cabrera & La Nasa, 2001; St. John et al., 1997). Joseph Murphy (2008) who has studied “turn around” schools, emphasizes the importance of strong leaders as agents of change, as the leader sets the tone and can point the moral compass of the building (Robbins, 2021).

Additionally, working to create relational trust with external stakeholders (families and community members) can be a key factor in creating meaningful change (Robbins, 2021; Morris, 2016; Griffen, 2019). This social capital and relational trust is imperative for creating cultures that work to bring everyone to the conversation about equitable and just student outcomes.

Bradford and Lesal (2021) suggest:

Forming those deep, authentic bonds with those around us creates that sense of community buy-in, and the ability to bring folks together to repair harm when it occurs and ultimately to stay connected to healthy institutions (pg. 17).

Effective partnerships with all stakeholders require the creation of bidirectional trust that is intentionally built and sustained over time (Epstein & Sanders, 2009; Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997; Ishimaru, 2014; Price-Mitchell, 2009; Smith, 2008; Griffen, 2019). St. John, Griffith, and Allen-Haynes (1997) found that partnerships between parents and educators can be powerful when they collaborate using their individual strengths to achieve academic success for all students. Yet, without intentionality by the principal, schools in underserved populations struggle developing those partnerships and, sometimes, do more to discourage relationships with external stakeholders than encourage (Robbins, 2021; Morris, 2016; Griffen, 2019).

Trust as a means to address mindsets

Where relationships have been established and trust exists alongside those relationships, leaders have the opportunity to help the school community (all stakeholders) create meaning and are more likely to be innovative and responsive to the organizational goals (Daly & Finnigan,

2012; Daly, 2009; Datnow et al., 2006; Finnigan & Stewart, 2009). As relationships move beyond those that are more transactional in nature to those based in trust and mutual exchange, there is opportunity to engage all stakeholders in improvement efforts and build collective capacity (Daly & Finnigan, 2012; Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Forsyth et al., 2011). Monique Morris (2016), who studies the impact of the criminalization of Black girls in schools, suggests that collective wisdom is a powerful tool for innovation. Morris (2016) states:

We must consider what social innovations might arise when we come together and mobilize our collective wisdom, and thus begin to maximize the power of our input toward social change. Building an adaptive platform for innovation, one that allows us to rethink what we “know” and what we think works, will reduce the criminalization of our children in schools. (pg. 191)

Collective wisdom, as Morris (2016) describes it, can also help school leaders do the work of addressing the root causes of inequitable or unjust practices. However, walking through these conversations requires environments where mutual, bidirectional, trusting relationships allow all parties to engage in vulnerability without shame (Bradford & Lesal, 2021; Gottman, 2011).

Restorative practices (RPs), specifically, require adults to wrestle with historical injustices and discipline practices that mimic Jim Crow era policies that have resulted in the school-to-prison pipeline (Robbins, 2021; Gregory & Fergus, 2017; Morris, 2016). Doing so also requires schools to develop cultural competency that allows for the strengthening of relationships and connection (Bradford & Lesal, 2021). Gloria Ladson-Billings (2002) defines cultural competence as:

...the ability of students to grow in understanding and respect for their culture of origin. Rather than experiencing the alienating effects of education where school-based learning detaches from their home culture, cultural competence is a way for students to be bicultural and facile in the ability to move between school and home cultures (pg. 111)

Cultural competency can only be created in environments where adult mindsets and implicit bias are continually addressed and staff are encouraged on a regular basis to “do the work” of addressing their biases. Bradford and Lesal (2021) suggest:

A white teacher walking into a culturally diverse classroom believing “I have no bias” is actually more dangerous than walking in as a teacher who has identified an implicit bias and is careful to be aware of their actions and decisions in the classroom to ensure equity (pg. 142)

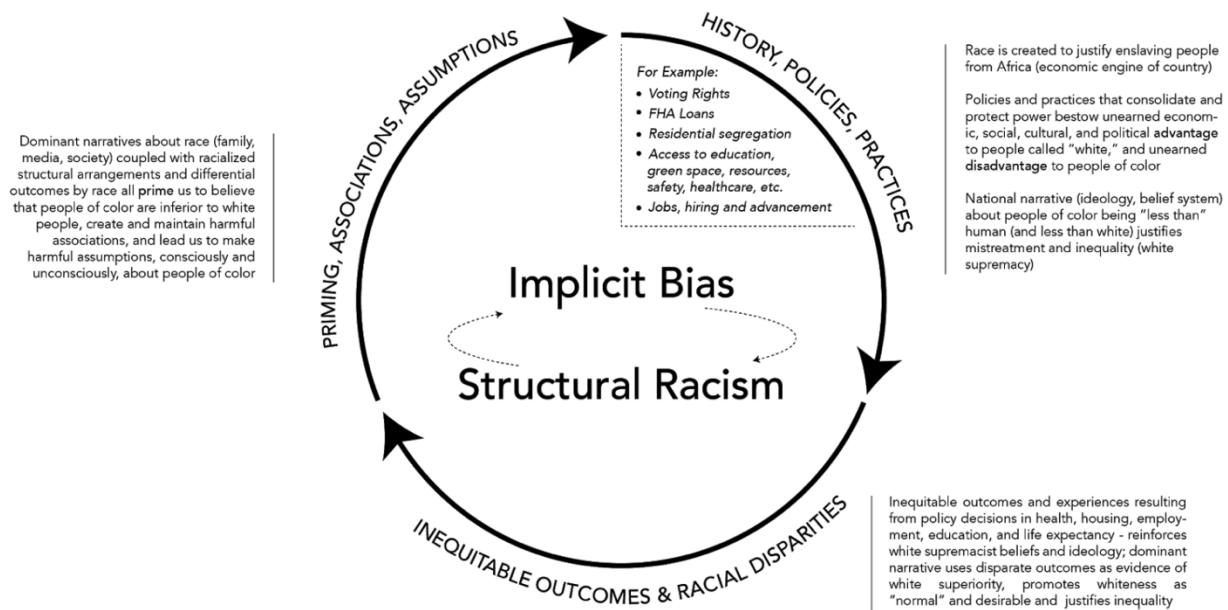
There are countless ways biases cause harm within a school community and lead to institutional or structural racism that have created and sustained the well-documented disproportionality of student discipline and academic achievement gaps. Table 1 provides common definitions for racism, structural and institutional racism, implicit bias, and discrimination.

Table 1. Definitions as defined by Bradford & Lesal (2021, pg. 133).

<i>Racism</i>	the belief that members of each race possess characteristics that distinguish it as inferior or superior to other races.
<i>Structural racism</i>	society has been structured in a way that excludes substantial numbers of people of color from taking part in social institutions equally.
<i>Institutional racism</i>	systems of inequality based on race that occur within institutions such as public government bodies and private business corporations.
<i>Implicit bias</i>	attitudes or stereotypes that affect our understanding, actions, and decisions in an unconscious manner.
<i>Discrimination</i>	the use of power positions to disempower those different from oneself

Implicit bias, unaddressed, can sustain cycles of structural racism as policies, practices, and procedures are created or upheld in school environments (Osta & Vasquez, 2022). Figure 7 highlights this narrative.

Figure 7. Cycle of Implicit Bias and Structural Racism (Osta & Vasquez, 2022, p. 5).



Working to address individual and collective perceptions, attitudes, and beliefs that shape our biases (both implicit and explicit), can prove to be difficult and uncomfortable work. However, the work is not impossible where trustworthiness exists, and where all members of a school community feel safe enough to engage in and risk vulnerability (Rao, Shayo, & Kakupa, 2021; Bradford & Lesal, 2021; Gottman, 2011). It is the school leader's job to model and engage with this work as they set the vision for the school community (Morris, 2016; Robbins, 2021; Bradford & Lesal, 2021; Griffen, 2019) Further, a good leader will also look for ways to celebrate and increase the diversity in staff in order to make increasingly authentic connections with the community they serve (Bradford & Lesal, 2021).

Sensemaking

Because restorative justice in schools requires an entire paradigm shift, understanding adult mindsets, attitudes, beliefs, and perceptions about a particular paradigm can provide

valuable insight into the complexities of systemic change and the willingness of teachers to implement new policies (Bradford & Lesal, 2021). Understanding how educators make sense of restorative practices or restorative justice can be important in evaluating how educators implement policies in different ways. This is especially true when a particular policy does not have a prescribed set of rules, procedures, or outcomes, and relies on educators to access prior knowledge or experience.

Sensemaking theory (Weick, 1995) suggests the ways in which an organization or its members interpret a situation has an impact on behavior which can lead to strategic change. Weick's (1995) model of sensemaking defines sensemaking as (1) a conversational process (2) highly collaborative (3) effective for organizational growth and planning (4) requiring short term and long-term engagement (4) is highly dependent on a participant's perspective and interpretation (Turner et al., 2023). Maitlis et al. (2012) define sensemaking as "...beginning when an event causes a previously coherent representation to break down such that new cues cannot be integrated into it...necessitating the construction of a new account" (pg. 224). Therefore, sensemaking is concerned with the "retrospective development of plausible accounts that rationalize what has occurred and bring order to disorder" (Matis et al., 224). Thus, sensemaking in a school building, like other organizations, is both a social and constructed process that can happen both formally and informally. (Coburn, 2005; Spillane et al., 2006). Spillane et al. (2006) explains:

An individual's prior knowledge and experience, including tacitly held expectations and beliefs about how the world works, serve as a lens influencing what the individual notices in the environment and how the stimuli that are noticed are processed, encoded, organized and subsequently interpreted (p. 49).

Because restorative systems in education are a newer paradigm, many educators currently working in school buildings experienced (through their own individual schooling and/or as

educators in these systems) educational environments centered on control and compliance. This shapes individual educators' beliefs about appropriate student behaviors and the appropriate administrative response to those student behaviors (Maag, 2012; Carr, 2012). Additionally, cultural expectations and norms of both the individual teacher and the individual student, and student/teacher interactions can create additional opportunities to create meaning that impact how an educator makes sense of student discipline or behavior (Coburn, 2005).

An added layer of complexity in understanding how educators make sense of student behaviors and discipline is the additional social emotional needs of students (and adults) coming off years of a global pandemic that created prolonged isolation, decreased opportunities for socialization, and has led to educational environments that look different than pre-pandemic environments (Schwartz et al., 2021). These new dynamics and different needs of both students and educators and has resulted in a reported increase in negative student behaviors (National Center for Education Statistics, 2022, Schwartz et al., 2021). The nuanced ways educators experienced the COVID-19 pandemic, and their own emotional well-being could impact not only their perceptions of restorative practices, but their willingness to enact policy changes in environments where stress is high.

Weick (1995) explains, “To talk about sensemaking is to talk about reality as an ongoing accomplishment that takes form when people make retrospective sense of the situations in which they find themselves and their creations” (p. 15). Knowing individuals perceive things differently based on their individual experiences and expertise, how, then, does a school leader navigate change initiatives that begin and end with the mindset of adults in the building? RPs do not begin with a narrative on how to change students but are centered in a narrative on how to change educators and create an environment where students can grow and flourish (Bradford & Lesal,

2021). This requires schools to engage in adult learning and to help adults work through the process of critical reflection and challenge their assumptions.

Attitudes, Perceptions, and Beliefs

Because sensemaking theory works to understand processes people go through to make sense of new information, it is important to understand how the constructs of perception, attitude, and belief are defined. Perception can be described as the process an individual goes through to organize and interpret information in order to give meaning to their environment (Jussim, 2012; Ingold, 2000; Rookes & Willson, 2000). Rookes and Willson (2000) define perception as “...a process which involves the recognition and interpretation of stimuli which register on our senses...In other words, perception relates to how we make sense of our environment...” (pp. 1-2).

Attitude, as defined by Pickens (2005), is “...a mindset or a tendency to act in a particular way due to both an individual’s experience and temperament” (p. 44). In other words, attitude indicates how an individual behaves, thinks, and feels about a particular topic. There are three components of attitude: an affect (feeling), cognition (thought or belief), and behavior (action) (Pickens, 2005; Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975).

For the sake of this study, the constructs of perceptions, attitudes and beliefs deal specifically with how individuals evaluate an initiative (attitudes and beliefs about discipline and RPs) and how that evaluation impacts their feelings towards the initiative (perceived hindrances and perceived effects).

Research Design and Methods

This study replicated a previous quantitative study conducted out of the University of Southern California in partnership with the California Department of Education (Dhaliwal et al., 2021). The previous study was given to a group of educators who had participated in the California Office of Education's RP training in the Spring of 2018 to the Spring of 2019 (Dhaliwal et al., 2021). The participants of this RP training attended voluntarily and were invited to take a survey at the end of their training. While the previous study offered valuable information, the purpose of this study was to expand its use to educators across the United States whose school sites and districts have adopted RPs as a response to student behaviors. The participants in this study may or may not have opted-in to RP training, may or may not have been formally trained in RPs, or may have been further removed from their initial RP training. These factors coupled with the survey being taken post-COVID 19 can help provide additional insight into how educators make sense of new initiatives and expand on the current body of research around sensemaking and RPs.

Survey Construct

The survey used in this study was created for a study conducted by Dhaliwal et al. (2021) with researchers out of the University of Southern California and in partnership with the California Department of Education. This survey was broken down into the following constructs: attitudes and beliefs, hindrances, and effects. Within these constructs, survey items were grouped into indices that were used to Appendix 1 illustrates the survey constructs, indices, and the mean and standard deviation of each index.

Attitudes and Beliefs

The survey construct examining attitudes and beliefs focuses on measuring respondents' attitudes and beliefs as it relates to punitive discipline, racial gaps in discipline, and RPs. Within this construct, survey items were grouped to create a total of 7 indices related to attitudes and beliefs.

A punitive discipline index is created by examining attitudes and beliefs through four survey items focused on attitudes and beliefs about zero tolerance policies, suspensions, and student behavior measured on a 4-point scale. The scale ranges from a participant selecting they 1- "not at all" agree with the statement, 2- "to a small extent" agree with the statement, 3- "to a moderate extent" agree with the statement, or 4- they agree with the statement "to a great extent" (Dhaliwal et al., 2021).

Also measured is the respondent's belief in how much of a priority their district places on closing racial discipline gaps. This is measured on a 5-point scale with 1 indicating it is "not a priority" and 5 indicating it is "essential." This survey item encompassed the Racial Discipline Priority index.

Two more indices examined the respondents' individual understanding of RPs and their perception of their colleagues' understanding of RPs. These items were measured on a 4-point scale with 1 being that they or their colleagues' clear understanding of RPs could be described as "to a small extent" and 4 being "to a great extent."

Respondents are asked the extent to which they believe RPs are critical for improving student behavior and student learning which created the RP Critical Index. These items were measured on a 4-point scale with 1 being RPs were critical to improving student learning and behavior to a "to a small extent" and 4 being RPs created improvement "to a great extent."

The final survey items focus on understanding respondents' attitudes and beliefs on factors respondents believe are responsible for creating discipline gaps. These items are grouped as school-based factors (implicit bias, teacher/administrator discretion) and non-school-based (student behavior, parenting, neighborhood, and income) and averaged. The items are measured on a 4-point scale ranging from 1 "not at all what I believe" to 4 "very true of what I believe" (Dhaliwal et al., 2021). All survey items are listed in Appendix I.

While these responses were individually examined to help answer RQ1, they were also used to help predict hindrances to RP implementation and effects of RP implementation through regression analysis for RQ 4.

