

APS and ATF: A Mutual Interest in Moving Toward Restorative Practices

The District and the Federation share the belief that providing a high-quality education for the children of Albuquerque is the paramount objective our district. An essential element of this goal is helping students develop pro-social behavior and fundamental life skills, including:

- Recognizing and managing emotions
- Developing caring and concern for others
- Establishing positive relationships
- Making responsible decisions
- Handling challenging situations constructively and ethically

As the result of joint research and collaborative work, APS and ATF have developed a mutual interest in moving toward restorative practices in all schools. Restorative practices have proven to be a strong strategy in the development of pro-social behavior and fundamental life skills which can support students' connections to both staff and other students.

Restorative values and principles include dignity, respect, accountability, and fairness. Evidence is clear that restorative practices contribute to a positive school climate which in turn has been proven to prevent bullying, reduce disciplinary incidents and violence, increase attendance rates and academic achievement, promote student mental and physical wellbeing, and aid in educator retention.

We believe that restorative practices implemented with SEL programming is an opportunity to acquire and apply the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to develop healthy identities, manage emotions, achieve personal and collective goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain supportive relationships, and make responsible and caring decisions. By integrating these approaches together, restorative practices become a vehicle to develop students' SEL skills, which includes communication skills, kindness, empathy, and caring. Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) Social and emotional learning is an integral part of child development and education.

Change requires intensive, carefully planned, and skillfully executed implementation. We acknowledge that strong, consistent leadership, trusting collaboration, system-wide communication, quality teaching, and high educator morale promote positive learning environments for students. We have agreed on the following implementation strategies for the 2022-2024 school years:

ONE: The Restorative practices/SEL Implementation Coordination Committee

The RP/SEL Coordination Committee role is to reduce or eliminate siloed efforts in the system. The committee will consist of representatives with experience and expertise in restorative practices and/or SEL from:

- The Office of Equity and Engagement
- The Office of Curriculum and Instruction
- The Office of Special Education
- The Office of Student, Family, and Community Support
- The Albuquerque Teachers Federation

The RP/SEL Coordination Committee will meet no less than monthly starting in August 2022 to communicate, coordinate, collaborate, analyze, plan, innovate, implement, and align efforts.

TWO: Shift School-Based Practices in 2022-23 and 2023-24

With the help and support of the counseling department and in coordination with middle and high school counselors, secondary schools will transition from In School Suspension (ISS) programs to Student Success Centers utilizing restorative practices.

The Office of Equity and Engagement, in collaboration with the Coordination Committee, will help to develop a prevention and intervention restorative practices guide for classrooms and schools.

A Conflict Mediation program will be implemented in elementary schools so that students learn how to resolve conflicts early in life, and with words.

The Counseling department, in collaboration with the Coordination Committee, will develop materials to distribute to every elementary school describing Conflict Mediation programs during the 2022-2023 school year. The program description will incorporate restorative concepts.

It is recommended that elementary schools create a student council with the intent of student ownership of the conflict mediation program.

Conflict mediation programs will be established through each school's instructional council by school year 2023-2024.

THREE: Modify Contract Language

Restorative and SEL practices should encompass not only student behaviors, but also staff behaviors, policies and procedures, pedagogical choices, curricular decisions, and schoolwide decision-making processes. As such APS and ATF agree to the following changes in Article 21: Student Discipline as a good faith effort in the transition from traditional consequence -based practice to restorative ones.

Article 21, STUDENT DISCIPLINE

- A. The District shall provide reasonable support and assistance to ~~teachers~~ educators as described in the ~~Student Behavior Handbook~~ APS Handbook for Student Success so they can maintain control and discipline while engaged in their duties and responsibilities. It is essential for the school staff to establish means for obtaining the cooperation of parents of students involved in discipline problems.
 1. APS and ATF acknowledge the vital role of an effective discipline plan and culturally responsive restorative practices (see Appendix...) at the district level and for each school site.
 2. It is the goal of the parties to have a comprehensive district restorative practices policy in place and implemented by the 2025/2026 school year.
- B. ~~A-Positive disciplinary program~~ practices and strategies shall be continued in each school. Each ~~teacher~~ educator shall be given a copy of the school's ~~disciplinary~~ discipline policy as developed and/or modified by the principal, Instructional Council and/or faculty.
 1. During the 2022/2023 and 2023/2024 school years, the IC, in conjunction with the TLF's, will:
 - a. schedule appropriate training for all staff in topics such as, but not limited to, social-emotional learning, restorative practices, culturally responsive practices, anti-racist education, de-escalation strategies, trauma informed education practices and LGBTQ+ inclusivity;
 - b. schedule time to hold and facilitate connection circles with staff and students in an ongoing effort to build relationships in the school community;
 - c. develop a restorative discipline plan that transitions from current discipline policy to a fully restorative plan by the 2025/2026 school year.

