

Ten Years of the School Climate Bill of Rights in L.A. Unified: Where are we?

Survey of School Leaders and
Teachers, Fall 2023

Independent Analysis Unit

Board of Education for the Los Angeles Unified
School District

June 2024

Megan Besecker

Andrew Thomas, Ph. D.

Acknowledgments

This report was made possible by the cooperation of many people, both in and outside the District. First, a special thank you to the teachers and school leaders who took some of their valuable time to complete the survey and provide feedback in open-ended responses. Special thank you to staff from Student Health and Human Services for meeting with the IAU and providing valuable information about past and current implementation efforts and for promptly answering any questions that we had. Thank you also to the stakeholders from community-based organizations that participated in a listening session on October 28, 2023, which helped add context to the survey data. Also thank you to members of the Board of Education's Committee on School Safety and Climate for engaging in discussions regarding early findings from the survey, following the IAU's presentation to the committee on November 16, 2023.

Note that the views expressed herein are those of the Independent Analysis Unit and do not necessarily reflect those of LAUSD, the Board of Education, or any individual Board Member.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In a May 2023 resolution, the Board of Education commemorated a decade of the School Climate Bill of Rights and requested analysis of its implementation from the Independent Analysis Unit (IAU). This report is in response to that request and provides novel data on staff's experiences implementing positive behavior interventions and supports and restorative practices (PBIS/RP).

"Ten Years of the School Climate Bill of Rights in L.A. Unified: Where are we?" provides a comprehensive analysis of the perceptions and experiences of L.A. Unified school leaders and teachers regarding discipline policy implementation, as revealed in a survey conducted by the IAU in fall 2023. Our final sample included 189 school leaders and 591 teachers, with respective response rates of 30% and 16%. We determined the data were sufficiently reliable for our objectives.

History of Discipline Reform in L.A. Unified

Beginning with the Modified Consent Decree in 2003, L. A. Unified embarked on two decades of student discipline reform. In 2013, the Board enacted the School Climate Bill of Rights, a landmark resolution that accelerated the District's shift away from a punitive model of discipline towards a more positive approach, adding restorative practices (RPs) to the District's existing positive behavior interventions and supports (PBIS) framework. Today, as envisioned and outlined in the School Climate Bill of Rights, the District's discipline policy remains centered on PBIS/RP.

Despite improved coherence in District policy and sustained low suspensions, racial disparities in suspensions and disparities between students with disabilities and their peers persist, and many schools are not implementing PBIS/RP with fidelity. Thus, survey results can inform how the District sets realistic goals and sustains efforts moving forward to achieve desired results. Importantly, as one current teacher and L.A. Unified graduate put it: "There may be some that think restorative practices may not be working but they do not get to observe the changes in the long term... those conversations eventually helped me go on and graduate and become a math teacher."

Key Findings

1. Ten years later, **restorative practices are embedded in the District's culture, but not yet universally adopted.**
 - Most school leaders and teachers were bought-in to RPs and confident using them.
 - Most school leaders—but few teachers—reported frequent use of PBIS/RP.
 - Some teachers reported high levels of proficiency in PBIS and RP, though they were the minority.
 - Few school leaders reported most of their teachers were trained in PBIS/RP.
2. **School leaders and teachers utilized some District supports.** As one teacher put it "This only works if there is top-down support and tools given to schools/classrooms beyond leaving it to teachers...not just trainings but demo conversations...so staff can observe and learn from them."
 - Four in ten teachers reported they did not receive training nor access District materials.
 - Survey data suggests higher uptake of Systems of Support Advisor (SOSA) supports in 2023-24 than 2022-23.
 - Most teachers reported their school leaders provided some support on PBIS/RP.

3. **Many cited structural and cultural challenges** to implementing the District’s discipline policy as envisioned by the School Climate Bill of Rights.
 - Most teachers and school leaders cited lack of time and limited training as challenges.
 - One in five teachers report lack of awareness of the discipline policy as a challenge.
 - School leaders and teachers expressed frustrations, even when bought-in and confident using RPs.
 - Resistance to RPs persists, especially among teachers who were in the classroom prior to 2013.
4. **Elementary schools, professional development, school-site supports, and District supports were positively associated with implementation metrics** like buy-in, confidence, proficiency, and usage.

Key Recommendations

1. **Consider mandatory training** and provide protected planning time.
Board Actions: Request an update in early 2025 on the ISSP training on PBIS/RP and ongoing updates regarding teacher and school leader PBIS/RP training.
District Actions: Emphasize PBIS/RP Tier I strategies in upcoming ISSP PD sessions; include PBIS/RP training as one of the choice modules for the required PD courses for 2024-25; monitor teacher and school leader training uptake.
2. **Integrate PBIS/RP framework with** implementation of updated goal regarding **social-emotional learning (SEL)**.
Board Actions: Request an update from the District by end of 2025-26 school year on implementation of SEL goal and how these efforts are integrated with efforts to strengthen PBIS/RP implementation
District Actions: Leverage existing networks (e.g., PBIS/RP task force, SEL Teacher Cadre) to develop resources integrating PBIS/RP and SEL effort; integrate training in Tier I PBIS/RP strategies to SEL materials and modules.
3. **Develop a communication strategy** to reaffirm commitment to PBIS/RP and set clear expectations.
Board Actions: Recognize RP as a complementary tool in the District’s broader PBIS/RP strategy and link requests regarding RP implementation to PBIS and the Tiered Fidelity Index (TFI) in public meetings and communications.
District Actions: Engage change management experts to develop strategies to foster buy-in amongst resistant staff.
4. **Enhance online resources** for secondary teachers in addition to videos modeling responses to challenging incidents.
Board Actions: Request updates regarding PBIS/RP resource utilization as part of Strategic Plan updates.
District Actions: Create videos modeling how to respond to different scenarios using various strategies.
5. **Fund and hire 30-35 more SOSAs** to decrease each SOSA’s school load down to 10 schools.
Board Actions: Monitor implementation of PBIS/RP with current funded positions; prioritize funding for SOSAs in future budget discussions.
District Actions: Explore re-purposing existing funds or look to carryover; collect data to illustrate SOSA impact.
6. **Elevate and celebrate California PBIS Statewide Recognitions** to incentivize implementation.
Board Actions: Encourage the District to elevate schools that win California Statewide PBIS Recognitions.
District Actions: Implement a visible and prominent recognition program akin to CA Distinguished School awards.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	II
TABLES AND FIGURES	V
INTRODUCTION	1
RESTORATIVE PRACTICES ARE SITUATED WITHIN BROAD SHIFTS IN DISTRICT POLICY OVER TWO DECADES	2
SURVEY DATA REVEAL MIXED RESULTS FROM PAST, CURRENT IMPLEMENTATION EFFORTS	5
RECOMMENDATIONS	14
NOTES AND REFERENCES	20
APPENDIX	A1
Survey Design and Administration.....	A1
Survey Sample.....	A1
Survey Limitations	A2
Links to Complete Surveys.....	A2

TABLES AND FIGURES

TABLES

Table 1. Average Perceptions of Student Buy-in/Attitudes, by Role and Survey Item6

Table 2. School Leadership Reported Share of Teachers Responding to Disciplinary Incidents with PBIS/RP in 2022-20237

Table 3. Teachers’ Self-Reported Proficiency in PBIS/RP7

Table 4. School Leaders’ Reported Shares of Teachers Trained in PBIS/RP at the Beginning of the 2022-23 School Year8

Table 5. Reported Supports Received from a SOSA by Role and School Year9

Table 6. School Leaders’ (SL) and Teachers’ (T) Reported Challenges to Implementing PBIS/RP 11

FIGURES

Figure 1. History of Major Events Impacting District Discipline Policy, 2003-20233

Figure 2. Summary of Major Revisions to the Discipline Foundation Policy and School Climate Bill of Rights in 20224

Figure 3. Average School Leader and Teacher Buy-in and Confidence Using Restorative Practices.....6

Figure 4. Teachers’ Self-Reported Proficiency in PBIS/RP, by Teacher Experience 13

In 2013, the L.A. Unified Board of Education enacted the *School Climate Bill of Rights* by passing the “2013 School Discipline Policy and School Climate Bill of Rights” resolution.¹ This landmark resolution accelerated the District’s shift away from a punitive model of discipline towards a more positive approach.² Notable provisions included banning willful defiance suspensions, enshrining students’ rights to school-wide positive behaviors and supports (PBIS), and enacting restorative practices (RPs) over the course of a five-year implementation.³ Today, as envisioned and outlined in the School Climate Bill of Rights, the District’s discipline policy—recently updated in 2022—remains centered on PBIS/RP.⁴

In a May 2023 resolution, the Board of Education commemorated a decade of the School Climate Bill of Rights and requested analysis of its implementation from the Independent Analysis Unit (IAU).⁵ This report is in response to that request and provides novel data on staff’s experiences implementing PBIS/RP from a survey of school leaders⁶ and teachers conducted in the fall of 2023.⁷

Successful organizational change requires cultural and logistical preparation, efforts implementing the change, and efforts to make the change stick. The IAU conducted a survey of school leaders and teachers to (1) assess staff’s attitudes and current knowledge about PBIS/RP, (2) understand how staff use PBIS/RP and access supports, and (3)

identify factors that challenge and support the ongoing implementation of PBIS/RP.

Existing administrative data, though rich in some ways, lacks information on staff perspectives on implementing PBIS/RP, hindering understanding of the District’s organizational change. Further, studies on the impact of the School Climate Bill of Rights to date (both internal and external) have focused on changes in student disciplinary outcomes at various stages of the policy’s implementation.⁸ The studies show a decrease in exclusionary discipline practices, but do not explain the factors that support staff’s use of PBIS/RP or sustain its implementation.

