Resolution to Humanize School Climate
Through Restorative Practices and Social Emotional Development

The School District of University City Board of Education wants to create a shift in school culture through an inclusive humanizing approach to discipline by adopting a system that works with our students. The District will do this by transitioning to comprehensive restorative practices (RP), to integrate social and emotional development into the curriculum, embrace a trauma informed framework, and incorporate the necessary wrap-around services. The goal of these interventions is to create a safe, equitable, and respectful learning and working environment for everyone in the school and prepare our students to become productive citizens. RP enables us to proactively provide universal interventions for all students, and customize interventions that address academic and behavioral challenges. It is an important means of addressing equity and most importantly, ensures the school community is provided with the kinds of supports needed to thrive. RP offers healthy alternatives to the traditional disciplinary approach to rules and consequences. RP teaches the entire school community to understand the impact of their behavior, take responsibility, repair the harm they have done, and restore relationships within the school community to allow all to feel valued, respected, safe and successful together.

In Support of a Resolution to Humanize School Climate Through Restorative Justice and Social Emotional Development—

WHEREAS, there is research that demonstrates punitive and reactionary discipline measures may have negative effects on the long-term resilience and connection within the community.

WHEREAS, there is a crisis of criminalization of our nation’s youth which has come to be known as the “School To Prison Pipeline,” which may include student suspensions, expulsions, push-outs, referrals to alternative institutions, and arrests in our public schools, and that increases and exacerbates our nation’s tragedy of mass incarceration; and

WHEREAS, in 2017 the ACLU of Missouri approached the SDUC to guide in the process of reducing the disproportionate rate of suspensions of minority students, school to prison pipeline, and eliminating zero tolerance language.

PREVIOUS, CURRENT, AND ONGOING INTERVENTIONS

WHEREAS, the SDUC has started the work to ensure the “Resolution to Humanize School Climate Through Restorative Justice and Social Emotional Development” is so created and becomes a reality by implementing the following:

- Professional development through Alive and Well STL to assist staff in becoming trauma informed
- Professional development to implement Restorative Justice and Practices through our schools
Continued

- Partnering with Wyman to develop effective and comprehensive community partnerships to provide wrap-around services to our children
- Professional development with Sharroky Hollie to increase the cultural competency and support of our staff
- Partnering with the ACLU to educate and engage our stakeholders in order to find solutions to disparities in discipline and subsequent consequences of those disparities
- Ongoing implementation of Positive Behavior Intervention Systems (PBIS) to support social emotional development
- The development of a district committee to review and revise the language of the discipline handbook
- The Board Policy Committee’s goal of aligning policy with the spirit of this resolution
- Hiring staff to implement restorative practices

WHEREAS: The SDUC Board of Education’s recommendations in February 28, 2019 highlight the ongoing need for:

- A “Culture shift” in the district with the goal of re-integration rather than exclusion
- Alternatives to suspensions and expulsions
- Humanizing responses to conflict to develop and restore school community relationships
- Culturally responsive approaches to education
- Further revisions to Discipline Handbook, including minimizing zero tolerance language
- District Policy alignment with Resolution
- Identify data and surveys to assist in monitoring success of approach and need for interventions
- Timeline for implementation of plan
- Budget and potential resources
- Ongoing development of appropriate community partnerships for wraparound services
- Continued professional development and/or workshops for students, families, and staff aligned with approach
- Engagement of city and police department on partnering with this approach
- Hire, cultivate and retain staff who embody this approach
- An open line of communication with the administration and Board of Education for staff to give feedback on needed supports.

WHEREAS, on February 28, 2019, the SDUC Board of Education seeks to adopt the Resolution, “In Support of a Resolution to Humanize School Climate Through Restorative Justice and Social Emotional Development” for the SDUC that will at minimum address all components cited above,

WHEREAS, the Board of Education endorses the belief that Restorative Practices, social emotional development, and trauma informed practices among the school community will positively impact the district’s school climate, and

RESOLVED, that the board will advocate for all schools to have plans identifying their unique needs and develop subsequent plans to implement this approach. The board allocates funds to provide the staff and
resources needed to successfully implement restorative practices and social emotional development with the goal of having designated staff at each school.

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WHEREAS, the board will seek out innovative ways of amplifying the voices from our school community as it relates to the implementation of this approach.

WHEREAS, specific restorative practices include but are not limited to counseling, intervention, peace circles, peer mediation, conflict resolution, restitution, and community service and,

WHEREAS, restorative discipline practices rests upon a continuum of appropriate interventions tailored to the needs of the student that include reinforcement, support and re-teaching opportunities as well as family and community conferencing, to increase student repertoires of effective responses and,

WHEREAS, the district is dedicated to incorporating social and emotional development, as it impacts the development of technical knowledge and skills through an equity lens free of implicit biases and,

WHEREAS, such framework will support and hold accountable students, teachers, administrators, families, and district leadership to reduce racial, ethnic, and any other protected class disparities in school discipline, especially suspension and expulsion.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Board of Education hereby continues a District-wide restorative practice initiative to include professional development of administrators and school site staff redesign of District discipline structures and practices and promote alternatives to suspension at every school, in partnership with support organizations and the ACLU to promote a District-wide "Culture of Caring" serving the whole child.

RESOLVED, that the SDUC will advocate that the students, parents, community members, legislators, and public be educated about Restorative Practices; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Board of Education creates a new “Restorative Practices and School Climate Committee” with a charge to advise the Board of Education and the Superintendent in designing, implementing and evaluating a student discipline framework based on restorative discipline practices which reduces student suspensions, increases student attendance and creates equitable, respectful, and fair school climates that support joyful learners; and

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED, that the new committee will be comprised of students, families, school site staff members and collaborating community partners; and be it finally

RESOLVED, The Board of Education requests the Superintendent and/or her Designee to monitor compliance with this resolution, and ensure that an initial plan and timeline is developed by July 2019, including a funding plan that will not increase the SDUC budget deficit for 2019-2020 with annual updates to the plan, and the BOE receives quarterly progress reports to ensure timelines and outcomes are met and review ongoing suspension and expulsion data with anticipated implementation in the 2019-2020 school year.