Hindrances

Respondents were also asked to report their perceived hindrances to implementation of RPs at their respective sites. These hindrances were grouped into indices that represent common implementation challenges which include: (1) lack of will to implement, (2) lack of time, (3) lack of professional development, (4) lack of capacity due to other responsibilities, (5) lack of cohesion with other policies, (6) lack of leadership and support from school, district, or parents and community. These hindrances were created based on literature regarding discipline reform and policy implementation (Dhaliwal et al., 2021; Anyon, 2016; Leithwood et al., 2006). Indices are created by averaging responses on a 4-point scale with 1 indicating a respondent believes the item is "not a hindrance" and 4 indicating the item is "a great hindrance." These indices are used in regression analysis which is described in the analysis section.

Effects

Last, the survey provides an examination of the perceived effects of implementing RPs. Survey items used by Dhaliwal et al. (2021) were created in partnership with the COE based on

the goals of RP implementation. However, it is important to note these same survey items fall in line with what the literature says are the effects of RP implementation (Lustick, 2021; Lustick et al., 2020; Costello, Wachtel & Wachtel, 2019; Dhaliwal et al., 2021; Robbins, 2021; Morris, 2016; Kehoe, Bourke-Taylor, & Broderic, 2018; Mansfield, Fowler, & Rainbolt, 2018). These 14 survey items are grouped by the types of effects they describe: (1) sense of community among teachers, students, and staff, (2) safety, (3), student misbehavior and use of suspensions/expulsions, (4) student, teacher, and/or staff voice, (5) student and staff absenteeism. Each of these indices was averaged and measured on a 4-point scale with 1 indicating the respondent “not at all” agrees with the statement and 4 indicating the respondent agrees with the statement “to a great extent” (Dhaliwal et al., 2021). A scale of the degree of perceived effect of RPs was created using the average of responses across all 14 items for the purpose of running regression analysis.

Data Collection

The data collection process for this study began by networking with colleagues I met through previous professional learning activities around restorative practices. These colleagues assisted in identifying points of contact at school sites and districts. Through these connections, I had points of contact in Virginia Beach Public Schools (VA), St. Louis Public Schools (MO), Louisville Public Schools (KY), and Denver Public Schools (CO). These contacts also connected me to a few other districts who utilize restorative practices: New York City Public Schools (NY), Bethlehem Public Schools (PA), Tulsa Public Schools (OK), and Portland Public Schools (OR). I then used publicly available email lists to recruit participants for the survey.

Surveys were sent to individuals over the course of 6 weeks depending on each of the districts’ school calendars and Spring testing schedules. In working with my contacts, I also

gained insight into the time of day and day of the week that would most likely elicit the most response and worked to avoid sending recruitment emails close to a scheduled break (See Appendix B for recruitment emails). Most of the emails were sent on Sunday late afternoon/evenings or first thing in the morning before the workday started. Email recruitment sent on Sunday evening yielded the best results.

Over the course of 6 weeks, approximately 15, 279 recruitment emails were sent to participants across the districts previously mentioned. Of the 15, 279, roughly 10% were kicked back due to an incorrect or inactive address. There was also an attempt to recruit responses on social media through educator pages on Facebook which could account for some of the outlying zip codes in responses. The total number of responses was 408 meaning roughly 2.6% of those solicited for response participated in responding. The number is probably slightly smaller due to the fact that the survey was shared on social media which could account for some of the 408 survey responses. Of the 408 responses, 73% of participants responded to every survey item and the other 27% responded partially. The original study completed by Dhaliwal et al., (2021) had 363 with a 72% response rate to all survey items and was given following completion of optional restorative practices training. The goal for this study was to meet or exceed the number of survey respondents even as survey participation has declined significantly since 2020 (Kreiger et al., 2023).

Additionally, there were efforts made to find rural districts participating in restorative practices through networking platforms like the National Association of Secondary School Principals and the National Education Association. However, those efforts did not yield positive results. Participants for the study were entered into a drawing for gift cards and ten \$20 visa gift cards were given to participants who were selected from this drawing.

Data Cleaning

Because I used a text box response, some of the responses had to first be cleaned before they could be analyzed. These survey items included:

1. Age
2. Years of experience in education
3. Estimate the percentage of non-white students in your school
4. Estimate the percentage of students who qualify for free and reduced lunch

These questions were open-ended to create a more accurate and inclusive demographic understanding of survey responses. Because these were open-ended, it was necessary to do data cleaning prior to running descriptive statistics or frequencies. Data cleaning was done by recoding the variables into the same variables, essentially creating a copy, and then removing words or symbols that would impact analysis.

Age

In three cases, participants entered the term “years” after their age, so “years” was deleted. One participant selected “45-55,” and one participant wrote “over 40.” Both of these responses were deleted before analysis, so age was not assumed, and data skewed. One participant typed “I teach K-5 art,” and that response was deleted because it was not relevant to the survey question.

Years of experience

In six cases, participants entered the term “years” after the number of years of experience in education. The term “years” was deleted. One participant selected “doctorate” for years of experience. Because we had a significant number of responses, this was deleted in the data clean-up so as to not assume a number of years of experience and skew any data. One participant selected “20+ since 1993!” The math was added to 31 years of experience. Five participants

began with “this is my ____ year.” This was also cleaned up to allow for tests to be run. One participant indicated they had only 6 years as a certified teacher, but 20 years when combining their non-certified education experience. Because the survey allowed all school staff to participate, the higher number “20” was selected.

Estimate the percent of non-white students

The majority of respondents included % following the number entered. Removing % was necessary prior to analysis. One participant picked a range of “20-30,” and one participant wrote “a little over 50%.” Because the question asked for an estimate, the median value of “25%” was selected for the “20-30” range, and “50%” was selected for the “little over 50%” response. These estimates would still provide a close estimate of non-white students at the respondent’s school site.

Estimate percent of students eligible for free and reduced lunch

Eight participants put some variation of “all” or “universal” or “schoolwide,” so these were changed to 100%. One participant stated “I have no idea. I cannot even guess.” This data was removed as to not skew or assume. One participant stated “IDK” and that data was excluded. A range of “60-80” percent was selected by one participant. The median 70% was selected in this case. “About half” was selected by one participant, so the number 50 was used for that respondent. One participant selected “not sure, but very low.” There was no value entered for this participant as to not assume or skew results. One participant selected “N/A” and the value of “0” was entered.

Survey Sample

Participants for the survey were school site educators from across the country. As mentioned above, participants were sought from the following school districts: Bethlehem Public

Schools (PA), Denver Public Schools (CO), Louisville Public Schools (KY), New York City Public Schools (NY), Portland Public Schools (OR), St. Louis Public Schools (MO), Tulsa Public Schools (OK), and Virginia Beach Public Schools (VA). Additionally, there were some respondents from zip codes outside of those areas. By default, these respondents came through online recruitment on social media platforms. In this study, the primary respondents were classroom teachers (71%), followed by other school staff (16%), site administrators (7%), and school counselors (5%). While the Dhaliwal et al. (2021) survey included district administrators, this study sample included only staff working in a school site on a daily basis. Therefore, the survey was not sent to district administrators. In the study sample, there are significant differences in the roles of the respondents from the Dhaliwal et al. (2021) student to this study's sample. The largest difference is that of classroom teachers where 48% of the previous study were classroom teachers compared to 71% of this study's sample. Table 2 illustrates the comparison breakdown of participants' role in this study and in the Dhaliwal et al. (2021) study.

Table 2.

Role of respondent in Dhaliwal et al. (2021) study and current study

Participant Role	Dhaliwal et. al Study	Sample
Classroom Teacher	48%	71%
School Counselor	16%	5%
School Administrator	16%	7%
Other Staff	7%	16%
District Administrator	7%	N/A

Additional demographic data was collected and compared to the Dhaliwal et al. (2021) study. In this sample, the average years of experience for participants is 15.67 which was about two years fewer than the previous study. The majority of the respondents identify as female

(70.30%), compared to male (26%), non-binary (2.4%), and self-identification (1%). Non-binary and self-identification were not options in the previous study, so there is not a comparison for these two gender identifications. White respondents accounted for 72% of survey respondents, compared to only 62% in the previous study, with non-white respondents making up 28%. Table 3 illustrates the comparison from the Dhaliwal et al. (2021) study and the sample from this study.

Table 3.

Characteristics of Dhaliwal et al. (2021) and study sample. Note: some percentages may not add up to 100 due to missing responses.

Characteristics	Dhaliwal et. al Study	Sample
Average Years of Experience	17.6	15.67
% Female	75%	70.30%
% Male	23%	26%
% Non-binary	N/A	2.40%
% Self-ID	N/A	1%
% White	62%	72%
% Non-White	23%	28%
% American Indian	1%	<1%
% Asian	8%	4%
% Filipino/Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	<1%	<1%
% Black or African American	2%	13%
% Mixed	12%	3%
% Hispanic	N/A	6%

Table 2 and Table 3 show the comparison between Dhaliwal et al. (2021) study sample and the current study sample. Additional demographic information was also collected for this study as an attempt to expand the scope and understanding of the previous study. The average

age of participants was 44 years old ($m=44.51$). Participants were asked their school setting (urban, suburban, or rural), and the grades their school site served. The responses to grades served were grouped into grade bands (elementary, middle, and high school). As indicated previously, there were no respondents who selected “rural.” Table 4 highlights the percent of respondents in each of these areas.

Table 4.

Percent of respondents based on school setting and grade band. Note: some percentages may not add to 100 because of missing responses.

School Setting	Percent of Respondents
Urban	62.30%
Suburban	27.20%
Rural	N/A
Grade-level	Percent of Respondents
Elementary (PK-5)	24.50%
Middle (6-8)	22.50%
High School (9-12)	48.30%

The next variable added to this survey is the education pathway for the participants. Participants were asked if their certification pathway could be described as traditional (teacher education program), alternative (certified through a non-education degree pathway), emergency (provisional certification), or other pathway (could self-ID). “Other pathway” was added because of differing laws in states around teacher certification that could be different than the other three listed. Because all school staff could participate in the survey, participants were also given the option to select “I am not a certified staff member.” Table 5 highlights the frequencies of respondents’ certification pathway.

Table 5.

Certification Pathways of Respondents. Note: some percentages may not add to 100 because of missing responses.

Certification Pathway	Percent of Respondents
Traditional	65.20%
Alternative	16.20%
Emergency	1.50%
Non-certified staff	5.90%
Other - self-ID pathway	1.00%

Last, participants were asked about their experience with RP training. In the Dhaliwal et al. (2021) study, participants were sent the survey after they participated in optional RP training. This training was held in 2019 with the survey given at the completion of the 2019 training. Because the survey for this study was conducted using schools who publicized RPs as their approach to handling student behavior and not given after an RP training, it is important to understand how many of the participants had 1) received training and 2) voluntarily received training like the participants in the previous study. Table 6 highlights the percent of respondents who have received training and whether that training was voluntary, mandatory, or other. Respondents who selected “other” were able to type responses. Of the 67 respondents who selected “other,” 19 respondents said their district has never offered RP training, 12 respondents said they had attended “both voluntary and mandatory,” 6 respondents said it was part of a graduate program, and the rest did not provide a response.

Table 6.

Respondents’ experiences with RP training. Note: some percentages may not add to 100 because of missing responses.

RP Training	Percent of Respondents
Yes	62.70%
No	26.20%
Training was...	Percent of Respondents
Mandatory	26.70%
Optional	32.40%
Other - self-ID	16.40%

Data Analysis

A combination of descriptive statistics and regression analysis were used to explore the four research questions. The survey, as mentioned above, was focused on three main constructs: attitudes and beliefs, hindrances to implementation, and effects of RPs. The first tests run in SPSS focused on descriptive statistics for items within each of the three constructs. Descriptive statistics provided the mean, standard deviation, and alpha for all of the survey items within those constructs which can be found in Appendix I. These items were then compared to the descriptives provided by the previous study (Dhaliwal et al., 2021).

OLS regression analysis was used to answer RQ4 which is focused on predictive relationships. There are two outcome variables: hindrances to implementation, and perceived effects of RPs. The first regression analysis focused on how attitudes and beliefs about discipline and RPs predict common hindrances to implementation. The following formula was used in the regression model:

$$Y_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 PunitiveDisIndex_i + \beta_2 RPUnderstanding_i + \beta_3 SchlRPUnderstanding_i + \beta_4 RpCritIndex_i + \beta_5 RacialDisPriority_i + \beta_6 SchlFactorsIndex_i + \beta_7 NonSchlFactorsIndex_i + \epsilon_i$$

In this formula, Y is the degree of reported hindrances by respondent i . This outcome is regressed based on the constructs described in the previous sections. The *PunitiveDisIndex_i* represents the extent of respondent i 's beliefs in punitive discipline such as zero tolerance and suspension. Survey items around the respondent's own understanding of RP, *RPUnderstanding_i*, and the level of RP understanding the respondent believed their colleagues at school demonstrate, *SchlRPUnderstanding_i*. The regression model also includes an index for respondent i 's belief RP practices were critical for improving student behavior and/or student learning, *RpCritIndex_i*. Last, predictors were added that related to the racial discipline gap. These predictors include: *RacialDisPriority_i* which indicated respondent i 's belief of the priority of the district to close racial gaps; *SchlFactorsIndex_i* which is an index of the extent to which respondent i believes school-based factors play a role in racial discipline gaps; *NonSchlFactorsIndex_i* which is an index of the extent respondent i believes non-school-based factors play a role in the racial discipline gap. Each of these indices are entered jointly to the model to determine if any variation in outcomes is explained by measures of attitudes and beliefs. The coefficient for each of the attitude and beliefs items explain how each relates to the extent of reported hindrances after controlling for the other predictors.

Additionally, regression analysis is used to examine how both hindrances and attitudes and beliefs about discipline and RPs predict the perceived effects of RPs. The equation used for this regression analysis is as follows:

$$Y_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 PunitiveDisIndex_i + \beta_2 RPUnderstanding_i + \beta_3 SchlRPUnderstanding_i + \beta_4 RpCritIndex_i + \beta_5 RacialDisPriority_i + \beta_6 SchlFactorsIndex_i + \beta_7 NonSchlFactorsIndex_i + \beta_8 HindranceIndex_i + \epsilon_i$$

In this equation, Y is the degree of perceived effects of RP by respondent *i*. The same attitude and beliefs variables are used in this regression model as in the first model. This model, however, added an index of hindrances in implementing RPs for respondent *i*, *HindranceIndex*.

Findings

The findings in the Dhaliwal et al. (2021) study provided evidence on how attitudes and beliefs, hindrances, and effects of RPs can influence each other. As previously mentioned in this section, the survey items were grouped to create indices based on the three big constructs: attitudes and beliefs, hindrances to implementation, and effects of RPs. This study expands on those initial findings by including educators from multiple districts across different regions of the United States, and by allowing all educators to participate whether they had opted-in to RP training or not. This study contains two models with two outcome variables, but reported findings are displayed alongside the findings from the previous study (Dhaliwal et al., 2021) for comparison.

Attitudes and Beliefs about Discipline, Racial Discipline, Gaps, and RP

The first set of results provides insight into educators' attitudes and beliefs about discipline. The survey items asked questions related to their attitudes and beliefs around discipline practices, racial gaps, and RPs. The findings for this study sample are displayed with a comparison to the previous study sample (Dhaliwal et al., 2021) in Table 7.

Table 7.