About the IAU’s Survey. The IAU surveyed school leaders and teachers separately in the early fall of the 2023-24 school year, employing a stratified random sample, stratified by school level. To ground staff’s responses, the survey asked almost all questions of the previous school year, 2022-23.^{9,10} Our final sample included 189 school leaders and 591 teachers, with respective response rates of 30% and 16%.¹¹ We determined the data were sufficiently reliable for our objectives.¹²

The IAU performed statistical tests to assess differences between school leaders and teachers and within school leaders and teachers of different subgroups (e.g., years of experience, school level, school priority initiative type, presence of restorative justice teacher advisor etc.). Which subgroups were of

From Restorative Justice to Restorative Practices

Definitions of a restorative justice approach vary across educational institutions, but all share the following core tenets: that interpersonal connections are foundational to strong communities, and when an individual imposes harm on another, those connections are fractured. Though restorative justice also shares roots with conflict mediation traditions from native cultures, restorative justice in schools largely originated from its use in criminal justice reform. Through this lens, a restorative justice approach entails a “reactive” process to repair harm and restore connection. Because something must exist to be restored, a restorative justice approach also requires preventative or “proactive” practices to build community and connection. Thus, **the term restorative practices encompass all efforts to create a positive school culture and climate through daily, universal practices and responses to disciplinary incidents.**

interest varied by the question. For more detailed information about our survey methodology, see the Appendix.

About this Report. The report begins with background on the School Climate Bill of Rights, PBIS, and RP, situating them within two decades of student discipline reform in L.A. Unified. Next, we present survey data summarizing our analysis and supporting our four main findings. Finally, we conclude with recommendations.

Restorative Practices are Situated Within Broad Shifts in District Policy Over Two Decades

Though the 2013 School Climate Bill of Rights marked an important shift in the District's approach to student discipline, previous District actions had already laid the foundation for policy reform (Figure 1). The 2003 *Modified Consent Decree* led to reduced suspensions amongst students with disabilities and a 2005 Board resolution led to the creation of the 2007 *Discipline Foundation Policy*, centered on school-wide positive behavior interventions and supports (SWPBIS).¹³ During this time, the suspension rate decreased dramatically from ~8% in 2002-03 to ~2% in 2011-12, approximately a 75% decrease.¹⁴

Despite the dramatic decrease in overall student suspensions, disproportionate rates of suspension for students with disabilities and Black and African American students compared to their peers remained. Board members and a coalition of community organizations advocated for change on behalf of these students, ultimately leading to the School Climate Bill of Rights in 2013.

What the IAU Found

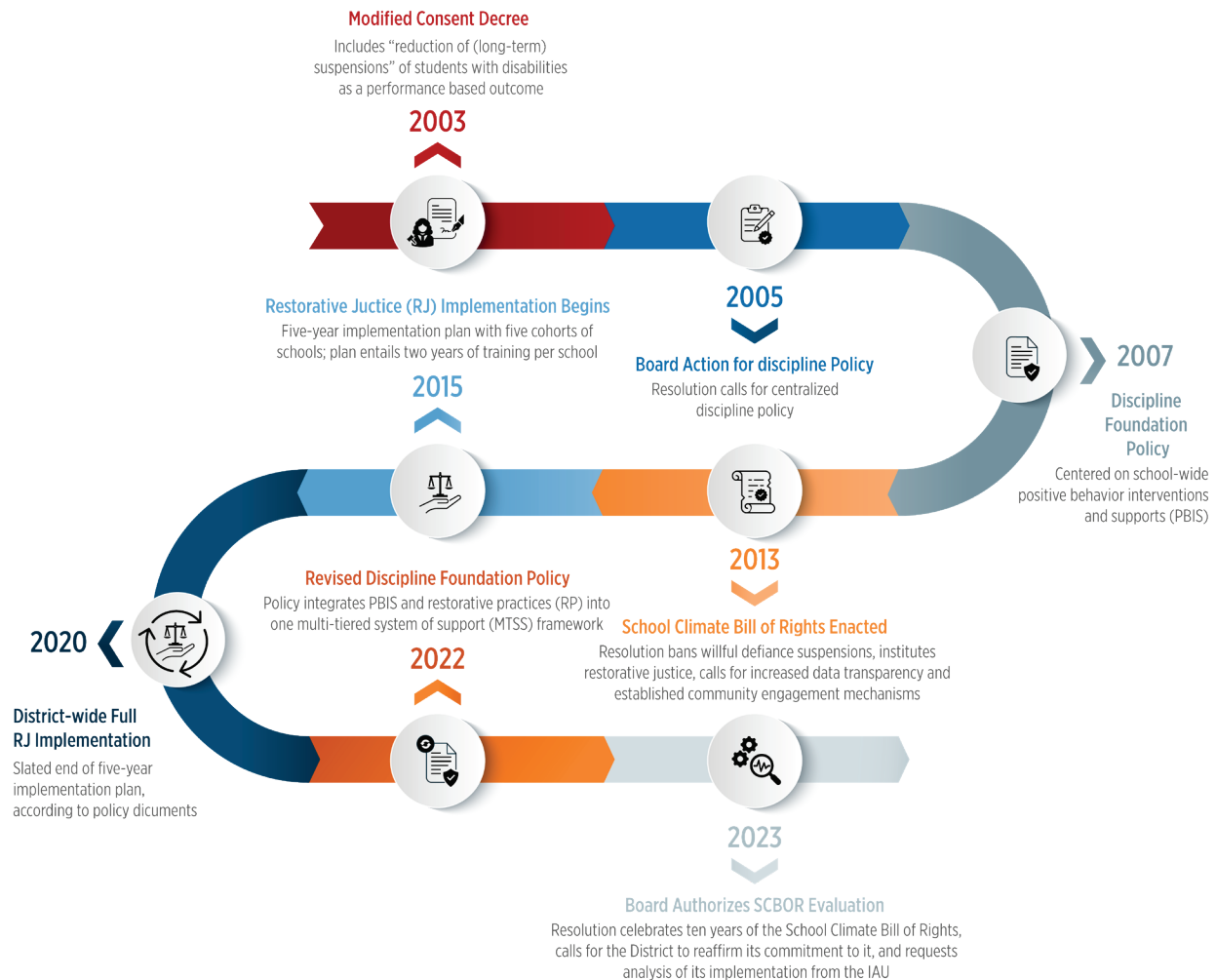
Overall, survey data show mixed results from past and current implementation efforts. We found that:

1. Most school leaders and teachers reported they bought in to and were confident using RPs, though perceptions about student attitudes were mixed and less positive, and only some teachers reported high levels of proficiency. Finally, use of PBIS/RP was not widespread among teachers.
2. As for supports, more teachers reported using online resources than receiving ongoing professional development. School support from SOSAs in 2023-24 was on track to exceed support in the previous year.
3. Even teachers and school leaders who bought in to PBIS/RP expressed frustrations with the policy. Many cited lack of time, insufficient training, and resistance to the policy among their colleagues or school leadership as challenges to implementing PBIS/RP.
4. However, IAU analysis identified factors that were positively associated with several implementation metrics (e.g., buy-in and proficiency): Elementary schools, accessing professional development, school-site supports and use of District supports.

What the IAU Recommends

1. Consider mandatory, ongoing, scaffolded training for all, accompanied by protected planning time.
2. Integrate PBIS/RP framework with implementation of updated strategic plan goal regarding social-emotional learning (SEL).
3. Develop a communication strategy to reaffirm commitment to PBIS/RP and set clear expectations for teachers and school leaders.
4. Enhance online resources for secondary teachers and provide videos modeling how to respond to challenging incidents.
5. Fund and hire 30-35 more SOSAs to decrease each SOSA's school load from 30-35 schools down to 10.
6. Elevate and celebrate California PBIS Statewide Recognitions to incentivize implementation—provide banners for recognized schools.

Figure 1. History of Major Events Impacting District Discipline Policy, 2003-2023



The School Climate Bill of Rights introduced restorative justice in 2013 and envisioned full implementation by 2020.

In passing the School Climate Bill of Rights in 2013, the Board called for schools to begin implementation of restorative justice (RJ)—now termed restorative practices (RPs)—in 2015-16 “as an alternative to suspension and tool for interpersonal conflict resolution.”¹⁵ Implementing RPs in L.A. Unified aligned with the District’s commitment to positive, welcoming, affirming educational environments and reducing exclusionary discipline in service of “dismantling the school-to-

prison pipeline and advancing social justice and educational equity on behalf of all students.”¹⁶

After the School Climate Bill of Rights was enacted, the District updated the discipline policy in 2014 to state that staff would develop alternatives to suspension and “by 2020, develop and implement Restorative Justice practices as an alternative to traditional school discipline.”¹⁷ In 2015-16, the District began its five-year RJ implementation plan. The plan organized schools into five cohorts and involved two rounds of training over two school years. Studies show that the passage of the School Climate Bill of Rights

The Restorative Justice Implementation Plan: 2015-16 through 2019-20

In 2015-2016, the District began its five-year restorative justice implementation plan. The plan organized schools into five cohorts of schools and involved two rounds of training over two school years.²⁰ The five steps of the plan included:²¹

1. *Training*: train-the trainer model in Tier I, Tier II, and Tier III practices
2. *Planning*: regular use of restorative practices amongst staff and students, continuous training, and monthly meetings
3. *Implementation*: all steps in the planning stage as well as training student leaders, posting signage, and incorporating restorative justice practices to school assemblies and PA announcements)
4. *Monitoring*: assessing implementation using the rubric of implementation, follow-up, data collection and analysis
5. *Sustainability and capacity building*: restorative justice fully infused in existing structures, supplemental professional development (at least one), and full alignment of school's discipline plan to restorative practices.

reduced suspensions, and suspensions continued to decline as schools progressed through the RJ implementation plan.^{18,19}

Despite improved coherence in District policy and sustained low suspensions, work remains.

