Ypsilanti Community Schools

Culture and Climate Advisory
Character Education Sub-Committee

April 11, 2013

RECOMMENDATIONS

1) We recommend that Ypsilanti Community Schools adopt **restorative practices (RP)** as its approach to character education throughout the district for the following reasons:

- RP has a focus on teaching and learning and building intrinsic motivation. It sets high expectations for students about behavior and high supports for success. It teaches problem solving, solution finding, critical thinking, empathy, conscience, making amends and forgiveness.
- RP is proactive and is not just about responding to discipline.
- It is NOT an entirely prescriptive program but is intended to be customized by the district. Everyone on the school staff has a say and a role in implementation. Staff is engaged in developing an explicit plan for implementation.
- All staff must be trained and ongoing coaching or professional learning groups are part of the model.
- RP gives teachers concrete skills to help create a better climate in every classroom, including proactive circles (staff would help decide when those should happen and whether they should happen in every class), affirmative statements and questions, reactive circles when a problem is detected, and more formal processes when conflicts arise are more intense and require additional staff assistance.
- RP has a common language that can be boiled down to one word: Respect. Through restorative practices, students will feel what respect is, know what it looks like, and understand how to give it to others.
- This is a model recognized internationally, nationally, and right here in Michigan by the Michigan Department of Education.
- Families are often called in to be part of RP conferences.

2) We recommend that the Board of Education support the implementation of district-wide restorative practices through a **work team process** to include parents, staff, and community members. The work team will determine the following:
- Vendor(s) to be used for training and services
- Timelines for professional development (year one, year two, etc.)
- Partnerships with community members and organizations to support RP in the schools
- Long-term plan for sustainability

3) We recommend that the Michigan Model for Health be adopted as the district's K-12 health curriculum, and that it be implemented at all grade levels. The curriculum includes social and emotional learning components, and students will learn skills that complement those they will learn through restorative practices.

DETAILS OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Creating a positive culture and climate is critical, and implementation must be done with fidelity from day one. The committee recognizes that all staff must "buy in" to the new approach, and we believe that restorative practices is a way of doing business to which all staff, students, and community members can relate and embrace. Efforts to create an ideal climate must be intentional, data and research driven, and mindful of the needs of individual schools within the district.

The committee's recommendation is based upon our definition of character education, which was developed over the course of several meetings:

> *Ypsilanti Community Schools believe that developing character and social-emotional skills are as important as academic achievement. Character education creates and supports a safe and healthy learning environment that promotes positive self-advocacy and citizenship while building a kind, caring, and just community. We are committed to identifying skills and practices that enable students to respect themselves and others. Adults in the district will model and teach these skills for students on a daily basis. This approach will enable students to develop habits required for lifelong success.*

The work team will focus on immediate needs for Year 1, and they will also suggest longer-term objectives for Years 2 and 3.

Year 1:
- Determine vendor(s) who will provide professional development and on-site RP services
- Provide broad professional development for all staff and board members in summer of 2013
- Plan follow-up professional development sessions and coaching throughout the 2013-14 school year
- Establish professional learning groups within each school to support RP work (through collection and analysis of data, sharing of ideas, etc.)
- Identify staff who will be trained as trainers for PD in Years 2 & 3
- Share successes with students, staff, families, and community members

- Build partnerships with community members and organizations to support RP in the schools

Year 2:
- Train staff to become RP trainers
- Provide PD in summer of 2014 for all staff (shorter "refresher" training for returning staff; longer, more in-depth training for new staff)
- Continue professional learning groups within each school to support RP work
- Share successes with students, staff, families, and community members
- Continue to build partnerships with community members and organizations to support RP in the schools

Year 3:
- Continue to provide professional development to both returning and new staff members
- Plan for sustainability, both within the district and with community partners
- Share successes with students, staff, families, and community members

Intersections with other Advisory Committee work:

- *Career Credentials & College Credit* – As YCS builds partnerships with post-secondary educational institutions, we will need to educate them about RP because they work with our students.

- *Co-Curricular Activities* – Ideally, RP would be leveraged by all adults who work with students in YCS (athletic coaches, out-of-school-time facilitators, etc.).

- *Early Childhood* – Restorative practices should be present at every level within YCS, starting with PreK.

- *Effective Leaders at All Levels* – Leadership must embrace RP and hold staff accountable for using it within their schools on daily basis. Otherwise, it will turn into yet another forgotten program, collecting dust on the shelf.

