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Creating a Community of Support: An Evaluation of the Healing for Educational Achievement Resource Team

Ann M. Quintrell
SIT Graduate Institute

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Creating a Community of Support: An evaluation of the Healing for Educational
Achievement Resource Team

Ann Quintrell

PIM 72

A Capstone Paper submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a Masters of Arts in
Service, Leadership and Management at SIT Graduate Institute in Brattleboro, Vermont, USA.

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Advisor: Karen Blanchard

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Student name: Ann Quintrell

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Table of Contents

| | |
|---|-----|
| Title Page | i |
| Consent to Use | ii |
| Table of Contents | iii |
| List of Tables | iv |
| Abstract | 1 |
| Introduction..... | 2 |
| Literature Review..... | 6 |
| Research Design..... | 11 |
| Presentation and Analysis of Data | 14 |
| Discussion..... | 38 |
| Bibliography | 44 |
| Appendix A: Interview Transcripts | 45 |
| Appendix B: Surveys | 60 |

List of Tables

Table 1: Interview Highlights Regarding Collaborations.....19

Table 2: Themes for Action Team Success.....22

Table 3: Themes for Action Team Challenges.....23

Table 4: Themes for H.E.A.R.T. Benefits.....25

Table 5: Themes for H.E.A.R.T.'s Success.....26

Table 6: Themes for H.E.A.R.T. Challenges.....28

Table 7: Responses Regarding Continuing with H.E.A.R.T.....30

Table 8: Whole School Climate.....37

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research was to evaluate the effectiveness of the Healing for Educational Achievement Resource Team (H.E.A.R.T.). H.E.A.R.T. is a committee of staff at a middle school in Dorchester. Dorchester is a violence hotspot in Boston, MA, and students in such areas need to heal from traumas while meeting academic requirements. In order to meet their students' needs and achieve their goals, schools need to practice trauma informed care. H.E.A.R.T. represents a staff-driven effort to meet student needs and establish trauma informed care. H.E.A.R.T.'s effectiveness was evaluated through surveys and interviews of committee members, interviews of the school's administration, and an interview of H.E.A.R.T.'s facilitator, as well as through researcher participation in the committee. The findings identified strategies for success such as: clear goals, hard work, and the use of action teams to work on multiple projects simultaneously. Areas of improvement were identified as: communication with administration and other school committees; building relationships with community organizations in order to form collaborations; and keeping goals clear. H.E.A.R.T.'s impact in its first year was limited to the students who participated in its interventions and the staff in the committee.

The findings indicate that beginning this work for trauma informed care is slow and challenging and that the strategies and learnings from this start-up year can be used to benefit all students and staff. H.E.A.R.T.'s strategies and learnings could be used to benefit their whole school. The findings correspond with theories and other research, which indicate that H.E.A.R.T.'s work could be adapted to benefit other schools.

Introduction

Through my studies and years of work experience, I have found that many populations do not experience the support and care that humans should have. Educational institutions have a unique opportunity to transform into supportive communities which tackle some of the injustices children and their families face. Combining education and social justice work is my passion, so I was excited by the opportunity to join a committee of teachers and staff at a middle school in Dorchester.

Dorchester is an area of Boston and is one of the “hot spots” where high rates of shootings and homicides occur. Many community members feel that this violence has not received appropriate attention, and the Boston Marathon bombing, which occurred last year, has demonstrated how little attention inner-city shootings receive. Taylor (2013) wrote the bombs killed three and wounded over 260 “resulting in a widespread manhunt, a national outpouring of shock and sympathy, and the creation of a fund that has raised \$60 million to help the victims.” The way people came together to heal and support each other after the bombing led to the slogan “One Boston.” The problem with that slogan is that Boston, like most cities, is still divided in many ways.

More than 200 shootings occur annually in Boston, and the media dismisses these shootings and the majority of homicides as gang-related and thus expected. Millions of dollars were raised for the bombing victims, while other families in Boston struggle to raise money to bury their murdered relatives. Taylor (2013) reported “in violence-prone neighborhoods like Roxbury and Dorchester, some say the attention has made them feel only more isolated.” Taylor (2013) quoted Rev. Wall of the Global Ministries Christian Church in Dorchester as saying, “When three people die, because it happened in the downtown area, where the tourists come, that

gets the attention, that gets the state of emergency...It's that pain that we have to live with.”

This regular violence largely affects lower income communities and People of Color, and these marginalized communities have not received the support they should from policy-makers or the media.

This violence and lack of support result in traumas which are not being addressed. Many children in these communities need to heal from traumas, while successfully completing school requirements. Academic success is an important protective factor for children and is an obvious goal of schools. In order to meet this goal, schools in these communities need to be able to support their students. The McCormack School in Dorchester saw that need and has created a committee called the Healing for Educational Achievement Resource Team (H.E.A.R.T.).

H.E.A.R.T. began meeting in September 2013 and had its final meeting of the school year in June 2014. It is composed of sixteen staff representatives who selected to join, including teachers, a guidance counselor, and Citizen Schools staff. At the beginning of the school year, they designed and administered a school-wide survey of student needs and then began creating interventions to address those needs. They chose community partners and designed and implemented interventions.

I have also been a member of H.E.A.R.T. because she was invited by the facilitator of H.E.A.R.T., Ms. Ethna Riley, to assist her. My role has included data input and analysis for the school-wide survey of student needs; record keeper for the committee meetings; and logistical and technical support for the action teams' interventions.

H.E.A.R.T. represents a school-driven intervention to promote social justice in education. H.E.A.R.T.'s stated goals and objectives are:

Goals/Vision

- Increase number of effective interventions

- Understand and address problems
- Complete cycle for 3-4 interventions

Desired outcomes

- 3-5 new intervention/student support/leadership groups
- PD trainings for all staff => shared DMC strategies and expectations
- Foundation for restorative justice work/methods at DMC
 - More circles
 - More trained staff
 - Plan for implementation school-wide years 1-3
 - Vision for Discipline structures, approaches

H.E.A.R.T. planned to achieve these goals by designing and administering a survey of student needs and by dividing into action teams to meet specific needs. The facilitator, Ms. Riley, had planned for the survey to be completed quickly, but it was not administered until December 2013. Data from the survey was not analyzed until January 2014. Action teams were then formed with the intention to meet student needs that were revealed through the survey or that committee members knew about from their experience.

The action teams were: (1) a Gay-Straight Alliance (GSA); (2) TIMBo (trauma-informed mind-body yoga); (3) My Life, My Choice; and (4) Strong Families. The GSA, TIMBo, and My Life, My Choice teams were planned to be student groups based on the Steven's Circle model, which is explained in more detail in the Literature Review below. These teams would collaborate with outside organizations to bring resources, experience, curricula, and community for the students. GSA does not have a specific curriculum and is very adaptable to the context and the students' goals for the group. TIMBo is a pilot curriculum for middle-school girls based off the effective curriculum for women and was designed by Yogahope. My Life, My Choice is a program designed and facilitated by the Justice Resource Institute and is implemented in middle schools to prevent sexual exploitation of high-risk students, such as low-income or English Language Learner girls. The Strong Families team decided their goals were to create a donation closet and to create a Community Resource Binder to use in staff meetings about

students and their families. These families often need help with financial resources, utilities, access to food, mental health services, etc., and the Community Resource Binder would allow the Guidance Office to answer staff's questions about how to help these families.

H.E.A.R.T.'s goals to establish a supportive school community reflect theories about trauma informed care. Trauma informed care must be distinguished from trauma-specific treatment. Hodas (2006) explains that trauma-specific treatment "involves specialized treatments... Trauma informed care, in contrast, is not highly specialized and can be provided in multiple settings by committed professionals who understand trauma without the expertise to offer trauma-specific treatment" (p. 6). Only the school guidance counselors have the expertise to address the need for trauma-specific treatment, but all school staff are able to provide trauma informed care in order to promote learning and positive development.

Trauma informed care, especially as applied to a school environment, is a relatively new approach. Bornstein (2013) explains that scientists have been developing a better understanding of the effects of trauma and thus ideas about trauma informed care "are beginning to take hold, but practice still lags well behind knowledge." Cole et al. (2005) explain that schools "can play a major role in the healing process and lead to strong academic, social, and behavioral outcomes" (p. 38). In order to promote healing and positive outcomes, practices in schools need to change in order to better educate and care for their students. Schools need to "move away from reflexive discipline and toward responses that help kids learn how to calm themselves" (Bornstein, 2013). This shift represents a change in educational practices, policies, systems, and culture.

Trauma informed care is needed now in schools because current students are struggling to heal and succeed. Hodas (2006) argues that clinical research alone is too slow to help many

children and schools now. Hodas (2006) encourages “accept[ing] the validity of ‘practice based evidence’ and not just ‘evidence based practice’” (p. 68). Given the need for trauma informed care, H.E.A.R.T. began working towards implementing appropriate practices. Since the committee is devoting its time and energy to developing and implementing interventions, the researcher has been in the position to research the effectiveness of the committee in order to inform their future practices.

Based off of H.E.A.R.T.’s goals and theories about trauma informed care, the research questions are as follows:

How effective was the H.E.A.R.T. committee at meeting student needs?

- What committee goals were met?
- What impact did collaborations have?
- What were some system changes based off of H.E.A.R.T.’s work?

The partnerships that H.E.A.R.T. is developing have the potential of affecting system changes in the school and community, and thus partners’ relationships with the school should be specifically evaluated, along with H.E.A.R.T.’s stated goals. These questions will provide insights into H.E.A.R.T.’s development of effective practices for their school.

Literature Review

Trauma is not a new concept. It has impacted students for generations, but as Cole et al. (2005) note, “What *is* new is that trauma researchers can now explain the hidden story behind many classroom difficulties plaguing our educational system” (p. 4). Trauma has typically been used to describe only violent, rare events, but as trauma has been researched, it has become clear that traumatic events are much more common than previously thought. Hodas (2006) highlights,

“With notable exceptions, trauma has not been recognized as a part of the daily, regular, experience of many individuals, including children and adolescents.” Steele and Kuban (2013) explain that even nonviolent situations, which are “situations that are not the result of direct intent to do harm” (p. 4), can be traumatic. What is a traumatic experience is determined by the person who experiences a situation, not by a diagnostic manual or anyone else (Steele and Kuban, 2013).

Trauma impacts people in many different ways. Steele and Kuban (2013) note, “Neuroscience has confirmed that trauma is experienced in the midbrain and lower brain, sometimes referred to as the “feeling” brain or the “survival” brain” (p.8). These regions of the brain affect how people process the world around them, their cognitive abilities, behaviors, and private logic. Steele (2008) explains that trauma may cause someone to “become frozen in an activated state of arousal”, affecting how they process information (p. 2). They develop a private logic based on their traumatic experiences, and from this traumatized logic, they make inferences about others’ intentions, their own self-worth, and the behaviors that are needed to survive.

Traumatized people tend to react to perceived threats by fighting, fleeing (withdrawing from others) or freezing (shutting down emotionally, psychologically, and even physically). Steele (2008) lists numerous researchers who “have supported that... students, who do not feel safe, find it difficult to learn; they even find it difficult to remember (Perry & Szalavitz, 2006; Matthews & Saywitz, 1992) and, while in an aroused state, begin to behave in ways that are problematic.” (p. 7) Cole et al. (2005) explain, “To gain a sense of control, [students] may challenge school personnel, or they may overact because they misinterpret classroom encounters” (pp. 38-9). Traumatized students perceive threats and respond with survival strategies, which are not usually thoughtful, appropriate behaviors for school.

These diverse impacts of trauma are often misunderstood. Steele and Kuban (2013) explain, “Trauma symptoms are often mistaken for depression, attention deficit problems, oppositional defiant disorder (ODD), conduct disorder, reactive attachment and other disorders (van der Kolk, B. & Pynoos, R., 2009a).” (p. 6). These misdiagnoses happen partly because of focusing on the symptoms and not the causes of the symptoms. In addition to potential misdiagnoses, children also face the risk of adult stigmatization. Hodas (2006) warns that adults often make “the inaccurate attribution of intentionality to these children, whereby they are viewed as being ‘manipulative’ and seeking to create havoc ‘on purpose.’ They may also be seen as ‘bad kids’ who need to be ‘put in their place’ and punished rather than helped.” (p. 32). These misdiagnoses and stigmatization further harm the traumatized child.

As stated in the introduction, schools are an important part of the healing process. While diagnoses are not part of the school’s purview, schools are in the position to end adult stigmatization and facilitate healing. When schools do not understand the impacts of trauma, they struggle to support students in appropriate ways. Bornstein (2013) argues

“schools send powerful messages by the way they treat children whose behavior falls outside the normal bounds. They can mete out punishment in ways that reinforce judgments and hierarchies and perpetuate crises – or respond by deepening the understanding about others and building supportive communities.”

