Speaker 1: Restorative Practices has really changed the school environment.

Nanayo S.: There is a calmness and a consideration that's coming out that wasn't there before.

Speaker 3: And you can say exactly what you've been needing to say.

Speaker 4: I think the kids are really, really responding to it.

Student 1: It helps me think about other people really like about the world.

Student 2: Well, what I like about circles is that everybody gets a turn.

Speaker 7: We need to talk to our kids. We need to create these relationships.

Speaker 3: It's all about building relationships.

Speaker 4: They're able to believe in their own feelings and to share their own feelings.

Nanayo S.: You get to say everything you want to say and people listen to you.

Speaker 4: It truly is something that's allowing our students to believe that they feel safe and to believe that they feel cared about within our community.

Student 3: It made me feel like a part of this class.

Student 4: It made me feel special.

Speaker 13: I think it's really transformed our school. We're working towards building that kind of school that we want.

Student 5: Restorative Practices are based on principles that emphasized the importance of positive relationships as central to building community and involve processes that restore relationships when harm has occurred.

Student 5: A restorative school environment is about building relationships, giving students a voice, creating an inclusive community, working with students and consistency in the restorative process.

Kerri Berkowitz: It's all about building relationships and stressing the importance of that to know that if I just spend time building relationships with my students, that's going to allow for a climate in the classroom that will really foster their learning.

Ben Kauffman: Before we can get the testing, before we can get to academics, we have to start with how do we connect to and how do we relate to this human being better in front of us. Restorative Practices has been able to give people language around taking all those different things on. The number one thing for me being the relationships that people have with one another.

Student 5: Human beings are happier more productive and more likely to make positive changes in their behavior when those in positions of authority do things with them rather than to them or for them.

Chad Slife: We often as adults, we talked down to the kid. It can be something as simple as, "You threw that pin at him, I need you to come in at lunch. I need you to serve at detention."

Cynthia D.: In a lot of areas in their lives, they don't feel like they get to be heard, they're talked to.

Chad Slife: Letting the kid talk, I think it's the biggest thing.

Student 6: A lot of adults that only let you say what they want to hear.

Mr. Thompson: The key to the whole system restorative practice to me is trust. They have to trust that you're going to allow them to speak.

Betty Momjian: Someone's actually listening to what I have to say, why I'm hurting. They're listening and they're not judging me. It's a great feeling.

Kerri Berkowitz: To allow everybody's stories to be a part of the community, and we're building that framework.

Amy Merickel: It really just builds community and it just creates a model for how we all want to relate to one another.

Ben Kauffman: Ultimately, everyone wants to feel a sense of belonging. They want to be seen, they want to connect with another person.

Joel Balzer: Children who are assailants are often victims themselves, who haven't been taught that they really are part of something. They don't feel like they're part of something, and they don't feel that they have a voice.

Tiffany Hyman: No matter who you are here at Civic Center, this is a community and we work really hard to instill community and help people feel like there's a place where they're wanted, where they feel comfortable, they feel good about coming to school every day.

Student 7: When I first came to the school, I think that I like ... I feel like a fish out of water, but when I start participating more like I got to see how everybody interact and everybody were just fine about it.

Cynthia D.: What I really like about the restorative practices is that you're working with the students to help them to develop their own problem solving skills.

Esther Honda: We have to make this sort of leap of faith that it's going to work out and give them full buy in to the culture of the school. It really makes sense because they're the ones who have to go to school here.

Mr. Thompson: They work it out. You yourself, you tell me what you think you should do to make that person feel better. They come up with some things that are phenomenal.

Nanayo S.: It's always going to be the same process. For the adults, we have a tool that gives us the words to say and a process to go through for every single case. Kids who have a lot of trauma in their lives, this is the same process every day with every adult and no matter what happens, they are being heard.

Cynthia D.: Using these questions and not everyone has it memorized yet, but even when they take out the card, it's giving them a chance to pause before reacting. It's giving the adult a chance to pause before reacting and the child a chance to pause. And so it's sort of slows down that process of reactivity.

Student 5: The Continuum of Restorative Practices includes effective statements, restorative dialogue and impromptu conferences, circles, community building and repairing harm, and formal conferencing.

Student 5: Effective statements are statements that include how a person was affected by the behavior of another person.

Chad Slife: Teachers are really trained now in like using effective statements. So as opposed to saying, "Stop talking." It's, "You're frustrating me right now because I'm trying to talk to the class and you keep talking. It'd be helpful if you stop."

Speaker 33: You're going to come in quietly and have a seat and you're going to give me your attention. What how Keno does it, so beautifully.

Speaker 33: I love how the class is giving her plenty of thinking time. A variety of sports. I like it. Everybody's thinking for themselves, their own ideas. I like how he knows he shouldn't be playing in his folder right now.

Ben Kauffman: I can use an affective statement and I can say, "I really care about you right now and I'm concerned about the fact that you haven't been to school for three days. Is everything okay with you and your family right now? Because last week, you were here everyday and I know that your mom has been sick."

Student 5: When responding to a conflict, a restorative approach consists of asking key questions.

Mr. Thompson: We usually follow those specific questions. It's more less, "What happened? What were you thinking? What are you thinking about now? Who have you harmed? How can we resolve it?"

Cecily Ina: Instead of saying, "Why did you do that?" Asking, "What happened?" Creating a deeper understanding of the importance of letting the kids express themselves.

Mr. Thompson: Everybody's using this same terminology and the kids, in my opinion, are getting that.

Leslie Culkin: It's become a way that we talk at home. You know instead of saying, "You need to apologize to your sister." We say to both kids, "How are you going to make this right?"

Cecily Ina: They know that this is a place where they will be treated fairly, and I think that's so important for kids to understand and know.

