The Family & Youth Restorative Conference Program

A restorative justice/youth development approach created and operated by the Legal Rights Center.

Implemented in collaboration with the Minneapolis Public Schools District. Program evaluation conducted in partnership with the University of Minnesota’s Healthy Youth Development • Prevention Research Center, with funding provided by the Minnesota Office of Justice Programs. Additional program support provided by the Minneapolis Foundation.

Student Participants

- 90 Student Participants consented to evaluation
- 63% Male
- Ages 11-17
- African American 90%
- Latino 10%
- White 7%
- American Indian 12%
- Multiple 15%

Program Goals

- paths to opportunity
- The program disrupts the standard paths established by systemic disparities to support young people and their families in academic success

Program Elements

- Restorative Family Conference
  - Led by LRC Restorative Facilitator
  - Identify family and student strengths
  - Discuss incident and school/home issues
  - Reflect on accountability
  - Identify support needed

Accountability Plan

- Created by participants, their family, district social worker and school representatives
- Address placement at new school
- Establish performance targets for restoring good standing at original school
- Referral to therapeutic or social services
- Establish supportive school-family communication process to maintain the path towards success

Re-engagement Plan

- Reintroduction to original school setting
- On-going connections and supports

Systemic Racial Disparities

Young people of color are disproportionately represented in the program – as they are nationally in measures of health and well-being. Research points to many causes – inequitable distribution of resources, bias within policies and practices – indicating that systemic issues play a dominant role.

Program Results

Results shown include percentages ‘agreed’ in post program survey as well as statistically significant differences in pre/post surveys.

Students

- Connected to school
  - Talks to family about problems with friends or dating (+0.29)
- Supports for learning
  - Knows who to talk about problems (+0.22)
  - I like school (+0.17)
  - Would recommend program to friend (97%)

Parents

- Connected to school
  - Talks to child about school (+0.21)
- Supports for learning
  - Knows someone they can ask if there’s a problem at school (+0.47)
  - Satisfied with program (97%)
  - Would recommend program to friend (94%)

Family Communication

- Makes good choices about how to act (+0.22)
- Less skipping or cutting school (-0.22)
- Less physical fighting (-0.21)

School Performance Trends

“it was helpful that I had people at school who I go and talk about my problems.”

Involvement in Justice System

In Minnesota’s Juvenile Justice System young people of color are 3x more likely to be arrested for a delinquency offense than white youth.

“that they talked me into doing better. I love that program cause if it wasn’t for them I wouldn’t be where I am today.”

Program Evaluation

- Implemented in collaboration with the Minneapolis Public Schools District
- Program evaluation conducted in partnership with the University of Minnesota’s Healthy Youth Development • Prevention Research Center, with funding provided by the Minnesota Office of Justice Programs
- Additional program support provided by the Minneapolis Foundation

In any given year in Minnesota's Juvenile Justice System 1 in 250 youth are referred for provision of transfer to a new or alternative educational setting due to behavioral incidents.

Students referred after receiving recommendation for expulsion due to behavioral incidents:

- Incidents leading to referral
  - Weapons
  - Assault

Discontinued and pushed-out from school

- Nearly 8 in 10 have seen someone get beat up, stabbed or shot with a gun (78%)

Students are referred after receiving recommendation for expulsion due to behavioral incidents:

- Guns
  - 78%
- Weapons
  - 48%
- Assault
  - 29%

In Minnesota’s Juvenile Justice System

- Nearly 8 in 10 have seen someone get beat up, stabbed or shot with a gun (78%)
- Students who are barely maintaining a connection with their school often are pushed out, as if suspension were a treatment. The statistics on the use of suspension for African American and special education students are cause for great concern. Every dropout costs society hundreds of thousands of dollars over the student’s lifetime in lost income, and removing a large number of students from school undermines a community’s future.

Involvement in Justice System

- In Minnesota’s Juvenile Justice System young people of color are 3x more likely to be arrested for a delinquency offense than white youth.

Involvement in Justice System

- In Minnesota’s Juvenile Justice System young people of color are 3x more likely to be arrested for a delinquency offense than white youth.

Program Evaluation

- Implemented in collaboration with the Minneapolis Public Schools District
- Program evaluation conducted in partnership with the University of Minnesota’s Healthy Youth Development • Prevention Research Center, with funding provided by the Minnesota Office of Justice Programs
- Additional program support provided by the Minneapolis Foundation

In any given year in Minnesota's Juvenile Justice System 1 in 250 youth are referred for provision of transfer to a new or alternative educational setting due to behavioral incidents.

Students referred after receiving recommendation for expulsion due to behavioral incidents:

- Incidents leading to referral
  - Weapons
  - Assault

Discontinued and pushed-out from school

- Nearly 8 in 10 have seen someone get beat up, stabbed or shot with a gun (78%)

Students are referred after receiving recommendation for expulsion due to behavioral incidents:

- Guns
  - 78%
- Weapons
  - 48%
- Assault
  - 29%