Classrooms Not Courtrooms: Using Cross Sector Collaboration to Support Justice-Involved Youth in Richmond City

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Classrooms not Courtrooms:
Using Cross Sector Collaboration to Support Justice-Involved Youth in Richmond City

Doctor of Education Leadership (Ed. L.D.)
Capstone

Submitted by
Shadae Thomas Harris

To the Harvard Graduate School of Education
In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Education Leadership.

April 2018
When it all seems too much,
when the news is so bad
meditation itself feels useless,
and a single life feels too small a stone
to offer on the alter of peace,
find a human sunrise.
Find those people who are committed to
changing our scary reality.
Human sunrises are happening
all over the earth,
at every moment.
People gathering,
people working to change the intolerable,
people coming in their robes and sandals
or in their rags and bare feet,
and they are singing, or not,
and they are chanting or not.
But they are working to bring peace, light,
compassion
to the infinitely frightening downhill slide of
human life.
...Find a human sunrise.

-- Alice Walker

This capstone is dedicated to my **human sunrises**

**Henry M Thomas III**
my father and eternal leadership compass

**Devonia J Thomas**
my mother, my heart and ultimate prayer warrior

**Nathanael Harris**
my husband, publicist and love of my life – it’s only the beginning

**Perren Thomas, Jr & Penn Thomas**
my nephews, my light and joy

**Perren & Letesha Thomas**
my brother & sister, my best friends and coaches
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ABSTRACT

All over the country, public schools have become feeders into the juvenile and criminal justice systems. Overly harsh and discriminatory zero tolerance policies have systematically excluded young people from educational opportunities through suspensions, placement in alternative settings, and expulsions. In response, districts across the country have begun moving away from zero tolerance policies and implementing more trauma-informed and restorative justice approaches for discipline-related issues. In my cross-sector work with the Virginia Governor’s Children’s Cabinet, the Virginia Department of Juvenile Justice, and the Richmond Public Schools, I have led the development of policy and program improvements for youth whose education has been interrupted due to a court charge. In this capstone, I analyze the district’s policies for justice-involved youth through the lens of trauma and restorative justice, demonstrate how I led meaningful conversations with key stakeholders about how the policies impact students, and provide an analysis of how and why changes were able to take place in Richmond City.
INTRODUCTION

All over the country, public schools have become feeders into the juvenile and criminal justice systems. Young people are finding themselves being systematically excluded from their education through suspensions, placement in alternative settings, and expulsions (Youth United for Change and Advancement Project, 2011). These forms of pushouts are authorized in the name of safety and perpetuated by overly harsh zero tolerance policies. Especially after the 1999 tragedy at Columbine High School, “zero tolerance” policies continued to sweep the country. As a result, “school districts across the nation began to adopt harsh, unforgiving policies and practices that emphasized the long-term exclusion of students who violated school rules” (Youth United for Change and Advancement Project, 2011, p. 2). Moreover, Sedlack and McPherson (2010) found a significant connection between exclusionary school practices and incarceration, a connection that many now refer to as the “school-to-prison pipeline.” Their findings showed that the majority of incarcerated youth suspended and/or expelled from school had already dropped out well before being incarcerated.

Nelson and Lind (2015) also attributed zero tolerance policies and schools’ outsourcing discipline to juvenile court officers as primary factors that contributed to schools becoming gateways to prisons rather than barriers. In 1994, Congress introduced the Gun-Free Schools Act, which encouraged states receiving federal funds for education to introduce zero tolerance laws. Specifically, it mandated yearlong out-of-school suspensions for any student caught bringing a gun to school (Nelson & Lind, 2015).

This requirement further promoted zero tolerance policies full of broad language and loose definitions that ultimately led to detrimental exclusionary practices for
students. These types of practices resulted in suspension rates and expulsions doubling since the 1970s, particularly for Black and Latino youth. Additionally, resources that were meant to support schools, such as school resource officers or police officers, continue to be consistently overused. According to the U.S. Department of Education statistics, during the 2011-2012 school year about 92,000 students were arrested in schools. Out of those 92,000 incidents, the data shows most of the offenses were low-level violations (Nelson & Lind, 2015). Low-level violations include, but are not limited to, “insubordination” or “willful defiance.” Both of these terms are extremely tough to define and could mean a student has challenged a teacher’s authority rather than commit a harmful offense. Additionally, these types of nebulous offenses continue to target black students disproportionately. For example, during the 2006-2007 school year 51 percent of New York City public school students suspended for profanity were black and 57 percent of students suspended for “insubordination” were also black (Nelson & Lind, 2015).