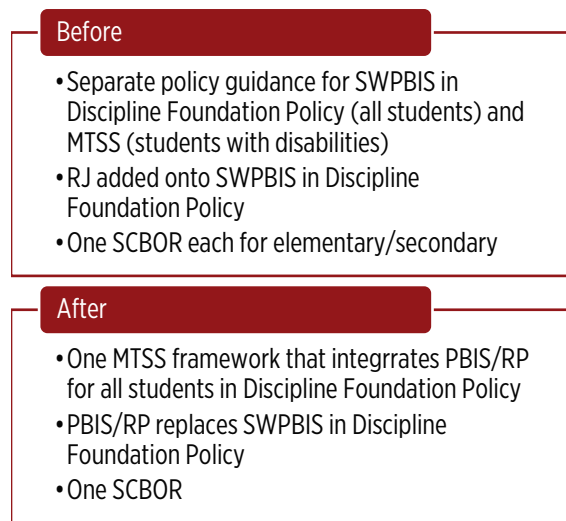
In 2022, the District updated both its Discipline Foundation Policy and School Climate Bill of Rights, bringing the two into alignment and improving the coherence of District policy (Figure 2). Previously, the District

framed RJ as complementary to its existing multi-tiered system of support (MTSS) framework of SWPBIS. Now, both the updated Discipline Foundation Policy and updated School Climate Bill of Rights emphasize that positive behavior interventions and supports and restorative practices (PBIS/RP) go together as part of an evidenced-based MTSS framework to support the whole child.

By 2022-23, there were ~1,600 students suspended, equal to a 0.4% suspension rate and a 70% reduction in suspensions over 10 years.²² Still, racial disparities in student discipline remain. Black students were overrepresented among students suspended by a factor of 2.8 in 2022-23, a slight decrease from a factor of 3 in 2012-13.²³ Moreover, for the last several years, California has instructed the District to implement a Comprehensive Coordinated Early Intervening Services (CCEIS) plan to address factors that contribute to significant disproportionality in disciplinary outcomes for students with certain disabilities.^{24,25}

Maybe the School Climate Bill of Rights and related discipline policy have not been effective at reducing or addressing the root cause of disparities in student discipline. Or, as one current teacher and L.A. Unified graduate put it, the policy's impact is not always immediately apparent:

Figure 2. Summary of Major Revisions to the Discipline Foundation Policy and School Climate Bill of Rights (SCBOR) in 2022



Source: Updated Discipline Foundation Policy, 2022

“I want to share with you that during my time in Middle School, I did not have excellent grades and would at times not listen or pay attention to my math teacher... **There may be some teachers that think restorative practices may not be working but they do not think about the long term or get to observe the changes in the long term...** those conversations they were having helped me reflect and eventually helped me go on and graduate (from college and become a math teacher). These practices such as reflections and conversations, in my opinion, do work for the long term.”

Looking ahead, the District will need time and sustained investment to fully implement PBIS/RP and achieve desired results.

Since 2013, the District has experienced six superintendent changes, and concurrent with these leadership transitions, the District implemented its five-year restorative justice plan and updated its discipline policy. The District also experienced many months of remote learning during the pandemic, and since the return to full in-person learning, ongoing efforts to address the effects of the pandemic on students' well-being and academic achievement.

A consistent approach is necessary to assess whether the District's discipline policy can eliminate disparities and create positive learning environments. Once the District establishes a consistent approach, the policies may need time to reach full implementation fidelity. As one school leader put it:

“School climate and culture take time & funding to implement.”

Today, the District supports the implementation of PBIS/RP through an updated model

centered on utilizing Systems of Supports Advisors (SOSAs).²⁶ SOSAs help schools develop systems and provide other virtual and in-person supports. In 2023-24, the District funded 51 SOSA positions, with 43 filled (4 positions were frozen). Of the 43 SOSAs:

- 16 SOSAs were funded by Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) funds allocated to CCEIS (per IDEA requirements), with each supporting approximately 4 CCEIS schools (20 total SOSAs were funded).
- 27 SOSAs were funded or managed by Student Health and Human Services (SHHS), each responsible for 30-35 schools (31 total SOSAs were funded).

As the remainder of the report will show, the District has made substantial inroads implementing PBIS/RP but has not reached full implementation fidelity. Changes in District priorities over the last ten years help contextualize the results. Still, the survey results can inform how the District sets realistic goals and sustains efforts moving forward.

Survey Data Reveal Mixed Results from Past, Current Implementation Efforts

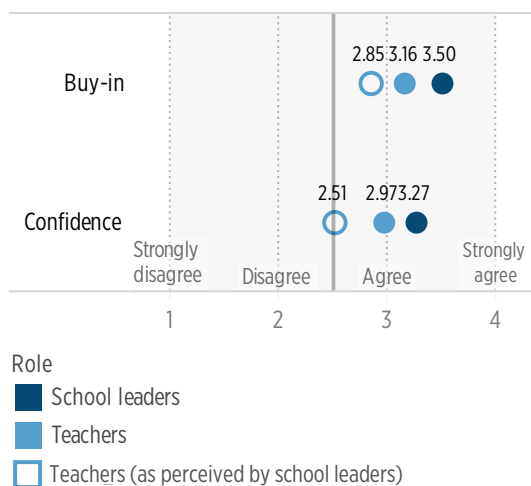
1. Ten years later, restorative practices are embedded in the District's culture, but not yet universally adopted.

In 2023, ten years after the School Climate Bill of Rights, the IAU surveyed school leaders and teachers about their attitudes towards, use of, proficiency in, supports utilized, and challenges faced using restorative practices. Responses provide evidence of a sustained, though not universal, shift in

District culture and practice regarding student discipline.

Most school leaders and teachers surveyed were bought-in to restorative practices and were confident using them. On a four-point scale, school leaders' and teachers' average agreement with survey items on buy-in and confidence equaled three or greater, as shown in Figure 3. Overall, 83% of school leaders and 54% of teachers bought in to *and* were

Figure 3. Average School Leader and Teacher Buy-in^a and Confidence^b Using Restorative Practices



Note: The self-reported buy-in and confidence constructs are expressed as composite measures, which result from combining responses to multiple questions, following the methodology of RAND's 2018 evaluation of a mid-sized urban district.²⁸

^aSelf-reported buy-in items were: "I believe that restorative practices can help to improve student behavior," "Learning restorative practices is worth my time," "Adopting restorative practices is worthwhile for my school," and for school leaders only, "Most staff in this school believe that restorative practices can help improve student behavior." School leaders were also asked for their agreement regarding teacher buy-in ("Most teachers in this school believe that restorative practices can help improve student behavior").

^bSelf-reported confidence items were ["I am confident"]: "...that I know the purpose of restorative practices," "...that I know the restorative practice methods," "...in my ability to use restorative practices with most students in my school," and for school leaders only, "...in my ability to support teachers using restorative practices." School leaders were also asked for their agreement regarding teacher confidence ("Most teachers can confidently use restorative practices with most students in my school").

confident using restorative practices (i.e., average agreement with the buy-in *and* confidence items were greater than or equal to three, meaning on average, respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the buy-in and confidence items).

Further analysis revealed higher buy-in among school leaders than teachers. School leaders' average buy-in (3.50) was significantly greater than teachers' average buy-in (3.16). School leaders' reported confidence was also greater than teachers', but the difference was not statistically significant. Finally, school leaders assessed teachers as being less bought-in and less confident than teachers reported themselves to be, with school leaders' perceived buy-in and confidence among teachers less than three (Figure 3).²⁷

School leaders' perceptions of students' attitudes towards restorative practices were moderately positive, but teachers' perceptions were split. On a four-point scale, school leaders perceived weak to moderately positive attitudes among students, with an average response of 2.78, as shown in Table 1. Across all items, teachers' perceptions of student attitudes were significantly less positive than school leaders' perceptions.

Table 1. Average Perceptions of Student Buy-in/Attitudes, by Role and Survey Item

Survey Item	Average Agreement ^a	
	School Leaders	Teachers
Students engage with RPs.	2.84	2.59
Students seem to understand the goal of RPs.	2.71	2.49
Students seem to respect RPs.	2.80	2.47
Overall	2.78	2.53

^aAs in Figure 3, for each question, respondents were given a four-point Likert scale (1-4): strongly disagree, disagree, agree, and strongly agree.

When asked whether students engage with, understand, and respect RPs, between 40 and 45% of teachers disagreed or strongly disagreed, versus between 27 and 33% of school leaders disagreed or strongly disagreed.

Most school leaders – but few teachers – reported frequent use of PBIS/RP. Unsurprisingly, then, few school leaders reported widespread use of PBIS/RP among their teachers. The IAU asked both school leaders and teachers how often they used PBIS strategies and RPs to address formal disciplinary incidents, i.e., office discipline referrals (ODRs), in the 2022-23 school year. While 73% of school leaders reported frequent use of RPs,²⁹ of the teachers who submitted ODRs, only 43% reported frequent use of RPs.³⁰ Similar shares of school leaders and teachers reported frequent use of PBIS to respond to ODRs.

We also asked school leaders how many of their teachers *always* responded to disciplinary incidents with PBIS/RP or responded at least once. Small shares of school leaders reported most to all teachers *always* used PBIS and RPs, as shown in Table 2. Further, only 25% of school leaders reported most to all teachers used an RP at least once. Relative to RPs, a larger share of school leaders reported most to all teachers used PBIS at least once.

Table 2. School Leadership Reported Share of Teachers Responding to Disciplinary Incidents with PBIS/RP in 2022-2023

Share of Teachers	At Least Once		Always	
	PBIS	RPs	PBIS	RPs
None or few	41%	51%	51%	66%
Half	23%	25%	22%	18%
Most or all	35%	25%	27%	16%

Note: Responses may not sum to 100% due to rounding. Respondents were given a five-point scale: None, Few, Half, Most, and All. Responses were collapsed to three categories.

We also asked teachers about how they used PBIS/RP to build community and address misbehavior in their classrooms. Close to half or more teachers reported they never used PBIS or RPs or only did so sometimes. Nonetheless, about 30% reported using RPs frequently in their regular practice (i.e., to build community and manage their classrooms).

Further analysis revealed a relationship between teachers' use of RPs as regular practice and their use of RPs in response to incidents. If a teacher used RPs most of the time and had a discipline incident, most likely, that incidents' response involved RPs.

