

## **Presentation Abstracts**

### **The Power of Mindsets: Creating a Positive School Climate, *Dr. Robert Brooks***

In his presentation, Dr. Brooks will describe the mindset and practices of educators who are effective in touching both the hearts and minds of students. He will detail specific strategies for creating a positive school climate that nurture motivation, learning, responsibility, hope and resilience in students, while lessening anger, pessimism, and resentment.

### **School Discipline in Massachusetts: A Look at the 2015 Data, *Rob Curtin (Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education)***

Mr. Curtin will use the discipline data from the 2014-15 school year to explore the degree to which the new school discipline law (CH222) has impacted overall suspension rates and disparities in discipline rates among various groups of students. He will also provide an update on how DESE plans to meet its obligation under the law and regulations to address schools that suspend a significant number of students for more than 10 cumulative days in a school year; to identify schools that need assistance to reduce over-reliance on long-term suspension or expulsion, and to identify models for doing so; and to identify districts with significant disparities.

### **School Discipline Law CH222: Implementation Successes and Challenges: Moderated Panel**

Moderator: *Matt Cregor (Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights and Economic Justice)*

Panelists: *Valerie Bond (formerly of Boston Public Schools), David Bulley (Van Sickle Middle School), William Foley (Burncoat High School), Hannah Hussey (Massachusetts Commission on LGBTQ Youth)*

This panel will share their experiences with school discipline, highlighting recent progress under the new law and identifying areas in need of improvement.

### **Youth Perspectives on School Discipline, *Rebecca (Becca) Holland, Fania Joseph, and Carlos Rojas (Boston Student Advisory Council)***

In this session, participants will hear about the power of youth voice while learning about the work of Youth on Board and the Boston Student Advisory Council. The presentation will include highlights from the group's statewide Youth Summit, held this past January, as well as the findings of their most recent Listening Project, during which they solicited input from over 400 young people around the city of Boston regarding their thoughts and experiences related to school discipline.

## **Restorative Circles at Worcester's North High School: Moderated Youth Panel**

Moderator: *Andrea Cameron*

Panelists: *Emanuela (Emma) Hoxha, Faustina Owusu, James Vega*

These youth panelists will share their experiences with Restorative Circles at North High School, comparing Restorative Justice to other, more traditional approaches to school discipline and discussing the impact Restorative Circles has had on their relationships with their teachers and classmates.

**Understanding, Assessing, and Improving School Climate,** *Dr. Maria Pacheco (New England Equity Assistance Center at Brown University) and Kalise Osula (Youth on Board/Boston Student Advisory Council)*

Kalise will share youth perspectives on the link between school climate and student success. Dr. Pacheco will discuss the New England Equity Assistance Center's comprehensive approach to requests for technical assistance and professional development in the area of school climate. Participants will have an opportunity to learn about the processes and tools the Center uses in its delivery of services, which include needs assessments, professional development and technical assistance to practitioners.

**Restorative Practices,** *Susan Maze Rothstein (Northeastern University School of Law) and Teena-Marie Johnson (Youth on Board/Boston Student Advisory Council)*

Participants will learn the core tenets of Restorative Practices and will be encouraged to explore how these practices can be used not only as an alternative approach to school discipline but as a way to strengthen communities by meaningfully engaging all members.

**Policing in Schools: Improving Practice and Policy,** *Liz Sullivan-Yuknis (Dignity in Schools), Rebecca Holland (Youth on Board/Boston Student Advisory Council), and Whitney A. Taylor (ACLU of Massachusetts)*

Participants will hear from youth leaders and advocates about their experiences with police and School Resource Officers (SROs) and explore different approaches to addressing the role of law enforcement in schools. Speakers will discuss different practices in school districts across Massachusetts and around the country, and share policy recommendations from the Dignity in Schools Campaign Model Code on Education and Dignity.

**Deconstructing the School-to-Prison Pipeline: School-Court Collaborations,** *Honorable Jay D. Blitzman, (Middlesex Juvenile Court) and Honorable Carol A. Erskine (Worcester Juvenile Court)*

This session will explore the counter-intuitive phenomenon of increased referrals from schools to juvenile

justice in an era of dramatically declining arraignments in other contexts and strategies to redress the process. The unintended consequences of expansion of zero tolerance and deployment of school police without first defining their relationship to educators and school officials in the post-Columbine era has exacerbated the problems of racial and ethnic bias while adversely affecting public safety. This presentation will feature the design and use of inter-systemic collaborative dialogue by engaging all stakeholders in a manner that enables participants to understand each other's points of view outside of courtrooms..

**Community Schools and Wraparound Zones: Creating a Safe and Supportive Context for Student Success**, *Dr. Claire Crane and Omar Longus (Center for Community Schools at Salem State University); Yuisa Perez Chionchio, Robert Jennings, Jennifer Jimenez, and Lilyvette Perez (Worcester Public Schools)*

Dr. Crane and Mr. Longus will present research on the efficacy and best practices of the Community Schools model – a model that sees communities as comprehensive sites for PK-adult education, with schools at the heart of social, cultural, health, and economic networks that improve and enrich learning. Afterwards, Wraparound Zone Coordinators from Worcester public schools will share their lessons learned after years of implementing and refining their wraparound model. In particular, coordinators will discuss the evolution of their role from one of individual service delivery to one of creating and coordinating systems of support.

**Recalibrating Schoolwide Discipline to Support a Healthy School Climate**, *Larry Dieringer (Engaging Schools)*

School communities all over the country are seeking to create innovative plans for reducing discipline problems in schools. Recalibrating a schoolwide discipline model to secure every student's right to an education in a safe and caring community takes relentless commitment from school leaders and their staff. In this session, participants will explore eight interdependent systems that result in an effective schoolwide discipline model, will unpack the differences between a punitive and an accountable and restorative model, and think through some critical "Tips for Recalibrating Schoolwide Discipline." This session is particularly helpful for middle and high schools wishing to be in compliance with Chapter 222.