

Title: Whole School Restorative Practices Project
Type of grant: Development
Absolute Priority: Priority 3
Competitive Preference Priority: Novice

Description: The project aims to reduce suspensions, reduce discipline disparities, and improve progression through school for students in 12 public elementary, middle, and high schools in Brooklyn’s District 18. The project model represents a novel integration of restorative practices (RP) and social and emotional learning (SEL) with an explicit focus on equity. By strengthening relationships; developing social and emotional skills, including cultural fluency; and by using restorative interventions, our model creates a positive climate for learning and addresses the root causes of suspensions and disproportionality, including educator bias.

The initiative is rooted in a 3-decade collaboration between Morningside Center and the NYC Department of Education that has produced two of the nation’s leading evidence-based SEL programs. The project is a **partnership with NYC Department of Education’s** Office of Safety and Youth Development and Community District 18.

The project will serve some **5,472 students** (90% Black, 80% low-income) in four elementary, four middle and four high schools in Brooklyn’s District 18. **Project activities** include SEL skill-building restorative circles for all students; coaching for school leaders in becoming “restorative leaders”; and training and coaching for school staff, students and parents in SEL and RP, with a focus on equity and bias awareness. In Phase 1, three District 18 schools will serve as a “learning pilot” for improving the model. Evaluators will conduct an implementation study and offer iterative feedback for improvement. In Phase 2, nine additional District 18 schools will implement the improved project. Evaluators will conduct a quasi-experimental design study involving the 9 intervention schools and 9 comparison schools.

Expected outcomes include: improved SEL competency of students and staff, increased cultural fluency among staff, reductions in exclusionary discipline, reductions in discipline disparities, and improvements in students’ successful progress through school.