Because of trauma’s impact on learning and behavior and the problem of adult stigmatization, schools need to practice trauma informed care. Children are required to attend school, and these mandatory systems need to be aware of how to handle trauma. Cole et al. (2005) explain that schools provide the opportunity for “traumatized children to forge strong relationships with caring adults and learn in a supportive, predictable, and safe environment. These are factors that can help protect children from, or at least ameliorate, some of the effects [of trauma]” (p. 5).

Schools can use researchers' improved understanding of trauma and trauma informed care to intentionally support their students.

This intentional support means a commitment to trauma informed care at both the individual level and the structural level. Hodas (2006) argues that interventions need to address both of those levels because trauma cannot be healed or prevented when the environment continues to be traumatizing. Cole et al (2005) explain that addressing both those levels involves "a welcoming environment where the staff understands trauma's impact on relationships, behavior, and learning" (p. 20). Trauma informed care requires commitment from the administration and all staff, appropriate policies and practices, and understanding of students and trauma. Hodas (2006) outlines diverse barriers to providing trauma informed care, such as:

- "Lack of attention to organizational culture and the need for organizational change...
- Lack of adequate skill sets for direct care staff, based on insufficient training, supervision, and oversight
- Lack of adequate response to the trauma histories and experiences of the children being served
- Lack of awareness of the potential impact of each helping adult – positive and negative
- Mistakenly attributing *intentionality* to the child's behavior
- Equating trauma informed care and being therapeutic with 'being soft' ...
- A program overly concerned with rules and procedures
- A prevailing belief that 'we are doing this already'" (pp. 56-8)

These barriers prevent programs, such as schools, from appropriately supporting children. These barriers may explain why the educational system struggles with the achievement gap and higher disciplinary rates for students of color. By dismantling these barriers and instituting trauma informed care, schools may be able to change those structural problems and facilitate the success of all students.

At the individual level, students need therapeutic relationships with adults. Therapeutic relationships, as Hodas (2006) emphasizes, do not mean "that the adult engages in psychotherapy...but that the adult responds in ways of *therapeutic benefit*" (p. 39). These

relationships are characterized by support, self-expression, and trust. Cole et al. (2005) stress that schools provide the opportunity to “strengthen traumatized children’s relationships with adults” and “help children to...self-regulate” (p.44). Positive relationships with adults are an important protective factor for youth.

Hodas (2006) argues that adults need to take a “universal precautions” approach, which means treating every child with “unconditional respect to the child and being careful not to challenge him/her in ways that produce shame and humiliation... since children who have been exposed to trauma require it, and other, more fortunate children deserve and can also benefit from this fundamentally humanistic commitment” (p. 40). In order to provide trauma informed care, there must be a school-wide commitment to it.

As part of instituting trauma informed care, H.E.A.R.T. has collaborated with other organizations. Collaborations are a way to connect experts in a field with the school and are important because school staff need to learn about trauma and trauma informed care. For example, H.E.A.R.T. improved their own understanding of trauma through a training about trauma’s impact on learning from the Louis D. Brown Peace Institute. The Peace Institute has been training service providers and providing services to survivors of homicide victims for twenty years. This training was part of preparing to survey students about needs and designing interventions.

H.E.A.R.T. planned to meet its goal of implementing new interventions through collaborations. Their model for an effective intervention was Steven’s Circle. Steven’s Circle is a grief mediation and peace education program for middle school students who have lost a loved one to homicide. It incorporates the internal work of healing through creating a community of support and the external work of creating positive changes in the community through leadership

development. The Peace Institute, along with the House of Peace, has been collaborating with the McCormack for three years to implement it. This collaboration uses Wolff's (2010) six key strategies for effective collaboration: (1) enhance each organization, (2) engage the entire community, (3) promote empowerment, (4) build on community strengths, (5) address issues of social change, and (6) demonstrate commitment to core values. Steven's Circle also builds collaborations with external organizations and with the rest of the school.

Steven's Circle invites guest speakers to connect outside organizations and leaders with the school and to expand the students' supportive community. Steven's Circle has also hosted school-wide events, such as a Peace Concert, and has promoted outside events, such as the Mother's Day Walk for Peace. It has also supported the events of other groups in the school. Building these relationships and collaborations externally with other organizations and internally with other members of the school is an important strategy for a student leadership and empowerment group. By using all these strategies, Steven's Circle is an effective collaboration and intervention.

As Steven's Circle has demonstrated, collaborations between schools and organizations are a useful strategy for understanding and implementing trauma informed care. Trauma informed care must be implemented at the programmatic and individual levels. Thus, H.E.A.R.T.'s goals need to lead to changes at both those levels in order to develop the school into a trauma informed environment.

Research Design

Interviews regarding Impact of Collaborations

Originally, each action team was going to partner with an outside organization to implement an intervention for students, and the researcher had planned to interview a member of each action team to gather more information about their collaborative process with their partnering organization and about their intervention. By the end of the year, only two action teams had partnered with outside organizations and implemented an intervention. After consulting H.E.A.R.T.'s facilitator, the researcher decided to interview only those two action teams. The interviews provided more detail about the effectiveness of the collaboration and its impact on students and the school. Data was collected from notes taken during the interviews and from audio recordings of the interviews.

Surveys of H.E.A.R.T. committee members

I surveyed the H.E.A.R.T. committee on the impact, strengths and areas of growth of their action teams and H.E.A.R.T. The surveys administered to the H.E.A.R.T. members asked about what was successful and challenging for their action teams. An optional survey was also provided; this survey gathered committee members' opinions about the whole school environment. The optional survey was based off of Hodas' (2006) recommendations for a trauma-informed program. The surveys were administered during the last committee meeting on June 13, 2014. The surveys were also e-mailed to the committee members who did not attend the final meeting, and a reminder to complete the surveys was e-mailed four school days later.

Eight H.E.A.R.T. members completed the survey: four from the Strong Families team, one from the TIMBo team (not the person interviewed), one from the My Life, My Choice team, and two from the GSA team. Seven H.E.A.R.T. members attended the final meeting and completed surveys there, and two e-mailed their surveys to the researcher. Seven H.E.A.R.T. members did not participate.

Data from the surveys and the interviews was analyzed by identifying key themes in order to answer the research questions. Themes identified the effective strategies and areas of improvement for action teams.

Additional evaluation of committee goals and system changes

Since I participated in H.E.A.R.T. meetings and some of the planning for the committee, I evaluated which committee goals were met by analyzing meeting records.

I interviewed the school Principal and the T3 Coach (who is the teacher coach who helped the facilitator design the goals and methods for the committee). These interviews gathered data about how people outside the committee perceive its work and evaluate its effectiveness. These outside perceptions provided a different perspective on the committee than committee members could provide, and they provided more information about the H.E.A.R.T. committee's role in the school.

Ms. Riley, who is the committee facilitator, was also interviewed about the effectiveness and impact of the committee. This interview focused on the strategies which helped H.E.A.R.T. achieve its goals and the factors involved in not achieving other goals. The interview also gathered data about the impact of the committee on school policy, school culture, and staff who are not committee members in order to determine what system-level changes may have occurred. The interview also revealed some plans for next year to improve H.E.A.R.T.'s impact.

Data from the interviews was gathered through note-taking and audio recordings. Data was analyzed by identifying themes and comparing themes from the committee members and leader with themes from the Principal and T3 Coach.

Limitations

The two main limitations of this data are: (1) the small number of participants in the research and (2) researcher bias. By participating in the committee, I observed that only about 8-10 of the 17 committee members attended meetings regularly. The small number of committee members resulted in a small number of research participants. I had proposed surveying noncommittee members, but since the committee was unable to organize a whole school PD as planned, most school staff could not provide evaluative information on H.E.A.R.T.

I am also biased because of my participation in almost every meeting, in some of the planning for H.E.A.R.T., and in the action team work. Through this participation, I was able to build relationships with the committee members and other school staff and to develop a better understanding of the whole school. The benefit of this relationship was that the committee members trusted me and I knew a lot about the dynamics of their school and action team. The potential problem with this relationship was that I also knew about some more private concerns of committee members; knowing what individuals were concerned with affected my choice of questions in interviews.

Presentation and Analysis of Data

H.E.A.R.T.'s Goals

H.E.A.R.T. established two student groups (GSA and TIMBo) and completed two other projects (forming a donation closet and creating a community resource binder). My Life, My Choice has also established plans for a third student group to begin next school year. H.E.A.R.T. also outlined plans for specialty teachers to implement meditation and breathing practices in order to create calmer transitions between classes; for a breathing room for students who need a safe space to self-regulate their emotions; and for a trauma training next year.

Another goal was “understanding student needs.” This goal was achieved in that committee members discussed multiple perspectives and ideas on student needs, received a training on trauma’s impact from the Louis D. Brown Peace Institute, designed and administered a schoolwide survey on student needs, and researched various programs and organizations through their action teams. Understanding student needs was not achieved in the sense that the student survey did not provide information which was used by the action teams.

H.E.A.R.T. did not achieve two goals: implementing a staff training and planning the foundation for restorative justice. Ms. Riley explained that the staff training did not happen because the action teams needed more time to accomplish their goals and did not also have time to organize a training.

The goal of planning the foundation for restorative justice practices was not met because of many factors. This goal was intended to be a three year strategic plan, but Ms. Riley explained, “Because of a training my principle attended, a grant opportunity that presented itself, and a major budget cut that nobody foresaw coming,...and like general impulses within [Boston Public Schools] as a whole – this is all...happening next year.” All these factors changed the timeline for the goal and the staff involved in reaching that goal. Ms. Riley said, “I did not want to be working on that in two spaces and envisioning one thing and other things coming down the pipe and I felt like that was going to be very counterproductive.” Ms. Riley and the H.E.A.R.T. committee did not have the updated information needed to work on this goal.

Impact of Collaborations

GSA

An interview was conducted with a member of the GSA action team who worked to begin a collaboration for GSA. The GSA action team first contacted GLASS, who was too busy

to begin a collaboration, and then contacted GLSEN. The interviewee identified that the effective aspect of collaborating was bringing the school to the attention of other organizations and beginning to plan a training. The biggest challenge was scheduling.

The GSA action team was able to network with GLSEN but was not able to cooperate fully or collaborate. Himmelman (2001 as cited in Wolff, 2010) distinguishes between networking, coordination and cooperation which build up to collaboration. Networking is “exchanging information for mutual benefit” (Wolff, 2010, p. 26). The GSA action team had access to GLSEN’s newsletter and were familiar with GLSEN’s educational materials. In organizing a professional development training for the school staff, the GSA action team was attempting to coordinate. Coordination is the next step beyond networking because it also involves “modifying activities” (Wolff, 2010, p. 26). Coordination was not achieved this year mostly because of scheduling conflicts between the school and GLSEN.

The interviewee also expressed concern that GLSEN may not have the same understanding of the need. Networking and coordination requires a lot of work from the teachers and the school because, as the interviewee said, “the sense of urgency that I feel because I’m in the school day to day is not necessarily the sense of urgency that an outside organization would feel because how...could they know that urgency really if they’re in an office most of the time?”

This networking and attempt to coordinate with GLSEN did not have an identifiable impact on students. GSA was implemented by teachers and impacted students, administration, and other staff, but that impact is attributed to the GSA action team, not to the attempted collaboration.

TIMBo

An interview was conducted with the teacher who started TIMBo at the school. The interviewee explained that she collaborated with Yogahope to pilot the TIMBo curriculum with girls. TIMBo has been shown to be effective with women in multiple cultures. The interviewee had trained to be a facilitator and had been working with TIMBo for a year before beginning the collaboration this year. She chose Yogahope because of that prior relationship.

The interviewee explained that the collaboration was effective because “[Yogahope] are community oriented” and “they had an investment in bringing this to our kids.” The challenge was that the school did not have funding and had very limited schedule, and they were able to collaborate because Yogahope was able to be flexible and adjust to those limitations. Yogahope was able to provide the curriculum books for TIMBo and facilitators to implement the curriculum and to plan and debrief with the interviewee.

The TIMBo action team was able to cooperate consistently with Yogahope, which is the foundation for collaboration. Cooperation involves coordination (exchanging information and modifying activities) and “sharing resources” (Wolff, 2010, p. 26). Yogahope provided all the resources for the TIMBo curriculum, and the school provided the space, identified students, and got permission for them to participate. In this pilot of TIMBo, they did not achieve true collaboration, which involves “enhancing the capacity of another” (Wolff, 2010, p. 27).

This cooperation impacted students. The interviewee said that partnering with Yogahope “allowed our kids to meet people like the facilitators was extremely powerful. Because now they’ve made connections with individuals that may maintain relationships with them in the future that aren’t education-based.” Developing positive, therapeutic relations with adults is a vital element of establishing trauma informed care.