Educator attitudes and beliefs about discipline and RPs

Attitudes/beliefs about discipline									
	Great Extent (Dhalival)	Great Extent (Sample)	Moderate Extent (Dhalival)	Moderate Extent (Sample)	Small Extent (Dhalival)	Small Extent (Sample)	Not at all (Dhalival)	Not at all (Sample)	
Contribution of Zero Tolerance to maintaining order at school	12.80%	9.09%	16.44%	31.96%	27.52%	29.91%	43.96%	29.03%	
Zero tolerance sends a clear message to disruptive students about appropriate behaviors in school	13.13%	14.03%	15.82%	32.16%	32.32%	31.87%	38.72%	21.92%	
Suspension is necessary tool for maintaining school order	6.71%	19.83%	23.83%	33.23%	46.98%	37.02%	22.48%	9.91%	
Schools cannot afford to tolerate students who disrupt the learning environment	12.75%	30.61%	25.50%	30.90%	31.88%	23.32%	29.87%	15.16%	
	Essential (Dhalival)	Essential (Sample)	High Priority (Dhalival)	High Priority (Sample)	Medium Priority (Dhalival)	Medium Priority (Sample)	Low Priority (Dhalival)	Low Priority (Sample)	Not a Priority (Sample)
Priority to close racial gaps in suspension rates in district	26.22%	25.86%	26.92%	32.49%	32.17%	26.50%	10.49%	9.19%	5.99%
Factors responsible for racial gaps in discipline									
	Very True (Dhalival)	Very True (Sample)	True (Dhalival)	True (Sample)	Slightly True (Dhalival)	Slightly True (Sample)	Not True (Dhalival)	Not True (Sample)	
Student behavior	14.58%	24.30%	27.08%	36.76%	43.05%	26.47%	15.28%	12.46%	
Parenting	17.83%	23.29%	22.03%	28.88%	46.86%	31.99%	13.29%	15.84%	
Neighborhood environments	19.51%	18.94%	28.22%	40.68%	44.60%	30.75%	7.67%	9.62%	
Income levels	12.89%	17.30%	18.82%	29.53%	49.13%	34.28%	19.16%	18.87%	
Level of teacher and administrator discretion	7.64%	11.21%	15.28%	26.48%	42.71%	33.96%	34.38%	28.35%	
Implicit bias	14.69%	28.13%	16.08%	31.88%	44.41%	27.19%	24.83%	12.81%	
Attitudes/beliefs about RP									
	Great Extent (Dhalival)	Great Extent (Sample)	Moderate Extent (Dhalival)	Moderate Extent (Sample)	Small Extent (Dhalival)	Small Extent (Sample)	Not at all (Dhalival)	Not at all (Sample)	
I have a clear understanding of RP	58.67%	26.19%	39.60%	52.68%	1.73%	16.96%	0%	4.17%	
Teachers at my school have a clear understanding of RP	10.67%	5.34%	39.63%	44.21%	40.83%	39.47%	8.84%	10.98%	
I believe RP are critical for improving student behavior	71.64%	43.41%	22.51%	38.32%	4.97%	14.07%	0.88%	4.19%	
I believe RP are critical for improving student learning	67.65%	44.61%	25.00%	36.23%	6.18%	14.67%	1.18%	4.49%	

In this sample, about 56% of respondents did not feel or felt “to a small extent” that zero tolerance policies were necessary or sent a clear message to students. This is down from the 71% of respondents in Dhaliwal et al. 's (2021) study who did not feel or felt “to a small extent” that zero tolerance policies were necessary or sent a clear message. The survey items asking respondents about suspensions as a necessary tool for maintaining order and a school’s affordance to tolerate student disruptions went from nearly 70% of respondents selecting “not at all or to a small extent” in the previous study (Dhaliwal et al., 2021) to only about 47% of respondents selecting “not at all or to a small extent” in the current sample. When looking specifically at the survey question “Suspensions are a necessary tool for maintaining order at this school,” only 9.91% of respondents selected “not at all” compared to 22.48% in the previous study (Dhaliwal et al., 2021).

The average of the four survey items encompassing “attitudes and beliefs” about punitive discipline show that about half (49.54%) of respondents in this study’s sample felt punitive measures were not or were “to a small extent” necessary for maintaining order. This is a roughly 20% difference from the previous study where 68.43% of respondents felt that punitive measures were not or were “to a small extent” necessary for maintaining order (Dhaliwal et al., 2021).

On the opposite end of the scale, fewer respondents (11.56%) believed zero tolerance policies were necessary or contributed to order “to a great extent” in this sample compared to the respondents in the previous study (12.97%) (Dhaliwal et al., 2021). However, when asked if suspensions were necessary for maintaining order, 19.83% of respondents selected “to a great extent” compared to 6.71% in Dhaliwal et al.’s (2021) study.

“Schools cannot afford to tolerate students disrupting the learning environment” also saw a significant difference in response with 30.61% of participants selecting “to a great extent” in this study sample compared to 12.75% in the previous study (Dhaliwal et al., 2021).

For both this study and the previous study (Dhaliwal et al., 2021), the majority of respondents felt closing the racial discipline gap was an essential or high priority for their district (58% from 53%), and only about 15% of respondents in both samples felt it was not a priority or a low priority. Respondents for both surveys, however, differed in their explanations for why these gaps exist in the first place. Student behavior as an explanation for gaps being “very true” or “true” jumped from 41.66% in the previous study (Dhaliwal et al., 2021) to 61.06% in this sample. Parenting as an explanation being “very true” or “true” jumped from 39.86% (Dhaliwal et al., 2021) to 52.17%. Neighborhood environment as an explanation being “very true” or “true” from 47.73% (Dhaliwal et al., 2021) to 59.62%. Level of teacher and administrator discretion as an explanation being “very true” or “true” went from 22.92% (Dhaliwal et al., 2021) to 37.69%. The largest difference in respondents selecting “very true” or “true” was for the explanation of implicit bias which jumped from 30.77% (Dhaliwal et al., 2021) to 60.01%.

Respondents' understanding of RPs dropped significantly from 58.67% (Dhaliwal et al., 2021) to 26.19%. Their belief about their colleagues having a “great” understanding of RPs also dropped from 10.67% (Dhaliwal et al., 2021) to 5.34%. Additionally, the belief RPs are critical for improving behavior “to a great extent” dropped from 71.64% (Dhaliwal et al., 2021) to 43.41%, and the belief RPs being critical for student learning “to a great extent” dropped from 67.65% (Dhaliwal et al., 2021) to 44.61%. On the opposite end of the scale, less than 1% of respondents in the previous study (Dhaliwal et al., 2021) selected “not at all” concerning RPs being critical for improving student behavior compared to 4.19% selecting “not at all” in this

sample. Moreover, about 1% of respondents in the previous study (Dhaliwal et al., 2021) selected “not at all” that RPs were critical for improving learning compared to 4.49% of respondents selecting “not at all” in this sample.

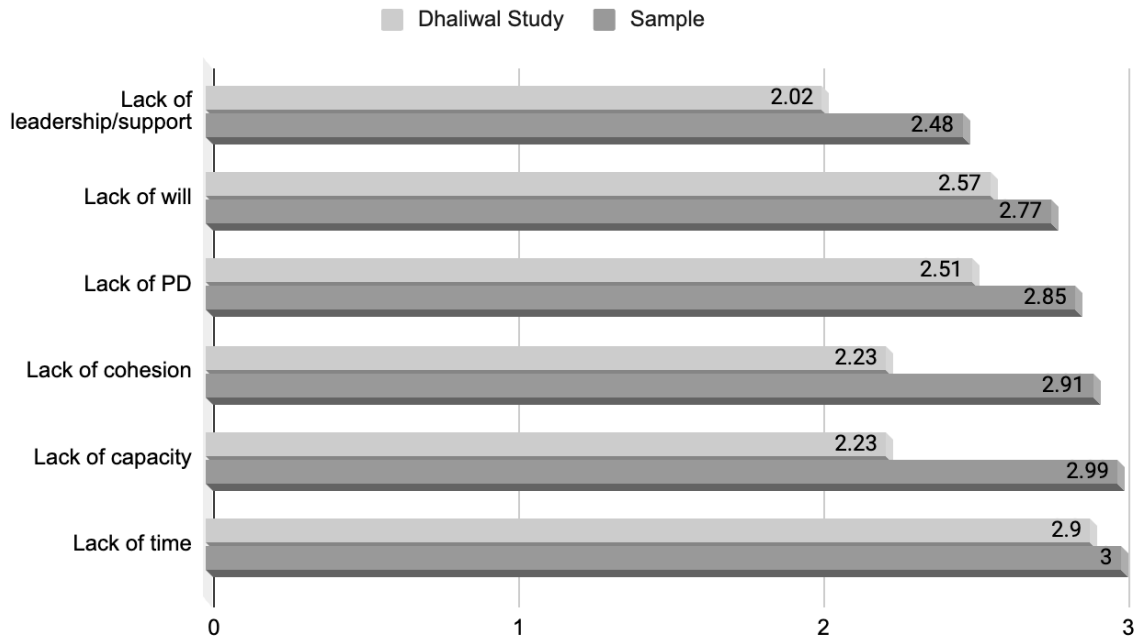
Reported Hindrances to Implementing RPs

Multiple factors seem to hinder implementing RPs and there were some shifts in perceived hindrances from the previous study (Dhaliwal et al., 2021) to the current sample. Consistent with the previous study (Dhaliwal et al., 2021), respondents cited “lack of time” as the strongest hindrance to implementing RPs (mean=3.0). The next strongest cited hindrances were lack of capacity (mean=2.99) and lack of cohesion between RPs and other school policies (mean=2.91). The least cited hindrances were lack of leadership or support from the school, district, and/or parent/community members (mean=2.48), and lack of will to implement (mean=2.77). These results vary from the previous study (Dhaliwal et al., 2021) as demonstrated in Figure 8.

Figure 8. Average reported hindrances to implementing RP.

Note. 1- Not a hindrance; 2-A slight hindrance; 3-A moderate hindrance; 4-A great hindrance

Reported Hindrances



There are notable differences in multiple items relating to perceived hindrances from this study's sample to the previous study's sample. Of note, lack of capacity ($m1=2.99$ from $m1d=2.23$), lack of cohesion between RPs and other policies ($m1=2.91$ from $m1d=2.23$), and lack of leadership/support ($m1=2.48$ from $m1d=2.02$) saw the biggest jump in perceived hindrances compared to the previous study (Dhaliwal et al., 2021). Overall, participants in this study sample reported more hindrances than those in the previous sample (Dhaliwal et al., 2021). This is evidenced by the increased means for each item representing perceived hindrances and displayed in figure 8.

Perceived Effects of Implementing RP

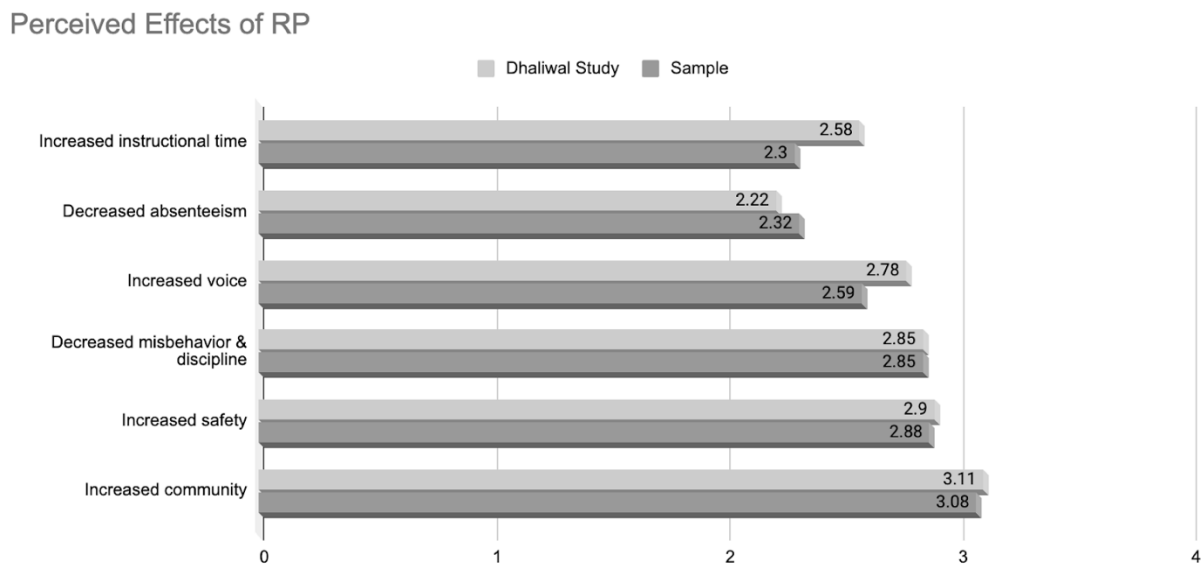
Respondents found there to be some positive effects of implementing RPs. The most positively cited effect was an increased sense of community among students, teachers, and/or staff (mean=3.08). This was also the most positively cited effect in the previous survey

(Dhaliwal et al., 2021). This was followed by an increase in school safety (mean=2.88) and a decrease in student misbehavior and suspension (mean=2.85). Additionally, respondents cited increased voice for both students and staff (mean=2.59), decreased absenteeism for students and staff (mean=2.32), and increased instructional time (mean=2.30) as positive effects of RPs.

Figure 9 highlights the responses and compares them to the previous responses in the Dhaliwal et al. (2021) study.

Figure 9. Average perceived effects of implementing RPs.

Note: 1-Not at all; 2-To a small extent; 3-To a moderate extent; 4-To a great extent



Participants in this study reported more hindrances to implementation of RPs from the previous study (Figure 8), but perceived fewer positive effects of RP implementation in this study than the previous study. The exception to this was the positive effect of decreased student and staff absenteeism which increased from a mean of 2.22 (Dhaliwal et al., 2021) to a mean of 2.32. Interesting that the shift by school site practitioners is a trend toward more punitive measures while also saying that the district is focusing on closing disproportionality in discipline.

Predictive Relationships Between Attitudes and Beliefs

Table 7 depicts the regression results from both equation 1 and equation 2. These are placed next to the regression results from the previous study (Dhaliwal et al., 2021) for comparison. In column I, it is found that beliefs about punitive discipline, the degree to which non-school based factors and the degree to which school-based factors explain discipline gaps, and the level of understanding of RPs by colleagues at the school site are statistically significant related to perceived hindrances of implementing RPs. Participants who more strongly believe in punitive discipline measures (suspensions, expulsions, zero tolerance) report greater hindrances to RP implementation ($\beta=.135$, $p<.05$). Participants who believe non-school based factors are sources of racial discipline gap (i.e., student behavior, parenting, neighborhood, income levels) reported high levels of hindrances ($\beta=.148$, $p<.01$). Participants who believe school-based factors are sources of racial discipline gaps (i.e., teacher and administrator discretion, implicit bias) reported high levels of hindrances ($\beta=.258$, $p<.001$). Alternatively, participants who reported their colleagues had a clear understanding of RPs reported fewer hindrances ($\beta= -.139$, $p<.05$). As mentioned, table 8 depicts the comparison of regression results from the previous study (Dhaliwal et al., 2021) to this study's sample. The strongest association demonstrated in the regression results was for participants who believed school-based factors are the source of racial discipline gaps ($\beta=0.258$) which was a larger association than the previous study ($\beta=0.171$) (Dhaliwal et al., 2021).