Some teachers reported high levels of proficiency in PBIS and RP. While most teachers surveyed rated their proficiency in PBIS/RP as basic or higher, only 26% and 27% of teachers reported having advanced proficiency in PBIS and RP, respectively, as shown in Table 3. Few teachers assessed themselves as proficient enough to train their peers. Moreover, 41% and 43% of teachers rated themselves as not understanding or only understanding some elements of PBIS and RP, respectively,

Table 3. Teachers' Self-Reported Proficiency in PBIS/RP

	PBIS	RP
Limited proficiency	41%	43%
I do not understand [PBIS/RP]	7%	5%
I know what some elements or practices of [PBIS/RP] are.	35%	38%
Basic proficiency	32%	31%
I know what [PBIS/RP] practices are.	32%	31%
Advanced proficiency	26%	27%
I could explain [PBIS/RP] practices to a peer.	21%	21%
I could train another person to use [PBIS/RP] practices in their classroom.	5%	6%

Note: Responses may not sum to subtotals or 100% due to rounding. Questions were adapted from RAND's 2018 evaluation report, "Can Restorative Practices Improve School Climate and Curb Suspensions."

notable given PBIS and RP are core components of the District’s current discipline policy and the length of time passed since the School Climate Bill of Rights.

A small share of teachers attended professional development in 2022-23, and few school leaders reported most of their teachers were trained. Twenty-five percent of teachers reported attending professional development either prior to or after the start of the 2022-23 school year. Notably, many of the teachers commented in the open-ended section of the questionnaire that they needed initial training. Many school leaders and teachers also discussed receiving training and support prior to the pandemic during the five-year restorative justice plan, but nothing since.

School leaders’ perceptions of teachers’ training may not align with complete information regarding their teachers’ professional development history. Still, school leaders’ perceptions of teacher training aligned with teachers’ self-reported low uptake of PBIS/RP professional development. When asked how many teachers were trained in RPs at the start of the 2022-23 school year, only 33% of school leaders selected most or all teachers (Table 4). Regarding PBIS, a larger minority of school leaders reported most or all teachers were trained in PBIS – 45%. Notably, over half of school leaders (54%) reported none or few teachers were trained in RPs. Regarding PBIS, 42% of school leaders reported none or few teachers were trained.

In general, school leaders reported that similar proportions of teachers were trained in both PBIS and RP. If a school leader reported a low number of teachers trained in PBIS, that same school leader typically reported a low number of teachers trained in RP.

Table 4. School Leaders’ Reported Shares of Teachers Trained in PBIS/RP at the Beginning of the 2022-23 School Year

Share of Teachers Trained in PBS/RP as Reported by School Leaders	PBIS	RP
None or Few	42%	54%
Half	14%	13%
Most or All	44%	33%

Note: For each question (PBIS and RP), respondents were given a five-point scale: None, Few, Half, Most, and All. Responses were collapsed to three categories.

In some schools, school leaders frequently discussed PBIS/RP and school climate data in school-wide meetings and communication. Overall, 22% of school leaders reported frequently (i.e., most of the time to always) discussing RP in school meetings and communications. A slightly larger share of school leaders (34%) reported frequently discussing PBIS in school meetings, while fewer (18%) reported discussing school climate data. Further analysis showed more secondary than elementary school leaders reported frequently discussing school climate data – 27% versus 12%, respectively.

Teachers reported that PBIS, RP and school climate data were discussed in school meetings and communications at slightly lower rates than school leaders, but the data followed a similar pattern, with more teachers reporting PBIS was discussed frequently than RPs and school climate data.

2. School leaders and teachers utilized some ongoing District supports more than others.

Some teachers used District online resources and found them useful. Overall, more teachers accessed the District’s online/virtual resources (50%) than received professional development prior to or during the school year (25%). Considering each online/virtual resource separately, 48% of

teachers accessed materials/resources provided by the Schoology PBIS/RP group and 6% attended one of the weekly PBIS/RP. Of teachers who reported using the District's online resource, 40% reported the Schoology group's resources were useful and another 40% had a neutral opinion.

Four in 10 teachers reported they did not receive professional development nor access District materials. Altogether, 37% of teachers reported they neither used online resources nor attended professional development in the 2022-23 school year. It is possible these teachers have never received training (i.e., have little to no knowledge of PBIS/RP) or that PBIS/RP was not a priority for a multitude of reasons (e.g., competing demands or lack of substantive disruptive student behavioral issues).

A minority of school leaders and teachers received support from a System of Support Advisor (SOSA) last year, but survey data suggests higher uptake in the current school year. Forty percent of school leaders reported interacting with a SOSA in the previous school year (Table 5). The most common support school leaders reported receiving

from a SOSA in 2022-23 was professional development (over half), followed by direct support, support on tiered supports, and coaching.³¹ Thus, given 40% of school leaders reported interacting with a SOSA, about 20% reported receiving professional development support. Finally, of these school leaders, many reported interacting with a SOSA one to two times the previous year (44%), while an equal share reported more frequent uptake.³²

The IAU asked teachers about SOSA support in the previous and current school year. Reflecting on the previous school year, 19% of teachers attended schools that had interacted with a SOSA. By October 2023, already similar shares of teachers had interacted with a SOSA (16%). Among teachers who reported their school interacted with a SOSA, most did so through SOSA-delivered professional development across both years. The next most common supports in both years were support on tiered supports, data use, and direct support.³³ Among teachers who interacted with SOSAs directly (~10-12%),³⁴ six in ten received some sort of direct support. The most common forms of direct support across both years were general, modeling, and specific.³⁵

Table 5. Reported Supports Received from a SOSA by Role and School Year

Survey Item	School Leaders		Teachers	
	EOY 2022-23	BOY 2023-24	EOY 2022-23	BOY 2023-24
Reported their school interacted with a SOSA	40%	—	19%	16%
Of those who reported their school interacted with a SOSA...				
Received professional development	52%	—	60%	58%
Received direct support to teachers or classrooms	37%	—	26%	36%
Received support designing, implementing, and evaluating tiered supports for behavior	30%	—	21%	26%
Other	25%	—	14%	15%
Utilized coaching opportunities	20%	—	16%	12%
Received support on data use	18%	—	28%	22%

Note: EOY denotes end of year, while BOY denotes beginning of year (BOY). Teachers were asked about current year interactions and supports to collect feedback on SOSA interactions in 2023-24, whereby SHHS implemented a larger (i.e., more SOSAs), more organized SOSA implementation model relative to 2022-23.

Most teachers reported their school leaders provided some support on PBIS/RP. Eighty-three percent of teachers reported their school leadership either somewhat (44%) or fully (39%) supported the implementation of PBIS/RP. Of those teachers who received support from their school's leadership, the most reported type of support was general support, with specific and modeling the next two most common supports. Seventeen percent of teachers reported they received no support from their school leadership.

Open-ended responses highlighted issues with existing supports provided by school leaders and District staff. Many teachers commented on challenges related to insufficient District and school administrative supports, some going as far as describing a toxic school culture and climate. Many others acknowledged an absence of top-down support or resources that empower teachers to fully implement PBIS/RP. As one teacher said:

“This only works if there is top down support and tools given to schools/classrooms beyond just leaving it to teachers to figure. I expect District staff to helping lead these conversations (not just trainings but demo conversations) so staff can observe and learn from them.”

Other teachers highlighted differences in their own proficiency and their school leaders' proficiency as a challenge to achieving school-wide fidelity of implementation. As one teacher stated, for example:

“I am implementing [PBIS] in my classroom and it works... In my present school at PD's/Staff Meetings, admins go through the motion of giving information, by showing graphs... and diagrams but too abstract to follow.”

3. Many cited structural and cultural challenges to implementing the District's discipline policy as envisioned by the School Climate Bill of Rights.

One school leader succinctly summarized all the key supports needed for successful implementation:

“SWPBIS/Restorative practices work when teachers are trained, there is time built into the schedule to implement, the right personalities are leading the implementation and students and parents have the emotional quotient to participate, learn from, and recognize that the process is a ‘consequence’.”

Closed and open-ended questions were used to inquire about the obstacles faced by school leaders and teachers when implementing PBIS/RP. School leaders and teachers alike echoed the importance of having sufficient training, time to plan and implement the policy, and a shared mindset towards PBIS/RP. Survey data showed that:

Most teachers and school leaders cited lack of time as a challenge to implementing the discipline policy. Over 60% of school leaders and 50% of teachers selected time constraints as a challenge to implementing both PBIS and RP, as shown in Table 6. In open-ended responses, many school leaders and teachers report they do not have the time to learn the practices sufficiently, nor do they have the time, resources, or proficiency to implement the practices with fidelity.

A common refrain from teachers and staff was the lack of time built into the school day to plan for how to implement. In other instances, because PBIS/RP takes time to implement, it may be dropped due to limited resources/capacity when other demands escalate. As one administrator put it:

“As an assistant principal, with **all the other duties assigned** plus the additional sporadic incidents that occur, **not much time if any is available** to properly implement/continue with SWPBIS at the school sites.”

Teachers also frequently cited competing priorities with insufficient time and support to achieve full implementation:

“I remember we talked about [it], but don’t remember the specifics. **We get bombarded** with a ton of things to implement... **not proper time to actually do them and no follow up...**”

Table 6. School Leaders’ (SL) and Teachers’ (T) Reported Challenges to Implementing PBIS/RP

	PBIS		RP	
	SL	T	SL	T
Time constraints	65%	52%	65%	54%
Limited training	60%	45%	62%	46%
Lack of buy-in among staff	41%	25%	42%	22%
Student attitudes	30%	46%	28%	43%
Lack of District (central office) support	42%	26%	30%	24%
Unfamiliar with discipline policy	18%	23%	12%	20%

Note: Totals exceed 100% because respondents were able to select multiple challenges.

Most school leaders and many teachers cited limited training as a challenge. Over 60% of school leaders and 40% of teachers reported limited training was a challenge to implementing PBIS/RP (Table 6). In open-ended responses, teachers and school leaders spoke to a need for renewed and ongoing efforts to fully train *all* staff to implement PBIS/RP. Many noted the challenges to high-fidelity implementation when not all staff received training. As one principal shared:

“Only a handful of teachers are trained. Only 2 teachers attended a 2 day training in RP about 7 years ago. All teachers need to be trained in the RP practices. **Expectation to have 2 teachers return to the school site to train the entire staff with budget and sub constraints is difficult.** Teachers need to be able to attend paid training. Possibly prior to the new school year during the Summer PD time (paid time and part of their work year [mandatory training]). It is crucial to train campus aides and supervision staff since most of the interactions and incidents occur on the playground / outside of the classroom.”