- *High Quality Teachers and Teaching* – Teachers must receive substantial and ongoing professional development to use RP to build relationships with their students, increase instructional time, and decrease behavioral problems. Also, a willingness to embrace RP could be part of criteria for hiring new teachers.

PROCESS

Overview

The task provided to the Character Education Sub-Committee of the Culture and Climate Community Advisory was to "select a comprehensive character education program for grades K-12" for the newly forming Ypsilanti Community Schools District. A diverse volunteer committee made up of parents, teachers/school staff, non-profit community leaders, and a middle grade student met over the course of two months to engage in a process to achieve the goal. The following report provides an overview of the participants, meeting goals process & key steps, summary of programs reviewed and key recommendations for a program, its implementation and next steps.

The committee started its task by gathering and examining information about the programs:
- Readings about each program/approach
- Interviews with people who had experience with the programs: Julie Stapp, trainer at Flippen Group (Capturing Kids' Hearts); Novi Community Schools administrator, principal, and elementary teacher, who have been using The Leader in Me for 5+ years
- Overviews presented at meetings about Capturing Kids' Hearts and The Leader in Me based on readings and interviews
- Presentations about restorative practices from The Dispute Resolution Center (Belinda Dulin, Margaret Rohr) and The Sower Center (Bill Sower)
- Presentation about the Michigan Model for Health from Mary Beno, Regional Health Coordinator, Livingston ESA

The group then listed pros and cons for each program and discussed how each might fit into the new district. To quantify our discussion, group members completed a survey in which they were asked to rate each program for relevance to our non-negotiables and the district principles. The results from those surveys can be found in Attachment 1. Informal discussions also took place about how the different programs might fit in with other parts of the district, including instruction and co-curricular activities. The final recommendation is based on a combination of the survey results and in-depth conversations at committee meetings.

Participants

In total, 24 different participants attended the 5 meetings held between January 30-March 21. The group represented a diverse community and included participants from: WRCS (social workers, S3 liaison), YPSD (teacher, parents, student, administrator, S3 liaison, custodial staff), LESA (regional health coordinator), Communities in Schools, Student Advocacy Center, WISD (transportation, SE), Neutral Zone, The Dispute Resolution Center, The Corner Health Center, MDE (Safe and Supportive Schools Grant), and the Washtenaw Juvenile Court.

Of these 24 participants, 18 people participated regularly (in at least 3 meetings).

Committee Meetings - Goals, Process & Key Steps

In the committee's first meeting on January 30 the group started by discussing what "positive climate" means from their own personal perspective. From that conversation the group did some active brainstorming around 'what we aspire to' for school culture/climate for the newly consolidated district. In the final meeting's step the group brainstormed and narrowed down the key components for positive climate/culture.   Minutes from those discussions are in Attachment 1.

On February 7, the group reconvened and narrowed down the key components for positive climate/culture to the most essential. The group then began a process to come up with a common understanding and definition for the idea of "character education". The group then began defining some "non negotiables" that we could use to vet different character education approaches.

During the March 7th meeting the advisory committee drafted its final definition for character education as follows:

> *Ypsilanti Community Schools believe that developing character and social-emotional skills are as important as academic achievement. Character education creates and supports a safe and healthy learning environment that promotes positive self-advocacy and citizenship while building a kind, caring, and just community. We are committed to identifying skills and practices that enable students to respect themselves and others. Adults in the district will model and teach these skills for students on a daily basis. This approach will enable students to develop habits required for lifelong success.*

During the March 7th meeting the advisory committee also finalized the "non negotiables" we intended to use to vet different character education approaches and programs. The final list is as follows:

- Program includes on-going professional development for every adult (bus drivers, teachers, lunch supervisors,...) working in schools - training on philosophy, practice and shared vocabulary of character education

- Approach has clear expectations, creates a supportive community, a safe and trusting environment, respect and appreciation for all, focuses on empathy and listening and supports the wrongdoer

- Teacher/staff can buy-in by having input/participation in development

- Program has continuity PreK-12

- Students have voice, meaningful roles and choices in the character education program

- Program is embedded in school climate (not an off-the-shelf program or separate class that students take)

- Program provides resources and approaches to teach and intervene in teachable moments without disrupting learning of all students

- Program includes In-school remedies - In-school suspension or plan

- Program includes peer mediation opportunities and/or learn conflict resolution skills