Table 8.

*Predictors of Reported RP Hindrances and Effects. Note: standard errors are in parentheses. * $p<.05$, ** $p<.01$, *** $p<.001$. The previous study only reported ** $p<.01$, *** $P<.001$.*

Variables	Outcome Variable: Hindrances Index		Outcome Variable: Effects Index	
	Hindrances Index (Dhaliwal Study)	Hindrances Index (Sample)	Effects Index (Dhaliwal Study)	Effects Index (Sample)
	Model (Id)	Model (I)	(Model IId)	(Model II)
Punitive Discipline Index	0.159** (0.057)	0.135* (0.059)	0.100 (0.057)	0.024 (0.058)
Non-school based factors of racial discipline gap index	-0.000 (0.041)	0.148** (0.055)	0.132*** (0.041)	0.111 ** (0.054)
School-based factors of racial discipline gap index	0.171*** (0.037)	0.258*** (0.050)	0.045 (0.038)	0.093 * (0.051)
Prioritizing racial discipline gap	-0.071 (0.039)	-0.015 (0.037)	0.074 (0.038)	0.150*** (0.036)
RP Understanding	-0.015 (0.084)	.002 (0.056)	0.028 (0.084)	-0.042 (0.055)
RP Understanding of others at school	-0.364*** (0.053)	-0.139* (0.056)	0.033 (0.058)	0.052 (0.055)
RP critical index	0.004 (0.072)	0.077 (0.052)	0.645*** (0.072)	0.434*** (0.036)
Hindrances Index			-0.071 (0.062)	0.112 * (0.059)
Constant	2.909*** (0.429)	1.543*** (.330)	-0.597 (0.467)	-0.091 (0.333)
Observations	262	288	250	275
R-squared	0.25	0.159	0.341	0.393
Adjusted R-squared	N/A	0.138	N/A	0.374

Reported Hindrances, and Perceived Effects

Table 8, column 2 demonstrates how attitudes and beliefs and reported hindrances predict the degree of reported positive effects of RPs. When predictors related to attitudes, beliefs, and hindrances are entered into the model, each are statistically significant predictors of RP effects. For the attitudes and belief indices, respondents who believe more strongly that RPs are critical for improving student learning and/or behavior are more likely to perceive positive effects ($\beta=.434$, $p<.001$). Respondents who felt closing the discipline gap was higher district priority are

more likely to perceive positive effects of RPs ($\beta=.150$, $p<.001$). Respondents who believe non-school based factors are the cause of discipline gaps are more likely to perceive positive effects of RPs ($\beta=.111$, $p<.01$), and respondents who believe school-based factors are the cause of discipline gaps are more likely to perceive positive effects of RPs ($\beta=.093$, $p<.05$). Different from the previous study (Dhaliwal et al., 2021), respondents who reported a greater number of hindrances in implementing RPs were still likely to perceive positive effects of RPs ($\beta=.112$, $p<.05$).

Discussion

To recall, the purpose of this study is to gain insight into how educators and school staff make sense of RPs as a response to student behavior, and to expand the application of findings by replicating a previous study (Dhaliwal et al., 2021) on a new and much larger population. The study aimed to examine the relationship between teachers' attitudes and beliefs around implementing restorative practices (RPs) and the expected effects of RPs, plus whether the expected hindrances to RP implementation mediate the relationship. The study is guided by four research questions:

RQ1: What are educators' attitudes and beliefs about discipline, racial discipline gaps, and RP?

RQ2: What are the most frequently reported hindrances to implementing RP?

RQ3: What are the perceived effects of implementing RP?

RQ4: How do educators' attitudes and beliefs predict their reported hindrances to implementing RP? And how do attitudes, beliefs, and reported hindrances explain the perceived effects of RP?

Respondents for this survey were educators from across the United States: Oregon, Colorado, Oklahoma, Missouri, Kentucky, Pennsylvania, and New York. The majority of respondents represented secondary school educators from urban school sites in their respective areas. Results from the survey responses indicated educators believed some punitive discipline is necessary for maintaining school order despite the fact that their individual districts placed a high priority on closing racial gaps around discipline. These educators also felt both school-based factors and non-school-based factors contributed to gaps in discipline disparity. Despite being in school sites and districts that claim RPs as their main response to student behavior, respondents

felt they themselves and their colleagues had a limited understanding of RP even though the majority of respondents felt RPs were “very much” or “moderately” critical for improving student behavior and learning.

Respondents in this study also reported moderately to high levels of hindrances to implementation of RPs. The most highly reported hindrances were lack of time, lack of capacity, and lack of cohesion with other building or district policies. Respondents, however, did perceive positive effects from implementing RPs. The most positive reported effects were centered around increased sense of community among students and staff, increased school safety, and decreased student misbehavior and discipline.

Regression model 1

Model 1 regression analysis demonstrated predictive relationships between respondents’ attitudes and beliefs and their perceived hindrances to implementation. Beginning with outcome variable 1 (degree of reported hindrances), it was found that educators belief about punitive discipline, the degree to which school-based factors and non-school-based factors explain racial discipline gaps, and the level of RP understanding at the school site are statistically significant related to the perceived hindrances in implementing RP. Educators who more strongly believe in punitive discipline (i.e. suspensions, zero tolerance) report greater hindrances to implementing RPs ($\beta=.135$, $p<.05$). Those educators who believe school-based factors (i.e., implicit bias and teacher/administrator discretion) are sources of the racial discipline gap also reported higher levels of hindrances ($\beta=.258$, $p<.001$). Similarly, educators who believe non-school-based factors (i.e., neighborhood environment, parenting, student behaviors, income level) explain racial gaps in discipline reported higher levels of hindrances ($\beta=.148$, $p<.01$). Last, educators who felt their

colleagues lacked an understanding of RP reported more hindrances to implementation ($\beta=.139$, $p<.05$).

Regression model 2

The second regression model demonstrated predictive relationships on how attitudes and beliefs and reported hindrances predict the degree of reported positive effects of RPs. When predictors related to attitudes, beliefs, and hindrances were entered into the model, both indicators related to attitudes and beliefs as well as hindrances were statistically significant predictors of RP effects. Educators who more strongly believe RPs are critical for improving student learning and/or student behavior are more likely to report positive effects of RPs ($\beta=.434$, $p<.001$). Educators who believed it was a high priority for their district to close the racial gap in discipline reported more positive effects ($\beta=.150$, $p<.001$). Educators who believed more strongly non-school-based factors explain the racial discipline gap reported more positive effects ($\beta=.111$, $p<.01$). Similarly, educators who believed more strongly school-based factors explain the racial discipline gap reported more positive effects ($\beta=.093$, $p<.05$). Last, educators who perceived more hindrances to implementation also reported positive effects of RP ($\beta=.112$, $p<.05$).

RQ1: Attitudes and beliefs about discipline and RPs

The study results around attitudes and beliefs about discipline and RPs drew some interesting parallels and conclusions that may shed light on challenges to implementation and sustainability for RPs as previous literature references (Lustick, 2021; Dhaliwal et al., 2021; Acotsa et al., 2019; Kehoe, Bourke-Taylor, & Broderic, 2018; Mansfield, Fowler, & Rainbolt, 2018; Gregory & Fergus, 2017; Maag, 2012; Carr, 2012). Participants in this study were more inclined to believe punitive discipline is necessary for maintaining order and providing an

instructional environment free from disruption. This aligns with commentary in older research implicating the pressure school staff feel to use punitive discipline to create controlled environments (Morris, 2016; Perry & Morris 2014; Maag, 2012), but is in contrast to newer bodies of research indicating the need to move away from exclusionary measures as a way to control student behavior (Jabbari & Johnson, 2023; Darling-Hammond, 2023; Dhaliwal et al., 2021; Lustick, 2021; Lustick et al., 2020; Morris, 2014). This is also in contrast to the same study by Dhaliwal et al. (2021) whose participants believed more strongly that punitive measures were not necessary for maintaining control. The shift back towards a belief about punitive measures could be explained by the recent rise in negative student behaviors post-pandemic which has impacted classroom experiences for teachers and created additional workloads for school site educators who not only have to deal with greater social-emotional needs, but also learning gaps as a result of distance learning and/or disrupted learning (Creagh et al., 2023; National Center for Education Statistics, 2021; MissionSquare Research Institute, 2021; Walker, 2021).

Respondents also do not believe in the impact of RPs to the same extent as those in the original study. However, it is important to draw a comparison to when the survey was taken for both the Dhaliwal et al. (2021) study group and this study group which draw a sharp contrast in the conditions surrounding survey completion. The previous study examined survey results from a 2019 survey completed after voluntary RP training by educators from one district in California. This could give some indication of recency bias (an individual's tendency to overemphasize the importance of the most recent information or event) impacting an individual's sensemaking process. The closer, more recent, a respondent is to new information could have an impact on how they interpret that information (Glover & Duxbury, 2018). Additionally, a respondent's

ability to choose this training over the training being mandatory could play a role in their interpretation of the training they received. Of the approximately 63% of respondents who reported having received training, approximately 27% of teachers said that training was mandatory. Educators typically report higher levels of dissatisfaction when they feel initiatives are being done “to” them as opposed to “with” them (Fairman et al., 2022).

Moreover, respondents' attitudes and beliefs about the effects of RPs align with the current literature on the challenge of sustainability with RPs (Lustick, 2021; Dhaliwal et al., 2021; Kehoe, Bourke-Taylor, & Broderic, 2018; Mansfield, Fowler, & Rainbolt, 2018; Gregory & Fergus, 2017; Maag, 2012; Carr, 2012). For RPs to remain effective, educators need ongoing training and dialogue about the effectiveness of RPs and refreshers on effective practices when implementing RP. Most of the research indicates districts struggle with maintaining restorative environments because of staff turnover, lack of funding for continued professional development, and the fidelity to which it is being used building-wide (Lustick, 2021; Dhaliwal et al., 2021; Acosta et al., 2019; Kehoe, Bourke-Taylor, & Broderic, 2018; Mansfield, Fowler, & Rainbolt, 2018; Gregory & Fergus, 2017; Maag, 2012; Carr, 2012). In this study alone, 27% of the participants indicated they had never received any training on RP even though their building had adopted RPs as their approach to student behaviors. Sensemaking theory explains that people make sense of information based on their previous experiences (Turner et al., 2023; Coburn, 2005; Spillane et al., 2006; Weick, 1995). For those participants who had not received formal training, their experiences are shaped by a different set of parameters than those who had received training which could be the reason for differing responses in the Dhaliwal et al. (2021) study and this study.

Educators also felt strongly that non-school-based factors explain racial discipline gaps. The majority of participants in this study are urban educators where many non-school-based factors would be more prevalent than in suburban areas. Additionally, the majority of the participants are secondary teachers who may have a greater understanding of how non-school-based factors are directly impacting student behaviors especially for age-groups where more violent behaviors are typically seen (i.e. fighting, gang behavior, etc.) (Granero-Gallegos et al., 2020; Kulina et al., 2006).

School-based factors (too much teacher/administrator discretion and implicit bias) are also a highly reported explanation for racial discipline gaps. Interestingly, there is a pretty significant increase in educators who believe implicit bias explains discipline gaps. The previous study included survey responses from a 2019 survey where the term “implicit bias” wasn’t as widely used as it has been in more recent years, specifically following the murder of George Floyd which sparked national conversation about bias and racism in all institutions (Sullivan et al., 2021; Tadam & Cane, 2022). In the years following, there has been a significant focus on implicit bias as schools and districts have pushed towards creating environments centered on diversity, equity, and inclusion, and ensuring disparities in racial discipline are central focuses for school sites (Theo, George, & Maudlin, 2023; Atwater, 2023). More recent research around RPs also indicates implicit bias is a barrier to effective RP implementation (Rao, Shayo, & Kakupa, 2021; Bradford & Lesal, 2021; Robbins, 2021; Lustick, 2021, Darling-Hammond et al., 2020), and, in this case, respondents believe it has a direct impact on the racial discipline gaps in their individual school sites.

RQ2: Most frequently reported hindrances

Overall, educators reported more hindrances to implementation than the participants who took the survey in 2019 (Dhaliwal et al., 2021). Educators sighted time as the biggest hindrance to implementation of RPs. This is in-line with what the research says about a challenge to RP implementation and can impact how educators make sense of the initiative all together. This is especially true with increasing demands to improve academic outcomes while also taking care of the social-emotional needs of students (Tian, 2023; National Center for Education Statistics, 2021; MissionSquare Research Institute, 2021; Walker, 2021). RPs, as a practice, require additional effort, time, and resources than exclusionary discipline, and often these resources are in short supply (Darling-Hammond; 2023; Bradford & Lesal, 2021; Robbins, 2021; Lustick, 2021).

Lack of capacity was the second highest reported hindrance to RP implementation. This dealt directly with the number of staff the individual educator said that had to support. For school administrators, the job load has increased exponentially over the last decades as state and federal mandates around school accountability have required more and more of the school sites (Nguyen, Lam, & Bruno, 2022; Acosta et al., 2019; Bonell et al., 2014; Bonell et al., 2017; Bonell et al., 2018; Green et al., 2019; Warren et al., 2019; Ahmed & Braithwaite, 2019). Often, this requires districts to not only require more of their site-level administrators, but as a result site-level administrators then, in turn, have the necessity to require more of their staff (Creagh et al., 2023; Walker, 2021). This reported hindrance is similar to what previous research demonstrates about what is happening to the workload of school staff. However, when comparing the results of this study to the study completed by Dhaliwal et al. (2021), there was a significant increase in educators who reported this as a “moderate” or “great” hindrance. This could be that while educators have been seeing increasing workloads since the passage of NCLB

and Race to the Top, educators have been reporting higher levels of burnout post-pandemic due to the increasing burdens placed on them (Nguyen, Lam, & Bruno, 2022; Tian, 2023; National Center for Education Statistics, 2021; MissionSquare Research Institute, 2021; Walker, 2021). This is partially due to the increasing learning gaps, but also due to the increasing social emotional needs of students. Couple lack of time and lack of capacity, and it explains how systematic barriers could play a role in how educators make sense of initiatives - even those initiatives educators have found to be successful.

When considering alignment of RPs to initiatives or policies also in place at the school site, educators reported lack of cohesion between RP and other behavior policies/initiatives such as PBIS or zero-tolerance. This hindrance was also reported at a higher rate than the previous study completed by Dhaliwal et al. (2021). A lot of the research points to PBIS as a great starting point for RPs (Jabbari & Johnson, 2023; Lustick, 2021; Lustick et al., 2020), so it is telling how respondents reported a disconnect between policies such as PBIS. Explanations for this shift could be an indicator of RPs being more “programized” and not an entire paradigm shift within a school site. If RPs are not “how we do things,” educators’ view RPs could shift to just another thing “we have to do.” (Darling-Hammond, 2023; Jabbari & Johnson, 2023; Lustick, 2021; Lustick et al., 2020).

Notably, respondents selected lack of professional development as a hindrance to implementation of RPs. These educators are in schools that claim to use RPs schoolwide, but over a quarter of the respondents had received no training in RP. Because people make sense of information based on their previous experiences, without training to disrupt a potential attitude or belief about an initiative, an individual will draw their own conclusion based on their previous experiences (Turner et al., 2023; Coburn, 2005; Spillane et al., 2006; Weick, 1995). In this case,

it is plausible for educators to fall back to “what they have known” which could be environments centered around compliance and control (Maag, 2012).