Many teachers spoke to a need and desire for an updated training or training for their colleagues. Even amongst teachers with high buy-in, confidence, and proficiency, many requested the need for refresher modules and a desire for more specific modeling of how to use the strategies in challenging circumstances. One teacher echoed the refrain that all staff need to understand RPs and discussed this lack of consistent training for themselves and their peers as a challenge:

“I probably need a “refresher course.” We have many new teachers at my school who have had no SCHOOL PDs on RP. **If we are going to use this practice, ALL teachers need the information and need to understand that RP will benefit their classroom climate.**”

Other school leaders emphasized competing demands:

“Yes, I would like all my staff to get trained on RP and have time to plan around best practices as these connect to our school goals...**It is great but our time for PD is so limited, I have not highlighted it as much as I would like.**”

On buy-in, attitudes, and District support, teachers and school leaders differed in their opinions. As shown in Table 6, more school leaders compared to teachers reported school buy-in as a problem, while more teachers reported student attitudes (i.e., student buy-in) as a problem, suggesting administrators and teachers focused on different sources of strain, or perhaps their own spheres of influence. Also, substantially more school leaders reported needing support implementing positive behavior interventions and supports, compared to teachers.

A sizable minority report lack of awareness of the discipline policy as challenges to implementing PBIS/RP. It is notable that one in five teachers reported—when asked about challenges they faced—that they were unfamiliar with the discipline policy (Table 6). In open-ended responses, many teachers reported not knowing what PBIS or RP meant nor ever hearing of the School Climate Bill of Rights.

School leaders and teachers alike expressed frustrations with the current policy, even when bought-in and confident using RPs. When discussing frustrations with the current policy, several teachers cited the lack of support received when addressing challenging situations, in which they perceived PBIS/RP as ineffective. This refrain was consistent, even amongst teachers bought-in to the policy:

“I strongly support PBIS and RP, however the lack of support from administration and the district when these strategies do not work has led to injuries and unsafe climate at my school. What is being done to address instances where PBIS/RP does not work?”

Still, as one experienced teacher put it, teachers may be open to strengthening their

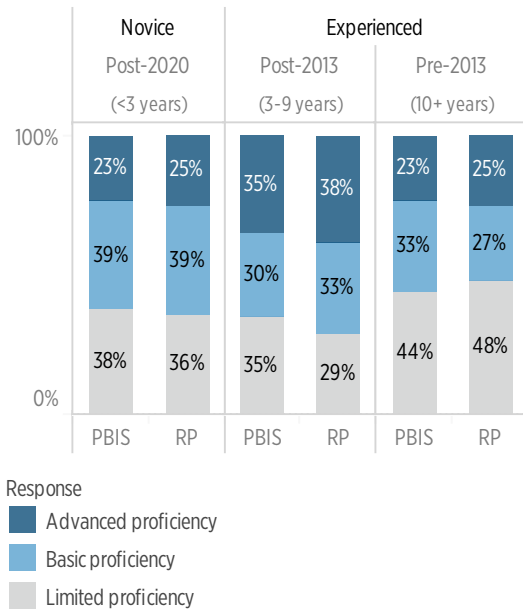
skillset if their misconceptions or issues with the policy are addressed.

“There is a perception among many staff at my site that restorative practices mean that there are no consequences for serious discipline issues. I, and others, need to better understand how the whole process works. We need to know that if a student is abusive to another person, that there can be both a consequence and a restorative process. Right now, it seems both students and staff believe that students can get away with most behavior, no matter how severe or abusive, and there will not be any serious consequence. In a middle school environment, I feel this perception has resulted in serious discipline/behavioral problems that often don't seem to be fully addressed.”

Ten years after the policy shift, resistance to RPs persists, especially among teachers who were in their position prior to the enactment of the School Climate Bill of Rights. Figure 4 shows the distribution of proficiency among teachers by teachers' years of experience.³⁶ Years of experience categories were aligned to the policy's implementation: novice (<3 years) – “post-2020;” after the passage of the School Climate Bill of Rights (3-9 years) – “post-2013;” and prior to its passage (>10 years) – “pre-2013.”

Teachers and school leaders in their roles in 2013 or earlier had lower buy-in, confidence, proficiency, and use of RPs compared to their peers who entered their roles after the School Climate Bill of Rights. Notably, more teachers with the most teaching experience (>10 years) rated themselves as having limited proficiency than their less experienced peers. As shown in Figure 4, among teachers in the classroom prior to the implementation of the School Climate Bill of Rights (pre-2013), 48%

Figure 4. Teachers’ Self-Reported Proficiency in PBIS/RP, by Teacher Experience



Note: Like Table 3, *Limited proficiency* includes the responses “I do not understand [PBIS/RP]” and “I know what some elements or practices of [PBIS/RP] are;” *Basic proficiency* includes the response “I know what [PBIS/RP] practices are;” and *Advanced proficiency* includes “I could explain [PBIS/RP] practices to a peer.” and “I could train another person to use [PBIS/RP] practices in their classroom.”

reported limited knowledge of RP. Comparatively, among experienced teachers who entered the classroom since the School Climate Bill of Rights (post-2013), only 29% had limited knowledge of RP.

4. Elementary schools, professional development, presence of school-site supports, and use of District supports were positively associated with metrics like buy-in, confidence, proficiency and usage.

Elementary schools. Compared to secondary school teachers and school leaders, elementary school staff:

- had significantly higher buy-in (or in the case of school leaders, perceived

significantly higher buy-in among their teachers);

- had significantly more positive perceptions of student attitudes (though still moderate overall);³⁷ and
- reported more frequent use of PBIS/RPs.

Professional development and online resources. Compared to their peers, teachers who attended professional development on PBIS/RP prior to or during the school year:

- had significantly higher buy-in and confidence;
- had significantly more positive perceptions of student attitudes (though still moderate overall); and
- had more frequent use of use of PBIS/RP for either everyday behavior management or discipline and reported greater levels of proficiency in PBIS/RP.

Teachers who accessed online materials had more buy-in and higher levels of proficiency than their peers who did not make use of these materials.

School leaders who reported high teacher training levels among their teachers had improved perceptions of teacher buy-in and confidence as well as perceptions of student attitudes towards RPs.³⁸

School-site supports. Compared to their peers, **teachers who reported their school leadership provided support:**

- had significantly higher buy-in and confidence;
- reported significantly higher perceptions of student attitudes towards RPs; and
- reported greater levels of proficiency (were more likely to report some to advanced knowledge of PBIS and RPs).

Analysis of the data also revealed **teachers at schools with a restorative justice teacher**

advisor reported significantly higher confidence using RPs than teachers at schools without that position.

District supports. Compared to teachers at schools who did not interact with a SOSA, **teachers who reported their schools interacted with a SOSA** last year:

- had significantly higher confidence;
- had significantly more positive perceptions of student attitudes;³⁹
- had more frequent use of use of PBIS/RP for either everyday behavior management or discipline; and
- reported greater levels of proficiency (were more likely to report some to advanced knowledge of PBIS and RPs).

Relative to teachers at schools with no priority initiative, **teachers at schools with at least one priority initiative:**

- had significantly higher buy-in;
- had significantly more positive perceptions of student attitudes; and
- reported greater levels of proficiency in RPs.

Recommendations

1. Consider mandatory, ongoing, scaffolded training for all, accompanied by protected planning time.

Rationale

Teachers who attended training generally had more buy-in, proficiency and reported use of PBIS/RP. Teachers at schools where their school leadership supported implementation of PBIS/RP also reported higher proficiency than their peers. Mandating trainings elevates PBIS/RP as a priority, though staff also need time and support from

administration, as the following quote from a school leader makes evident:

“It would be helpful to have district training [on PBIS/RP] for PD time. It would be helpful to have any PD time left to discuss RP. We are so focused on instruction and PDSA and mandated trainings that **there is no time left to get on the same page about PBIS and RP.**”

However, survey data revealed many teachers have limited proficiency in both PBIS and RPs, and open-ended responses reveal many teachers have not received training since before the pandemic, and some have never received training. Teachers emphasized the need for ongoing training, especially at schools with high turnover of staff:

“Since our school always has a big turnaround of staff, it is imperative that all staff on campus (certified and classified) should receive annual training on PBIS/RP in order to provide consistency in policy and protocol that would help to promote clear expectations of both students and adults on campus.”

Previous District documentation stated defined full training in RPs defined as attending both parts of the training.⁴⁰ RAND’s evaluation of RP implementation in a mid-sized urban district emphasized both providing mandatory training and the importance of school leaders in its recommendations to other districts.⁴¹

Current Commitments and Policy

In the 2024-25 school year, all schools will be required to provide professional development on PBIS (welcoming school environments) and de-escalation/RPs to fulfill the Integrated Safe Schools Plan (ISSP).^{42,43} School leaders will also receive some of this training at the summer Principal’s Leadership Institute.

Otherwise, the current District policy mandates that half of the professional development time on banked Tuesdays be determined by each school's Local School Leadership Council (LCSC), while the remaining 50% must align with the District's instructional priorities.

- In 2023-24, middle and high schools were required to provide the professional development course “Phase 5 of the Anti-Racist Journey,” showing there is precedence for mandating professional development aligned to organizational culture.⁴⁴
- In 2024-25, the District will provide 19 mandated trainings, of which 7 are choice modules. Various offices will collaborate to develop these modules, which will be available to principals by August 12, 2024.

Board Actions:

- The Board should request an update in early 2025 on ISSP training and any new efforts to bolster proficiency in PBIS/RP.
- The Board can request updates from the District at mid or end-of-year regarding level of teacher and school leader training in PBIS/RP annually.