- Health and emotional well being is the foundation (for all -- students, teachers, staff, community, families) -- especially students' social/emotional/ethical development as well as academics

- There are clear and universal values and expectations that are embedded in the school climate and understood by all (even outside the district)

- There is an emphasis on positive (not punitive)

Programs Examined

The advisory committee examined four programs or approaches in-depth: restorative practices, Capturing Kids' Hearts, The Leader in Me, and the Michigan Model for Health curriculum. Various processes were used to consider these programs. In all instances, reading materials were reviewed and discussed with the committee and practitioners and/or vendors who use/disseminate each of the programs were interviewed by one or more of the advisory members. In the case of restorative practices and the Michigan Model for Health, presentations by providers or trainers were made to the full committee. The following are brief overviews of these approaches:

Restorative Practices
Restorative practices provide an underpinning ethos and philosophy for building, maintaining, and repairing relationships and for fostering a sense of social responsibility and shared accountability. Restorative practices promotes inclusiveness, relationship-building, and problem-solving through such restorative methods as circles for teaching and conflict resolution to conferences that bring victims, offenders, and their supporters together to address wrongdoing. Instead of punishment, students are encouraged to reflect on and take responsibility for their actions and come up with plans to repair harm.

Restorative practices occur over a continuum from "informal" to "formal" practices. On the informal end of the continuum are community circles used to build common language and understanding, foster communication, and establish community. Another informal practice is the use of affective statements, which are the personal expressions of feeling in response to specific positive or negative behaviors of others. Moving along the continuum are restorative questions, which are responses to negative behavior and conflict. Further along are impromptu conferences, which are exercises to quickly respond to lower-level incidents. Next are proactive circles, which are meetings with a group of students and are based on topics selected intentionally to deal with possible issues. Responsive circles and restorative conferences are at the formal intervention side of the continuum and use structured protocols in response to serious issues.

We learned about RP from Washtenaw County's The Dispute Resolution Center, Bill Sower from The Sower Center, and a video and written material about the International Institute for Restorative Practices' Safer Saner Schools program.

Capturing Kids' Hearts
CKH is a skill-driven, participatory approach intended to develop safe, trusting, self-managing classrooms and decrease negative behaviors. Capturing Kids' Hearts is meant for all faculty, staff, and administrators.

The primary focus is to develop healthy relationships between members of a school's educational community and to teach effective skills that help participants…
- Develop self-managing classrooms and decrease discipline issues through innovative techniques such as a social contract
- Decrease delinquent behaviors such as disruptive outbursts, violent acts, and drug use
- Utilize the EXCEL Teaching Model™ and reinforce the role of emotional intelligence in teaching
- Build classroom rapport and teamwork to create a safe, trusting learning environment
- Develop students' empathy for diverse cultures/backgrounds
- Increase classroom attendance by building students' motivation and helping them take responsibility for their actions and performance

The Flippen Group can work with district to align academic standards and expectations with character/behavior component. They also offer "district-by-design" support through two main programs:

1. Organization blueprint - Helps leaders coordinate critical systemic elements of an organization - mission, core principles, vision, capacity for change, alignment tools, accountability, and internal communication - to reach optimal results. Participants learn essential facilitation skills to guide their organization through a rigorous and effective strategic-planning process.

2. Leadership blueprint - Helps organizations cultivate true leadership potential at all levels to meet ambitious goals. At this training, leaders learn and practice specific skills that make clear, candid communication possible. They learn to use these skills in their personal relationships and to model and apply them on the job.

The Leader in Me

The Leader in Me is a whole-school model based on *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*. It focuses on outcomes such as higher academic achievement, discipline, and engagement among teachers and parents. *The Leader in Me* focuses on helping students build 21st century skills. The Leader in Me process is now being implemented in more than 1000 schools worldwide.

