

Executive Summary of the Davis Joint Unified School District (DJUSD) and Yolo Conflict Resolution Center Partnership (YCRC)

Background

The DJUSD Ad Hoc Alternative Conflict Resolution Committee was formed in the fall of 2014 with the express purpose of exploring alternatives to the existing mechanisms for addressing and resolving conflict within DJUSD. The Committee was chaired by Matt Best, Job Title at the time?, and members included representatives from the Board of Education, the Director of Student Support Services, District Climate Coordinator, parents, DTA and CSEA. The Committee reviewed the types of conflict within DJUSD, and current policies and procedures for addressing conflict. Presentations were made by: Yolo Conflict Resolution Center (YCRC) on mediation, Da Vinci Charter Academy on restorative practices and from UC Davis Ombudsman Services.

In April 2015 the Committee presented and the Board approved three primary courses of action based in taking a restorative approach to conflict:

1. Continue and expand the use of and training in restorative practices district-wide to meet the need of resolving conflict most respectfully and compassionately, and at the lowest organizational level possible, throughout the DJUSD community: students, staff, parents, board.
2. Create a formal partnership with YCRC to provide neutral, third-party mediation services, especially for conflicts between staff members, but also for conflicts involving parents and staff, and students and staff.
3. Update Board Policy and District regulations to reflect these commitments.

In Fall of 2015, DJUSD and YCRC entered into an MOU for the 2015-16 school year to achieve the goals above. Upon receipt of the report detailing that work, the MOU has been renewed for 2016-2017.

Outreach and Education

YCRC staff explained its services to leadership staff at the August ALT meeting and during the year with individual principals regarding specific site needs and ways to refer cases to YCRC for mediation (particularly cases between staff). YCRC staff provided PTA/PTO organizations with information about mediation services, available to students and parents for school-related issues at no cost. Continued education is critical for effective and efficient resource utilization

Training

YCRC provided both training and direct support to district staff in facilitating activities and training throughout the year. Additional training and support is planned for this coming school year.

Conflict Resolution Services

YCRC responded to referrals for mediation services from several sources, including the Climate, Administrative Services and Student Support Services Offices, as well as direct individual requests, for cases involving students, staff and parents. These were addressed by facilitated mediations, restorative conferences, and circle conversations. Evaluations by participants engaging in YCRC services were positive. This assessment is congruent with district DJUSD staff interactions with YCRC staff.

Overall Assessment of Services

DJUSD staff is very pleased with YCRC services and the on-going relationship with YCRC staff, which we believe to be mutually beneficial to our respective organizations and the larger Davis community. These services enrich and expand existing offerings, and are highly collaborative. YCRC trainers are highly skilled, collaborative and dedicated to shaping their training to DJUSD.

Goals for 2016-17

In 2016-17 the primary focus of YCRC's work will expand from outreach and direct mediation services to greater support for broadening and deepening the use of restorative practices within DJUSD, working closely with the Office of School Climate, and including collaboratively developing and delivering training and growth opportunities aligned with the district's goals of building and strengthening resilience and community in the service of providing a quality education for all students.