Student 5: A restorative circle is a community process with a range of purpose, including community building and repairing harm.

Chad Slife: We do circles all the time. We have advisories everyday, which is like a half hour of small group of kids. And that's always a circle. We do circles as a staff every time we meet.

Cecily Ina: We do circle every morning. It's a way for me to touch bases with my kids every day. It's also another way for the kids to feel like they are spoken and they are heard. And you know it's it's raw, it's their true feelings. And a lot of it has actually come with the restorative practices rather than just saying, "I'm sad." They're able to explain why they're sad now.

Student 8: That made me feel proud.

Student 9: It was excellent.

Student 10: When I go out to recess, I play soccer and I feel strong.

Cecily Ina: How did it make you feel?

Student 11: Smart.

Cecily Ina: They know that when they're willing to express themselves, other people will be receptive to what they have to say.

Student 5: Circles can be used for conflict resolution, building community, healing, problem solving, brainstorming, diffusing tension, reflecting, family issues, introducing new students, farewell to students leaving, and community violence debriefing.

Student 5: Restorative Conference is a structured meeting with the victim, offender, and affected parties to decide as a group how the harm will be repaired by the offender.

Cynthia D.: We go to the party, it's usually the students and they both agree to it. And it's a chance for them to talk things out to hear each other's perspective. So we go through the questions here. The questions for the person being harmed and questions for the person who did the harm. And usually how it works is both sides have done some harm and both sides feel harmed. And so we just go through the questions and they each get to tell their perspectives on it, and then they come up with the solution. So it's problem solving, it's real life skills for them, and they generally feel better about it in the end and they feel like it's more fair.

Speaker 45: Tell her what you're going to do.

Student 12: Well Raven, we're going to be friends and like we can't be fighting [inaudible 00:09:46]. We can't let what people say come between us. Because most of the stuff that people say is not true. They try to start fights.

Esther Honda: It's pretty radical shift in a way, even though it felt subtle at first, I think it's pretty radical.

Carol C.H.: You have a paradigm shift from before like when somebody broke a rule, then they would be punished for the breaking of the rule. A restorative approach is teaching the person who's caused the harm to look at how their actions impact, not just the person that they're hurting, but also the people around them. Then a lot more learning and accountability can happen.

Kay Kirman: Recognizing that there are people that were affected by that choice and the effect might be something as simple as my feelings were hurt, or the effect might be so strong that another child doesn't want to go to school the next day.

Taffany Davis: What I found restorative practices, not only does it allow a chance to build a relationship, but more importantly it creates accountability.

Kay Kirman: Restorative Practices to me is taking the time to sit down and find out what is really going on because that's the only way you're going to prevent it from happening again.

Michelle J.M.: You get down to what's really going on. Lower the repeat of incidences that come up because those underlying issues before we're not getting addressed.

Cynthia D.: Instead of getting a referral because someone's talking back to the teacher in class, I get a referral for the reasons why the child may be talking back in class. So the student didn't get any food, the student lost their housing, the parents are separating. So we're getting at those underlying reasons, and then I can actually do the job that I was put here to do versus putting out fires.

Charles Waters: I do our suspension stats for our school every year, and for the past seven years, I've created charts after every semester, after every school year. The discipline model, although for some cases, I think you know it is necessary, maybe mandatory that it doesn't fit anymore. What I realize is that we can't expel or discipline ourselves out of problem. It's just going to take real action from us as teachers and administrators and just concerned citizens to change that cycle.

OKorie Clark: The old model was very punitive. I think we just kind of took in our mind that this person is guilty, you get a punishment, and go on. And that was some vindication for the victim. In this situation, there's also a vindication for the victim by hearing that the person can actually acknowledge what they did, speak about what they were thinking at the time, and also that perpetrator can hear how it made that victim feel.

Nanayo S.: The net effect has been amazing. The office used to be full of kids. We didn't have enough seats for all the kids in the office. Kids would run into the office trying to tell their stories yelling because they wanted to be the first one to tell their version of whatever it was that happened. Now, they walk in.

Esther Honda: I just hear so much less yelling by kids, by adults, by all the staff members, my family members.

Leslie Culkin: It's really important for a child's future and for their adulthood to be able to resolve conflict appropriately as a kid. And they're learning to do that at school.

Nanayo S.: And there's a feeling of calmness that we didn't have before. There's a feeling of knowing that whatever happen is going to be taken care of, that everybody's story will be heard. It allows them to handle the smaller things in a faster, more effective way, and then the more serious things get to have a little bit more attention.

Mr. Thompson: It really works. Something I've been doing for a long time, but I think with the new terminology, everybody pitching, it's helpful, very helpful.

Esther Honda: The guiding team folks have agreed especially I think we need to get to the next level, really to have staff members practicing what we implemented by giving each other those effective statements. Feeling like it's a safe place to come to one another with any kinds of differences or problems that we can work out through this restorative model.

Kay Kirman: Restorative practices helps kids recognize that these feelings that they have as a result of something can be changed and everybody can move forward. The kid who did the harm, the kid who was harmed, the teacher who might have been harmed in this process, the whole school community. I think it's really the way to go.

Emily Geiges: It's allowing our students to take control over how their days run, that no one's going to tell them what to do. You have control over how you interact with your friends and your teachers and anyone else in the school.

Joel Balzer: But most people really believe that education is the way our world is going to get better, and on the idea that everyone deserves the chance to be heard. Restorative Practices really embodies what most teachers went in to teaching to accomplish in the first place. They wanted to be part of a community, of relationship that provides education. We need to reclaim the idea of relationship and education.

OKorie Clark: It works here. It's a great model here that we're using at Civic Center and it's working for us, so I would imagine that it could work for any school if it can work here.

Nanayo S.: It's been great for our school.

Mr. Thompson: I see it working.