TIMBo was implemented by Yogahope and the interviewee and had an impact on students but not a lot of involvement from the rest of the school. The interviewee asked other school staff to use H.E.A.R.T.'s survey of student needs and their own observations to refer students to the program. When no one responded to that request, the school guidance office identified students, made the referrals, and obtained permission for participations, but they were not involved in the rest of the program. An element of an effective collaboration is involving the full diversity of the community (Wolff 2010), and because of how quickly TIMBo was piloted, the school as a whole was not closely involved in the collaboration process. TIMBo (the interviewee and Yogahope) need to strengthen their networking with the rest of the school in order to establish a true collaboration.

Table 1: Interview Highlights Regarding Collaborations

| Question | Response for GSA | Response for TIMBo |
|--|---|---|
| Who did you collaborate with? Why them? | “GLASS was really – like we reached out to them, and they were very very busy for the rest of the year, umm, and suggested that maybe we get in touch with them over the summer. But they were pretty much booked, so I reached out to GLSEN because I’m on their email list” “I tend to think of them as like the premier LGBT education resource. They are a large resource, and they do provide a lot of materials both at a low cost and sometimes for free to schools” | Yogahope “Last year at a professional development we received as a whole school via Wediko, one of our partners, I approached the presenter afterwards, and we talked about yoga. And he had told me about TIMBo” “I began my first training as a TIMBo facilitator. So that was a year ago. So knowing that after sitting with this program for almost a year, I just knew this would be fantastic for our kids, and I knew that this was a great opportunity just, you know, to pilot it.” |
| What have been some effective aspects of this collaboration? | “we as a school got our name out there as a school that wants to collaborate; we were beginning the planning stages of making an action happen – making a professional development happen for the school” | “they are community oriented. They themselves look to populations that would best benefit from what they do” “So it’s something that I knew that they would care about my kids, and so that’s why I think it worked so well. They already – even though they didn’t know our school, our kids, they had an investment in bringing this to our kids.” |
| What is a challenge you have faced in this collaboration? | “but if I had known that they had this conference on the schedule and Pride on the schedule and that we were approaching the end of the school year - all these things - I think I would have just started a conversation about getting professional development for the fall. Now I’m leaving this work for the summer, and I already do enough schoolwork in the | “– they were very open and thankfully very flexible because we didn’t have funding, generally they receive funding. We had a very limited schedule here that we could offer for them” |

| | | |
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| | summer. So I wish I had known more about their larger schedule” | |
| What have you learned from this collaboration? | “Well, it’s going to take a lot of work on the teacher end to ensure that something actually happens...Because I think that the sense of urgency that I feel because I’m in the school day to day is not necessarily the sense of urgency that an outside organization would feel because how could they?!? How could they know that urgency really if they’re in an office most of the time?” | “we do meet periodically and we’re meeting again Thursday to kinda go over. We do talk about things like this – is the...it’s very difficult in larger organizations to get something done. Example, like even within our committee, I knew what I could do but having to wait for X, Y, and Z person to do X, Y and Z in order to move forward is extremely frustrating when I know I have the ability to do this and I just need to move forward. So that’s kinda one of the things that did happen. I-we just ended up e-mailing Ethna and Mike and just saying now’s the time” |
| Anything you want to add? | | “I think partnering with an agency such as TIMBo that allowed our kids to meet people like the facilitators was extremely powerful. Because now they’ve made connections with individuals that may maintain relationships with them in the future that aren’t education-based. And I just think that’s very exciting for our kids, and I think that’s another reason why I feel very strongly about the Citizens School and Tenacity ‘cause it’s almost in the same sense that they’re able to see people in different lights and to maintain some of these relationships outside of school. So that –that was great, and I think it’s going to |

| | | |
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| | | happen with this group.” |
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Action Teams

Themes for action teams’ successful strategies were planning/vision and hard work. Success was also connected with outcomes of that planning and hard work. Planning, a clear vision or a “common goal” were identified by five participants as strategies for success. Hard work and commitment was also mentioned four times. The participants in the GSA and TIMBo action teams also identified forming a student group as one of the reasons they were successful. Implementing a student group was a goal for both groups, and achieving this outcome demonstrated their success as action teams.

Only one participant, who was in the Strong Families group, indicated that “diversity of our team” was a reason for success.

Table 2: Themes for Action Team Success

| Theme | <i>Planning/vision</i> | <i>Hard work</i> | <i>Outcomes</i> |
|---------------------------------------|---|--|--|
| Examples from Survey Responses | <p>Participant 1: “clarity around process”</p> <p>Participant 2: “Planning, initially having a vision” “common goal”</p> <p>Participant 3: “our ability to keep pushing forward but also stepping back and re-evaluating our work”</p> <p>Participant 6: “Clear goal/vision tangible and easy action steps.”</p> <p>Participant 7: “The team got the ball rolling and made plans for next year”</p> | <p>Participant 3: “our hard work”</p> <p>Participant 4: “we were productive”</p> <p>Participant 6: “Hard working team!!”</p> <p>Participant 8: “[we] were both really committed to getting it off the ground.”</p> | <p>Participant 5: Created a group that meets during ELT</p> <p>Participant 6: We started a group and laid foundations!</p> <p>Participant 8: The formation of the GSA went well.</p> <p>Participant 9: The GSA worked well in terms of putting into action the GSA and holding a variety of meetings throughout the course of the year. We did well in involving students in the formation and the vision setting of GSA and completing one action (Rainbow Spirit Day) by the end of the school year.</p> |

Themes for challenges that the Action Teams faced were identified as: clear purpose, attendance, and implementation. Three of four surveys from the Strong Families action team identified “clear purpose” as a challenge; they raised the questions of who was benefiting from the creation of a resource binder and how it would be used. Attendance was a challenge for members of the Strong Families, TIMBo, and GSA action teams. GSA and My Life, My Choice action teams listed implementation challenges. The interview for TIMBo also revealed some challenges in implementing a new student group, such as funding and selecting program participants. The interviewee did not participate in the survey.

Table 3: Themes for Action Team Challenges

| Theme | <i>Clear Purpose</i> | <i>Attendance</i> | <i>Implementation</i> |
|-------------------------|---|---|--|
| Survey Responses | <p>Participant 1: More clarity on referral process, who makes referrals. Still not certain about how school can provide services and which services can be provided</p> <p>Participant 2: The reason we were compiling the Family Resource binder and who should have access to it</p> <p>Participant 3: (arrow from “What did you struggle with?”) the bigger picture – who are we helping (arrow from “What would have made your team more impactful?”) ??- maybe more time</p> | <p>Participant 4: Team attendance was a struggle. I am not sure that our agenda and action item was consistent every time we met.</p> <p>Participant 5: All team members attending meetings at the same time.</p> <p>Participant 9: As a partner (not a BPS teacher), I personally felt conflicted when Citizen Schools obligations occurred on Fridays and did not allow me to be fully present at HEART committee meetings. I think that the only thing that would have made the team more impactful was more time at the beginning to plan and to put the GSA into action. The sporadic HEART meetings in the fall made this difficult. Once Friday schedule was changed to provide more regular committee meetings, our work moved as well.</p> | <p>Participant 6: Student consistency, more adult/meeting consistency with students – easier way to communicate with GSA members w/o outing them</p> <p>Participant 8: We struggled to collaborate with outside organizations. They were not as responsive as I had hoped, and it was not possible to effectively form a partnership for this year.</p> <p>Participant 7: The smaller details – staffing, \$</p> <p>Participant 9: It was initially difficult to find the appropriate time and space for the GSA to occur- this ended up delaying our initial start date by a few weeks.</p> |

H.E.A.R.T.

The committee members were surveyed regarding H.E.A.R.T.'s work. From those surveys, themes were identified for: the benefits of participating in the committee; the committee's impact on students and the school; the strategies for success; the challenges; and personal involvement in H.E.A.R.T.

The themes for benefits of participation were: (1) a sense of community/team and (2) the content (problems and strategies). A sense of community or being a part of a team was mentioned by five participants, and the content of H.E.A.R.T.'s work was identified by four participants. The sense of community was identified by the majority of participants and was the clearest benefit to committee members.

Table 4: Themes for H.E.A.R.T. Benefits

| <i>Themes</i> | <i>Sense of community/Team</i> | <i>Content (problems and strategies)</i> |
|-----------------|---|---|
| Examples | <p>Participant 2: I enjoyed hearing others’ opinions on how to best have a healthy school climate, as well as ideas around some of the current problematic structures (the DMLC, for instance)</p> <p>Participant 3:the teachers are extremely supportive of each other.</p> <p>Participant 6: Built new relationships with staff members. Developed leadership skills.</p> <p>Participant 7: There are a lot of dedicated adults at the school willing to help out their students. In many different ways too</p> <p>Participant 9: I am also thankful to have had the ability to create connections with other adults who have similar interests and passion in supporting students outside of the classroom.</p> | <p>Participant 3: Our school does try to do a lot of good but we have a long way to go.</p> <p>Participant 4: How important it is for staff trainings.</p> <p>Participant 5: I got more insight on our students needs and the issues the staff feel need attention.</p> <p>Participant 6: I gained a respect for student leadership and beliefs.</p> <p>Participant 9: As a new staff member to the DMC, the HEART committee gave me an opportunity to get to know our student body in a different way that I would have if I had not been a part of this committee. I am leaving with a greater understanding of the needs of our students and ways in which the incredible adults in our building are working to address those needs.</p> |

The impact of H.E.A.R.T. on students and the school was identified as the GSA. Eight participants identified the GSA, and one participant did not answer.

The survey also asked for successful strategies used this year. Those strategies were: the facilitator’s style (collaborative approach) and the use of action teams. A theme in these

strategies was teamwork. The way meetings were organized and facilitated encouraged everyone to participate in deciding the committee’s plans and actions. As one participant stated, a successful strategy was fostering “adult buy in.” The action teams also provided everyone with a purpose and a community committed to that goal. As a participant stated, H.E.A.R.T.’s success came from “our dedication, communication, and hard work.”

Table 5: Themes for H.E.A.R.T.’s Success

| Themes | <i>Facilitation Style</i> | <i>Action Teams</i> |
|-----------------|--|---|
| Examples | <p>Participant 5: Making posters and voting on the most important issues</p> <p>Participant 6: Consistent meetings. Clear goals. Time for action steps during meetings.</p> <p>Participant 8: I think the group was very well facilitated. In the face of pushback, the leader did not give up on reaching our group’s intended goals.</p> <p>Participant 9: The HEART committee was run very collaboratively and Ethna did a great job in holding everyone accountable. Through emailing notes from our team breakouts and then including them on the next agenda, having honest and real conversations about timeliness, structuring the space so everyone was expected to speak, Ethna ensured that no one or no initiative flew under the radar.</p> | <p>Participant 1: Having regular time to meet and consistent group</p> <p>Participant 2: I think having smaller teams (5-10 people per) was a great way to break up the work and allow committee members the option to work on things that interest them.</p> <p>Participant 7: Mostly the dedicated adults on the team willing to contribute to their own sub group.</p> <p>Participant 9: The time devoted to work in meetings also helped tremendously in moving action teams along.</p> |

Themes for challenges were: the project design process (identifying needs, deciding on action teams) and collaboration with whole school. The majority of participants (seven out of nine survey participants) identified project design as the challenge of this work. Project design includes identifying needs to be addressed and implementing appropriate interventions. The other theme in participants' responses was collaboration with the whole school, which connects to the theme of project design. Two participants explained that collaboration was needed in order to implement projects well.

Table 6: Themes for H.E.A.R.T. Challenges

| Themes | <i>Designing projects</i> | <i>Collaboration with whole school</i> |
|-----------------|---|--|
| Examples | <p>Participant 1: Scale of needs, identifying more realistic and targeted projects</p> <p>Participant 2: Resources within the school, whether funding, spaces, or administrative support.</p> <p>Participant 3: Try to address all needs at one point and then (personally) feeling guilty when we had to pick some needs over other needs</p> <p>Participant 6: Logistical complications, inconsistent adult attendance</p> <p>Participant 7: Identifying which student needs are actually the “most” important and how to actually address them.</p> <p>Participant 8: Collection of student data was not as helpful as it could have been.</p> <p>Participant 9: HEART got an initially slow start due to the sporadic nature of the meetings- it wasn’t until February where we were actually doing action team work and in some ways this meant that we did not have as much success as we potentially could have had. Figuring out some way to move the team to action quicker next year (or at least</p> | <p>Participant 4: Not having enough staff trained in social/emotional areas. I felt that a lot of work fell on the guidance team, especially on sub-committees.</p> <p>Participant 5: I think some of our biggest obstacles dealt with implementation of certain procedures school wide</p> <p>Participant 6: lack of communication with whole school staff.</p> |

| | | |
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| | <p>figuring out some themes/topics that could begin work in implementing their ideas sooner) would help to have more of an impact on students.</p> | |
|--|--|--|

The survey ended by asking committee members if they wanted to continue their work with H.E.A.R.T. Only one participant said no because “I did not feel effective in this group.” Three participants said “yes” because of their commitment to improving school culture and meeting students’ social-emotional needs. Five participants said that they were not sure. Three of these participants explained that lack of time and a heavy workload were challenges that may prevent them from participating. One participant explained that while s/he is committed to continuing to implement the GSA, s/he may not also do the committee. That participant is committed to continuing to pursue this committee’s goals of implementing interventions and staff trainings.