The 7 Habits are:
1. Be Proactive
2. Begin with the End in Mind
3. Put First Things First
4. Think Win-Win
5. Seek First to Understand, Then to Be Understood
6. Synergize
7. Sharpen the Saw

This program has a three-year implementation plan:

Year 1 Goals:
- •Create a shared vision of an ideal school and understand the leadership model
- •Train the staff in the 7 Habits to establish a common language and culture
- •Provide implementation training for the staff to learn how to teach the Habits and create an environment of leadership
- •Create Lighthouse leadership teams at each school to ensure successful implementation

Year 2 Goals:
- •Implement Leadership Notebooks to help students set academic and personal behavior goals and to track their learning progress
- •Provide more opportunities for student leadership
- •Implement action plans created by the Lighthouse teams in 6 areas: Role modeling, environment, curriculum, instruction, systems, and traditions

Year 3 Goals:
- •Continuous improvement efforts to ensure the new leadership culture is sustainable long-term

CONNECTION TO 5 GUIDING PRINCIPLES

High expectations for all learners

In a culture that embraces the concept of restorative practices, there are high expectations for student behavior. Students are taught to work through their problems respectfully, and they are expected to accept responsibility for their actions and for the consequences of their actions. Support will be provided so students can be guided to solve problems without having to leave the school community.

Evidence-based "best practices" while allowing for creativity and innovation

The restorative practices philosophy provides a common language, approach, and vision for the district without mandating how it will be put into practice. Each school's unique culture will be able to shape how restorative practices will be implemented. Staff will be involved in creating the processes through which restorative practices will be utilized on daily basis.

Family and community partnerships

Families and community partners must be involved in restorative practices if they are to have meaning within our schools. During conflict resolution, family and community members are invited into mediations to help the offender learn how to repair harm and learn skills to avoid conflict in the future. It is a team effort to teach students how to build and retain relationships within their community; they are not pushed out to fend for themselves without support.

Student voice and empowerment

Each student's voice is heard when restorative practices are used. During all types of conflicts, students are empowered to share their stories and accept responsibility for their actions. They are guided to repair any harm they may have inflicted, thus enabling them to maintain positive relationships within the school community and beyond. One component of restorative practices is peer mediation, which can start on a basic level in elementary school. By high school, students are able to help their peers work through serious interpersonal conflicts.

Efficiency and financial viability and stability

Depending on how the restorative practices approach is configured, it can be financially viable and sustainable. The Dispute Resolution Center has been working in Washtenaw County for more than a decade and already has many valuable community partners who may invest in a district-wide effort. The DRC also has more than 100 highly-trained volunteers who can be utilized for conflict mediation. There could be a "train the trainer" model (such as in IIRP's

Safer Saner Schools program) put in place so selected staff members will be able to train new people within the district, which makes the approach sustainable over time.

OPPORTUNITIES, ISSUES, CHALLENGES, & CONSIDERATIONS

Opportunities

An approach like restorative practices represents a major shift in traditional thinking about classroom management and disciplinary procedures. Instead of putting disruptive students out of the classroom or school, we are committing to keeping them within our community and teaching them to become better problem solvers and citizens.

Key Questions – Issues & Challenges
- What is the capacity of vendors to provide all the services needed by the district, both short- and long-term?
- How do we blend the different approaches of restorative practices into a program that will work for the district?
- What is the budget for this program? Can we do what is necessary to institutionalize restorative practices with the money we have?
- How much professional development time will be devoted to this program this summer and during the school year?

Considerations

Other considerations were discussed during the process and identified as critical considerations for adopting any approach to help support a positive climate and culture. These elements include:

- School staff must be provided non-instructional time to reflect, debrief, discourse on the approach adopted
- Time should be created, before the start of the school year to actively reach out to families and students to inform them about the new practices being used in schools
- Community members should also get training in the "character education" approach (so they can support outside of school)
- The school leadership must "buy into" the program/approach; the leadership must support staff as they teach/model skills and value
- There must be enough support staff to help teacher, model, re-teach, and practice RP skills (social workers, counselors, etc.) – it will take a whole team to help coordinate the new approach.

MEMBERS

Sonja Allen – Communities in Schools
Mary Beno – Regional Health Coordinator, Livingston & Washtenaw Counties
Lesley Chace – Health Educator, Parent, Project Healthy Schools (UM)
Maria Cotera - Teacher
Toney Cummer – Teacher
Belinda Dulin – The Dispute Resolution Center
Celeste Gentile - WISD
Annie Hampel – Safe & Supportive Schools Liaison (WR)
Susanna Hanrath – Social Worker (WR)
Robert Harris – Support Staff (YPS)
Monique Hoyle – The Corner Health Center
Jacquelynn King – Social Worker (WR)
Daisy Mull – Parent (YPS)
Caroline Mull – Student (YMS)
Lisa Murray – Teacher (WR)
Deborah Payne – Transportation (WISD)
Kelly Powers – Principal (YPS)
Margaret Rohr – The Dispute Resolution Center
Michelle Rose-Armstrong – Safe & Supportive Schools Liaison (YPS)
Ruth Salles – Student Advocacy Center
Debby Shaw – Juvenile Court
Lara Slee – Safe & Supportive Schools Grant Regional Coach (MDE)
Peri Stone-Palmquist – Student Advocacy Center
John Weiss – The Neutral Zone