Nevertheless, it is important to note that many juvenile court systems are not on board with this trend, but rather have spoken out about the ways in which police officers in schools are substantially increasing admittance into the juvenile court system. The chief judge of the juvenile court in Clayton County shared, “Georgia has become an outspoken opponent of police in schools and the school-to-prison pipeline after placing cops on school grounds resulted in eleven times as many students getting sent to juvenile court” (Nelson & Lind, 2015, p. 1).

Throughout the research, race has remained a determining factor as to who is charged and/or incarcerated. Tremendously disproportionate incarceration rates are found between races among youth and continue to characterize data throughout this field. The
U.S. Department of Education traces this disproportionality as far back as preschool where they found that Black public preschool children are suspended from school at higher rates. Specifically, the report found the following:

- Black preschool children are 3.6 times as likely to receive one or more out-of-school suspensions as white preschool children.
- Black children represent 19% of preschool enrollment, but 47% of preschool children receiving one or more out-of-school suspensions; in comparison, white children represent 41% of preschool enrollment, but 28% of preschool children receiving one or more out-of-school suspensions.
- Black boys represent 19% of male preschool enrollment, but 45% of male preschool children receiving one or more out-of-school suspensions.
- Black girls represent 20% of female preschool enrollment, but 54% of female preschool children receiving one or more out-of-school suspensions (U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights, 2014).

Despite these findings, people are reluctant to have conversations about race and its relationship to the juvenile justice system.

A myriad of studies highlight the relationship between race, behavior, and suspension. It is important to note that these studies consistently demonstrate that Black and White students’ rates of misbehaving are comparable. However, research shows the stark ways in which White students are much more likely to be disciplined for provable, documentable offenses – smoking, vandalism, and obscene language – whereas their Black counterparts are more likely to be disciplined for subjective reasons, such as disrespect (Nelson & Lind, 2015). These findings are significant as we think about how zero tolerance policies disproportionately impact Black students and their communities.

In addition to race, the report highlights the ways in which students with disabilities in grades K-12 are disproportionately suspended from school. For example, the out-of-school suspension rate for students with disabilities is twice the rate of students without disabilities (U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights, 2014). For the purpose
of this capstone, I will primarily focus on disproportionality as it relates to race. I make this distinction because of Richmond’s long legacy of racial segregation and its current population in which over 75% of its students are Black.

Furthermore, evidence across the field appears to suggest that zero tolerance policies, “have not made schools safer or improved educational quality. It has needlessly undermined students’ opportunities to learn, pushed more youth out of school and into the juvenile and criminal justice systems, harmed countless families and communities, and wasted tax payers’ dollars” (Youth United for Change and Advancement Project, 2011, p. 1). In 2011, The U.S. Department of Education and U.S. Department of Justice have made the impact of zero tolerance policies a priority and continue to urge states to examine zero tolerance discipline policies and the disparate impact they have on students of color and students with disabilities (Youth United for Change and Advancement Project, 2011).

**Virginia Context**

Exclusionary practices are prominent across the country, but especially in Virginia, which currently leads the nation in school-based referrals to law enforcement (Ferriss, 2015). Using data reported to the U.S. Department Education, the Center for Public Integrity reported that in a single year, Virginia schools referred students to law enforcement agencies at nearly three times the national rate. Virginia’s referral rate was about 16 for every 1,000 students, compared to a national rate of 6 referrals for every 1,000 students (Ferriss, 2015). The report also showcased that Virginia’s high suspension and expulsion rates disproportionately affect students of color. Amy Woodard, Legal Aid Justice Center attorney, shared the tight connection between Virginia schools and the
justice system in the 2017 release of “Suspended Progress.” As author of the report, Woodard underscored the alarming rate at which students are suspended from schools in Virginia:

- Students with disabilities were suspended at rates 2.6 times higher than that of non-disabled students; African-American students were suspended at rates 3.8 times higher than Hispanic and White students.
- The short-term suspension rate increased in 2015-2016 after years of significant steady decline.
- Virginia schools continue to suspend very young students at an astonishing rate, issuing over 17,300 short-term suspensions and at least 93 long-term suspensions just to children in Pre-K through 3rd grade.
- The vast majority of all suspensions were issued for minor offenses, with approximately two-thirds of all suspensions issued for behavior offenses like possession of cell phone, minor insubordination, disrespect, and using inappropriate language.

