



International Institute
for Restorative Practices
Graduate School



Case Study

City Day Community School

📍 Dayton, OH

City Day Community School in Dayton, Ohio, is one of the first and longest-running community schools in Dayton. Their student population ranges from kindergarten to 8th grade, and they specialize in providing individualized education to support each student's ability to reach academic success. Some students enrolled in City Day have experienced trauma, bullying, and overlooked Individualized Education Program (IEP) requirements at their previous schools.

Since 2017, City Day has integrated restorative practices into the fabric of their schooling community through curriculum, policy, climate and culture, arts and music education, and discipline interventions. The fidelity of this work has contributed to significant decreases in the need for traditional punitive discipline measures, leading to zero expulsions in the 2022–23 academic year and zero in-school suspensions in 2023–24. Principal Paula Graham and Superintendent Crystal Mosley attribute these accomplishments to their steadfast implementation and integration of restorative practices into both school culture and academics. Below are explicit examples of the ways in which City Day employs restorative practices:

Categories of this case study

- K-12 Education
- Restorative Practices
- Curriculum, Arts, and Technology
- Climate and Cultural Integration
- Policy and Discipline

Policy and Discipline

- Establishing an administrative Restorative Solutions Team (RST) that reviews discipline data and addresses disruptive student behaviors through restorative chats and redirection that maintains the dignity of the student.
- Updating their discipline policy to include restorative resolutions led by the RST that work with the student(s) to resolve conflicts and address when harm has occurred.

Curriculum, Art, and Technology

- Providing students with the My Music Ed app, developed by restorative practitioner and professional musician Deron Bell, which melds restorative practices concepts and music through accessible technology to build connections with circle and somatic activities and instrumental education.
- Supporting students through retreats and arts-based restorative justice programs.
- Empowering students to be leaders in the restorative practices movement. In partnership with Central State University's Health and Wellness Center, City Day middle school students visit the campus quarterly to model restorative practices to college students through circles and breakout sessions. In return, CSU students provide the middle schoolers with insight into their majors, potential career trajectories, and general knowledge on how to prepare for the rigors of higher education.

"City Day is a unique school since we have such a range of grades under one roof. We used to experience disconnect between staff and students, but restorative practices has helped us transcend the communication barriers—they're not 'your kids' anymore; they're 'our kids.'"

– Principal, Paula Graham

Climate and Culture

- Providing "Cooling Off Corners" – places where students experiencing intense emotional reactions can write and draw, then rejoin the classroom once they have regulated.
- Emphasizing school culture through mottos like "PAWS: Pride, Attitude, Wise choices, Safety," which reminds students to "pause and think."
- Establishing a "check-in, check-out" mentoring program for elementary students in which they are partnered up with middle school students who regularly check in on academics and behavioral performance. This program enforces mutual accountability and builds trust among the student body.



For more examples of how City Day sustains its culture of restorative practices and positive school environment, listen to Deron Bell on *Restorative Works!* Podcast.



Deron Bell Speaks with
Claire De Mezerville-López

Artful Integration with
Deron Bell



"When we're getting into impact and evidence-based connections, I always start with the proper introduction of restorative practices. Whether the goal is for a team in one building or a district-wide implementation, stick to the script. It won't let you down and it allows for things to come about organically, intentionally, and consistently."

- Deron Bell