The least reported hindrance for this study is lack of leadership or support. While this is in opposition to literature surrounding hindrances to policy implementation (Honig, 2006; Leithwood et al., 2002), each of these respondents work in schools and districts where RPs are cited as the response to student behavior. In fact, some of the participants work in school sites that have dedicated staffing for RPs. So, while leadership and support are important components to effective implementation, this study would demonstrate having one set of conditions necessary to implement an initiative cannot overcome other perceived barriers.

RQ3: Perceived effects of RPs

Educators, despite reporting high levels of hindrances to implementation, also reported significant positive effects to RP. The highest reported effect to RP was increased community among students and staff. Research has shown one of the main impacts to RPs seen in schools and districts across the country has been a deeper sense of community (Darling-Hammond, 2023; Lustick, 2021; Lustick et al., 2020; Costello, Wachtel & Wachtel, 2019; Dhaliwal et al., 2021; Robbins, 2021; Morris, 2016; Kehoe, Bourke-Taylor, & Broderic, 2018; Mansfield, Fowler, & Rainbolt, 2018). As educators focus on mutual respect and relationship building, community building and increased belonging are a natural result. Understandably, educators who use even small components of RPs could feel increased community because the foundation of RP is about building community (Darling-Hammond, 2023; Bradford & Lesal, 2021; Lustick, 2021; Morris, 2016). The reporting for this group of respondents is also almost exactly the same as the previous study completed by Dhaliwal et al. (2021) hinting that even with increasing challenges or barriers some of the foundational components of RPs can be seen and felt.

Similar to the previous study conducted by Dhaliwal et al (2021), educators also reported increases in school safety as a positive effect of RPs. Because research indicates, and this study's respondents suggest, increases positive school community environments (Darling-Hammond, 2023; Bradford & Lesal, 2021; Lustick, 2021; Morris, 2016), it is not surprising respondents also felt their school was safer because of RPs. Although there is limited evidence that RPs do, in fact, improve school safety, educators feeling more connected to their students could play a role in their perception of a safe school environment.

This study also indicated the same level of positive response from the previous study (Dhaliwal et al., 2021) centered around decreased student misbehavior and punitive discipline. While there are studies reporting RPs positive impact on student misbehavior (Lustick, 2021; Lustick et al., 2020; Acosta et al., 2019; Kehoe, Bourke-Taylor, & Broderick, 2018; McCluskey et al., 2008), most of those studies are also pre-pandemic research. It is interesting that while these respondents did not have the same attitudes and beliefs about discipline or RPs as a whole to the previous respondents, they still reported the same level of positive impact on student behavior as the previous respondents. The suggestion being educators can make sense of an initiative differently or with more nuance based on their individual and/or site experiences, but still perceive the same positive impact.

Educators did not report high levels of positive effects in regards to increased voice for school staff and students, nor did they report high levels of positive effects for decreased absenteeism or increased instructional time. Limited research around these impacts exists in literature, so it is hard to draw parallels. When it comes to increased voice for staff and students, the nature of RPs should provide more voice as RPs premise is on repairing relationships and community in a way that works for both the victim and author of harm. However, there is a

tendency for RPs to become more “program” than “paradigm” with prescribed ways of doing things (Darling-Hammond et al., 2020).

Additionally, absenteeism has looked significantly different post-pandemic than pre-pandemic. Previous research, while very limited, looked at absenteeism in relation to decreases in exclusionary discipline (Gregory et al., 2016; Perry & Morris, 2014; Losen & Skiba, 2010). However, chronic absenteeism has since become a focus for many states and, in some states, a measure of school accountability (Dee, 2024; Chang et al., 2021; Dorn et al., 2021).

Absenteeism, for many educators, encompasses any absenteeism, and it is widely reported that students are not attending school like they did pre-pandemic (Dee, 2024; Chang et al., 2021; Dorn et al., 2021). Therefore, educators may not believe RPs have an impact on absenteeism because absenteeism is incredibly nuanced, and, for the years immediately following a return to in-person learning, was partly a result of COVID contact-tracing policies and the lingering illness of the pandemic.

Lastly, educators' belief RPs did not positively impact instructional time could be compared to educators believing “lack of time” was a significant hindrance to RP implementation. As is well documented, there are significant learning gaps for students post-pandemic (Dee, 2024) and RPs take more time, resources, and effort (Darling-Hammond, 2023; Lustick, 2021; Bradford & Lesal, 2021; Robbins, 2021; Lustick et al., 2020). Therefore, it is understandable educators may not perceive a positive impact on instructional time when RPs are not a “quick fix,” but rather a slow investment.

RQ4: Predictive factors for perceived hindrances and reported effects

Research question four aimed to discover how attitudes and beliefs predicted educators reported hindrances, and how attitudes, beliefs, and hindrances predicted reported effects. Using

regression analysis, the relationships between RQ 1-3 can provide valuable insight to how responses from one can impact another.

Attitudes and beliefs predicting reported hindrances

The results in the first model with reported hindrances as the outcome variable found educators' belief about punitive discipline, the degree to which school-based factors and non-school-based factors explain racial discipline gaps, and the level of RP understanding at the school site are statistically significant related to the perceived hindrances in implementing RP with school-based factors having the largest impact on perceived hindrances.

School-based factors

Educators who felt more strongly that school-based factors explain racial discipline gaps reported more hindrances to implementation. The school-based factors in this survey encompassed two items: too much teacher/administrator discretion and implicit bias. As mentioned in the analysis of RQ 1, implicit bias and its impact on how people respond to situations is a construct educators have become increasingly aware of and a focus of many schools and districts (Sullivan et al., 2021; Tedam & Cane, 2022). This could be an indicator districts are not doing enough to address implicit bias, and, for educators to perceive fewer barriers to initiatives like RPs, districts must continue to address biases and their impact on systemic barriers leading to racially disproportionate practices.

RP Understanding

For initiatives to have a level of success, it is necessary for those implementing the initiative to have a clear understanding of the initiative. There was an association in this study between an educator's belief about their colleagues' understanding of RPs and their reported hindrances. The more an educator believed their colleagues understood about RPs, the fewer

hindrances were reported. The relationship between those two is understandable given these participants work in sites who are committed, at some level, to RPs. With a quarter of respondents having no training in RPs, it does, however, call into question whether RPs are truly schoolwide or “handed off” when a student misbehaves, especially considering there was no significant relationship between a respondent’s own understanding of RPs and reported hindrances. This could also point to the notion of RPs becoming more of a program with prescribed processes as has been seen in districts who have adopted RPs (Darling-Hammond et al., 2020).

Punitive Discipline

Respondents who were more inclined to believe punitive discipline reported more hindrances to implementation. These results suggest a couple of challenges experienced by individual respondents. As mentioned previously, the majority of respondents were secondary school educators. Secondary educators are more likely to experience higher levels of student behaviors (i.e. fighting, drugs) than that of their elementary peers (Granero-Gallegos et al., 2020; Kulina et al., 2006), so this could indicate these educators find exclusionary discipline efforts necessary to maintain safe and controlled environments (Gregory & Fergus, 2017; Maag, 2012; Carr, 2012). Additionally, these results also suggest the respondents who are more inclined to believe in punitive measures have a harder time envisioning restorative environments because of either a lack of information or individual experiences impacting how they make sense of RPs as a whole (Turner et al., 2023; Dhaliwal et al., 2021; Darling-Hammond et al., 2020; Coburn, 2005; Spillane et al., 2006; Weick, 1995).

Non-school-based factors

For the purpose of this study, non-school-based factors are defined as student behavior, neighborhood environment, income level, and parenting. Respondents who believed non-school-based factors explained racial discipline gaps reported more hindrances to implementation. This was not the case in the previous study completed by Dhaliwal et al. (2021). A few things could explain these results. First, the majority of respondents work in urban districts. Often, urban school students experience greater environmental or systemic barriers than their suburban peers (Cameron & McKall, 2020). It could be respondents who work in challenging contexts where many influencing factors are outside of their control have a harder time envisioning successful implementation to RPs.

Moreover, respondents reported, at a high level, that both student behavior and parenting were explanations for racial discipline gaps. This could indicate some respondents are working in contexts where parents have been viewed negatively or are not seen as partners in the RP process. Student behaviors as an explanation, on the other hand, could indicate respondents are less invested in understanding their own implicit biases and/or are experiencing increased behaviors as a result of the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on students of color and their families (Creagh et al., 2023; National Center for Education Statistics, 2021; MissionSquare Research Institute, 2021; Walker, 2021). All of these factors may make it hard for an individual to make sense of how RPs could be successfully implemented in their school writ large.

Predictive relationships on the effects of RPs

The results in model two examined how attitudes, beliefs, and reported hindrances predict perceived effects of RPs. The regression analysis in this model found those who believed RPs were critical for improving student behavior and/or learning, the district placed a high priority on closing discipline gaps, and that both non-school-based factors and school-based factors

explained racial gaps in discipline reported more positive effects of RPs. Additionally, those who reported more hindrances also reported positive effects.

RPs critical for improving student behavior/learning

The predictor related to RPs as a critical component for improving student behavior and student learning had the most significant relationship to perceived effects of RPs. Respondents who reported this belief were more likely to report higher levels of positive effects for RPs. There could be a couple of reasons for these associations. First, these respondents may have previously experienced the positive impacts of RPs, thus, making their overall attitudes and beliefs towards the policy positive. In other words, they believe RPs are critical for improving student behavior and learning because they have seen the result in their school and/or classroom. Second, if they are in a context with few behavior problems, it suggests respondents may have been told this is a result of their school's investment in RPs and they have no reason to believe differently. This could be particularly true to an individual respondent who is new to a building who has been highly invested in the success of RP implementation.

Non-school-based factors

Respondents who felt non-school-based factors were the explanation for racial gaps reported more positive effects. While this predictor also impacted reported hindrances in the first regression model, it may hint that respondents find school to be an essential place to solve problems. In other words, this result could indicate educators believe RPs have the ability to empower students to overcome challenging external environments and emphasize the importance of the school as the solution to those challenging external environments. Some newer research may point to this mindset as well (Darling-Hammond, 2023).

School-based factors and hindrances

Different from the previous study completed by Dhaliwal et al. (2021), respondents who believed school-based factors explained racial discipline gaps reported more perceived positive effects of RPs. Also, respondents who reported more hindrances also reported more perceived positive effects. An individual may view the school environment as a constraint in and of itself, but still have a belief in the positive effects of RPs. Likewise, an individual can recognize hindrances to effective implementation and believe in the policy's effectiveness. Both of these results tell us more about sensemaking when it comes to change initiatives. Participants can trust an initiative's effectiveness despite internal or external barriers because of their previous experience with an initiative or because they have been presented with data/information proving it can work.

Theoretical and practical implications

This study makes important contributions to past literature by (1) expanding existing research on educator attitudes and beliefs towards RPs and (2) analyzing how those attitudes and beliefs relate to reported hindrances and effects. Additionally, this study also provides theoretical contributions to sensemaking theory and trust theory. As a reminder, those in the sample for this study work in districts across the country who have made the implementation of RPs and the closing of racial discipline gaps a priority. Each district represented has also invested in RPs on some level through additional staffing and/or by providing professional development.

Sensemaking

The use of RPs in schools requires a paradigm shift and runs counter to Western culture's stance on punishment, compliance, and control. This is especially true for educators whose own school experience runs counter to the experience their school sites and/or districts are attempting to implement through RPs. Sensemaking theory (Weick, 1995) suggests an organization's (or its

members) behavior is dependent on how they interpret a situation or change initiative. The ability to lead people through strategic change requires conversation, collaboration, effective planning, and both short- and long-term engagement (Weick, 1995). This study's findings would not only corroborate Weick's (1995) contribution to sensemaking but emphasize the necessity for an organization to actively plan for conversation, collaboration, and short- and long-term engagement in order for people to interpret change initiatives within their original intent.

Nearly 27% of participants in this study had never received training on RPs, and yet, the majority of respondents believe in the positive impact of RPs despite reporting more hindrances than those in the previous study, and despite believing some punitive discipline is necessary to maintain order. The fact that over a quarter of participants had received no training on RPs, but still reported positive impacts of RPs, suggests an individual's behavior can be shaped by their experiences within an environment they may not fully understand. Meaning, in this case, a respondent can see the impact of RPs without fully understanding RPs which allows respondents to make sense of RPs within the intent of implementation. This is important because it indicates sensemaking happens through the lens of an organization's culture even without direct training in the underpinnings of that organization's culture. In other words, a member of an organization can make sense of a strategic change initiative simply because that change initiative is deeply embedded in the organization's culture.

Because sensemaking is both a social and constructed process (Coburn, 2005; Spillane et al., 2006), this study furthers the idea that members of an organization can make sense of change initiatives when both short term and long-term investment are a priority for the organization (Weick, 1995; Turner et al., 2023). As said earlier, many of these respondents are in buildings where RPs have been the norm for a number of years. Their sites and districts have moved

beyond implementation towards sustainability. They have hired staff members in dedicated positions around RPs and have made RPs their primary approach to establishing proactive and reactive support around student behavior. Investing long term in an initiative can communicate that the change initiative is more than “what we do” and is “who we are.” Moving from “what we do” to “who we are” can help members of an organization construct meaning that, even when there are doubts, can continue to push an initiative forward.

Trust

Trust in schools is built through building positive relationships between all stakeholders and is a key factor for creating transformational change in a school (Griffen, 2019; Daly & Finnigan, 2012; Forsyth, Adams, Hoy, 2011; Tachannen-Moran, 2004). The participants in this study represented schools who had begun the work of transforming their response to student behavior and closing racial discipline gaps. While the survey did not ask directly about an individual respondent’s trust of RPs, the responses on attitudes and beliefs and the effectiveness of RPs indicate a level of trust around RPs that align with previous research about trust.

Because trust is a key factor in bridging connections and strengthening communities (Chazdon & Lott, 2010), initiatives rooted in community building could help in building trust for an initiative. Even as respondents reported more hindrances to implementation, one of the strongest reported effects of RPs in this study is increased community among students and staff. This is telling of respondents’ ability to trust RPs even when they report barriers to full implementation of RPs. Previous research around trust and transformation in school suggest trust is a reciprocal process that increases as relationships are developed and as boundary lines are blurred between administration, students, and staff working to create mutually empowering relationships (Robbins, 2021; Griffen, 2019; Daly & Finnigan, 2012; Chazdon & Lott, 2010;

Tschannen-Moran, 2004; Cabrera & La Nasa, 2001; St. John et al., 1997). As an initiative works to build community within an organization (schools in this case), relational trust is established which allows for the organization to work through transformational change (Price-Mitchell, 2009). This study would further prove the necessity of transformational change being rooted in initiatives where community and relationship building are foundational to the initiative itself especially when the initiative is challenging.

Additionally, a key component to RPs is addressing mindsets that lead to problematic responses to student behaviors or responses that widen racial discipline gaps. Respondents, however, reported implicit bias to be a key factor in the racial discipline gap within their school context while also reporting positive effects of RPs. Working to address biases, both individual and collective, is challenging but not impossible where trust exists (Rao, Shayo, & Kakupa, 2021; Bradford & Lesal, 2021; Gottman, 2011). The study results suggest that trust in change initiatives is still possible when stakeholders view other stakeholders as the cause of the problems the change initiative is set to address.