REFERENCES

Capturing Kids' Hearts

Capturing Kids' Hearts – Flippen Group web site for overview of program
http://www.flippengroup.com/education/ckh.html

Capturing Kids' Hearts – Research report (on Flippen Group web site)
http://flippengroup.com/pdf/funding/CompleteSummaryForCKHandTL_Sept10.pdf

SAMHSA National Registry of Evidence-Based Programs and Practices – Capturing Kids' Hearts
Intervention Summary
http://www.nrepp.samhsa.gov/ViewIntervention.aspx?id=266

http://dayintheclassroom.edublogs.org/2011/06/30/capturing-kids-hearts/

http://www.edweek.org/dd/articles/2011/10/19/01conversionside-relationships.h05.html

The Leader in Me

The Leader in Me – web site for overview of program
http://www.theleaderinme.org/

The Leader in Me – links to evidence of program's success
http://www.theleaderinme.org/what-are-the-results/

Literature
Review: http://www.theleaderinme.org/uploads/Documents/results/RochesterLitRev.pdf

Novi Community School District – web site for The Leader in Me district-wide program
http://www.novi.k12.mi.us/academics/7-habits/

Restorative Practices

International Institute for Restorative Practices – overview of RP plus references
http://www.iirp.edu/what-is-restorative-practices.php

Safer/Saner Schools: http://www.iirp.edu/pdf/WSC-Overview.pdf

The Dispute Resolution Center – overview of services provided
http://www.thedisputeresolutioncenter.org/

Michigan Model for Health

Michigan Model for Health – overview of curriculum
http://www.emc.cmich.edu/mm/default.htm

Michigan Model for Health – evaluation study results
http://www.michiganmodel.org/

School Climate and Character Education Survey Results

On a scale of 1 (not at all) to 5 (very much)

	RP	CKH	LIM	MMH
Program includes on-going professional development for every adult (bus drivers, teachers, lunch supervisors,...) working in schools - training on philosophy, practice and shared vocabulary of character education	4.50	3.71	2.38	2.38
Approach has clear expectations, creates a supportive community, a safe and trusting environment, respect and appreciation for all, focuses on empathy and listening and supports the wrongdoer	5.00	4.13	3.50	2.50
Teacher/staff can buy-in by having input/participation in development	4.63	2.88	2.63	2.13
Program has continuity PreK-12	4.29	3.75	3.57	4.43
Students have voice, meaningful roles and choices in the character education program	4.75	3.88	3.57	2.50
Program is embedded in school climate (not a canned program or separate class that students take)	4.88	3.63	3.43	1.86
Program provides resources and approaches to teach and intervene in teachable moments without disrupting learning of all students	4.38	3.63	3.14	2.00
Program includes In-school remedies - In-school suspension or plan	4.38	2.71	2.17	1.20
Program includes peer mediation opportunities and/or learn conflict resolution skills	4.88	4.00	3.50	1.83
Health and emotional well being is the foundation (for all -- students, teachers, staff, community, families) -- especially students' social/emotional/ethical development as well as academics	4.13	3.88	4.00	3.57
There are clear and universal values and expectations that are embedded in the school climate and understood by all (even outside the district)	4.13	4.13	4.29	2.25
There is an emphasis on positive (not punitive) [Leader in Me]	4.50	4.14	3.86	2.40
High expectations for ALL learners	4.50	3.75	3.99	3.52
Evidence-based "best" practices while allowing for innovation and creativity	4.43	3.14	3.29	3.33
Family and community partnerships	4.41	4.20	4.03	3.35
Student Voice and Empowerment	4.88	3.88	3.86	3.00
Efficiency and financial viability and stability [Restorative Practice]	4.40	2.40	2.40	4.60
Addresses stereotyping from student and adult perspectives.	4.14	3.50	3.17	3.40
Addresses racism from student and adult perspectives.	4.17	3.40	3.00	2.83
Addresses bullying	4.33	3.40	3.20	3.20
Total	**4.48**	**3.61**	**3.35**	**2.81**