Table 7: Responses Regarding Continuing with H.E.A.R.T.

| Themes | <i>Yes</i> | <i>Hesitations</i> |
|-----------------|--|--|
| Examples | <p>Participant 2: Yes I would want to. My personal belief is that having a healthy, accepting, school culture/climate is critical to a functioning school</p> <p>Participant 6: Yes. I think that a second year can lead to stronger student buy in as well as greater staff buy-in.</p> <p>Participant 9: Yes! I really appreciate the space that Ethna created and I feel committed to and passionate about supporting students in what they are struggling with outside of the classroom.</p> | <p>Participant 1: Not sure – think so</p> <p>Participant 3: Yes but not as much as this year. I will need to focus on completing my graduate classes</p> <p>Participant 4: I think in a different capacity. It has been hard for me to make meetings and keep up with everything. It may need a new structure for next year.</p> <p>Participant 7: Yes & No. Yes because I want to see what will happen and how we will impact the school in the future. No – only based on the factor that my team is going to have a lot of changes next year and I want to best support them.</p> <p>Participant 8: I think I want to continue my work with the GSA, but I don't know if I will also be a part of the HEART team.</p> |

Interviews

From analyzing the interviews of a T3 Coach, the Principal, and Ms. Riley (H.E.A.R.T.'s facilitator), themes were identified regarding the value of the H.E.A.R.T. committee, the impact of the committee, the successful strategies, and the areas for improvement.

The interviewees were asked about the value of this committee in order to provide information about the purpose and potential of the committee in relation to the whole school. The theme for H.E.A.R.T.'s value was that H.E.A.R.T. focuses on social-emotional needs, which the current school systems do not meet as well as they should. The Principal stated,

“H.E.A.R.T....has as its mission looking at a side of student/school experience that the general school reform movement and accountability systems that we are driven by don’t take into account and it’s easy to forget about.” The T3 Coach identified the “gap” in meeting students’ social-emotional needs “on the program development/systems end”, and the T3 Coach identified the value of “helping teachers start to think about [social-emotional needs] as a component of their job.” Ms. Riley stated that “having a designated time and space where teachers put their full attention and focus on issues of social-emotional support is in itself a powerful thing. I feel like that work is constantly nagging at the periphery.” Current educational structures do not consider social-emotional needs as they need to for students and schools to be successful, and H.E.A.R.T. brings staff’s attention to that gap.

In H.E.A.R.T.’s first year, the committee’s impact was seen in the committee members and the student groups. The T3 Coach identified “the impact that I’ve seen more...has to do more with teachers’ awareness of the capacity to help with these issues and that it is a component of their job.” The Principal also stated at the end of the interview:

“I know that a lot of people get into the field of education with idealism about the role they’re going to play in kids’ lives and families’ lives, and a lot of people lose that after time of just suddenly being told you’re not grading test scores enough... So the fact that it exists and teachers are being brought into that and young teachers are able to be a part of that - I think it’s restorative not just for kids but for adults.”

H.E.A.R.T. impacted committee members by bringing their focus to social-emotional needs and developing their sense of efficacy. Ms. Riley explained, “we made progress on a goal that I did not know was...a major goal – as far this idea that teachers play a central role in supporting traumatized – in supporting students who are struggling with the impact of trauma on their lives...And I think that that was in many ways our largest obstacle by far.” Ms. Riley gave an example of evidence for this impact:

“I think that for the people that were in this room I appreciated hearing that they feel like they did walk away with some strategies and that they are applying that...I think we are at a very different place than we were a year and some change ago as far as the amount and depth of teacher awareness of trauma even being...a very real impact in students’ experiences of school and in their capacities for learning.”

Ms. Riley and the T3 Coach referred to the challenge of building committee member’s sense of efficacy and understanding of the committee’s work and trauma informed care. Part of H.E.A.R.T.’s impact in its pilot year was to make progress was made in committee members’ knowledge and efficacy.

The other impact was the formation of student groups. The Principal and the T3 Coach mentioned the formation of the GSA, and Ms. Riley also said that GSA and TIMBo impacted the students in those groups. The Principal also discussed Steven’s Circle, which was the model for an effective student group, and explained the impact that student groups can have not only on the students in the group but also on other students and the whole school: “Steven’s Circle is having an impact on the school and the culture [with its school events] and the fact that students who have experienced traumatic loss becoming student leaders that’s a really incredible vision...that definitely has an impact on school culture.”

Another theme concerning impact was the question of how to measure it well. The Principal explained, “School culture is a very complex and multidimensional thing to try to measure.” Ms. Riley also explained a factor in the complexity of school culture:

“social-emotional need and trauma...in previous incarnations of this group...had been conflated into like the same issue of Tier 3 needs, and I felt very strongly like we needed to separate them and deal with the overlap as it presented.... I feel like the school’s in a rough place with that issue, and it makes it hard to assess the school culture as far as student culture.”

Social-emotional interventions and trauma informed care are not the same as Tier 3 interventions, and they need to be understood and evaluated differently from Tier 3

interventions. The T3 Coach also identified two other challenges in measuring impact: (1) committee members' concerns about asking students too invasive questions on surveys and (2) methods for measuring impact over time. The T3 Coach explained that meeting students' social-emotional needs happens over time and is not "necessarily immediately evident."

H.E.A.R.T.'s success was bringing attention to student's social-emotional needs, which was connected directly with its purpose and value. The Principal said:

"one of the risks of the whole current ed reform movement is that kids just get reduced to numbers or to achievement scores and so I think that the H.E.A.R.T. committee just with its name and its mission thinks about students as actual people with their whole range of experience including the trauma that they've had and commits us to trying to design the school to support them, which is of course what we're supposed to be doing."

That mission is important to the whole school and directly impacted committee members. A strategy for success was identified by the T3 Coach as the facilitation strategy of balancing clear direction with building capacity. The T3 Coach said, "[Committee members] did best when they had a clear direction and a clear project, and I think that is tricky because...there is also a goal of sort of building people's own capacity to determine what's needed." Ms. Riley also identified that providing a clear direction was an important strategy for success. Ms. Riley explained, "I had done a lot of envisioning and planning work for these groups beforehand and around these issues beforehand," so she had clear goals for the committee and the action teams. That clarity was important because as Ms. Riley said, she needed to provide "direct instruction in a way that I was not expecting to have to do. For example, like 'complete cycle for three to four interventions' that necessitated me putting that into a graphic and revisiting that graphic." The facilitator needed to provide direct instruction in trauma informed care, staff's roles, and the committee's goals in order to build the committee's capacity and make progress on their goals.

Another strategy to build efficacy and accomplish goals was designing action teams. Ms. Riley said that “one strategy that did help was placing people in different groups and trying to balance the groups.” Ms. Riley explained that the action teams were successful in that “I think if we had all worked on one issue I don’t think we would’ve gotten it done any better or faster” and each action team achieved at least one goal.

The theme for areas of improvement was considering how the committee can impact school structures and culture. Strategies for increasing the committee’s impact include: (1) building teachers’ capacity to do this work, (2) forming student groups based off of the Steven’s Circle model, and (3) collaborating with other committees and with administration.

The T3 Coach identified the need to “[build] teachers’ like sense of efficacy around this work - that they could see something that needs to be done and they could do it.” That need connects to other areas of improvement identified by the T3 Coach, such as moving faster next year to have “clearer goals sooner” and “get more of these programs moving.” Ms. Riley said that part of her leadership role involved “how to sort out what is people’s ideological objections to [trauma informed care], what are people’s trust issues on that, and what of it was just good ole feeling overwhelmed and helpless.” Ms. Riley mentioned the progress this year in terms of staff commitment and efficacy as part of the success and impact of H.E.A.R.T., and more progress on that goal can be made in the future.

Staff need to develop a sense of efficacy in order to do this work, such as establishing student groups. Committee members identified project design and implementation as the challenges their action teams and H.E.A.R.T. faced. Progress in establishing effective student groups can be made by utilizing the Steven’s Circle model. Ms. Riley said:

“I hear people’s push back on it but the biggest deal things that have happened in this school right now I’m gonna say with respect to that model have been the

GSA and Steven's Circle....Steven's Circle I think had an impact beyond those students – like had an impact on the students as a whole. And I think that these student groups should be able to have an impact beyond that little group of students as a whole, but in order to have that, you need to have more groups like that.”

Many committee members struggled with project design, but understanding and committing to the Steven's Circle model would help action teams to design effective groups.

Another area of improvement is in collaborating with the whole school. A risk is that the H.E.A.R.T. committee becomes isolated from the whole school. To ensure that isolation does not happen, the T3 Coach said there needs to be “better structures for sharing this work across the school,” such as all-school trainings and other methods for changing culture and systems. Ms. Riley also identified trainings for the whole staff as an important strategy for working with the whole school. Ms. Riley said that training would “make us more impactful as far as giving people the concrete strategies and skills...and beginning a schoolwide conversation about trauma informed practice.” The trainings would provide information and strategies for trauma informed care and meeting social-emotional needs.

In addition to trainings, further collaboration with committees and administration are needed to implement changes in school structure and culture. Ms. Riley said, “I think that communicating more with admin and with other groups will help the adult piece.” The Principal explained the importance of “communicating [with and]... motivating the rest of the school.”

The Principal also stressed developing a collaboration between H.E.A.R.T. and the Wellness committee, which focuses on “the physical and emotional health of students and the school environment.” Ms. Riley also discussed the possibility of partnering with the family committee, which would increase the resources and the impact of this work. Ms. Riley said that this partnership would provide the resources to do events with the whole school and families and

accomplish more tasks. Ms. Riley's strategy would also allow these event-focused teams to "[move] on with a new group of people or a slightly different configuration of people, so if a group is not as functional as it needs to be, so that wouldn't go on and on." Accomplishing more short-term goals, while continuing to work on longer term goals, would increase the committee's impact on the whole school, and partnering with other committees would provide the resources and physical capacity to accomplish more goals.

Collaborating with the whole school also involves improving the collaboration with the administration team. The T3 Coach said that a "closer collaboration with the admin team, which is something that...both [Ms. Riley] and the admin team wanted but for a variety of reasons couldn't get off the ground." This collaboration is important for impacting the whole school because as the T3 Coach explained, the administrators "hold more of the whole school stuff."

Through collaboration with administration and other committees, more staff and thus more students will be impacted by this work. Building this level of collaboration is vital to impacting the whole school. The T3 Coach said that a long-term goal is "to think about how can we lead school change around structures." In order to impact the whole school, H.E.A.R.T. can utilize the strategies of organizing trainings, forming student groups based on the Steven's Circle model, and collaborating with administration and other committees.

Whole School

Committee members were administered an optional survey regarding the whole school climate. The survey asked about common barriers to establishing trauma informed care, which Hodas (2006) identified. This survey revealed that the two areas which need the most improvement are: (1) staff receiving appropriate background information on students and (2) staff receiving appropriate training about trauma. These two areas for improvement connect to

H.E.A.R.T.'s goals and areas for improvement for next year – improving collaboration with the whole school and providing training for the whole school.

Table 8: Whole School Climate

| Question | Average Response | |
|--|------------------|--|
| Our school is committed to establishing a nonviolent community | 2.888888889 | Key: 4=Strongly Agree 3= Agree 2= Disagree 1=Strongly Disagree |
| our leadership is willing to change practices and policies in order to use strengths-based and trauma-informed methods | 2.555555556 | |
| Our school collaborates with students' families | 2.666666667 | |
| Our school develops students' social-emotional and coping skills | 2.125 | |
| Staff appreciate all the differences (cultural, racial, religious, ethnic, etc.) of students and their families | 3 | |
| Staff respect gender and sexual identify differences | 2.888888889 | |
| staff show unconditional respect to each child | 2.25 | |
| staff avoid yelling and rebuke | 2.125 | |
| Staff try to see a situation from the child's point of view, even if a child's statement does not appear to be accurate | 2.375 | |
| Staff avoid power struggles and coercion, instead seeking methods to engage students | 2.333333333 | |
| Teachers feel personally supported by leadership in handling challenging situations with students | 2.222222222 | |
| Our school provides useful staff training about trauma and student needs | 2 | |
| When students enter the school, teachers are provided with enough information about a student's history and needs in order to respond appropriately to their behaviors | 1.875 | |
| staff tend to believe that students' inappropriate behavior is intentional and "manipulative" | 2.222222222 | |
| Staff tend to look for triggers and root causes of inappropriate behavior | 2.555555556 | |
| Staff prioritize enforcing rules over healing | 3 | |

Discussion

Conclusions

Based off of the themes from the surveys and interviews, recommendations and conclusions have been identified for H.E.A.R.T., action teams, and collaborations.