District Actions

- In upcoming PD as part of the ISSP, the Districts’ materials can emphasize PBIS strategies and RPs that teachers can use daily, such as using affective statements while teaching or greeting students at the door. This can help address staffs’ concerns about time and foster buy-in.⁴⁵
- Include additional and scaffolded training on PBIS/RP as one of the choice modules for the seven remaining required professional development courses for 2024-25. Schools with high buy-in/proficiency can strengthen more advanced

skills, while schools with low buy-in/proficiency can focus on Tier 1 strategies.

- Strengthen PBIS/RP competencies among school leaders through annual trainings at the Principal Leadership Institute and throughout the school year.
- District leadership should work with relevant stakeholders to identify strategies to mandate training and institute protected planning time in 2025-26 and beyond and to find means of incorporating elements into existing required professional development.
- Develop a record of teacher and school leader training on PBIS/RP to help track implementation and assess need for initial and more advanced professional development.

Additional Considerations Regarding Mandatory Training

PBIS/RP is a high-effort policy, with time and competing priorities presenting substantial challenges for full implementation. Thus, requiring initial and ongoing training may feel like a burden for some school leaders and teachers – many teachers expressed they were overburdened with changing priorities and existing initiatives. However, PBIS/RP have been District policy for over a decade, and lack of adherence to the policy puts the District at risk and inhibits schools from creating positive, welcoming school environments when staff are not all on the same page.

2. Integrate PBIS/RP framework with implementation of updated strategic plan goal regarding social-emotional learning (SEL).

Rationale

On May 7, 2024, the Board approved an updated version of the strategic plan SEL goal: 100% of students in elementary, middle and high school will engage in integrated evidence-based social-emotional wellness (SEL) instruction by 2026, as evidenced by

classroom usage reports. By 2026, 50% of students will access and upload artifacts using the SEL Portfolio in grades 2, 5/6, 8, 10, and 12 in order to deepen our understanding of student development in SEL and provide recommendations for MTSS.⁴⁶

While PBIS/RP (a framework for managing behavior) and SEL (teaching emotional competencies and prosocial behavior) differ, both strategies are compatible and centered on developing positive behavior, enabling effective classroom management and positive school climates.⁴⁷ Further, by presenting PBIS/RP and SEL as complementary, the District can foster buy-in instead of resistance to what may feel like “another” thing expected of teachers.

Current Policy

The corresponding Board of Education report requesting the update notes the SEL portfolio will provide “data” or indicators to help staff provide MTSS interventions as needed.

Board Actions

- Request an update from the District by end of 2025-26 school year on implementation of SEL goal and how these efforts are integrated with efforts to strengthen PBIS/RP implementation.

District Actions

- Leverage existing networks (e.g., PBIS/RP task force, school site PBIS/RP teams, and SEL Teacher Cadre) to develop resources that show school leaders and teachers how PBIS/RP and SEL efforts are integrated and complementary.
- Consider leveraging existing networks to develop an integrated framework that combines PBIS/RP and SEL.
- With rollout of new SEL goal, integrate training in Tier I PBIS/RP strategies to SEL materials and modules.

3. Develop a communication strategy to reaffirm commitment to PBIS/RP and set clear expectations for teachers and school leaders.

Rationale

In recent public meetings, the District has acknowledged a need to reaffirm its commitment to PBIS/RP. With few exceptions, schools are not implementing PBIS/RP with fidelity, likely contributing to negative behavioral outcomes and school climates. Many staff do not view PBIS/RP as a District priority, evidenced by the following quote:

“Staff at my site are willing to support RP. The problem is that administration does not commit to the program on a long-term basis, and they are not held accountable from the district leaders. Often, administration mentions the program but does not follow up. This has been occurring for years now... If district wants RP to work, then site administrators have to be held accountable for not supporting RP in the form that it should.”

Further, survey data revealed a lack of awareness about the Discipline Foundation Policy and School Climate Bill of Rights and confusion regarding PBIS/RP, exemplified by the following quote from a teacher:

“I believe PBIS/RP can work if the goal is teaching consequences and teaching students to do/be better. Currently, PBIS/RP show students that there are no consequences for their actions.”

Finally, some school leaders and teachers expressed outright rejection of RP in open-ended responses, while others noted rejection of PBIS/RP amongst their peers as a barrier to full implementation, suggesting the need for a new approach:

“I believe the training we have received is sufficient. The issue is **some staff will always hem and haw and not see the need to change their old ways.**”

Current Policy

The District’s Discipline Foundation Policy, recently updated in 2022, outlines PBIS/RP strategies. In 2023-24, the District launched its use of the Tiered Fidelity Index (TFI), a nationally recognized, research-backed tool for assessing fidelity of PBIS implementation.

Board Actions

- Recognize RP as a complementary tool in the District’s broader PBIS/RP strategy and link requests regarding RP implementation to PBIS and the TFI in public meetings and communications.
- In requesting updates from District leadership and staff, focus on growth in use of all (PBIS and RP) Tier I strategies in the near term. Once data (e.g., TFI) reveal growth in fidelity of Tier I implementation, request and monitor growth in Tier II and Tier III strategies.

District Actions

- Develop new communication strategies (and revisit old strategies where appropriate) to make sure expectations are clear regarding use of PBIS/RP and adherence to the Discipline Foundation Policy, using data from the TFI to identify schools that need extra support and leveraging existing mandatory trainings (e.g., ISSP) to communicate clear messaging regarding PBIS/RP, positive school climate, and the School Climate Bill of Rights.
- Engage change management experts to develop strategies to foster buy-in amongst staff resistant to the policy. Similarly, for these staff, consider

emphasizing PBIS in communication strategies (and deemphasizing the phrase restorative justice). For example, research suggests that training may be less effective among individuals not bought into RPs.⁴⁸

- Leverage SOSAs to engage with school leaders and staff to better understand frustrations with the policy to provide appropriate supports and interventions to achieve full implementation.

4. Enhance online resources for secondary teachers and provide videos modeling how to respond to challenging incidents.

Rationale

Teachers who used the District’s online resources had more buy-in, proficiency and reported use of PBIS/RP. However, elementary teachers were more likely than secondary teachers to report uptake of existing District supports, and accordingly, they were less bought-in and proficient in PBIS/RP.

Survey data also revealed room for improvement of the District’s online resources. While 20% of teachers who used the District’s online resources reported they were not useful, only 40% rated them as useful (the rest were neutral). Several secondary teachers expressed training and resources felt better suited for elementary school and did not find them helpful, requesting, for example:

“PBIS and RJ Training geared towards high school students that is NOT touchy-feely... so much of the materials are for elementary students.”

Another common refrain from teachers was a desire to see strategies modeled in difficult situations, as well as modeled generally, such as videotaped dos and don’ts.

Current Policy

The PBIS/RP team provides extensive resources on the District website and via the Schoology group and often disaggregates resources by school level.

Board Actions

- Request updates regarding PBIS/RP resource utilization as part of the District's Strategic Plan updates and any updates to the Board on lessons learned from the first year of the TFI.

District Actions

- Create videos modeling strategies in different contexts are one way to support stronger implementation. To create these videos, the District can work with SOSAs to identify scenarios that would be most helpful (via feedback from staff).
- Engage secondary teachers and facilitate feedback from individuals accessing online resources to better understand skills/knowledge gaps in existing resources, then adapt them accordingly.

5. Fund and hire 30-35 more SOSAs to decrease each SOSA's school load from 30-35 schools down to 10.

Rationale

By reducing each SOSA's school load to about 10 schools each (75-80 SOSAs), central supports will be better able to accelerate stronger implementation of PBIS/RP, as evidenced by the following quote from a school leader:

“Yes, dedicated SOSA support. Currently we get 5h a month. We need at least 5h a week...PBIS should be a top priority, but usually is the bottom priority. When pressed for time, it is invariably the first thing to go.”

Survey data showed teachers at schools that received supports from SOSAs had more confidence using PBIS/RP, greater use of PBIS/RP, and higher levels of proficiency. In open-ended responses, many survey respondents expressed eagerness to work with a SOSA and a desire for greater support. As one teacher shared:

“When our SOSA came to support and run PD on community circles, he barely had the time he needed because of other content. I heard other teachers comment on how interesting his presentation was, and how they wish he'd been given more time. When everything is a priority, nothing is a priority.”

Current Commitments and Policy

In 2023-24, 51 SOSA positions were funded with 43 positions filled.⁴⁹ Sixteen SOSAs were CCEIS-funded and supported about four CCEIS schools. The remaining 27 SOSAs (funded by or managed by SHHS) each supported 30-35 schools. In 2024-25, 45 SOSA positions are included in the superintendent's proposed budget (16 CCEIS and 29 SHHS-funded or managed).

Board Actions

- Monitor implementation of PBIS/RP with current number of funded positions.
- In future budget discussions, prioritize funding for SOSAs and direct the District to find funding for additional SOSAs.

District Actions

- To fund more positions, the District could explore re-purposing existing funds or look to carryover.
- Collect data to illustrate SOSA impact on PBIS/RP implementation (e.g., via focus groups or surveys).

6. Elevate and celebrate California PBIS Statewide Recognitions to incentivize implementation—provide banners for recognized schools.

Rationale

The District routinely celebrates schools that win academic awards such as the California Distinguished Schools Program, and the California Gold Ribbon Schools Program. Similarly, celebrating schools that receive recognition for excellence in PBIS would send the message that the District values and prioritizes accomplishments in the areas of school climate and safety.

In 2023, eight LAUSD schools received recognition, of which five were independent charters. Three District-operated schools that received rewards were Brooklyn Avenue Elementary as well as Sepulveda and Burroughs Middle Schools.⁵⁰

Current Policy

California has a PBIS Recognition System that acknowledges schools for implementing PBIS with fidelity to the national framework.⁵¹ L.A. Unified encourages and supports schools in applying for California PBIS recognition, which they do by submitting their TFI online.

Board Actions

Encourage the District to elevate and celebrate schools that win California Statewide PBIS Recognitions and help promote and publicize these awards.

District Actions

The District can implement a visible and prominent recognition program like what they do for California Distinguished School awards. Specifically, the District can:

- Design and provide large, weather-resistant banners for schools to display on

their fences or prominent areas of the campus. These banners should feature the PBIS recognition level (Bronze, Silver, Gold, or Platinum) along with the year of achievement.

