

Ms. Ana Rivas Logan, Board Member

SUBJECT: REQUEST THAT THE SCHOOL BOARD OF MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA, DIRECT THE SUPERINTENDENT TO EXPLORE THE FEASIBILITY OF IMPLEMENTING RESTORATIVE JUSTICE PRINCIPLES IN MIAMI-DADE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

COMMITTEE: INSTRUCTIONAL EXCELLENCE AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

LINK TO DISTRICT

STRATEGIC PLAN: DEVELOP OUR STUDENTS SO THAT THEY ARE ABLE TO SUCCESSFULLY COMPETE IN THE GLOBAL ECONOMY

Restorative Justice offers schools and communities an effective method to deal with minor and serious wrong doings without retribution, shaming or isolation. Schools across the nation are adopting Restorative Justice principles to bolster their comprehensive school approaches to discipline. Practicing Restorative Justice principles provides victims and community members an empowering voice to vocalize harm done to them and describe to offenders "what it takes to repair the harm." In this effort to make things right, Restorative Justice provides an effective alternative to target harm done to school communities where traditional discipline practices fall short.

Under this concept, everyone affected by an incident of misbehavior sits in a circle, where they have a chance to speak and to be an active listener. Restorative practices in school include peer mediation, classroom circles to resolve problems, and family group conferencing. All of these practices involve face-to-face resolution to address the multiple impacts of a student's offending behavior. Those people most affected by the behavior play an important role in resolving the incident.

Research tells us that "belonging" is the single most important factor in preventing violence in our schools. Traditional punitive systems suspensions, expulsion and police intervention offer schools few choices other than to push students further away from their learning communities. Practicing Restorative Justice principles provides a high impact strategy to address minor to severe cases such as, being pushed in the hallway to more severe cases like assault or property crime.

Regardless of the harm done, Restorative Justice provides a carefully planned method to repairing harm, restore safety, foster authentic offender accountability, while maintaining connections with offending students.

The goals and objectives of Restorative Justice program are to:

- Reduce reliance on suspension, expulsion and police intervention;
- Address school and victim safety; and violence prevention programs;
- Sustain connection with offending students; and
- Reintegrate offending students back into school communities.

**ACTION PROPOSED BY
MS. ANA RIVAS LOGAN:**

That The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, direct the Superintendent to explore the feasibility of implementing Restorative Justice principles in Miami-Dade County Public Schools.