



Minnesota Association of Secondary School Principals

Star of Innovation Award Application Form

School Name Oak Grove Middle School Grade Levels 6-8
Name of School District Bloomington Public School District 271
Name of Principal Anne Graner
Application Submitted By Anne Graner - Principal & John Polhill - AP
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MASSP Division Hennepin
Name of Program The Restorative Room

Please answer the following questions on a separate sheet/s of paper.

- Description of the program.
- How has it impacted your school?
- What difficulties did you encounter in its implementation?
- What issue/s might another school encounter in replicating this program?
- Do you have any data to show the impact of this program? If so, please share it with us.

Applications must be submitted to MASSP offices by March 1.

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Questions? Please contact:
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Oak Grove Middle School
Principal Anne Graner
Assistant Principal John Polhill
MASSP Star of Innovation Award Submission
The Restorative Room
March 1, 2024

Two years ago, we decided that we wanted to get more out of our Quiet Room at Oak Grove Middle School in Bloomington, MN. Previously, the Quiet Room was a place that students would go to when they were sent out of the classroom for behavior reasons. Once in the Quiet Room, students would sit quietly for the remainder of the class period (or longer depending on the incident), and work independently on any work they had to complete. Administration felt that we could be doing more to support our students when they are sent out of the classroom for disciplinary reasons. It was from this thought that the Restorative Room was born. Oak Grove Middle has worked hard over the past two years to hone in on the process and to help develop the Restorative Room into what it has become today.

Description of the Program

The Restorative Room, a tier two intervention, was established to support students in a three-fold process in order to: 1.) provide a break for students that have not been able to redirect their behavior after tier one interventions were used in the classroom setting, 2.) provide academic support for the student that was sent out for both the current assignment as well as any other work that may be missing or that the student needs support on, and 3.) provide social-emotional support for students who are dysregulated due to the current reason for being sent out, or other underlying issues that the student may be dealing with.

The reason our Restorative Room is so effective is due to the staff that we have put into key positions, each playing a fundamental role in the success of this space. Our dean of students is the manager of the whole process. Her office is connected to the Restorative Room and she oversees all aspects of the process. Next, we have a paraprofessional that manages the influx of students on a daily basis. Once a student has been processed and seated in the Restorative Room, our Restorative Room para alerts the dean and the Academic Interventionist. The dean connects with the student to determine what happened and may also contact the teacher or staff member that sent the student to the Restorative Room. This is to find out any key details that may be needed in determining how long the student will be visiting as well as what behavioral

interventions may be needed. The academic Interventionist then connects with the student to find out what class that student was in and what they were working on when the student was sent down. If the Academic Interventionist needs more information, he will quickly run to the classroom and get more information or materials the visiting student may need. He then gets the student going and provides any academic support needed to help that student be successful. Finally, one of our two school social workers sweeps in and connects with the student for a quick social emotional check-in. We have a general education social worker as well as a special education social worker. Depending on the visiting student, one or the other will check in and determine whether or not they need more social emotional support. The social workers also work on doing mediations and restorative work depending on whether or not there is a need to repair a student to student relationship or a student to staff relationship.

The amount of time a student may be in the Restorative Room varies from student to student and is based on the severity of the incident. Some students may be in for a part of the class and then right back to the next class. Other students may find themselves in the Restorative Room for a couple of periods, half a day or even a full day - all depending on the incident and what our school code of conduct suggests is the proper consequence. No matter the amount of time spent in the Restorative Room, we are confident that a student who visits will leave better connected to OGM - both on an academic and social emotional level.

When a student is allowed to leave the Restorative Room, one final step we complete is an exit ticket. This is done via Google Form and is given to every student before they leave the Restorative Room. The ticket asks the students if they feel they had a successful visit to the Restorative Room. The form also asks them if they would like any further support academically and/or emotionally. After each question, there is a space that is offered for the student to be more specific with their support request. For instance, if a student says they need more academic support, they may ask for specific help in completing a health class project. Likewise, if they solicit emotional support, they may tell of a friend issue that they are having trouble resolving on their own. This exit ticket has been invaluable on multiple levels. It allows us to stay connected with the students beyond their visit for behavior intervention. If a student checks a box and is seeking support, our Restorative Room paraprofessional reaches out to necessary parties to put the support in motion. If academic, she starts with John Born, our academic interventionist, as well as the classroom teacher for that subject. If emotional, the student's counselor is notified along with one of our social workers. They then strategize to develop a plan that will provide the needed support.