Practical implications

The results for this study indicate educators have some belief that exclusionary discipline is necessary for maintaining order and control or optimizing the learning environment for other students even with their districts prioritizing closing racial discipline gaps. These educators believe they and their colleagues have some level of understanding of RPs but see both school and non-school-based factors as an explanation for racial discipline gaps. This implies a few things. First, districts will have to continuously confront beliefs about punitive discipline for RPs to be implemented successfully as punitive measures run counter to the framework of RP (Lustick, 2021; Dhaliwal et al., 2021; Acotsa et al., 2019; Kehoe, Bourke-Taylor, & Broderic,

2018; Mansfield, Fowler, & Rainbolt, 2018; Gregory & Fergus, 2017; Maag, 2012; Carr, 2012).

Second, districts may consider finding alternative measures and/or resources to work with students whose behaviors may require short-term separation from the learning environment in order for harm to be repaired. Issues of safety or mental health crisis may require a different approach for long-term buy-in to RPs.

Additionally, respondents cited challenges to implementation that align with existing literature around challenges to policy implementation (Honig, 2006; Leithwood et al., 2002). The challenges reported, however, did not impact a respondent's ability to see RPs as an effective response to student behavior. The fact that educators were able to report positive effects of RP despite reporting hindrances to implementation suggests educators' experiences can still be positive when barriers are in place. Alongside this, "lack of will" was not one of the higher reported hindrances which would imply educators have an appetite for a different approach, and a belief alternative approaches can work. However, they have a "lack of time" to do so. If districts or schools are wanting to create restorative environments, simplifying the workload of educators or the number of initiatives could help with the fidelity of RP implementation.

Just as with previous research, the questions about and challenges of long-term sustainability are implied within this study. There is a fragmented level of understanding by both the participants and what they believed other educators in their school knew about RPs. This is also indicated by 27% of respondents having received no training on RPs. Model 1 of the regression analysis indicates this fragmented understanding by an educator's colleagues is associated with greater reported hindrances. For RPs to be schoolwide, all school staff have to be brought into RP and have a clear understanding of RPs (Darling-Hammond, 2023; Bradford & Lesal, 2021; Lustick 2021). School districts could provide job-embedded professional learning

by school staff who are trained in RPs to combat the challenges of staff turnover or to provide real-time support when misbehavior occurs (Darling-Hammond, 2023; Darling-Hammond et al., 2020; Brock & Beaman-Diglia, 2018).

Last, the previous study completed by Dhaliwal et al (2021) indicated a higher level of positive effects of RPs around increased voice among students and staff. This student did not find increased voice reported to the same level. While suspensions and exclusionary discipline only occurs for a small percentage of students, this calls into question what RPs look like in these particular settings. If staff and students are not a part of the RP process, it could be these schools have allowed RPs to become more of a “program” where students follow a prescribed set of options to repair the harm they caused. This aligns with more recent literature, albeit limited, about RPs can be morphed into a program limiting its impact (Darling-Hammond, 2023; Velez, 2021; Darling-Hammond et al., 2020).

Limitations

This study aimed to understand educators’ attitudes, beliefs, and perceptions of RPs to better understand how educators make sense of RPs by replicating a previous study conducted by Dhaliwal et al. (2021). For this particular study, one limitation is the limited number of responses across districts. Roughly 2.5% of those who had access to the survey completed the survey, and about 70% of the respondents completed all survey items. While this survey had more respondents than the initial study, the response rate for survey items could be considered low. The response rate is not a limitation in and of itself, however, a low response rate could indicate a level of response bias. This could make the results sensitive to outliers who had exceedingly positive or negative experiences with RP. Additionally, the original intent of the survey was to draw on responses from educators in a variety of contexts (rural, urban, and suburban), however,

the survey was largely composed of respondents from urban districts across the country (63%). This could impact the overall findings as educators in urban areas may have different biases because of the typically diverse environments of urban cities.

Second, for the survey item asking educator's beliefs about non-school and school-based factors as explanations for racial discipline gaps, the original survey had a 5-point Likert scale while this survey had a 4-point Likert scale. The original survey had the following response items "very true, true, somewhat true, slightly true, not true." "Somewhat true" was left off this survey in order to provide some consistency in Likert responses throughout. There is a debate among researchers about the appropriate number of items for a Likert type scale, so Cronbach's alpha is denoted on appendix 1 to inform reliability of response items (Croasmun & Ostrom, 2011). However, the comparisons between the Dhaliwal et al. (2021) study and this study for those particular items are not exact.

Last, a limitation that should be considered is that RPs could mean something different to each of the respondents depending on their experiences with RPs and what RPs look like within their school context. The initial study by Dhaliwal et al. (2021) was conducted after a 2019 RP training. All participants in that study had received the same RP training. These respondents would have experienced common language around RPs. For this study, we do not know the varying level of expertise each respondent could have with RPs. Potentially, some of these respondents have more knowledge and experience than other respondents which could impact how individual respondents reported their attitudes and beliefs. Additionally, each school context could be at different stages in the implementation process. While each of the districts respondents work in have claimed to do RPs for a number of years, changes in school leadership

and/or staff turnover, could place each individual school site at a different level of RP implementation.

Recommendations for future research

The findings for this study raise a number of areas for future research. First, more research is needed to understand how experiences with RPs shape attitudes over a period of time. Because RPs require a paradigm shift that runs in opposition to Western culture's view of behavior and accountability (Gregory et al., 2016; Perry & Morris, 2014; Losen & Skiba, 2010), additional qualitative research focusing on how educators experience RPs on a daily basis could provide insight into the complexities of RPs over time and the willingness to adopt alternative discipline approaches. This research could dive into how attitudes shift over time, from training to implementation to sustainability, which could shed light on the conditions that need to be in place to see an initiative through from implementation to sustainability.

Second, as schools continue to look for alternative discipline models and a departure from previous punitive models, more research needs to be completed to understand how attitudes of RPs impact long-term impact effectiveness of RPs. Many studies have looked at the effectiveness of RPs over time (Acosta et al., 2019; Bonell et al., 2014; Bonell et al., 2017; Bonell et al., 2018; Green et al., 2019; Warren et al., 2019; Ahmed & Braithwaite, 2019). However, this research does not provide information on the relationship between educator attitudes towards RP and the effectiveness of RP over time. This study did expand on the previous study by providing data of respondents' attitudes and beliefs of RPs in contexts where implementation had already occurred. While this information is valuable and sheds light on how those directly impacted by implementation (school site educators) make sense of RPs, more research should be done to understand how attitudes and beliefs of RPs impact long term

effectiveness of RPs. In other words, are there any relationships between how educators feel about RPs and student behavior data over time?

Third, more research needs to be completed to understand how the complexities of school context impact the overall perception of educator perceptions of RPs. As stated in the limitations section, the majority of respondents in this survey were secondary urban educators, and it is not known the context of the participants of the original study other than educators from a district in California (Dhaliwal et al., 2021). An urban educator will have entirely different experiences than a suburban or rural educator. A secondary educator will have entirely different experiences than an elementary educator (Granero-Gallegos et al., 2020; Kulina et al., 2006). These experiences can impact the perceptions these educators have on discipline, racial gaps in discipline, and RPs. Using a mixed methods approach to get a more comprehensive understanding, research surrounding how educator context impacts attitudes of RPs could provide valuable information on the willingness to implement alternative discipline models. This type of research could also be useful to districts looking to implement or sustain RPs as their approach to student behaviors by allowing districts to understand what conditions (positive or negative) could impact an individual's willingness to try a different approach.

Conclusion

The challenge for schools and districts across the country have been tackling issues of equity and inclusion that lead to closing opportunity gaps for students. There are many systemic practices that exist which create these gaps. Exclusionary discipline, one of these systemic practices, has worked to create disproportionate responses to student behaviors that have led to racial discipline gaps in districts across the United States (Jabbari & Johnson, 2023; Dhaliwal et al., 2021; Morris, 2016; Perry & Morris 2014; Maag, 2012). With issues of equity and school

discipline becoming a central focus for the Office of Civil Rights and a key focus for the reauthorization of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) (US Dept. of Ed., 2018; Gregory & Fergus 2017), districts have employed schools to find alternative approaches to discipline. One option districts and school sites have adopted to respond to inequity in student discipline is the system of restorative justice through the use of restorative practices. Restorative justice is a system centered on restoration, repair, and integration while restorative practices are the strategies used within the system (Bradford & Lesal, 2021; Robbins, 2021, Acosta et al., 2019; Kehoe, Bourke-Taylor, & Broderick, 2018; McCluskey et al., 2008). Because RPs are a shift from a Western culture's model of compliance and control, educators have to navigate the mindset of individuals for RPs to become standard within their school context.

This study aimed to understand what educators' attitudes and beliefs are about racial discipline gaps and RPs and how those attitudes and beliefs predict reported hindrances and reported effects. This study shows that while there is still work to be done in confronting educator beliefs about punitive discipline, educators do not lack the will to try a different approach to student behavior. As schools and districts move in their work toward restorative environments, they must continue to confront adult mindsets by challenging beliefs and confronting biases through a combination of ongoing professional learning and removing barriers to implementation.

References

- Acosta, J., Chinman, M., Ebener, P., Malone, P.S., Phillips, A., and Wilks, A. (2019). Evaluation of a whole-school change intervention: Findings from a two-year cluster-randomized trial of the restorative practices intervention. *Journal of Youth Adolescence*, 48 (5).
- Anyon, Y., Gregory, A., Stone, S., Farrar, J., Jenson, J.M., McQueen, J., Downing, B., Greer, E., Simmons, J. (2016). Restorative interventions and school discipline sanctions in a large urban school district. *American Educational Research Journal*, 53 (6), 1663-1697.
- Apuke, O. D. (2017). Quantitative research methods: A synopsis approach. *Kuwait Chapter of Arabian Journal of Business and Management Review*, 33(5471), 1–8.
- Atwater, S. A. (2023). Critical Race Theory in K-12 Schools: A Four-Element Framework to Inform DEI Training. In *Implications of Marginalization and Critical Race Theory on Social Justice* (pp. 144-173). IGI Global.
- Baker, C. (2017). Quantitative research designs: Experimental, quasi-experimental, and descriptive. In H. R. Hall & L. A. Roussel (Eds.), *Evidence-based practice: An integrative approach to research, administration, and practice* (pp. 155–183).
- Balnaves, M., & Caputi, P. (2001). *Introduction to quantitative research methods: An investigative approach*. SAGE Publications, Inc.
- Banerjee, A., & Chaudhury, S. (2010). Statistics without tears: Populations and samples. *Industrial Psychiatry Journal*, 19(1), 60-65.
- Baron, R. M., & Kenny, D. A. (1986). The moderator–mediator variable distinction in social psychological research: Conceptual, strategic, and statistical considerations. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 51(6), 1173-1182.
- Blum, R. (2005). *School connectedness: Improving the lives of students*. Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins School of Public Health.
- Bonell, C., Allen, E., Christie, D., Elbourne, D., Fletcher, A., Grieve, R., LeGood, R., Mathiot, A., Scott, S., Wiggins, M., et al.(2014). Initiating change locally in bullying and aggression through the school environment: Study protocol for a cluster randomized controlled trial. *Trials*, 15, 381.
- Bonell, C., Mathiot, A., Allen, E., Bevilacqua, L., Christie, D., Elbourne, D., Fletcher, A., Grieve, R., Legood, R., Scott, S. et al. (2017). Initiating change locally in bullying and aggression through the school environment trial: Update to cluster randomized controlled trial protocol. *Trials*, 18, 238.
- Bonell, C., Allen, E., Warren, E., McGowan, J., Bevilacqua, L., Jamal, F., Legood, R., Wiggins, M., Opondo, C., Mathiot, A., et al. (2018) Effects of the Learning Together intervention

- on bullying and aggression in English secondary schools: A cluster randomized controlled trial. *Lancet*, 392, 2452–2464.
- Bottiani, J.H., Bradshaw, C.P., & Mendelson, T.. (2016). A multilevel examination of racial disparities in high school discipline: Black and white adolescents' perceived equity, school belonging, and adjustment problems. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, Vol. 109 (4), 532-545.
- Bradford, N., and Lesal, D. (2021). *A real-world guide to restorative justice in schools: Practical philosophy, useful tools, and true stories*. Jessica Kingsley Publishers.
- Cabrera, A.F., La Nasa, S.M. (2001). On the path to college: Three critical tasks facing America's disadvantaged. *Research in Higher Education*, 42, 119-149.
- Cameron, R. K., & McCall, R. E. N. E. E. (2020). Coming from where we're from: The stories and experiences of African American students in predominantly white high schools. *VUE (Voices in Urban Education)*, 49(2).
- Chang, H. N., Gee, K., Hennessy, B., Alexandro, D., & Gopalakrishnan, A. (2021). Chronic absence patterns and prediction during covid-19: Insights from Connecticut. *Connecticut, EUA*.
- Chazdon, S.A., and Lott, S. (2010). Ready for engagement: Using key informant interviews to measure community social capacity. *Community Development*, 41(2), 156-175.
- Coburn, C. E. (2005). Shaping teacher sensemaking: School leaders and the enactment of reading policy. *Educational Policy*, 19(3), 476–509.
- Costello, B., Wachtel, C., and Wachtel, T. (2019). *The restorative practices handbook: For teachers, disciplinarians, and administrators*. 2nd Ed. Behthlehem, PA: International Institute for Restorative Practices.
- Creagh, S., Thompson, G., Mockler, N., Stacey, M., & Hogan, A. (2023). Workload, work intensification and time poverty for teachers and school leaders: A systematic research synthesis. *Educational Review*, 1-20.
- Crenshaw, K., Ocen, P., and Nanda, J. (2015). *Black girls matter: Pushed-out, over-policed, and under-protected*. New York: African-American Policy Forum. Retrieved from: <https://www.aapf.org/blackgirlsmatter>
- Creswell, J.W., and Creswell, J.D. (2018). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*, 5th edition. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publishing.
- Cummings, L., & Bromiley, P. (1996). Organizational trust inventory. In R. Kramer & T. R. Tyler (Eds.), *Trust in organizations* (pp. 302–330). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

- Curran, F. C. (2016). Estimating the effect of state zero tolerance laws on exclusionary discipline, racial discipline gaps, and student behavior. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 38(4), 647-668.
- Curran, F. C. (2016). Estimating the effect of state zero tolerance laws on exclusionary discipline, racial discipline gaps, and student behavior. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 38(4), 647-668.
- Daly, A.J., and Finnigan, K.S. (2012). Exploring the space between: Social networks, trust, and urban school district leaders. *Journal of School Leadership*, 22, 493-530.
- Datnow, A., Lansky, S., Stringfield, S., & Teddlie, C. (2006). *Systemic integration for effective reform in racially and linguistically diverse contexts*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Dee, T. S. (2024). Higher chronic absenteeism threatens academic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 121(3), e2312249121.
- Dhaliwal, T.K., Daramola, E.J., Alonso, J.D., and Marsh, J.A. (2021) Educators' beliefs and perceptions of implementing restorative practices. *Education and Urban Society*, 00 (0), 1-31.
- Dorn, E., Hancock, B., Sarakatsannis, J., & Viruleg, E. (2021). COVID-19 and education: The lingering effects of unfinished learning. *McKinsey & Company*, 27.
- Epstein, J.L., and Sanders, M.G. (2009). Prospects for change: Preparing educators for school, family, and community partnerships. *Peabody Journal of Education*, 81(2), 81-120.
- Etikan, I., Musa, S. A., & Alkassim, R. S. (2016). Comparison of convenience sampling and purposive sampling. *American Journal of Theoretical and Applied Statistics*, 5(1), 1-4.
- Fairman, J. C., Smith, D. J., Pullen, P. C., & Lebel, S. J. (2022). The challenge of keeping teacher professional development relevant. In *Leadership for Professional Learning* (pp. 251-263). Routledge.
- Forsyth, P. B., & Adams, C. M. (2004). Social capital in education: Taking stock of concept and measure. In W. K. Hoy & C. G. Miskel (Eds.), *Educational administration, policy, and reform: Research and measurement* (pp. 251-278). Greenwich, CT: Information Age.
- Forsyth, P. B., Adams, C. M., & Hoy, W. K. (2011). *Collective trust: Why schools can't improve without it*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Fukuyama, F. (1995). *Trust: The Social Virtues and the Creation of Prosperity*. Toronto: Simon and Schuster.