- C. The principal has the primary responsibility for administering the school's ~~disciplinary~~ discipline policy. In accordance with the school's ~~disciplinary~~ discipline policy, the ~~teacher educator~~ is responsible for maintaining a good social environment among those students under the ~~teacher's~~ educator's responsibility at any given time and for sharing with other staff members the responsibility for school-wide behavior.
- D. The ~~teacher educator~~ shall receive assistance from the principal when a ~~disciplinary~~ discipline problem is beyond the control of the ~~teacher educator~~ or when the ~~teacher educator~~ believes it is necessary.
1. In the event an educator is struggling to implement restorative practices, the principal shall provide additional supports.
 2. Additional supports may include, but are not limited to:
 - a. release time for additional PD
 - b. release time to observe colleagues
 - c. modeling in struggling educator's classroom
- E. The ~~teacher educator~~ may temporarily dismiss a student from class to the principal when the student's behavior is disruptive to the point of impeding learning by the other students or if the behavior is a safety concern and after efforts have been made to correct the problem in accordance with the school's ~~disciplinary~~ discipline practice policy.
1. The ~~teacher educator~~ shall furnish the principal in writing full particulars of the incident including the efforts that have been made to correct the problem and whether or not the student may be returned to class prior to a conference between the ~~teacher educator~~ and principal.
 2. Before the principal (or designee) returns the student to the classroom, the principal shall inform the ~~teacher educator~~ of the measures or actions taken to address the behavior.
 3. In cases of extreme or chronic student disruption to a classroom, the ~~teacher educator~~ may call a case conference with the principal, parents, and others as necessary for the purposes of discussing the problem and determining and initiating corrective measures. If requested the student will not be returned to the classroom until such corrective measures have been initiated or until the due process rights of the student would be violated.
 4. Efforts to increasingly include restorative practices, as determined by the transition plan created through the IC, must be included.
- F. Notification shall be provided to ~~teachers~~ educators of suspended students by the end of the school day that follows the day of suspension.
1. As schools transition to restorative practices, suspension will only be used as a last resort and when there are immediate safety concerns.
- G. Whenever it appears that a student needs professional attention beyond the scope of the individual school, the ~~teacher educator~~ shall inform the principal in writing so that reasonable steps can be taken.
- H. The parties agree that a ~~teacher educator~~ may use reasonable force to repel a personal assault or one upon any other person. Any case of assault shall be promptly reported to the principal and by the principal to the Superintendent. The District shall provide the necessary support to a ~~teacher educator~~ who is subjected to or charged with an assault during the course of one's duties, providing the ~~teacher educator~~ was acting in a reasonable manner and the actions were justifiable under the law, the Code of Ethics of the Education Profession, the terms and provisions of this Agreement, and regulations of the District.
- I. Corporal punishment, which is defined as any disciplinary action taken by school personnel with the intention of producing physical pain, shall not be used as a disciplinary measure in the Albuquerque Public Schools. Disciplinary consequences of unacceptable student behavior will be aimed toward assisting students in the

development of constructive personal and social behavior. Consistent with the Code of Ethics of the Education Profession, school staff members will "deal justly and considerately with each student."

- J. Whenever ~~possible~~ reasonable, an officer of the District shall initiate a complaint arising from criminal acts occurring on school property. It shall be the responsibility of any ~~teacher~~ educator witnessing such acts to provide all information to the principal.
- K. ~~A teachers~~ Educators shall be informed of any complaint to the principal by a parent concerning the disciplinary action taken by the teacher in regard to a child.
- L. All schools shall fully develop and implement a plan for restorative practices aligned with the APS Handbook for Student Success by the 2025/2026 school year.

FOUR: Dedicated time for Adult Learning

APS and ATF believe that professional development (PD) is most effective when it is site-based, embedded in everyday work, and offered "just in time." To that end, we are dedicated to a PD structure that includes Teacher Leader Facilitators (TLF).

In addition to regular classroom duties, the TLF is an instructional leader who collaborates with the Instructional Council and administration to provide support for the professional development needs at the school level in conjunction with school goals and individual adult learning needs.

During the 2022-2023 school year TLFs will be supported by the district to gain expertise in:

- Social Emotional Learning (SEL) techniques interwoven into daily practice and school structures.
- The understanding and beginning implementation of classroom-based and school-wide restorative practices.

The TLF in collaboration with the Instructional Council at each site can either use one hour of the principal's discretionary 2 for 20 for PD focused on SEL/RP or the site can choose to utilize one hour in addition to the 2 for 20 for dedicated PD time focused on SEL/RP.

Throughout the 2022-23 and 2023-24 school years the RP/SEL Coordination Committee will support the shared goal of shifting to restorative practices district-wide by disseminating research and information about practical applications as well as provide ongoing learning opportunities for educators interested in developing expertise in restorative practices.