RESTORATIVE JUSTICE MONTCLAIR

Charge – Vision – Mission Statement

Charge
Nationally and in Montclair, Restorative Justice (RJ) was developed as a district-wide response to suspension rates, the racial and special education disparities in suspensions and the high levels of bullying in our schools. RJ is an approach to transforming school culture toward reparations and relationships and away from punishment and suspension. Rather than isolate, punish, and separate a child who is accused of wrongdoing, RJ is designed to build an environment and relationships of inclusion, shared responsibility and accountability. RJ is an evidence-based intervention method designed to incorporate students, staff, administrators, faculty and family—a method that will not be successful when approached with superficial implementation. In order to generate the desired outcomes with respect to bullying, suspension, school violence, and civic engagement, and to provoke a rich climate change, the necessary conditions for effectiveness must include:

1. **SUPPORT FROM THE TOP:** Strong commitment from school and district leadership to work through conflict, rather than to isolate and punish.

2. **FULL SCHOOL INVOLVEMENT:** Willingness to train staff and students on RJ circles and strategies. For RJ to become a regular part of a school's culture, it cannot be treated as a supplemental program, but as a philosophy that permeates the values and policies of the school, with demonstrated impact on reductions in bullying, suspensions and more civic engagement within the school community.

3. **VISIBILITY:** The RJ facilitator needs to be onsite, working with a core team of faculty and students, with significant face time with students in order to help foster a preventative, inclusive culture. This facilitator has to be able to respond immediately to incident/crisis and sustain communities of care and accountability in the aftermath of an incident.

Vision

Restorative Justice Montclair (RJM) is guided by a philosophy that fosters social and emotional well-being, acceptance, empowerment and mutual respect for those who are impacted by and involved in conflict.

RJM will build cultures and communities of *response-ability*, respect and reparation of relationships where harm has occurred.

Mission

Restorative Justice Montclair (RJM) is a collaboration of the Montclair Board of Education, the Montclair Education Association and our Montclair community.

RJM seeks to cultivate an equitable environment where all individuals feel safe, included, heard and will benefit from shared learning experiences. RJM will provide integrated methods to address conflict through reflection, reconciliation and accountability where harm has occurred.