- Paint logos on the main building of recognized schools. These logos should clearly display the PBIS recognition level and year.
- Host an annual district-wide ceremony to present these visual recognitions, inviting local media and community leaders to increase visibility and awareness of the PBIS program's importance.

Additional Considerations Regarding PBIS/RP Implementation Data

Current tools do not enable school and District leaders with data to monitor how schools continue to implement PBIS/RP in real-time. For example, MiSiS only includes a subset of specific restorative practices as options for responses to ODRs. Additionally, the new Tiered-Fidelity Index, an evidence-based tool to evaluate PBIS, will provide rich data but not in real time. The emphasis on PBIS in TFI may create some confusion regarding RPs when data is shared publicly.

District leadership may consider leveraging existing platforms to better monitor of PBIS/RP as part of an overall strategy to reaffirm its commitment to PBIS/RP, including, possibly, incorporating implementation metrics as part of the District's Strategic Plan.

Finally, we note that while an application is more difficult to develop and requires substantial upfront investment; the District has previously acknowledged the need for tracking behavior to set clear expectations and create routines. The District previously acknowledged the need for tracking behavior to set clear expectations and create routines:

“SHHS is working with ITD to begin development of a Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports/Restorative Practices e-tool, including an app that will be available for all LAUSD classroom teachers (customized software and e-learning). These tools are being developed to build school site teams' capacity to improve student behavior, accelerate academic engagement, and decrease office referrals and suspensions.”

NOTES AND REFERENCES

¹ Board Resolution 2013 *School Discipline Policy and School Climate Bill of Rights* adopted May 14, 2013, during the Regular Board Meeting. Available from <https://www.lausd.org/cms/lib/CA01000043/Centricity/Domain/106/8a%20%20Discipline%20Resolution%20BOE%20STAMP%2005-14-13.pdf#page=2>

² See Board Report developed in response to Board Resolution 004-19/20: Supporting SB419 to Ensure that All California Schools End Suspensions for Disruption or Defiance, adopted July 2, 2019, for a complete timeline of District's discipline policy up through 2020. Available here:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/14H7A1XeJkok2vrII9Gi7eV9DLas68hao/view?usp=sharing>

³ In 2013, when the Board of Education approved the School Climate Bill of Rights in response to negative effects of exclusionary discipline, students of color and students with disabilities were suspended more than white peers and students without disabilities. Further, "willful defiance" accounted for 25% of student suspensions. With the passage of this resolution, L.A. Unified became the first district in CA to ban willful defiance suspensions for and implement restorative practices. The District also committed to transparency, community involvement, and accountability in school climate and disciplinary practices.

⁴ Los Angeles Unified School District Policy Bulletin, BUL-133307: Discipline Foundation Policy: Multi-Tiered Systems of Support for Behavior and Social-Emotional Well-Being using Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports/Restorative Practices (PBIS/RP). Dated November 21, 2022. Available here:

<https://www.lausd.org/site/handlers/filedownload.ashx?moduleinstanceid=34064&dataid=42289&FileName=BUL-133307%20-%20Discipline%20Foundation%20Policy.pdf>

⁵ Board Resolution (Res-020-22/23) *Commemorating Ten Years of the School Climate Bill of Rights* adopted May 9, 2023, during the Regular Board Meeting.

<https://www.lausd.org/cms/lib/CA01000043/Centricity/Domain/1057/05-09-23RegBdOBstampedRevised.pdf#page=6>.

⁶ School leaders included principals and assistant principals.

⁷ While only one part of a larger study, the survey provides novel data on staff's experiences implementing key components of the District's discipline foundation policy (as outlined in the School Climate Bill of Rights): positive behavior interventions and supports (PBIS) and restorative practices (RP). Because of the data's novelty and usefulness to support ongoing implementation efforts, we present a standalone report on our analysis of the survey data first.

⁸ E.g., see: Hashim, A. K., Strunk, K., & Dhaliwal, T. K. (2018). Justice for All? Suspension Bans and Restorative Justice Programs in the Los Angeles Unified

School District, *Peabody Journal of Education*, 93(2), 174-189.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/0161956X.2018.1435040>

⁹ Many survey items were duplicated or adapted from RAND's 2018 evaluation of a two-year grant funded restorative justice initiative in a mid-sized urban district. See: Augustine, C. H., Engberg, J., Grimm, G. E., Lee, E., Lin Wang, E., Christianson, K., & Joseph, A. A. (2018). *Can Restorative Practices Improve School Climate and Curb Suspensions*. RAND Corporation.

<https://doi.org/10.7249/RR2840>. Also available here:

https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR2840.html

¹⁰ Other items were developed by referencing current policy documents and with feedback from District staff to ensure questions accurately reflected current practice and terminology.

¹¹ To construct the sample invited to take the survey, staff assignment, contact information and other demographics (e.g., age, race/ethnicity) were pulled from SAP. We limited the population to all school leaders and teachers in the same role and school in 2023-24 as the previous school year Staff were then stratified by school level then randomly assigned a number, and those with the lowest numbers were invited to participate. In total, over 600 school leaders and 3,600 teachers were randomly selected to participate. The number of teachers and school leaders invited to participate were based on desired statistical power and predicted response rates.

¹² Our final samples enabled 95% confidence level with 10% confidence intervals for school leaders and 95% confidence level with 5% confidence intervals for teachers. We also found the final samples were representative of the broader population (i.e., no significant differences were observed between the sample and population on demographic and school-based factors).

¹³ Los Angeles Unified School District Policy Bulletin, BUL-3638.0: Discipline Foundation Policy. Dated March 27, 2007. Available here: https://www.eastlaskillscenter.org/files/bul_3638_discipline_foundation_policy.pdf

¹⁴ In 2011-12, ~13,700 students were suspended, down from approximately 60,000 in 2002-03. Author's calculations using District suspension data downloaded from MyData Suspensions Dashboard (2002-03), which is likely an overestimate of the number of students suspended; The 60,000 number is an estimate for illustrative purposes, using the estimated rate of 8% (see note 14) multiplied by the total enrollment in 2002-03, available on CDE Dataquest, 746,852.

Suspension rates and the unduplicated count of students suspended in 2011-12 are available on CDE Dataquest. <https://dq.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/dqCensus/DisSuspRate.aspx?cds=1964733&agglevel=District&year=2011-12&initrow=&ro=y>

¹⁵ L.A. Unified Secondary School Climate Bill of Rights, 2013. Available here:

https://www.lausd.org/cms/lib/CA01000043/Centricity/Domain/770/LAUSD%20Bill%20of%20Rights_Secondary.pdf

¹⁶ See Board Report developed in response to Board Resolution 004-19/20: Supporting SB419 to Ensure that All California Schools End Suspensions for Disruption or Defiance, adopted July 2, 2019, for a complete timeline of District's discipline policy up through 2020. Available here:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/14H7A1XeJk0k2vrIlgGi7eV9DLas68ha0/view?usp=sharing>

¹⁷ Los Angeles Unified School District Policy Bulletin, BUL-6231.0: Discipline Foundation Policy: School-Wide Positive Behavior Intervention and Support. Dated February 14, 2014. Available here:

<https://www.lausd.org/cms/lib/CA01000043/Centricity/Domain/106/BUL-6231.0%20%20DISCIPLINE%20FOUNDATION%20POLICY.pdf>

¹⁸ Hashim, A. K., Strunk, K., & Dhaliwal, T. K. (2018). Justice for All? Suspension Bans and Restorative Justice Programs in the Los Angeles Unified School District, *Peabody Journal of Education*, 93(2), 174-189.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/0161956X.2018.1435040>

¹⁹ See Board Report developed in response to Board Resolution 004-19/20: Supporting SB419 to Ensure that All California Schools End Suspensions for Disruption or Defiance, adopted July 2, 2019, for a complete timeline of District's discipline policy up through 2020. Available here:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/14H7A1XeJk0k2vrIlgGi7eV9DLas68ha0/view?usp=sharing>

²⁰ The LAUSD Restorative Justice Implementation Roadmap. (n.d.).

https://www.lausd.org/cms/lib08/CA01000043/Centricity/Domain/293/RJ_RoadMap.pdf

²¹ L.A. Unified Presentation on Restorative Justice Implementation Roadmap. (n.d.).

<https://www.lausd.org/cms/lib/CA01000043/Centricity/domain/416/ap%20meeting%2012.04.19/Performance%20Evaluation%20Overview%2010-28-2019.pdf>

²² CDE Dataquest 2022-23 Suspension Rate.

<https://dq.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/dqCensus/DisSuspRate.aspx?cds=1964733&agglevel=District&year=2022-23&initrow=&ro=y>

CDE Dataquest 2012-13 Suspension Rate

²³ In 2022-23, Black students represented 22.0% of students suspended and 7.8% of students enrolled (22%/5.9%=2.8). In 2012-13, Black students represented 28.2% of students suspended and 7.8% of students enrolled (28.2%/9.4%=3)

²⁴ e.g., see Division of Special Education's (DSE) amendment to the 2022 Comprehensive Coordinated Early Intervening Services (CCEIS) Action Plan, approved in the June 18, 2024 Regular Board Meeting (Tab 17).

<https://www.lausd.org/cms/lib/CA01000043/Centricity/Domain/1057/06-18-24RegBdOBwithLinkedMaterialsPost.pdf#page=1105>

²⁵ For more about CCEIS, see: California Department of Education's *Disproportionality in CA Public Schools* page (last updated March 18, 2024).

<https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/se/qa/disproportionality.asp>

²⁶ Some schools also have Restorative Justice Teacher Advisors.

²⁷ The survey design did not permit matching principals to their teachers, so we cannot say that individual principals thought their teachers lacked buy-in and confidence, even as those teachers claimed to be bought in and confident.

²⁸ Augustine, C. H., Engberg, J., Grimm, G. E., Lee, E., Lin Wang, E., Christianson, K., & Joseph, A. A. (2018). *Can Restorative Practices Improve School Climate and Curb Suspensions*. RAND Corporation.