Collaborations

In order to collaborate with community organizations, school staff have to build relationships with them. As the GSA action team demonstrated, building that relationship and networking is challenging. The GSA action team knew about GLSEN and their work before attempting to collaborate with them, but GLSEN did not have the same knowledge about the school. The work to engage GLSEN in the school had to be accomplished by teachers because GLSEN could not understand the school without the staff's information. Through exchanging information, organizations can share their guiding principles and vision, which Wolff (2010) identifies as key elements for effective collaboration. Wolff (2010) states that "the answers to our biggest problems...may best be addressed by calling not for more money but for each of us to remember, and work from, our highest spiritual essence" (p. 198). Without sharing principles and vision, limited resources are often the excuse for not sharing resources and cooperating (Wolff 2010).

TIMBo demonstrated the value of a relationship and understanding between organizations. Because Yogahope and a staff member had been connected and networking for a year, the staff member knew how Yogahope's principles and vision related directly to the school and could move relatively quickly into a cooperation and potentially a full collaboration with them.

The GSA and TIMBo action teams also faced the challenge of building collaborations with the rest of the school. At the end of the school year, the GSA group was able to organize a whole school Spirit Day, for which everyone was encouraged to wear rainbow colors for Pride. This event, as well as communicating with staff about engaging students in GSA, was part of building that collaboration with the whole school. The GSA and TIMBo groups can further develop this collaboration by using the Steven's Circle model. Each year that Steven's Circle has been implemented, the program's collaboration with community organizations and with the school has grown by inviting more organizations as guests to the group, improving communication with potential collaborators, hosting more events, and participating in more events. Using this model will help GSA and TIMBo to build their collaborations with community organizations and with the whole school.

Action Teams

The use of action teams was identified as a successful strategy by Ms. Riley, the T3 Coach, and committee members. This strategy was successful because multiple projects could be designed simultaneously. Having regular meetings and attendance were the fundamental problems for action teams. Missing meetings or meetings being scheduled too far apart made it harder to keep a clear goal and process in mind.

H.E.A.R.T.

H.E.A.R.T.'s successful strategies which need to be used in future work are action teams and forming student groups. These strategies directly connected to H.E.A.R.T.'s value and success in its pilot year, which has been bringing attention to student's social-emotional needs. Action teams and student groups have been strong strategies.

Another strategy to improve H.E.A.R.T.'s impact is to improve its collaboration with the whole school. Ms. Riley and the administration team have planned for H.E.A.R.T. to collaborate closely with other committees and with the administration team. In order to create this collaboration, they will need to establish a system for regularly exchanging information between the committees, staff and the administration team. Networking is a fundamental aspect of collaboration and could be achieved through regularly meetings or correspondence, such as e-mails.

Another way of improving collaboration with the whole school is through trainings. Ms. Riley and the GSA action team are also planning to organize trainings. Trainings would engage all school staff in H.E.A.R.T.'s work and improve the school's understanding of trauma informed care and students' needs.

H.E.A.R.T. could also improve collaboration with the whole school through forming student groups based on the Steven's Circle model. Not only is that model effective for the students in the group, but it also develops students' leadership skills in order to impact others in the school. Participants in Steven's Circle develop their leadership skills through hosting events and sharing Steven's Circle's work and goals with other students, staff, and community members. When action teams use this model, they will be able to improve networking with the school and build collaborations.

In addition to improving collaboration with the school, another goal for H.E.A.R.T. is to build teachers' capacity to support students' social-emotional needs and students who have been impacted by trauma. Progress was made this year on this goal through the facilitation strategy of balancing clear direction with building capacity. Staff commitment and efficacy in this work is important and was achieved mostly through staff training – the facilitator teaching her strategies

and vision and providing resources for training. Next steps for this goal include more intentional training of committee members at the beginning of the school year, as well as on-going training for committee members and all staff throughout the school year.

A final area for growth is developing a system to evaluate students' needs and H.E.A.R.T.'s impact. While a whole school survey of student needs was administered this year, it did not provide useful information. In order to redesign the survey to be effective, committee members need a clear purpose for how the survey will be used. Before designing a survey, they need some training to understand trauma and healing; that training will also help to build a sense of efficacy and a sense that they are capable of identifying and meeting student needs. From that training and efficacy, committee members can begin identifying their interests and goals for the year. They can identify potential student groups, which they would be interested in committing to, and then design a survey to identify students for those groups. Through this process, the survey would provide useful information for committee members about what students need and are interested in doing.

Improving that survey will also help in evaluating H.E.A.R.T.'s impact. This year, impact was seen in the student groups and the committee members, but an effective system for tracking that impact has not yet been established. Impact on committee members could be evaluated through pre- and post-surveys of committee members' understanding of trauma, sense of efficacy in meeting students' social-emotional needs, and the strengths/areas of improvement for the school. Action teams could also evaluate their programs through surveys of program participants and compare surveys from the end of their programs to the survey which identified program participants.

Out of H.E.A.R.T.'s goals, the only one that has been addressed is the plan for restorative justice. The question of how the new plan for restorative practices will connect to the committee's work is still unanswered. When that plan is developed and shared with staff, H.E.A.R.T. will need to consider how that plan relates to their goals.

These findings and recommendations are outlined more succinctly below:

1. Continue successful strategies - action teams and forming student groups
2. Improve collaboration with whole school, which includes these strategies:
 - Collaborating with other committees and with the administration team, as planned for next year
 - Regularly exchanging information between committees, administration, and staff through meetings and written correspondence (such as e-mails)
 - Organizing trainings
 - Forming student groups using the Steven's Circle model
3. Build teachers' capacity to do this work, which began in the pilot year and needs to continue
 - Training committee members at the beginning of the school year
 - On-going training for all staff
4. Develop a system for evaluation of student needs and impact
 - Options for measuring impact
 - i. Pre- and post-surveys of committee members' understanding of trauma, sense of efficacy in meeting students' social-emotional needs, and the strengths/areas of improvement for the school
 - ii. Evaluations of programs implemented by the committee
 - Improve survey of students' social emotional needs
 - i. In order to redesign the survey to be effective: Begin by building staff efficacy and buy-in, then identify potential student groups. Once the committee has a clear use for the information they are gathering, they can design a survey to identify participants for their groups (needs and interest)

Practical Applicability

H.E.A.R.T. represents a community-driven effort to address needs, which is rare in a USA culture dominated by experts (Wolff, 2010). H.E.A.R.T.'s goals, process, and results connect with theories about collaboration (Wolff, 2010) and trauma informed care (Hodas, 2006; Cole et al. 2005). Because of its connection to theories and prior research and because of its grassroots approach, its successful strategies and learnings can be used by other schools. H.E.A.R.T. and

these theories have demonstrated that teachers and regular school staff are capable of meeting student needs, especially through establishing small groups or communities of support. Other schools can utilize H.E.A.R.T.'s strategies to design and implement their own plans for establishing trauma informed care and meeting students' social-emotional needs.

The caveat in arguing that other schools can use H.E.A.R.T.'s strategies is that the research is limited to one school and to the pilot year of this committee. This research alone provides insight into a very specific situation, but the connection of this research to prior research (Wolff, 2010; Hodas, 2006; Cole et al. 2005) supports the argument that other schools could use H.E.A.R.T.'s strategies.

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Appendix A: Interview Transcripts

June 10, 2014

2pm

Transcript of Interview about GSA Action Team

Researcher: You tried to collaborate with GLSEN and GLASS?

Teacher: No, so what happened was when we decided to start the GSA, [Principal] suggested that we talk to [a teacher] who has had a lot of success this year working with GLASS. Umm unfortunately GLASS was really – like we reached out to them, and they were very very busy for the rest of the year, umm, and suggested that maybe we get in touch with them over the summer. But they were pretty much booked, so I reached out to GLSEN because I'm on their email list and so I guess they were in my brain any way. And I reached out to them and asked for information about running a middle school GSA, as well as professional development opportunities for our staff. So that's sorda how that happened

Researcher: And was there any other reason that you chose GLSEN?

Teacher: Umm I tend to think of them as like the premier LGBT education resource. They are a large resource, and they do provide a lot of materials both at a low cost and sometimes for free to schools. My partner used to work for MassEquality and so I learned about GLSEN through MassEquality – all these LGBT organizations know each other and um get each other's names out there, so at some point I signed something that ended me up on GLSEN's email list. And so I think probably the combination of receiving their e-mails probably four days a week and um having like no success with GLASS I decided that GLSEN would be the best choice. Unfortunately, GLSEN was running a conference that I couldn't go to when I reached out to them and then now it's Pride and so between those two things they're really busy

Researcher: So what would you say was effective about this collaboration?

Teacher: I think that we as a school got our name out there as a school that wants to collaborate; we were beginning the planning stages of making an action happen – making a professional development happen for the school. But again the end of the school year comes so quickly, I feel like next year I'll start reaching out to them in August to having something on the calendar by October, and um I think starting a partnership is something. The problem is – I don't know if I should say this – but umm my partner you know used to work for another LGBT organization and um at least in that organization the turnover rate is pretty high. And I'm a little concerned that if I start reaching out in August I'm gonna be at square one again because they won't – what if that person's not there anymore. But at least if I start in August then I'll give myself time knowing that that may be an issue – I may just have to start over

Researcher: So you already touched on some of the challenges w/ starting a collaboration was there something that you wish you had known heading into this?

Teacher: Umm..something I wished I had known...

Researcher: like when I ask that - something like if a problem or a challenge that if you had known you would face, you could have come up with a strategy...

Teacher: Well it's terrible but if I had known that they had this conference on the schedule and Pride on the schedule and that we were approaching the end of the school year - all these things - I think I would have just started a conversation about getting professional development for the fall. Now I'm leaving this work for the summer, and I already do enough schoolwork in the summer. So I wish I had known more about their larger schedule and..I wish I - yeah I guess that would be it

Researcher: And what is something that you've learned from this collaboration? From trying to collaborate?

Teacher: Well, it's going to take a lot of work on the teacher end to ensure that something actually happens. I think it's going to take a lot of initiative on my part and on [teacher who is on the GSA action team]'s part to make sure that something actually gets done. Because I think that the sense of urgency that I feel because I'm in the school day to day is not necessarily the sense of urgency that an outside organization would feel because how could they?!? How could they know that urgency really if they're in an office most of the time? Is that unfair?

Researcher: No I think that's true

Teacher: Yeah so I think I just have to give it more

Interview about TIMBo

6/13/14

2:30 pm

Researcher: so my first question is you collaborated with Yogahope?

Teacher: Yes, Yogahope

Researcher: Why did you choose them?

Teacher: Last year at a professional development we received as a whole school via Wediko, one of our partners, I approached the presenter afterwards, and we talked about yoga. And he had told me about TIMBo – trauma informed mind body yoga that was a new training a couple of his therapists were in training for, and one of his therapists was becoming a faci-an actual trainer of trainers. And so I looked into it and [name] who used to be a therapist here and [name] who is

one of our partners – you know, several e-mails - I went and I began my first training as a TIMBo facilitator. So that was a year ago. So knowing that after sitting with this program for almost a year, I just knew this would be fantastic for our kids, and I knew that this was a great opportunity just, you know, to pilot it. And I had shared this with them back in October and then again in January, and it was just one of those last minute – hopefully we can try to get it in before this year in order to do the pilot, get the pilot done so we can use this information hopefully to provide for the students' last year.

Researcher: And what was effective about collaborating with Yogahope?

Teacher: I guess they – they are community oriented. They themselves look to populations that would best benefit from what they do, and they – I know that they did great collaboration with agencies over in Haiti. They did a number of trainings in Haiti. They just completed training in the Framingham Prison for women. So it's something that I knew that they would care about my kids, and so that's why I think it worked so well. They already – even though they didn't know our school, our kids, they had an investment in bringing this to our kids. Does that make sense?

Researcher: Yeah – and [interruption] what was one of the challenges of the collaboration?

Teacher: I don't think it was quite a challenge, but I guess initially just...the collaboration – they were very open and thankfully very flexible because we didn't have funding, generally they receive funding. We had a very limited schedule here that we could offer for them. Those were some of the constraints, and they were more school based than the agency. So I think that was the difficulty – not having – we had no funds. They even provided the curriculum – the books, we didn't have – so that, that was the challenge

Researcher: What have you learned from getting this collaboration to happen?

