

“Restorative Justice is Respect. Respect for all, even those who are different from us; even those who seem to be our enemies.

Respect reminds us of our interconnectedness but also of our differences. Respect insists we balance concerns for all parties.

If we pursue justice as respect we will do justice restoratively.”

-- Howard Zehr, *The Little Book of Restorative Justice*

Based on Restorative Justice’s documented success as a discipline and learning tool, it has been used in the discipline process of these school districts:

- Lansing
- East Lansing
- Holt
- Ingham County Youth Center



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Central Michigan Restorative Justice

Restorative Justice in Schools



“Bringing students, families, schools and communities together to resolve problems, promote healing and transform conflict.”



Restorative Justice brings together all parties affected by misconduct or conflict to discuss the incident and its effect on others. Sitting in a circle, they work through three main points defined by the questions below.

Restorative Justice Asks:

- 1. What happened?*
- 2. Who has been affected and how?*
- 3. What can we do to make things right?*

Fosters Genuine Accountability

Traditional school discipline sends away students who violate the code of conduct, but rarely examines the harm that the misconduct or conflict has caused. In Restorative Justice, the person who caused harm takes responsibility for making things right and can then return to, or stay in, school.

Gives Victims a Voice

In a Restorative Justice circle, all participants are encouraged to express how the misconduct or conflict has impacted them. In particular, the victim defines what he or she needs to heal from the incident.

Empowers All

All parties craft an agreement that outlines the necessary actions to repair the harm and allows everyone to move forward from the misconduct or conflict.

Heals the Harm

In long term follow-up surveys conducted during the 2008-09 school year:

- 95% of participants reported they had resolved their conflict as a result of their Restorative Justice intervention;
- 92% said they learned new skills in the RJ process; and,
- 89% claimed they had used their new skills to avert or resolve subsequent conflicts.

Since January 2005, Capital Area schools have used Restorative Justice as part of their discipline process. Here is what participants are saying about their Restorative Justice experiences:

“This program allows us to create a positive process which fosters accountability and healing by taking into account the needs of all those in the schools and community that have been affected [by student misbehavior].”

*~ James Davis, Deputy Superintendent
Lansing School District*

“Excellent process. I hope our kids can take the lessons they learned and put them to good use in the school and community.”

~ High School Parent

“The program opened a window to the victim’s position as well as the other parents’ (and offenders’) which was better to grasp the whole situation and find remedies.”

~ High School Student