- Fullan, M. (2007). Change the terms for teacher learning. *Journal of Staff Development*, 28(3), 35-36.
- Gover, L., & Duxbury, L. (2018). Making sense of organizational change: Is hindsight really 20/20?. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 39(1), 3.
- González, T., Sattler, H., Buth, A.J. (2018) New directions in whole-school restorative justice implementation. *Conflict Resolution Quarterly*, 36, 207–220.
- Gottman, J. (2011). John Gottman on trust and betrayal. *Greater Good Magazine*, October 29.
- Granero-Gallegos, A., Baños, R., Baena-Extremera, A., & Martínez-Molina, M. (2020). Analysis of misbehaviors and satisfaction with school in secondary education according to student gender and teaching competence. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 11, 63.
- Green, A.E., Willging, C.E., Zamarinb, K., Dehaimanc, L.M., Ruilobad, P. (2019). Cultivating healing by implementing restorative practices for youth: Protocol for a cluster randomized trial. *International Journal of Education Research*, 93, 168–176.
- Gregory, A., Clawson, K., Davis, A., Gerewitz, J. (2015). The promise of restorative practices to transform teacher-student relationships and achieve equity in school discipline. *Journal Educational Psychology*, 25, 325–353.
- Gregory, A., Fergus, E. (2017). Social and emotional learning and equity in school discipline. *The Future of Children*, 27 (1), 117-136.
- Gregory, A.; Ward-Seidel, A.R.; Carter, K.V. (2021). Twelve indicators of restorative practices implementation: A framework for educational leaders. *Journal Educational Psychology*, 31, 147–179.
- Griffen, J. (2019). Families and counselors taking action to transform culture: An action-inquiry case study of an urban high school. *Education and Urban Society*, 51(4), 501-525.
- Gwathney, A.N. (2021). Offsetting Racial Divides: Adolescent African American Males & Restorative Justice Practices. *Clinical Social Work Journal*, 49, 346–355.
- Handford, V., and Leithwood, K. (2012). Why teachers trust school leaders. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 51(2), 194-212.
- Hannigan, J.D., and Hannigan, J.E. (2022). *Don't suspend me!: An alternative discipline toolkit*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.
- Honig, M.I. (2006). Complexity and policy implementation. In M.I. Honig (Ed.), *New directions in education policy implementation: Confronting complexity* (pp. 1-23). SUNY.

- Hoover-Dempsey, K. and Sandler, H. (1997). Why do parents become involved in their children's education? *Review of Higher Education*, 67, 3-42.
- Hopkins, B. (2003). Restorative justice in schools. *Support for Learning*, vol. 17 (3), pp. 144-149
- Hoy, W.K., and Tarter, C.K. (2004). Organizational justice in schools: No justice without trust. *International Journal of Educational Management*, 18, 250-259.
- Hoy, W.K., Tarter, C.K., and Kottkamp, R.B. (1991). *Open schools/healthy schools: Measuring organizational climate*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Ingold, T. (2000). *The perception of the environment: Essays on livelihood, dwelling and skill*. Routledge.
- Ingraham, C.L.; Hokoda, A.; Moehlenbruck, D.; Karafin, M.; Manzo, C.; Ramirez, D. (2016). Consultation and collaboration to develop and implement restorative practices in a culturally and linguistically diverse elementary school. *Journal Educational Psychology*, 26, 354-384.
- Ishimaru, A.M. (2014). When new relationships meet old narratives: The journey towards improving parent-school relations in a district-community organizing collaboration. *Teachers College Record*, 116, 1-49.
- Irons, P. (2014). *Jim Crow's schools*. Retrieved from:
<http://www.aft.org/periodical/american-educator/summer-2004/jim-crow-schools>
- Irvine, A. and Canfield, A. (2015). Factsheet: The overrepresentation of lesbian, gay, bisexual, questioning, gender nonconforming, and transgender youth in the juvenile justice system. *Impact Justice*.
- Jabbari, J., and Johnson Jr., O. (2023) The collateral damage of in-school suspensions: A counterfactual analysis of high-suspension schools, math achievement, and college attendance. *Urban Education*, 58(5), 801-837.
- Johnson, B. (2001). Toward a new classification of nonexperimental quantitative research. *Educational Researcher*, 30(2), 3-13.
- Kehoe, M., Bourke-Taylor, H., & Broderick, D. (2018). Developing student social skills using restorative practices: A new framework called HEART. *Social Psychology of Education*, 21, 189-207.
- Kitchenham, A. (2010). The evolution of John Mezirow's transformative learning theory. *Journal of Transformative Education*, 6, 104-123.

- Kidde, J. (2017). Whole-school restorative approach resource guide: An orientation to whole-school restorative approach and guide toward more in-depth resources and current research. *Vermont Agency of Education*.
- Klevan, S. (2021). Building a positive school culture through restorative practices. *Learning Policy Institute*.
- Kulinna, P. H., Cothran, D., and Regualos, R. (2006). Teachers' reports of student misbehavior in physical education. *Research Quarterly for Exercise and Sport* 77, 32–40.
- Laerd Statistics. (2023). *Multiple regression analysis using SPSS statistics*. Retrieved from <https://statistics.laerd.com/spss-tutorials/multiple-regression-using-spss-statistics.php>
- Limon, I., Sezgin Nartgün, S. (2020). Investigation of teachers' change fatigue level: Comparison by demographics. *Educational Administration Theory and Practice*, 26 (2), pp. 401-448.
- Lomaz, R.G., and Hahs-Vaughn, D.L. (2012). *An introduction to statistical concepts*, 3rd edition. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Losen, D. and Skiba, R. (2010). Suspended education: Urban middle school in crisis. Retrieved from: <https://escholarship.org/content/qt8fh0s5dv/qt8fh0s5dv.pdf>
- Lopez, E., Dueñas, R., and Lopez, J. (2021) Reimagining restorative justice in an ethnic studies high school classroom. In Winn, M.T., and Winn, L.T. (Eds.) *Restorative justice in education: Transforming teaching and learning through the disciplines* (pp. 10-24). Harvard Education Press.
- Lustick, H. (2021). Going restorative, staying tough: Urban principals' perceptions of restorative practices in collocated small schools. *Education and Urban Society*, 53 (7), 739-760.
- Lustick, H., Norton, C., Lopez, S.R., Greene-Rooks, J.H. (2020). Restorative practices for empowerment: A social work lens. *Children & Schools*, 42 (2).
- Maitlis, S., Vogus, T.J., and Lawrence, T.B. (2013). Sensemaking and emotion in organization. *Organizational Psychology Review*, 3(3), 222-247.
- Mansfield, K.C., Fowler, E., & Rainbolt, S. (2018). The potential of restorative practices to ameliorate discipline gaps: The story of one high school's leadership team. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 54 (2), 303-323.
- Marable, M. (1997). *Black liberation in conservative America*. Boston: South End Press.
- McCluskey, G., Lloyd, G., Stead, J., Kane, J., Riddell, S., and Weedon, E. (2008). 'I was dead restorative today': From restorative justice to restorative approaches in school. *Cambridge Journal Of Education*, 38 (2), 199-216.

- McIntosh, K., Ellwood, K., McCall, L., & Girvan, E. (2018). Using discipline data to enhance equity in school discipline. *Intervention in School and Clinic*, Vol. 53 (3), 146-152.
- Mezirow, J. (1991). Transformation theory and cultural context: A reply to Clark and Wilson, *Adult Education Quarterly*, 41(3), 188-192.
- Mezirow, J. (1995). Transformative theory of adult learning. In M. Welton (ed.) *In Defense of the Lifeworld*. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Mezirow, J. (1997). Transformative learning: Theory to practice. *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education*, 74, 5-12.
- Mezirow, J. (1998). On critical reflection. *Adult Learning Quarterly*, 48(3), 185-198.
- Mezirow, J. (2000). *Learning as transformation: Critical perspectives on a theory in progress*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Mezirow, J. (2006). An overview of transformative learning. In P. Sutherland & J. Crowther (Eds.) *Lifelong learning: Concepts and contexts* (pp. 24-38). New York: Rutledge.
- Menkel-Meadow, C. (2007). Restorative justice: What is it and does it work? *Annual Review of Law and Social Science*, 3, pp. 161-187.
- Morris, M.W. (2016). *Pushout: The Criminalization of Black Girls in Schools*. The New Press.
- Morris, M.W. (2012). *Race, gender, and the school-to-prison pipeline: Expanding the conversation to include Black girls*. New York: African-American Policy Forum.
Retrieved from:
<https://youthrex.com/report/race-gender-and-the-school-to-prison-pipeline>
- Murphy, J. (2008). The place of leadership in turnaround schools. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 46(1), 74-98.
- McIntosh, K., Girvan, E. J., Fairbanks Falcon, S., McDaniel, S. C., Smolkowski, K., Bastable, E., Santiago-Rosario, M. R., Izzard, S., Austin, S. C., Nese, R. N. T., & Baldy, T. S. (2021). Equity-focused PBIS approach reduces racial inequities in school discipline: A randomized controlled trial. *School Psychology*, 36(6), 433–444.
- National Center for Education Statistics (2022). More than 80 percent of U.S. public schools report pandemic has negatively impacted student behavior and socio-emotional development. Retrieved from:
https://nces.ed.gov/whatsnew/press_releases/07_06_2022.asp
- National Research Council and Institute of Medicine (2004). *Engaging schools: Fostering high school students' motivation to learn*. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press.

- National Center for Education Statistics (2022). More than 80 percent of U.S. public schools report pandemic has negatively impacted student behavior and socio-emotional development. Retrieved from:
https://nces.ed.gov/whatsnew/press_releases/07_06_2022.asp
- Nazaretsky, T., Cukurova, M., & Alexandron, G. (2022). An Instrument for Measuring Teachers' Trust in AI-Based Educational Technology.
- Osta, K., and Vasquez, H. (2022). Implicit bias and structural inequity. *National Equity Project*. Retrieved from:
<https://www.nationalequityproject.org/frameworks/implicit-bias-structural-racialization>
- Perry, B. L. & Morris, E.W. (2014). Suspending progress: Collateral consequences of exclusionary punishment in public schools. *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 79 (6), 1067-1087.
- Pickens, J. (2005). Attitudes and perceptions. *Organizational Behavior in Health Care*, 4(7), 43-76.
- Price-Mitchell, M. (2009). Boundary dynamics: Implications for building parent-school partnerships. *The School Community Journal*, 19(2), 9-26.
- Reinecke, J., and Ansari, S. (2015). What is a 'fair' price? Ethics as sensemaking. *Organization Science*, 26(3), 867-888.
- Robbins, Z.S. (2021). *Restorative Justice Tribunal: And Ways to Derail Jim Crow Discipline in School*. Routledge.
- Roehlkepartain, E.C., Pekel, K., Syvertsen, A.K., Sethi, J., Sullivan, T.K., and Scales, P.C. (2017). *Relationships first: Creating connections that help young people thrive*. Minneapolis, MN: Search Institute.
- Rookes, P. & Willson, J. (2000). *Perception: Theory, development and organization*. Routledge.
- Schwartz, K. D., Exner-Cortens, D., McMorris, C. A., Makarenko, E., Arnold, P., Van Bavel, M., & Canfield, R. (2021). COVID-19 and student well-being: Stress and mental health during return-to-school. *Canadian Journal of School Psychology*, 36(2), 166-185.
- Seeram, E. (2019). An overview of correlational research. *Radiologic technology*, 91(2), 176-179.
- Shayo, H.J., Rao, C., and Kakupa, P. (2021). Conceptualization and measurement of trust in home-school contexts: A scoping review. *Educational Psychology*, 12, 1-15.

- Silverman, J., & Mee, M. (2018). Using restorative practices to prepare teachers to meet the needs of young adolescents. *Education Sciences*, 8(3), 131.
- Siddle Walker, V. (2021). Why history matters. In Winn, M.T., and Winn, L.T. (Eds.) *Restorative justice in education: Transforming teaching and learning through the disciplines* (pp. 10-24). Harvard Education Press.
- Smith, E. J., & Harper, S. R. (2015). Disproportionate impact of K-12 school suspension and expulsion on Black students in southern states. Retrieved from: <https://race.usc.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Pub-14-Smith-and-Harper.pdf>
- Smith, M. (2008). Right directions, wrong maps: Understanding the involvement of low-SES African American parents to enlist them as partner in college choice. *Education and Urban Society*, 41, 171-196.
- Smith, P.A., Hoy, W.K., and Sweetland, S.R. (2001). Organizational health of high schools and dimensions of faculty trust. *Journal of School Leadership*, 11, 135-151
- Spillane, J. P., Reiser, B. J., & Gomez, L. M. (2006). Policy implementation and cognition: The role of human, social, and distributed cognition in framing policy implementation. In M. I. Honig (Ed.), *New directions in education policy implementation: Confronting complexity* (pp. 47–64). SUNY Press.
- St. John, E. P., Griffith, A. I., & Allen-Haynes, L. (1997). *Families in schools: A chorus of voices in restructuring*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- St. John, E.P., Masse, J.C., Fisher, A.S., Moronski-Chapman, K., Lee, M. (2014). Beyond the bridge: Actionable research informing the development of a comprehensive intervention strategy. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 58, 1051-1070.
- Stratton, S. J. (2021). Population research: convenience sampling strategies. *Prehospital and Disaster Medicine*, 36(4), 373-374.
- Sullivan, J. N., Eberhardt, J. L., & Roberts, S. O. (2021). Conversations about race in Black and White US families: Before and after George Floyd's death. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 118(38).
- Taylor, E. W. (1998). *The theory and practice of transformative learning: A critical review*. Columbus, OH: ERIC Clearinghouse on Adult, Career, and Vocational Education.
- Tedam, P., & Cane, T. (2022). “We started talking about race and racism after George Floyd”: insights from research into practitioner preparedness for anti-racist social work practice in England. *Critical and radical social work*, 10(2), 260-279.

