

San Juan High

San Juan USD | Citrus Heights, CA | (916) 971-5112 | www.sanjuan.edu/sanjuan

Subject: Discipline, Data Use

Practice: Restorative Justice Advocacy

Restorative Justice Advocacy

Restorative Justice Advocacy (RJA) was developed to improve school climate and culture by specifically addressing conflict and harms, and lack of safety on campus, as revealed by suspension rates and CHKS data. Suspension rates for the 2012-13 school year dropped to one-third of the previous year's rates, and the School Climate Index (SCI) improved 88 points.

After looking at suspension rates and CHKS data from the previous two years, the School Climate Team created a program that would decrease suspensions while creating a campus that was deemed safe by students, staff, families and the surrounding community.

In August of the 2012-13 school year, the S3 Coordinator and 14 students attended a 3 day workshop facilitated by the Restorative Justice Training Institute (www.rjtica.org) out of Oakland, CA. During the workshop, the program coordinator and student leaders were educated on the origins of Restorative Justice, underlying themes of the work and how it may be applied in a school setting. The students (Restorative Justice Advocates) and program coordinator who lead the work being done through Restorative Justice Advocacy, have received ongoing training in Restorative practices in partnership with the Restorative Schools Vision Project. This training has been invaluable in increasing the expertise of the RJA members in utilizing Restorative measures to improve school climate and culture. A key strategy implemented by the RJA students was the utilization of Reconciliation Circles in response to conflict. These Circles address conflict between students with the key purpose of establishing the root cause of the issue and through restorative conversations, provide an opportunity for resolutions before issues escalate. These Circles also have been used to "reintegrate" students who have been suspended due to fighting - ensuring that those involved in the altercation have resolved the issue and no further conflict will ensue.

During the pilot year of the program (2012-13), Restorative Justice Advocates facilitated 24 Reconciliation Circles. Of those 24 Circles, 21 resulted in resolutions after the first Circle, while the other three issues were reconciled with additional follow up. In addition to the Circles, RJ Advocates spent a great deal of time and energy promoting restorative practices during rallies, lunchtime activities and various other promotions. Due in large part to the efforts of the RJA members, suspension rates dropped from 389 for the 2011-12 school year to 133 for the 2012-13 school year. In addition to these promising numbers, San Juan High School's School Climate Report Card illustrated the improvement of school climate and culture. San Juan's School Climate Index (SCI) improved 88 points in the 2012-13 school year. Restorative Justice Advocacy has made a huge impact at San Juan High School while shifting the school climate and culture. The Restorative Justice Advocates are happy with the progress but know there is still a lot of work to do.