Teacher: One of the things and we actually spoke about this because we do meet periodically and we're meeting again Thursday to kinda go over. We do talk about things like this – is the...it's very difficult in larger organizations to get something done. Example, like even within our committee, I knew what I could do but having to wait for X, Y, and Z person to do X, Y and Z in order to move forward is extremely frustrating when I know I have the ability to do this and I just need to move forward. So that's kinda one of the things that did happen. I-we just ended up e-mailing Ethna and Mike and just saying now's the time, I have commitment from facilitators without needing funding, you know, we just need to act on this. So that, I guess, that was, you know, that was another piece that was there.

Researcher: Awesome. I've- I don't know a whole lot about how TIMBo actually started this year like how did you find kids for it?

Teacher: Well, when we had initially talked about doing this within our committee - our subgroup within the committee, it was supposed to be from the survey that we took, and then there was going to be a group of people that reviewed the survey and looked at the names and made some recommendations. This was kinda put out there. It didn't actually happen that way for some reason – I do not know why, and it ended up going through the counselors. Several of

the girls that were recommended to me and several kids that approached me like [lists 3 students' names] that wanted to be in it either couldn't because they were already in Steven's Circle or they were in Citizens Schools. So that was a constraint as well because I did have a good number of girls that really wanted to participate but couldn't.

Researcher: And is TIMBo only for girls?

Teacher: Yes, TIMBo is only for girls. It's trauma theory based and um it is gender based. So, it has been piloted only with women, and there's lots of research that's already been done knowing it's effective with women. But they're just piloting a men's group, not boy's but men's. And that was one of the pieces that it could not be boys and girls; it had to be just females, just girls. Not that in the future that they wouldn't consider piloting a both, but for now it's still new piloting it with girls. Developmentally they're at a different stage than women, so we're just trying to figure out how it could be tweaked to best fit this population.

Researcher: Awesome. Is there anything else that you want to add about what it was like to do this collaboration?

Teacher: Um, I think, outside of myself I think partnering with an agency such as TIMBo that allowed our kids to meet people like the facilitators was extremely powerful. Because now they've made connections with individuals that may maintain relationships with them in the future that aren't education-based. And I just think that's very exciting for our kids, and I think that's another reason why I feel very strongly about the Citizens School and Tenacity 'cause it's almost in the same sense that they're able to see people in different lights and to maintain some of these relationships outside of school. So that—that was great, and I think it's going to happen with this group.

Researcher: That's awesome. Thank you.

Phone Interview with Principal
June 12, 2014
5:30 pm

Researcher: What do you think is valuable about that committee and the work they're doing?

Principal: So um I would also include the Wellness Committee as a similar type committee I don't see them as totally distinct but I'll talk about HEART but sometimes I'm overlapping a little with the wellness committee because I think both are accomplish hing something similar um I think that H.E.A.R.T. is um has as its mission looking at a side of student/school experience that the general school reform movement and accountability systems that we um are driven by don't take into account and it's easy to forget about so it provides a...energy and attention to a very important part of school experience that would be easy to ignore

Researcher: Wonderful. And have you seen any evidence of impact on students or school culture with their work this year?

Principal: School culture is a very complex and multidimensional thing to try to measure so I don't think I could say there's a scientific dimension but when you see teachers and students and partners marching together in the peace march or wearing the Panthers for Peace tshirts around - everyone from teachers to kids to partners to my own kids at home. There is an impact going on but still to measure what it is unsure I can see the new student support organization around to benefit a small little group it's hard to know to say the impact is measureable but it's been important impact on the school culture and it's planting seeds that will probably take root over upcoming years

Researcher: Wonderful. And what would you say are some strengths of this committee?

Principal: So I think that the committee... one of the risks of the whole current ed reform movement is that kids just get reduced to numbers or to achievement scores and so I think that the H.E.A.R.T. committee just with its name and its mission thinks about students as actual people with their whole range of experience including the trauma that they've had and commits us to trying to design the school to support them, which is of course what we're supposed to be doing but it's easy to forget.

Researcher: So true and what are some areas for improvement for the committee? The committee's work?

Principal: Well I think the biggest one is that the Wellness committee is a very similar committee and there's been very poor communication between the two committees, and so I think we have to make sure things don't get cyloed. Those are kinda different groups of overlapping people and then also the counseling staff so I think its very important that if - the committee is almost like a little research and development group and very influential but it has to make sure it doesn't get too isolated from other parts of the school and it takes a lot of ongoing outreach. Not exactly a weakness - more like a challenge because it happens with a lot of different things

Researcher: Oh yeah and it's definitely a place that - that collaboration piece is always an area of growth and it could definitely be strengthened. Could you say more about what the Wellness committee is and how you see that working well with the H.E.A.R.T. committee?

Principal: In the Boston public schools framework, every school has a wellness committee and a good wellness committee it takes into account the physical and emotional health of the students and the school environment and that is a very direct alignment so for example the wellness committee arranged for representatives of GLSEN to come in to classrooms to speak to kids in the health class and at the same time the heart committee is piloting a...I forget the exact acronym for the group but a BGLA or whatever -I don't know the exact letters that are used for our group I forget- but it is piloting that student group and they're not really being done in conjunction so I think it would be good to bring those two very very parallel efforts together

Researcher: Yes wonderful and -

Principal: They're not conflicting at all. It's just sometimes I know things that are going on and I think there's actually some collaboration there but that's really a shared vision that should be tied into a shared mission in a way

Researcher: True it sounds like they could really support each other's work a lot and build off of each other

Principal: I think so, and I think that would gain more momentum in the school but that's a minor thing. I'm really glad that two groups are taking on all of these issues. I forgot to mention when you asked about impact you know the citizens school WOW when all the kids were there at their poster and talking about the things they had done and the symbolism of the plant and the drawings that they had made it was obvious that they were very very excited about their participation in Steven's Circle. Steven's Circle isn't exactly the same as the H.E.A.R.T. committee but it's all sorta tied into the same push that the H.E.A.R.T. committee is making. So that was very clear to me that Steven's Circle is having an impact on the school and the culture likewise the two peace concerts the last two years and the fact that students who have experienced traumatic loss becoming student leaders that's a really incredible vision that I just that definitely has an impact on school culture and on those own students that are belonging in pride

Researcher: And what would make the work more impactful next year? Some general ideas -

Principal: I think that H.E.A.R.T. committee - some things we do in the school are very systematic across the whole school like we implement a new assessment and everyone takes it and then we have a meeting to analyze it or even the restorative practices that we're going into everyone's going to be trained in it school wide. That's the one vision for change but the H.E.A.R.T. committee is different it's more like a research and development think tank like I said and that is good in a way because there's a lot more flexibility you don't have to move everyone at the same time but you can become a little isolated from the rest of the school so I think that message of communicating that of motivating the rest of the school are important. They did it right today I just suddenly think of an example. A rainbow diversity day was planned for tomorrow and I keep forgetting to announce it but they're not using fully all the tools that some other groups are using for example it's very hectic when announcements come so it's hard to remember what to announce and some groups will put their announcement right there by the speaker so you can't possibly miss it and they make sure their stuff is advertised and the heart committee has totally learned to do that yet I know that sounds really silly but that's the way in the context of the way administrators live in our building dealing with a lot of crises that you can make sure that the work of a group is publicized and advertised and so I think that's an area for possible growth not that we don't areas for growth as administrators or that wouldn't be necessary but that's an example so I didn't properly advertised the Rainbow group today that's on me but the group could've help do it or could have announced it in other ways to be creative about publicizing things and motivating people and I think that could be a little better or I should there's room for growth there

Researcher: True. Thank you so much for all of these ideas and insights on how heart is connecting with the school and areas of growth. Is there anything else you want to add about the H.E.A.R.T. committee?

Principal: I'm really happy that - I know that a lot of people get into the field of education with idealism about the role they're going to play in kids' lives and families lives and a lot of people lose that after time of just suddenly being told you're not grading test scores enough and then all the other things that seem so important that nobody seems to care about so the fact that it exists and teachers are being brought into that and young teachers are able to be a part of that I think it's restorative not just for kids but for adults also so I'm really glad that it exists

Researcher: Thank you so much for answering all these questions and I really appreciate your input.

Principal: You're welcome

Interview with T3 Coach
June 13, 2014
9:00 am

Researcher: My first question is what do you think is valuable about the heart committee?

T3 Coach: So I think having a group that's really dedicated to kids' social emotional needs is really valuable. I don't - you know I think there are individuals whose work it is to do that in the building, but my impression is that it doesn't operate on the program development/systems end but more on the sort of case management end, which is obviously also very important. But I think that's a gap, and I also think engaging teachers in that conver-in the work of figuring out how to meet kids' social-emotional needs is valuable because those are people who see the kids the most. And I think helping teachers start to think about that as a component of their job is useful

Researcher: Have you seen any evidence of impact on students or school culture?

T3 Coach: So that's - it's a little bit hard for me to see from my particular vantage point because I work with kids less. It is my impression that the GSA has been very effective, I mean, in its sort of embryonic stages but that's...I have to say that's sort of more anecdotal than like - I've heard that rather than I've seen it. And I - the impact that I've seen more (which is not to say that it's the impact that exists but the impact that I feel more aware of) has to do more with teachers' awareness of the capacity to help with these issues and that it is a component of their job. And I guess I'll say this, just since you're asking, this is something that I think, as you know, Ethna and I have struggled with from like the minute I interviewed her - how do you measure impact for this kind of work? And I don't feel that we developed a really good answer to that this year, which is not to say that the work was not impactful but more to say that I don't think we developed really great measures for knowing whether or not the work was impactful

Researcher: Yeah it sounds like it's a really qualitative type of measurement and that's hard to do...

T3 Coach: Yeah, I think there's a couple of factors. I think first of all, there was the group's leerness about asking questions that were really specific, which I understand but also makes it hard, you know. And yeah...and I think that not only is it qualitative but some of it's over time. Some of it is very direct – I'm a homeless kid who doesn't have team wear and somebody gets me team wear – success! But “I feel cared for” that's not only qualitative but - I don't know - it feels like the kind of thing you look back on a little bit, you know. Like the GSA is similar right like it makes me feel better, more accepted in the moment true, but also especially in the activism piece, it starts to change kids' minds. I don't know that that's necessarily always immediately evident. I think somewhat, like you could do some opinion surveys and you can think about incidents or lack of incidents and those kinds of things. But I think it's - I think there are probably ways to do it better than we've done it, but I think it's tricky. I think it's trickier than some of the other work I'm involved with.

Researcher: What would you say are some of the strengths of the committee?

T3 Coach: I think...so I think everybody's dedication to kids and to this work is a strength. I think the ...so I think the GSA group was the strongest. I thought that the My Life, My Choice group was doing some good thinking, although weren't able to implement. You know, I think in some ways, I think, they did best when they had a clear direction and a clear project, and I think that is tricky because I think there is also a goal of sort of building people's own capacity to determine what's needed. But I think this year the group functioned best when they sort of had a project and a direction given to them.

Researcher: What are some areas for improvement, for growth?

T3 Coach: So I think partially it's that – it's building teachers' like sense of efficacy around this work - that they could see something that needs to be done and they could do it. I think...you know Ethna talks a lot about like did it have to be this slow a roll to get started or could we have started sooner, and I think whether this year might or might not have been faster, I think next year should move faster and get more of these programs moving would be helpful. And then I think the third thing is - and I maybe should've said this when we talked about strengths, I think the group is much more comfortable with stand-alone programs and projects than they are with thinking about structures. But at the same time, I think that people feel very aware that structures are at the heart of some of the challenges, so I think it would be helpful for the group to start to think about how can we lead school change around structures, you know. So like how do we make EWI effective across school rather than in pockets; how do we help our colleagues grow in their ability to talk to kids in trauma friendly ways or like own capacity to do that. So I think it's not surprising, right - like concrete things are easier to do than these sort of bigger picture things. But I do think that - so I don't say that with like a sense that that was a weakness but more with a sense that that feels like the next step.

Researcher: Sort of connects to – what do you think would make the work more impactful next year?

T3 Coach: So I think probably clearer goals sooner. And being really like building on this success instead of trying something too new, and I think, you know [teacher] would say this all year - I think better structures for sharing this work across the school, which I have to say is not something that we've developed all that well in next year's plan, so it's a little bit of an area of concern. The team is thinking about some all school PD which is some – touches on that a little bit. But I think it's something to continue to think about. It's not as important for the individual projects right like "I'm starting a GSA," "I'm starting a My Life, My Choice group" - you just tell people it's happening. But if you're trying to get people to think about how they talk to kids differently or think about how they, you know, facilitate certain kinds of meetings differently that requires some better structures for how we talk to everybody in the school. So that's another thing to figure out.

Researcher: That sounds like a really challenging but amazing idea and direction for this work to go in. I don't know where you would begin to do that –

T3 Coach: Yeah, you know I think probably come from partially closer collaboration with the admin team, which is something that – it's funny I think both Ethna and the admin team wanted but for a variety of reasons couldn't get off the ground. So I think that's probably part of it - maybe more admin team members coming to these meetings, maybe Ethna has a regular meeting with somebody - I'm not sure. But I think those are the folks who have - hold more of the whole school stuff so it might be helpful

Researcher: Awesome that's all of my questions is there anything else that you want to add?