<https://doi.org/10.7249/RR2840>. Also available here:

https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR2840.html

²⁹ School leaders were asked, "Last year, how often were restorative practices used to address disciplinary incidents?" Responses "about half the time," "most of the time" and "all the time" were categorized as frequent (the other two options on the five-point scale were "never" and "sometimes").

³⁰ About half the teachers in our sample submitted at least one ODR. Teachers who submitted at least one ODR were asked, "Last year, how many discipline referrals that you submitted were responded to with at least one restorative practice or restorative justice program action?" Respondents were categorized as frequent use if "half," "most," or "all" was selected (the other two options on the five-point scale were "none" or "few").

³¹ Direct support: "Direct support to teachers or classrooms;" Support on tiered supports: "Designing, implementing, and evaluating tiered supports for behavior;" Coaching: "Coaching opportunities."

³² More frequent support is defined as two times a semester up to monthly.

³³ Support on tiered supports: "Designing, implementing, and evaluating tiered supports for behavior (behavior contracts, Interim Behavior Response Plan - IBRP, etc.);" Data use: "Data use (data interpretation, using data to make decisions);" Direct support: "Direct support to teachers/classrooms."

³⁴ Calculated as the percent of teacher respondents who selected at least one support in response to the question, "[Last/This year], a SOSA provided me with the following support." In 2022-23: 12%; in 2023-24, 10%.

³⁵ General: "Providing additional general information about PBIS/RP;" Modeling: "Modeling restorative practices (community building circles/activities, restorative questions think slips, restorative rounds, etc.);" Specific: "Answering specific questions about implementing PBIS/RP."

³⁶ Years of experience was measured by self-reported years in role.

³⁷ Even when statistically significant differences were observed in perceptions of student attitudes towards RPs, average composite scores across the comparison remained weak to moderate (less than 3).

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Ibid (regarding perceptions of student attitudes.

⁴⁰ See Board Report developed in response to Board Resolution 004-19/20: Supporting SB419 to Ensure that All California Schools End Suspensions for Disruption or Defiance, adopted July 2, 2019. Available here:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/14H7A1XeJk0k2vrII9Gi7eV9DLas68ha0/view?usp=sharing>

⁴¹ Specifically, the report stated: “Ensure that school leaders understand and can model restorative practices. School staff who received modeling and/or feedback from school leaders were more likely to use restorative practices.” See p. 72 in: Augustine, C. H., Engberg, J., Grimm, G. E., Lee, E., Lin Wang, E., Christianson, K., & Joseph, A. A. (2018). *Can Restorative Practices Improve School Climate and Curb Suspensions*. RAND Corporation. <https://doi.org/10.7249/RR2840>. Also available here:

https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR2840.html

⁴² Los Angeles Unified School District Interoffice Correspondence (IOC). Every School Safe Mandatory Safety Training Modules for 2024-2025 School Year. Dated June 17, 2024. Available here:

https://www.lausd.org/cms/lib/CA01000043/Centricity/Domain/1236/Every_School_Safe_Mandatory_Safety_Training_Modules_for_2024-25_School_Year.pdf; For more on Every School Safe Mandatory Safety Training Modules Certification, see: <https://www.lausd.org/cms/lib/CA01000043/Centricity/Domain/318/ESS%20Training%20Modules%20Certification.pdf>

⁴³ These topics were added to the collection of topics addressed in 2023-24, noted on the Integrated Safe School Plan page in the Every School Safe plan. See: Los Angeles Unified School District. (April 2023). *Every School Safe: 2023-26 Blueprint for Safety*.

<https://www.lausd.org/cms/lib/CA01000043/Centricity/Domain/1236/ESSBlueprintForSafety2023-26.pdf>

⁴⁴ Los Angeles Unified School District Memorandum, MEM-5788.14 *School-Site Professional Development Priorities and Banked Time Tuesdays for Middle and High Schools 2023-2024*. Dated June 26, 2023. Available on LAUSD’s Frequently Asked Questions Regarding the Mandated Training Status Report page:

<https://www.lausd.org/Page/18231>

⁴⁵ This was also recommended in RAND’s 2018 evaluation.

⁴⁶ Approved in June 18, 2024 Regular Board Meeting (Tab 12):

<https://www.lausd.org/cms/lib/CA01000043/Centricity/Domain/1057/06-18-24RegBdOBwithLinkedMaterialsPost.pdf#page=1051>; Stamped Order of Business: <https://www.lausd.org/cms/lib/CA01000043/Centricity/Domain/1057/06-18-24RegBdStamped-OBPost.pdf>

⁴⁷ E.g., for comparisons between PBIS and SEL, see:

https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/sites/default/files/sssta/20120417_RPWHornerS-SSTA4112012.pdf; see also: <https://www.classcraft.com/blog/difference-sel-pbis/#pbis-sel>

⁴⁸ Darling-Hammond, S., (2023). *Fostering Belonging, Transforming Schools: The Impact of Restorative Practices* (Policy Brief). Learning Policy Institute.

https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/media/4057/download?inline&file=Restorative_Practices_BRIEF.pdf

⁵⁰ List of 2022-23 PBIS awards in California:

<https://img1.wsimg.com/blobby/go/0307c2d7-b985-42c5-b8d3-316d5bfeae83/REVISED%2022-23%20Awarded%20Schools.pdf>

⁵¹ Schools receive recognition at various levels, including Bronze, Silver, Gold, or Platinum, based on their implementation and outcomes in the PBIS Recognition System in California. The California PBIS Coalition also awards the Community Cares Award to schools that have demonstrated exceptional efforts in promoting positive school culture. See: <https://pbisca.org/state-recognition-system>

APPENDIX

Survey Design and Administration

In early fall of the 2023-2024 school year, the IAU surveyed school leaders and teachers to better understand how schools are implementing practices outlined in the School Climate Bill of Rights and related discipline foundation policy. The survey questionnaires are provided at the end of the appendix. Most questions were multiple-choice or multiple select with a few targeted, open-ended questions.

The survey addressed staff's opinions of restorative practices, their use of restorative practices and positive behavior interventions and supports, and factors that challenge and support implementing the discipline policy (PBIS/RP). Questions about staffs' uptake of various district resources included questions about Systems of Support Advisers (SOSAs). To ground staff's responses, almost all questions were asked of the previous school year, 2022-2023. We asked both groups similar sets of questions on how PBIS/RP was integrated into their school's culture and practices.

Many survey items were duplicated or adapted from RAND's 2018 study, "Can Restorative Practices Improve School Climate and Curb Suspensions," an evaluation of a two-year grant funded restorative justice initiative in a mid-sized urban district.ⁱ Other items were developed by the IAU in consultation with Student Health and Human Services.

Surveys given to school leaders and teachers also included role-specific questions. School leaders were asked about teachers' use of, buy-in to, confidence using, and training in restorative practices. Teachers were asked about administrative support of school-wide use of positive behavior interventions and supports and restorative practices.

Survey Sample

School leaders and teachers were randomly selected from the population of all school leaders and teachers during the 2022-2023 school year. We employed a stratified random sample in recognition of the different practices and challenges implementing PBIS/RP in elementary and secondary grades. To construct the sample invited to take the survey, staff assignment, contact information, and other demographics (e.g., age, race/ethnicity) were pulled from SAP. Staff were stratified by school level then randomly assigned a number, and those with the lowest numbers were invited to participate. In total, over 600 school leaders and 3,600 teachers were randomly selected to participate.ⁱⁱ Our final sample included 189 school leaders and 591 teachers, with response rates of 30% and 16%, respectively.ⁱⁱⁱ

All survey responses were confidential. The survey was designed in Qualtrics, and invitations to the survey were delivered using the software's e-mail feature. Follow-up e-mail invitations were sent from the lead author's account to legitimize the survey for those questioning the @qualtrics.lausd.net domain.

Survey Limitations

Survey research can help us understand the self-reported experiences, attitudes, and opinions of teachers and school leaders at a single point in time. But surveys also have limitations that affect the reliability, validity, and accuracy of results. The general limitations of survey research include possible sampling or response biases and measurement error.

The sampling strategy and adequate response rate of this survey mitigated the risk of sampling bias—the survey respondents are a representative sample of elementary and secondary teachers and school leaders. Likewise, the confidentiality of the survey and the absence of incentives to respond one way or another helped mitigate response bias, which is the risk of a respondent answering inaccurately or untruthfully for various reasons.

However, measurement error derived from several sources probably affected the results. First, the items on the questionnaire were often open to individual interpretation or were ambiguous (e.g. “few” or “about half”). Therefore, comparisons between respondents are approximations—we cannot be sure respondents all interpreted their answers to the same questions in the same way.

Second, in several items, we ask respondents to recall the prior year. Here, recollections may be faulty or inconsistent. Third, the changes in implementation (different emphases in or styles of professional development, for instance) from year-to-year mean responses may refer to practices that were different last year to this year.

The nature of the study also restricts the inferences that researchers can make. Since there is no matching of principals to teachers, we cannot directly compare attitudes of teachers and principals at the same schools. Finally, although we can show associations between how participants responded to different questions, we cannot show any causal effect between factors. For example, as we show below, teachers who receive training and support also report relatively high levels of buy-in, but it does not follow that training causes buy in.

Links to Complete Surveys

Teacher Survey: [Web version](#) [PDF version](#)

School Leader Survey: [Web version](#) [PDF version](#)

ⁱ Augustine, C. H., Engberg, J., Grimm, G. E., Lee, E., Lin Wang, E., Christianson, K., & Joseph, A. A. (2018). *Can Restorative Practices Improve School Climate and Curb Suspensions*. RAND Corporation. <https://doi.org/10.7249/RR2840>. Also available here: https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR2840.html

ⁱⁱ The number of teachers and school leaders invited to participate were based on desired statistical power and predicted response rates.

ⁱⁱⁱ Our final samples enabled 95% confidence level with 10% confidence intervals for school leaders and 95% confidence level with 5% confidence intervals for teachers. We also found the final samples were representative of the broader population (i.e., no significant differences were observed between the sample and population on demographic and school-based factors).