How It Has Impacted Our School

Over the past two years, data has shown that our Restorative Room is a very effective aspect of Oak Grove Middle School. To begin with, the Restorative Room

allows teachers to send students out who are not responding to interventions within the classroom. This assures that the remainder of the students in that class can continue to learn without distraction. For the students that are sent to the Restorative Room, this break allows them to refocus and to be successful, even if they are out of the classroom. Often, part of the reason for the student's dysregulation is due to not understanding something in the classroom. Thanks to our academic interventionist, that student is given targeted, one-on-one academic support that, in turn, gives that student a sense of pride in completing the work. In many cases, a student is able to get so much work done while visiting the Restorative Room that their current grade in that course will actually increase by one or more letter grades. One thing we have gotten better with this year is communicating between the Restorative Room and the classroom teachers. When a student works hard in the Restorative Room after being sent from a classroom for behavior, we circle back to that teacher and let them know about the effort that was put forth while in the restorative room. We also let them know any areas where the student was struggling to help support that teacher with the student, moving forward. We also ask the teacher, as hard as it may be sometimes, to try and give that student praise for their effort. Human nature suggests this is difficult at times, but we are seeing a change in how our teachers respond to the student - post Restorative Room visit. When that student returns to the classroom, they have a new sense of pride for what they have accomplished and feel as though they belong in that setting. Overall, the Restorative Room has provided Oak Grove Middle a place where students can take a break and not only learn and grow academically, but a place that also offers them social emotional support. Students leave feeling better about themselves and feel as though they are more connected to Oak Grove Middle. It allows us to support the whole student and it also provides information on the needs of some of our most struggling students that can help us support them beyond their brief visit to the Restorative Room. The Restorative also gives our staff members the piece of mind that even if a student needs to be sent out of a classroom or other area within our building, the student will be given top-notch support that will help them to grow both academically and socially.

What Difficulties Did You Encounter in its Implementation?

The road to establishing our Restorative Room has not come without its challenges. One of the first hurdles we had to overcome was making sure that the Restorative Room was staffed correctly. In its first year, the paraprofessional that managed the day to day student influx was a bit more unorganized and lackadaisical in the management. We knew we needed to adjust that position and find someone that was firm and organized and have since done so. After that, we have been constantly tweaking our protocols for how we manage the flow of students, how we communicate

from the Restorative Room paraprofessional to the dean and then to the academic interventionist and social workers and finally making sure that we are keeping consistent and accurate data on the students who are visiting the Restorative Room.

The data piece has been something that we are continuously working on. It is imperative that we know who is visiting this room, why they were sent, the time spent in the room and what support they received. We also keep data on any needs they have beyond their time for that specific incident. Finally, something we are working on for the future of the Restorative Room is data that supports a decrease in repeated visits as well as an increase in the grades of students that visit the Restorative Room and receive academic support while there.

What Issues Might Another School Encounter In Replicating This Program?

If another school decided to build a Restorative Room in their building, it wouldn't come without challenges. First and foremost, the hurdle of funding is one that needs to be addressed. In order for a Restorative to truly run effectively, the academic piece must be in place. To do this, it is important that this position is filled with a certified teacher and not just a paraprofessional. We have had success with the room being managed by a paraprofessional, but the academic position should be an actual teacher. As budgets in schools all over the state are very tight, this is a big commitment to make, but one that reaps benefits to the school community if done with fidelity.

Another challenge that must be met is making sure that the Restorative Room team you establish is a cohesive unit that adheres to the same vision of the space. The team needs to work together at all times to ensure that every time a student visits the Restorative Room, a consistent process is followed: the student is checked in by the Restorative Room paraprofessional, the dean of students checks in with the student surrounding the incident that occurred for them to be sent there, the academic interventionist begins the academic remediation process and the social worker is notified and checks in with the student. It is imperative to our process that all areas are met for each student that visits our space. This is a great system that we have established, but in high frequency times it poses a challenge to the team to make sure that this process is adhered to.

One final issue that a school might face when implementing the Restorative Room process into their building is the area of staff buy-in and understanding of the process. The staff at OGM ultimately love the Restorative Room because it allows them to send a student out of their classroom when the student has not responded to interventions and is becoming a distraction to the learning process of other students in their classroom. That being said, the classroom teachers need to understand and adhere to the process as well. It is important that upon sending the student out of the room, they make a quick phone call to the Restorative Room paraprofessional to let her

know who is coming and why. This has been an issue at times, because the teacher is in the middle of teaching a classroom of students. The other hurdle that we have had to overcome with teachers is the restorative piece that comes with this program. It is imperative to our Restorative Room process that there is restoration between the student and the teacher after a visit to the restorative room. This restorative process can happen in different ways and is not just a sit down meeting between the two. Ultimately, we want the teacher to acknowledge that the student went to the Restorative Room, worked hard and turned a negative situation into a positive one. The ultimate goal is to restore the relationship between student and teacher and to build that student's capacity for learning with that teacher.

Summary

One of the biggest challenges in all schools today is the response to student behavior and how behavior is managed. A root cause of teacher burnout is the feeling as though there is nothing that can be done when a student is dysregulated within their classroom and the teacher is out of interventions to support that student at that moment. The Restorative Room at Oak Grove Middle School in Bloomington, MN, has provided a response to this issue. When a student needs a break from the regular classroom or school setting, we are confident that we cannot only provide that break, but we can also support the student academically and emotionally and return them to the learning process in a much better place than when they arrived. The Restorative Room goes beyond a tier two intervention in the moment, though, because it provides data and support for the visiting students beyond their brief stay with us. The Restorative Room gives teachers the piece of mind that the students they are sending out for a break will be supported academically and it allows the students who are visiting to feel successful in that content area while also helping them tackle any emotional hurdles they may be dealing with. The Restorative Room helps to restore the relationship between student and teacher and ultimately helps that student feel pride in themselves as a student while increasing their sense of belonging at Oak Grove Middle School.