T3 Coach: No I don't think so

Researcher: Thank you

Interview with Ms. Riley
June 20, 2014
3:00 pm

Researcher: my first question is...you speak a lot about this but what do you think is valuable about the committee?

Ms. Riley: I think having a designated time and space where teachers put their full attention and focus on issues of social-emotional support is in itself a powerful thing I feel like that work is constantly nagging at the periphery of the many other things that we're asked to focus on and is seen as you know detracting our attention from the central aspect of our job and yet you know when a student – school with a population such as this one is such a central part of our job but is never...we have yet to find a way to have that fully interwoven in the way I would like that to be so it seems step one is to actually focus exclusively on that and see where we're at with that and explore issues of social emotional support and trauma informed practice and then begin to you know beginning the process of seeing how that integrates into our teaching practice and our school culture.

Researcher: What have been some of the strengths of the committee this year?

Ms. Riley: I think that it's allowed likeminded and very committed people to come together to you know give their full attention to something that is very near and dear to their hearts and very influential to their role as teachers and I think that it is also – I think it's been amazing to see what has actually come out of it, even with all like difficulty with getting started the way that I had envisioned. That GSA is up and running and My Life, My Choice is coming, and that closet of donations and support – like resources does exist and the TIMBo class did take place and there's ideas of strategies for specialty next year that are in the works and a PD being planned – you know all these – and a breathing room, and all these things that I think somewhat against the odds we managed to be - I'm gonna say - remarkably successful. I mean I think we could've done a lot more and I would've liked to have us diversify our efforts a bit more, but I think it has definitely been a strength to have people that are really ready to get it done and dividing into action teams to do that was a strength of this year – well strength and a weakness. But I think that enabled certain things to happen. I think if we had all worked on one issue I don't think we would've gotten it done any better or faster. You know, so at least we're like working on four issues and they're as done as I think they would've been

Researcher: One of my research questions was what goals were met, and these are the list of goals and desired outcomes that I have from earlier in the year. We accomplished a lot and made progress on a lot of them. What do you think were some of the strategies that helped H.E.A.R.T. to be successful?

Ms. Riley: So that allowed us to meet this?

Researcher: Yeah

Ms. Riley: To meet the goals that we met? I can speak to the strategy that I found helpful as the facilitator and that was basically like direct instruction in a way that I was not expecting to have to do. For example, like “complete cycle for three to four interventions” that necessitated me putting that into a graphic and revisiting that graphic what five times that we went back to that again and again and were like ok remember this is what we're doing, this why. And having to essentially teach what was essentially my vision and reteach it and reteach it and reteach it again. And period. I think that the other thing that was helpful that is not necessarily a strategy but was crucial is that I had done a lot of envisioning and planning work for these groups beforehand and around these issues beforehand. So I heard people saying we're unclear on the vision and whatnot but I think what helped us get as far as we were was having it outlined and me saying this is the mission, this is the vision, this is the goals for each group. And my regret is that – sorry this is now tangential to your question – but my regret is that I didn't again like present that paper to them like four more times say like maybe we presented the cycle four to five different times. Because there was a mission and there was a vision and I did outline that which was a strategy and I did present it to them as a strategy. And I wanted to like give them the room to like tweak it and own it, but I don't think that happened. I think instead they like needed to just be taught it and retaught it. So that like direct instruction, explicitly preplanning and presenting what in a lot of ways was..it's not a finished product...was a pretty fleshed out plan I think was a

strategy that got as far as we were able to go in the areas that we were able to make the most movement on. And then strategically - one strategy that did help was placing people in different groups and trying to balance the groups. That wasn't able to be fully realized in the way that I wanted and ended up being sorta a weakness also in a way, but I think that to the extent that I was able to do that I was able to...[interruption]

Researcher: With all of these strategies and everything that you accomplished this year, what sort of impacts have you seen on students, on school culture?

Ms. Riley: School culture is kinda the hardest one in that we're not in a very good place as far as our issues of behavior and discipline this year. And yet I tried to make it as clear as possible that that wasn't something I was interested in putting in the H.E.A.R.T.'s purview. I feel like that's a separate issue that definitely intersects and overlaps and can be extremely influential within the same student on those two different dynamics of social-emotional need and trauma and behavior. But they are not...previously I feel like they in previous incarnations of this group and the Pride group to some extent (the spirit team) had been conflated into like the same issue of Tier 3 needs and I felt very strongly like we needed to separate them and deal with the overlap as it presented but not actually treat that as the same thing. So my point being, I feel like the school's in a rough place with that issue, and it makes it hard to assess the school culture as far as student culture. That said I think we are at a very different place than we were a year and some change ago as far as the amount and depth of teacher awareness of trauma even being a thing in students' - not a thing but like a very real impact in students' experiences of school and in their capacities for learning. I think that that's much more widespread than it has been in my seven years at this school, and I think that we're definitely making moves - if nothing else in putting that within people's consciousness and having that begin to inform their practice. I think that for the people that were in this room I appreciated hearing that they feel like they did walk away with some strategies and that they are applying that. And I think it's a matter of doing that piece even more intentionally next year. One of the goals that we did not meet was the training piece, and partly that was like oh crap we didn't get to do that and I wanted to. And partly that was an intentional decision on my part that once we started the action teams we didn't have time to - it didn't really lend itself to a break from that work. It's like once the ball got rolling, time crunch was in full swing, and plus the restorative justice practice piece that - the whole thing that I talked about about that not being clear. Anyways, point being you asked about school culture, you asked about teaching practice

Researcher: Impact on students

Ms. Riley: Again so hard to measure. I think the GSA starting is a big deal for the students in it, and I think that is going to be a big deal for our school culture in the very near future. I hope that TIMBo had a positive impact for the girls that were in it. The resources - I think it's addressing these small pockets of students that we set out to provide resources for I think happened to small extent. Students in general as a whole that weren't directly impacted - I don't think we're there yet. I don't think that's happened at least not to any significant or reasonable extent, except for maybe again like maybe Ms. Turner saying when anyone in my class has trouble I do this - that's like a hundred kids that she's interacting with. So that piece somewhat but as far as the actual action project, I don't think had a reach across the board yet.

Researcher: You sorta touched on the goals that were not achieved and why that had to happen. Some of the other ones like “foundation for restorative justice work”

Ms. Riley: I had to totally deliberately put that aside and that’s because when I took on this group I thought that that was going to be coming primarily through the impulse of the work of H.E.A.R.T. team and potentially in collaboration with the Spirit team. And my vision was that we could do a three year role out. And so that a big piece of it like year one we would really be pushing like a lot more circles, and restorative practices, and by year three, we’d be revamping the discipline system and doing restorative justice work and that a lot of our time and energy within this group – not exclusively within this group but in collaboration with other parties within the building – would be to map that out and again lay those foundations. Because of a training my principle attended, a grant opportunity that presented itself, and a major budget cut that nobody foresaw coming, this is all – and like general impulses within BPS as a whole – this is all supposedly happening next year. I still am unclear, with three days remaining of school, exactly what that’s going to look like, but all of that happened like outside of my own sphere of influence basically. And the communication back to me that was promised didn’t actually happen quite frankly. So I did not want to be working on that in two spaces and envisioning one thing and other things coming down the pipe and I felt like that was going to be very counterproductive. So it was like alright let’s wait and see what’s happening, let’s wait and see what’s happening. And unfortunately we’re still waiting to see what’s happening. But something’s happening in – you know circles are happening, restorative practices are coming, it’s coming but the H.E.A.R.T. committee didn’t need to be the vehicle for that let’s say – we’ll put it as a happy outcome.

Researcher: What are some areas of improvement for H.E.A.R.T. in the future?

Ms. Riley: I would like to see us dig into more training. I would like to see us play a role of – my original vision that we would kinda screen trainings for the whole staff. So like for example, if like the Peace Institute comes in and does a training, and we find it like super super helpful and powerful that like then that organization comes back and does round two with the whole staff. I would like to see us sponsoring more whole school PD with those training either from outside organizations brought in by us or from the members of H.E.A.R.T. directly. I would like to see – I’m toying with this idea of like more temporary projects. So one of the reasons I’m excited about potentially partnering with the family committee is that being able to put a huge amount of resources behind like let’s pull of this event. And then we pull it off and we go on to the next thing and do something else. But like having fixed deadlines of accomplishable things that can be done, completed, debriefed and reflected on, and then moving on with a new group of people or a slightly different configuration of people. So if a group is not as functional as it needs to be, so that wouldn’t go on and on but that there would be more flexibility. So I’m thinking about that...training, events piece,...definitely more collaboration with outside forces – so other committees (assuming they exist), with administration, with more organizations. I was really hoping that much much more solid partnerships would be founded this year, and that didn’t happen to the extent that I envisioned. I have ideas why that was, but I’m not one hundred percent sure why that was. And I would like to see us pull off some more initiatives that are directly working with students, we’ll say – or families. I have a bunch of ideas for next time. I

mean technically, I feel like the GSA's the only that really did what I hoped it would do and that was a little later than I had hoped. But I think we need to push for what I had originally envisioned and we had originally planned. "Originally" used in my context – what we had said we were going to do.

Researcher: This sorta connects – what do you think would make the work more impactful next year?

Ms. Riley: I mean doing those things quite frankly. I think that having more student groups up and running - I hear people's push back on it but the biggest deal things that have happened in this school right now I'm gonna say with respect to that model have been the GSA and Steven's Circle. As far as like Steven's Circle being the ongoing student group that has a specific purpose and does something within the community like there are other things that have like come and gone but I think that I don't know I'm biased because I love Steven's Circle and the vision that formed it but I think it works – it really works. And I think we need to take the model that works and replicate it and I think that would be more impactful. And Steven's Circle I think had an impact beyond those students – like had an impact on the students as a whole. And I think that these student groups should be able to have an impact beyond that little group of students as a whole, but in order to have that, you need to have more groups like that. And the fact that it's like a support group, it's an empowerment group, it's a leadership group – I think is really necessary and potentially powerful and it's a ton of work, but I think it's really worth it. I think that communicating more with admin and with other groups will help the adult piece – the training will make us more impactful as far as giving people the concrete strategies and skills that we would like to see them implement and beginning a schoolwide conversation about trauma informed practice and beginning to create some forums that are able to productively assess where we're at with that as a school as a whole. More deliberately plan how we're going to move forward – that work has happened in kinda spotty ways and it's never been with everybody in the room that needed to be in the room I think. I don't know – we'll see what happens with this – I'm rambling a little bit right now – we'll see what happens with this restorative practices thing because that's supposed to be what it does and that it forms our discipline and structure, that it forms our relationship building and many other things. We'll see how that happens.

Researcher: Is there anything else that you want to add about H.E.A.R.T. or this work?

Ms. Riley: I think we made progress on a goal that I did not know was a goal beforehand which was establishing that – I guess it kinda was a goal – I thought it was an assumption or an understanding rather but apparently it was a major goal – as far this idea that teachers play a central role in supporting traumatized – in supporting students who are struggling with the impact of trauma on their lives. I again had made the very naïve assumption that convening this group together and people selecting to be in this group indicated an understanding of that to begin with, and I was very wrong. And I think that that was in many ways our largest obstacle by far, and one that I again very naively did not – I wanna say did not anticipate but even if I did, I did not truly understand the extent of, we'll say. I still think that we're not over that as a whole, but I do think that we made a lot of progress on that and that even though that's somewhat a frustrating place to be on because I think we should've been beyond that before ever even like

sat down in this room, it's still – I need to step back and recognize that is the most necessary thing that has to be in place before anything else can show any roots, you know. It's a very important precursor to any actually impactful or productive work by any group of teachers.

Researcher: I had noticed that as well in reflecting on the beginning of the year. It's like they heard the word trauma and immediately "that's guidance realm and we can't touch that"

Ms. Riley: And you were there – I almost cried in that first meeting. I was so like shocked and disappointed and frustrated... – like that that was a big deal to be like woah woah woah we shouldn't be doing this – then what the hell are we even doing in this room together – this is what we're going to be doing all year. I think that to me was a major journey towards finding my own leadership role as far as how to sort out what is people's ideological objections to that, what are people's trust issues on that, and what of it was just good ole feeling overwhelmed and helpless. And I think all of those three things were very present in that moment and beyond, and like I said I don't think we're over it but I think we're in a very different place. I'm sure we could be further along and maybe theoretically be over it, but a part of me thinks we might have come as far as it was realistically possible for us to come in the course of the year, given the dynamics of people coming and going. We need to collaborate differently with guidance next year. I don't entirely know how – that relationship needs to have a clearer vision and it needs clear vision, clear expectations, clear parameters.