- Theoharis, G., George, L., & Mauldin, C. (2023). The House Is on Fire: A reckoning of leadership and DEI initiatives in predominantly white schools. *Journal of Cases in Educational Leadership*, 26(2), 118-137.
- Tian, X. (2023). Educational reform and prospects in the post-pandemic era. *Journal of Education, Humanities and Social Sciences*, 19, 262-270.
- Tschannen-Moran, M. (2004). *Trust matters: Leadership for successful schools*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Tschannen-Moran, M., and Gareis, C.R. (2017). Principals, trust, and cultivating vibrant schools. In: Leithwood, K.A., Sun, J., and Pollock, K. (eds.) *How School Leaders Contribute to Student Success: The Four Paths Framework*. Springer International Publishing, 153-174.
- Tschannen-Moran, M., and Hoy, W.K. (2000). A multidisciplinary analysis of the nature, meaning, and measurement of trust. *Review of Educational Research*, 71, 547-593.
- Turner, J.R., Allen, J., Hawamdeh, S., Mastanamma, G. (2023). The multifaceted sensemaking theory: A systemic literature review and content analysis of sensemaking. *Systems*, 11, 145-169.
- Van Houtte, M. (2006). Tracking teacher satisfaction: Role of study culture and trust. *Journal of Educational Research*, 99(4), 245-254.
- Van Maele, D., and Van Houtte, M. (2014). Trust in school: A pathway to inhibit teacher burnout? *Journal of Educational Administration*, 53(1), 93-115.
- Velez, G. M. (2021). School-based restorative justice: Lessons and opportunities in a post-pandemic world. *Laws*, 10(3), 71.
- Wachtel, T. (2106). Defining restorative. *International Institute for Restorative Practices*.
- Walker, T. (2021). Getting serious about teacher burnout. *NEA Today*, Nov. 2021.
- Warren, E.; Bevilacqua, L.; Opondo, C.; Allen, E.; Mathiot, A.; West, G.; Jamal, F.; Viner, R.; Bonell, C.(2019). Action groups as a participative strategy for leading whole-school health promotion: Results on implementation from the INCLUSIVE trial in English secondary schools. *British Educational Research Journal*, 45, 979–1000.
- Wearmouth, J. and Berryman, M. (2012). Viewing restorative approaches to addressing challenging behaviour of minority ethnic students through a community practice lens. *Cambridge Journal of Education*, 42 (2), pp. 253-268.
- Weick, K.E. (1995). *Sensemaking in organizations*. SAGE Publications Inc.

- Weinstien, J., Raczynski, D., Peña, J. (2020). Relational trust and positional power between school principals and teachers in Chile: A study of primary schools. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, 49(I), 64-81.
- Wright, C.R., and Manning, M.R. (2004). Resourceful sensemaking in an administrative group. *Journal of Management Studies*, 41(4), 623-643.
- U.S. Department of Education Office of Civil Rights (2106), 2013-2014 Civil Rights Data Collection, A First Look: Key data highlights on equity and opportunity gaps in Our Nation's Public Schools, 2016 (updated October 2016), 3, Retrieved from: <https://www.2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/2013-14-first-look.pdf>
- Yildirim, M. and Yanpar Yelken, T. (2020). The development of transformative learning scale for information and communication technologies. *Technology, Knowledge, and Learning*, 25, 989-1006.

Appendix

Table A1.

RP survey items and constructs

Construct	Definition and Measurement
<i>Attitudes and Beliefs</i>	
Beliefs about punitive discipline M=2.49 SD=0.75 $\alpha=0.77$	Defined as an index for beliefs regarding punitive disciplinary practices. The index is composed of responses to: “To what extent do you agree with the following statements: ● Zero tolerance makes a significant contribution to maintain order at this school ● Zero tolerance sends a clear message to disruptive students about appropriate behaviors in school ● Suspension is a necessary tool for maintaining school order ● Schools cannot afford to tolerate students who disrupt the learning environment” The index is measured on a four-point scale from “Not at all”=1, “To a small extent”=2, “To a moderate extent”=3, to “To a great extent”=4, and takes the average of values across each question.
Individual understanding of RP M=3.01 SD=0.77	Defined as a continuous outcome for individual understanding of RP. “To what extent do you agree or not with the following statements about Restorative Practices?: ● I have a clear understanding of RP” The response is measured on a four-point scale from “Not at all”=1, “To a small extent”=2, “To a moderate extent”=3, to “To a great extent”=4.
Teachers at campus understanding of RP M=2.43 SD=0.76	Defined as a continuous outcome for perception of the extent to which teachers on the respondent’s campus understand RP. “To what extent do you agree or not with the following statements about Restorative Practices?: ● Teachers at my school have a clear understanding of RP”

	The response is measured on a four-point scale from “Not at all”=1, “To a small extent”=2, “To a moderate extent”=3, to “To a great extent”=4.
Belief that RP is critical for student behavior and learning M=3.21 SD=0.83 α=0.94	Defined as a continuous outcome for beliefs that RP is critical for improving student behavior. “To what extent do you agree or not with the following statements about Restorative Practices?: ● I believe RP are critical for improving student behavior ● I believe RP are critical for improving student learning” The response is measured on a four-point scale from “Not at all”=1, “To a small extent”=2, “To a moderate extent”=3, to “To a great extent”=4.
Non-school-based sources of racial discipline gaps M=2.62 SD=0.73 α=0.76	Defined as an index for beliefs about the non-school-based factors contributing to higher rates of suspensions and expulsions for students of color compared to other groups. The index is composed of responses to: “To what extent do you believe each of these factors is responsible for the higher rate of suspensions and expulsions for students of color compared to other racial/ethnic groups? ● Student Behavior ● Parenting ● Neighborhood Environment ● Income Levels” The index is measured on a five-point scale from “Not at all what I believe”=1, “Somewhat true of what I believe”=2, “True of what I believe”=3, to “Very true of what I believe”=4, and takes the average of values across each question.
School-based sources of racial discipline gaps M=2.45 SD=0.85 α=0.65	Defined as an index for beliefs about the school-based factors contributing to higher rates of suspensions and expulsions for students of color compared to other groups. The index is composed of responses to: “To what extent do you believe each of these factors is responsible for the higher rate of suspensions and expulsions for students of color compared to other racial/ethnic groups? ● District discipline policies that give too much discretion to teacher and administrators ● Implicit Bias”

Prioritizing racial discipline gap M=3.63 SD=1.14	The index is measured on a five-point scale from “Not at all what I believe”=1, “Somewhat true of what I believe”=2, , “True of what I believe”=3, to “Very true of what I believe”=4, and takes the average of values across each question. Defined as a continuous outcome for the extent to which respondents believed closing racial discipline gaps in their district was a priority. “As you know, many schools and districts in California have higher rates of suspensions and expulsions for students of color compared to other racial/ethnic groups. Thinking about all of the important issues facing schools today, how much of a priority do you think it is to close racial gaps in suspension rates in your district?” The response is measured on a five-point scale from “Not a priority”=1, “Low priority”=2, “Medium priority”=3, “High priority”=4, to “Essential”=5.
<i>Hindrances</i>	
Lack of will to implement M=2.77 SD=1.05	Defined as a continuous outcome for the extent to which the lack of teacher/staff support is a hindrance to the implementation of RP. “To what extent is each of the following a hindrance to your ability to implement Restorative Practice? ● Lack of teacher/staff support for non-punitive forms of managing behavior” The response is measured on a four-point scale from “Not a hindrance”=1, “A slight hindrance”=2, “A moderate hindrance”=3, to “A great hindrance”=4.
Lack of time to implement M=3.00 SD=0.95 α=0.80	Defined as an index for the extent to which the lack of time for planning, meetings, observations, and preparation, as well as the overall time required for RP implementation, is a hindrance to the implementation or RP. The index is composed of responses to: “To what extent is each of the following a hindrance to your ability to implement Restorative Practice? ● Insufficient time for me to plan professional development, meet with teachers, and visit their classrooms ● Lack of teacher/staff planning time built into the school day to prepare for implementing RP

	Time required to implement RP cuts into instructional time” The index is measured on a four-point scale from “Not a hindrance”=1, “A slight hindrance”=2, “A moderate hindrance”=3, to “A great hindrance”=4, and takes the average of values across each question.
Lack of professional development M=2.85 SD=1.03	Defined as a continuous outcome for the extent to which the lack of high-quality professional development opportunities is a hindrance to the implementation of RP. “To what extent is each of the following a hindrance to your ability to implement Restorative Practice? Lack of high-quality professional development opportunities for RP” The response is measured on a four-point scale from “Not a hindrance”=1, “A slight hindrance”=2, “A moderate hindrance”=3, to “A great hindrance”=4.
Lack of capacity due to other responsibilities M=2.99 SD=1.08	Defined as a continuous outcome for the extent to which the expectation of supporting other teachers or staff is a hindrance to the implementation of RP. “To what extent is each of the following a hindrance to your ability to implement Restorative Practice? The large number of teachers/staff I am expected to support” The response is measured on a four-point scale from “Not a hindrance”=1, “A slight hindrance”=2, “A moderate hindrance”=3, to “A great hindrance”=4.
Lack of leadership and support from school, district, and parents/community M=2.48 SD=1.07 $\alpha=0.74$	Defined as an index for the extent to which the lack of leadership, district, and parent/community support is a hindrance to the implementation or RP. The index is composed of responses to: “To what extent is each of the following a hindrance to your ability to implement Restorative Practice? - Lack of school leadership support for implementing RP - Lack of district support for implementing RP - Lack of parent/community support in implementing RP”

	The index is measured on a four-point scale from “Not a hindrance”=1, “A slight hindrance”=2, “A moderate hindrance”=3, to “A great hindrance”=4, and takes the average of values across each question.
Lack of cohesion M=2.91 SD=0.96	Defined as a continuous outcome for the extent to which the lack of alignment between RP and other concurrent discipline policies is a hindrance to the implementation of RP. “To what extent is each of the following a hindrance to your ability to implement Restorative Practice? ● Lack of alignment between RP and concurrent discipline programs/policies (i.e., PBIS, zero tolerance)” The response is measured on a four-point scale from “Not a hindrance”=1, “A slight hindrance”=2, “A moderate hindrance”=3, to “A great hindrance”=4.
<i>Effects</i>	
Sense of community amongst students, teachers, and/or staff M=3.08 SD=0.94 α=0.91	Defined as an index for the effects of RP implementation on a sense of community. The index is composed of responses to: “To what extent do you agree or not with the following statements about the effects of Restorative Practices implemented in your school/classroom? ● Improved relationships between students and teachers/staff ● Improved sense of community among students ● Improved sense of community among teachers/staff” The index is measured on a four-point scale from “Not at all”=1, “To a small extent”=2, “To a moderate extent”=3, to “To a great extent”=4, and takes the average of values across each question.
Safety M=2.88 SD=1.01	Defined as a continuous outcome for the effects of RP implementation on school safety. “To what extent do you agree or not with the following statements about the effects of Restorative Practices implemented in your school/classroom? ● Increases in school safety” The response is measured on a four-point scale from “Not at all”=1, “To a small extent”=2, “To a moderate extent”=3, to “To a great extent”=4.

Student misbehavior and use of suspension and expulsions M=2.85 SD=0.79 α=0.98	Defined as an index for the effects of RP implementation on student misbehavior as well as suspensions and expulsions. The index is composed of responses to: “To what extent do you agree or not with the following statements about the effects of Restorative Practices implemented in your school/classroom?” ● Decreased student misbehavior ● Decreased violence and/or bullying ● Decreased student suspensions ● Decreased student expulsions ● Decreased student suspension or expulsions of students of color” The index is measured on a four-point scale from “Not at all”=1, “To a small extent”=2, “To a moderate extent”=3, to “To a great extent”=4, and takes the average of values across each question.
Student, teacher, and/or staff voice M=2.59 SD=0.90 α=0.69	Defined as an index for the effects of RP implementation on teacher/staff and student voice in discipline issues. The index is composed of responses to: “To what extent do you agree or not with the following statements about the effects of Restorative Practices implemented in your school/classroom?” ● Increased teachers/staff voice in discipline issues ● Increase student voice in discipline issues” The index is measured on a four-point scale from “Not at all”=1, “To a small extent”=2, “To a moderate extent”=3, to “To a great extent”=4, and takes the average of values across each question.
Instructional time M=2.30 SD=1.06	Defined as a continuous outcome for the effects of RP implementation on instructional time. “To what extent do you agree or not with the following statements about the effects of Restorative Practices implemented in your school/classroom?” ● Increases in instructional time” The response is measured on a four-point scale from “Not at all”=1, “To a small extent”=2, “To a moderate extent”=3, to “To a great extent”=4.

Student and staff absenteeism M=2.32 SD=1.07 $\alpha=0.89$	Defined as an index for the effects of RP implementation on teacher/staff and student absenteeism. The index is composed of responses to: “To what extent do you agree or not with the following statements about the effects of Restorative Practices implemented in your school/classroom?” ● Decreased student absenteeism ● Decreased teacher/staff absenteeism” The index is measured on a four-point scale from “Not at all”=1, “To a small extent”=2, “To a moderate extent”=3, “To a great extent”=4, and takes the average of values across each question.
---	--

Appendix B

Figure B1

Recruitment Email

Hello,

My name is Shari Gateley. I am a student in the Education Leadership and Policy Studies department at the University of Oklahoma, and I wanted to invite you to participate in my doctoral research project regarding **Educator Perceptions, Attitudes, and Beliefs about Restorative Practices**.

This research is being conducted at the University of Oklahoma. You were selected as a possible participant because you are a public school educator.

The survey should only take 10 minutes and is intended to collect information about your experience with restorative practices. This survey will ask you to share your years of experience, your school district, gender, race and ethnicity, certification status, etc. Your responses will be confidential and under no circumstances will any identifying information about you or your school district be disclosed.

Your participation is voluntary, but all participants will be able to enter a drawing for a \$20 Visa Gift Card.

To participate in this survey, please visit the link below:

<https://bit.ly/3Pap6eU>

Figure B2

Follow up email

Hello,

My name is Shari Gateley. I am a student in the Education Leadership and Policy Studies department at the University of Oklahoma. I am reaching back out as a follow-up to my previous invitation to participate in my doctoral research project regarding **Educator Perceptions, Attitudes, and Beliefs about Restorative Practices**.

The survey should only take 10 minutes and is intended to collect information about your experience with restorative practices. This survey will ask you to share your years of experience, your school district, gender, race and ethnicity, certification status, etc. Your responses will be confidential and under no circumstances will any identifying information about you or your school district be disclosed.

Your participation is voluntary, but all participants will be to enter a drawing for a \$20 Visa Gift Card.

To participate in this survey, please visit the link below:

<https://bit.ly/3Pap6eU>

Appendix C

Figure C1

IRB Approval

 **The UNIVERSITY of OKLAHOMA**

Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects
Approval of Initial Submission – Exempt from IRB Review – AP01

Date: March 08, 2024 **IRB#:** 16945

Principal Investigator: Shari Dawn Gateley

Approval Date: 03/07/2024

Exempt Category: 2

Study Title: Compliance vs Restoration: Educators' attitudes, beliefs, and perceptions of restorative practices as a response to student behaviors

On behalf of the Institutional Review Board (IRB), I have reviewed the above-referenced research study and determined that it meets the criteria for exemption from IRB review. To view the documents approved for this submission, open this study from the *My Studies* option, go to *Submission History*, go to *Completed Submission* tab and then click the *Details* icon.

As principal investigator of this research study, you are responsible to:

- Conduct the research study in a manner consistent with the requirements of the IRB and federal regulations 45 CFR 46.
- Request approval from the IRB prior to implementing any/all modifications as changes could affect the exempt status determination.
- Maintain accurate and complete study records for evaluation by the HRPP Quality Improvement Program and, if applicable, inspection by regulatory agencies and/or the study sponsor.
- Notify the IRB at the completion of the project.

If you have questions about this notification or using iRIS, contact the IRB @ 405-325-8110 or irb@ou.edu.

Cordially,



Aimee Franklin, Ph.D.
Chair, Institutional Review Board