Researcher: That's one of the things I've liked in my research having trauma specific treatment defined separately from trauma informed practice. And that really helps me to make those two more distinct and to see oh the role of guidance is vital for trauma specific treatment but we all have a role to play in trauma informed practice.

Ms. Riley: I totally agree with that, and yet at the same time I think that again what we've been most successful in being Steven's Circle is technically treatment in a way. And I do think that there is a teacher role to play in that piece as well– not solo, but in collaboration with that. And not treatment in a clinical way, but I don't know – thinking about restorative practices and circles and groups like is that treatment? Because it doesn't quite seem like practice – I don't know, it's somewhere in between those two things.I think that broadening our definitions of those things or creating a whole new third element to it as far as traditional, indigenous communal ways of doing things. You know, like traditional communal ways of doing things, and if the school is a community, we need to have those ways of doing things and ways of dealing with things and ways of supporting one another. And we say oh, this a DMC community and we say this is a learning community and a classroom community – community, community, community. But communities don't just interact with one another in one dimensional ways, don't just have a community that's all about – like if it's actually a community, then there's so many different elements to that and to me it seems that the community needs to actually care for one another and support one another and be present to one another in some very new and yet very ancient ways. As far as the role that we are in each other's lives – if we are actually going to be a healthy functioning community. I'm sure other communities do that in less explicit ways, and I think that's fine too if that works, but I don't think that's working for us. This is a tangent – but talking to the kids today about showing them this documentary of girls and educational access and so on... a little girl talking about her schooling and her education and her family in Sierra

Leone, her mom and dad. And dad died so mom's brother married her mom and like adopted the children. Kids were like what – how is her uncle her step-dad? No – like think about it. These are traditions that were put in place to make sure that people aren't left behind and people don't fall through the cracks and people aren't left destitute and in poverty and with no support system. Like if this is the mother's role in the community is to care for the family, who cares for her? They have a system set up so that if something happens, if you lose the dad and therefore you lose the provider and lose these other things, you're not like put on welfare. No, somebody else's role is to step-up and take it on fully. They're like oh, yeah that does make sense. But I think that, again what are our systems for stepping up and stepping in when things go wrong or when there's holes, whatever those holes may be? I think we say that that's family, school, community, maybe partnership but we need to do a lot more exploring and find out how to make that a reality in a such a huge school with so many challenges. That's a whole other thing – the size of this school – it's enormous work, enormous. It would be very different work if it was like 200 kids. That's the big questions that remains to be seen, if it's even possible in a community this size – I like to think it is, but we shall see.

Appendix B: Surveys

About your Action Team

1. What was your action team?

Strong Families

2. What went well? What facilitated your team's successes?

Participant 1: We had a chance to review the extent of community and in-school services available to students and their families. We started to get more clarity around process by which students/families access those services.

Participant 2: Planning, initially having a vision. I think we worked well together and had a common goal (the resource binder), but weren't always sure of what we were aiming for exactly

Participant 3: (arrow from "What went well?") our hard work
(arrow from "What facilitated your team's successes?") our ability to keep pushing forward but also stepping back and re-evaluating our work

Participant 4: I liked the diversity of our team and the time we got to spend together in our small committees. I felt like we were productive.

3. What did you struggle with? What would have made your team more impactful?

Participant 1: More clarity on referral process, who makes referrals. Still not certain about how school can provide services and which services can be provided

Participant 2: The reason we were compiling the Family Resource binder and who should have access to it

Participant 3: (arrow from "What did you struggle with?") the bigger picture – who are we helping
(arrow from "What would have made your team more impactful?") ??-maybe more time

Participant 4: Team attendance was a struggle. I am not sure that our agenda and action item was consistent every time we met.

About your Action Team

1. What was your action team? Select one.

Timbo

2. What went well? What facilitated your team's successes?

Participant 5: Created a group that meets during ELT

3. What did you struggle with? What would have made your team more impactful?

Participant 5: All team members attending meetings at the same time.

About your Action Team

1. What was your action team? Select one.

GSA

2. What went well? What facilitated your team's successes?

Participant 6: We started a group and laid foundations! Clear goal/vision tangible and easy action steps. Hard working team!!

Participant 8: The formation of the GSA went well. David and I were both really committed to getting it off the ground.

Participant 9: The GSA worked well in terms of putting into action the GSA and holding a variety of meetings throughout the course of the year. We did well in involving students in the formation and the vision setting of GSA and completing one action (Rainbow Spirit Day) by the end of the school year.

3. What did you struggle with? What would have made your team more impactful?

Participant 6: Student consistency, more adult/meeting consistency with students – easier way to communicate with GSA members w/o outing them

Participant 8: We struggled to collaborate with outside organizations. They were not as responsive as I had hoped, and it was not possible to effectively form a partnership for this year.

Participant 9: It was initially difficult to find the appropriate time and space for the GSA to occur- this ended up delaying our initial start date by a few weeks. As a partner (not a BPS teacher), I personally felt conflicted when Citizen Schools obligations occurred on Fridays and did not allow me to be fully present at HEART committee meetings. I think that the only thing that would have made the team more impactful was more time at the beginning to plan and to put the GSA into action. The sporadic HEART meetings in the fall made this difficult. Once Friday schedule was changed to provide more regular committee meetings, our work moved as well.

About your Action Team

1. What was your action team? Select one.

My Life, My Choice

2. What went well? What facilitated your team's successes?

Participant 7: The team got the ball rolling and made plans for next year

3. What did you struggle with? What would have made your team more impactful?

Participant 7: The smaller details – staffing, \$

About H.E.A.R.T.

- 1) What did you learn or gain from participating in H.E.A.R.T.?

Participant 1: I think that we all have good intentions, but the logistics of this may be more than we can handle. Might be better to focus our committee work on projects (like information expo or outreach)

Participant 2: A lot. I enjoyed hearing others' opinions on how to best have a healthy school climate, as well as ideas around some of the current problematic structures (the DMLC, for instance)

Participant 3: Our school does try to do a lot of good but we have a long way to go. However, the teachers are extremely supportive of each other.

Participant 4: How important it is for staff trainings.

Participant 5: I got more insight on our students needs and the issues the staff feel need attention.

Participant 6: I gained a respect for student leadership and beliefs. Built new relationships with staff members. Developed leadership skills.

Participant 7: There are a lot of dedicated adults at the school willing to help out their students. In many different ways too

Participant 8: I learned, sadly, about the level of pushback that people have around teachers' roles in supporting the emotional and social health of our students. I was very surprised

Participant 9: As a new staff member to the DMC, the HEART committee gave me an opportunity to get to know our student body in a different way that I would have if I had not been a part of this committee. I am leaving with a greater understanding of the needs of our students and ways in which the incredible adults in our building are working to address those needs. I am also thankful to have had the ability to create connections with other adults who have similar interests and passion in supporting students outside of the classroom.

2) What evidence of impact on students or school culture have you seen?

Participant 1: GSA – a great outcome

Participant 2: I suppose some w/ GSA – having meetings with students

Participant 3: GSA – creating a safe space

Timbo – creating a safe space

Double dutch – building girls relationships

Steven's Circle – safe space

Participant 4: Students being excited about GSA

Participant 5: Creation of groups to help kids that may feel neglected. Ex: GSA

Participant 6: Large population of participation in rainbow spirit day, student interest in meetings was high.

Participant 7: [blank]

Participant 8: Once we started the GSA, kids were asking for it very frequently. They want that sort of safe space. Several students started to have better relationships with adults because of this group.

Participant 9: I have seen more teachers involved in supporting students outside of the classroom- from the GSA to TIMBO- there are more adults who are doing even more to support students in a variety of different ways. I have seen students who I did not think would take to the GSA participate actively and positively and while we had only a handful of meetings this year- the fact that these students had that opportunity was huge.

3) What strategies or tools contributed to HEART's successes this year?

Participant 1: Having regular time to meet and consistent group

Participant 2: I think having smaller teams (5-10 people per) was a great way to break up the work and allow committee members the option to work on things that interest them.

Participant 3: Our dedication, communication, and hard work

Participant 4: Adult by in

Participant 5: Making posters and voting on the most important issues

Participant 6: Consistent meetings. Clear goals. Time for action steps during meetings.

Participant 7: Mostly the dedicated adults on the team willing to contribute to their own sub group.

Participant 8: I think the group was very well facilitated. In the face of pushback, the leader did not give up on reaching our group's intended goals.

Participant 9: The HEART committee was run very collaboratively and Ethna did a great job in holding everyone accountable. Through emailing notes from our team breakouts and then including them on the next agenda, having honest and real conversations about timeliness, structuring the space so everyone was expected to speak, Ethna ensured that no one or no initiative flew under the radar. The time devoted to work in meetings also helped tremendously in moving action teams along.

4) What obstacles has HEART faced in identifying and addressing student needs?

Participant 1: Scale of needs, identifying more realistic and targeted projects

Participant 2: Resources within the school, whether funding, spaces, or administrative support.

Participant 3: Try to address all needs at one point and then (personally) feeling guilty when we had to pick some needs over other needs

Participant 4: Not having enough staff trained in social/emotional areas. I felt that a lot of work fell on the guidance team, especially on sub-committees.

Participant 5: I think some of our biggest obstacles dealt with implementation of certain procedures school wide

Participant 6: Logistical complications, inconsistent adult attendance, and lack of communication with whole school staff.

Participant 7: Identifying which student needs are actually the “most” important and how to actually address them.

Participant 8: Collection of student data was not as helpful as it could have been.

Participant 9: HEART got an initially slow start due to the sporadic nature of the meetings- it wasn't until February where we were actually doing action team work and in some ways this meant that we did not have as much success as we potentially could have had. Figuring out some way to move the team to action quicker next year (or at least figuring out some themes/topics that could begin work in implementing their ideas sooner) would help to have more of an impact on students.

5) Do you want to continue your work with the H.E.A.R.T. team? Why or why not?

Participant 1: Not sure – think so

Participant 2: Yes I would want to. My personal belief is that having a healthy, accepting, school culture/climate is critical to a functioning school

Participant 3: Yes but not as much as this year. I will need to focus on completing my graduate classes

Participant 4: I think in a different capacity. It has been hard for me to make meetings and keep up with everything. It may need a new structure for next year.

Participant 5: No, I did not feel effective in this group.

Participant 6: Yes. I think that a second year can lead to stronger student buy in as well as greater staff buy-in.

Participant 7: Yes & No. Yes because I want to see what will happen and how we will impact the school in the future. No – only based on the factor that my team is going to have a lot of changes next year and I want to best support them.

Participant 8: I think I want to continue my work with the GSA, but I don't know if I will also be a part of the HEART team.

Participant 9: Yes! I really appreciate the space that Ethna created and I feel committed to and passionate about supporting students in what they are struggling with outside of the classroom.

Is there anything else you would like to add?

Participant 2: Nope – thanks for the opportunity to work on improving the school's climate!

Survey of Whole School Environment

| | | | | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|-----|---|------|-----|---|---|
| Whole School Environment | | | | | | | | | |
| Key | | | | | | | | | |
| Strongly Agree = 4 | | | | | | | | | |
| Agree = 3 | | | | | | | | | |
| Disagree = 2 | | | | | | | | | |
| Strongly Disagree = 1 | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | |
| Our school is committed to establishing a nonviolent community | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| our leadership is willing to change practices and policies in order to use strengths-based and trauma-informed methods | 2 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 2 |
| Our school collaborates with students' families | 2 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 3 |
| Our school develops students' social-emotional and coping skills | 2 | 1 | 3 | 3&2 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| Staff appreciate all the differences (cultural, racial, religious, ethnic, etc.) of students and their families | 3 | 2 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3&2 | 3 | 3 |
| Staff respect gender and sexual identify differences | 3 | 2 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 3 |
| staff show unconditional respect to each child | 2 | 2 | 4 | 2 | 1 | "eh" | 2 | 3 | 2 |
| staff avoid yelling and rebuke | 2 | 2 | 3 | 2&1 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 2 |

| | | | | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|----------|-----|---|---|
| Staff try to see a situation from the child's point of view, even if a child's statement does not appear to be accurate | 2 | 3 | 4 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 3&2 | 3 | 2 |
| Staff avoid power struggles and coercion, instead seeking methods to engage students | 2 | 3 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 3 |
| Teachers feel personally supported by leadership in handling challenging situations with students | 2 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 2 |
| Our school provides useful staff training about trauma and student needs | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| When students enter the school, teachers are provided with enough information about a student's history and needs in order to respond appropriately to their behaviors | 3 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 3&2 | 2 | 3 |
| staff tend to believe that students' inappropriate behavior is intentional and "manipulative" | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 |
| Staff tend to look for triggers and root causes of inappropriate behavior | 2 | 1 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| Staff prioritize enforcing rules over healing | 3 | 4 | 2 | 3 | 3 | "unsure" | 3 | 3 | 3 |