Virginia’s data was glaring, and Governor McAuliffe, committed to both education and transforming the juvenile justice system, took action. He established the Virginia Governor’s Children’s Cabinet (VGCC), a cross-sector, multi-agency collaborative designed to align policies and practices to support all of Virginia’s children, especially its most vulnerable (Commonwealth of Virginia, 2017). He charged the Children’s Cabinet to develop specific policy changes to support students staying in school and out of the criminal justice system. Led by a workgroup of agency heads and personnel from the Department of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS), the Department of
Juvenile Justice (VDJJ), and the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE), the Children’s Cabinet answered the Governor’s charge with the creation of an initiative entitled, “Classrooms Not Courtrooms (CNC).” The ultimate goal of Classrooms not Courtrooms was to keep students in classrooms learning while paying special attention to suspensions, expulsions, disproportionate minority contact, referrals to law enforcement, and juvenile intake rates (Commonwealth of Virginia, 2017).

My strategic project falls under the Children’s Cabinet Classrooms not Courtrooms initiative. Working in collaboration with Richmond Public Schools (RPS), my strategic project aimed to support RPS to explore the complex relationship between the school system and the juvenile justice system. The Virginia Governor’s Children Cabinet was passionate about being a connector and supporting leadership at a local level. In May, the former RPS superintendent asked the Children’s Cabinet for specific support with students in RPS whose education had been interrupted due to a court charge. Co-chairs of the Children’s Cabinet felt that Richmond, because of the locality’s request and high number of student suspensions, expulsions, and placements into alternative settings, would be a wonderful opportunity to support the Commonwealth in its Classrooms not Courtrooms initiative.

Along with the co-chairs of the VGCC, Secretary Dietra Trent and Secretary William J. Hazel, Daniela Lewy, Executive Director of the Children’s Cabinet, mentored me in this work. Directly supervising my strategic project were senior VDJJ leadership team members, Valerie Boykin, Deputy Director of Community Programs, and Jessica Schneider, Research Manager. VDJJ was one of the lead agencies of the Classrooms not Courtrooms initiative and, more importantly, had senior leadership positions that were in
place throughout the entirety of my residency. The Children’s Cabinet, signed by executive order in 2014 by Governor Terry McAuliffe, ended in January 2017. During this residency, I worked with three different organizations, Virginia Governors Children’s Cabinet, Richmond Public Schools, and Virginia Department of Juvenile Justice, all of whom in their own right went through an enormous amount of transition throughout my residency.

**Strategic Project Context: Richmond Public Schools**

Richmond Public Schools (RPS) serves nearly 24,000 students and is comprised of 26 elementary schools, including one charter school, eight middle schools, five comprehensive high schools and three specialty schools. The Commonwealth of Virginia has 132 school divisions, a geographic division over which a school board has jurisdiction. In 2015, 12 of its 132 divisions had more than 10,000 students in poverty; Richmond Public Schools had 18,663 students in poverty (2\textsuperscript{nd} in the state) (Richmond Public Schools, 2015). RPS reflects the diversity of its region yet many of its schools remain segregated and unaccredited. Un-accreditation in the state is attributed to a failing score, below 70\% in math, science, and history and below 75\% in English, on the state’s standards of learning test. In 2017, based on the results from the previous school year, over half of Richmond public schools were unaccredited.

In 2015, the Richmond School Board enacted a policy, found in RPS’s Student Code of Responsible Ethics (SCORE), which requires the immediate reassignment of students who have been charged with any offense listed in *Virginia Code* § 16.1-260 (G). VDJJ operates local Court Service Units, which are required by Virginia Code to notify
schools of certain charges. Once CSUs send charges, they do not have any influence on what schools decide to do. In 2015, Richmond Public School Board developed a policy to dictate how they interacted with students who received offenses related to Virginia Code § 16.1-260 (G).

The policy states the following:

When the RPS Superintendent receives notification pursuant to Virginia Code § 16.1-260 (G) that an RPS student has had a petition filed against him/her for one of the enumerated following crimes, due to the serious nature of the crimes charged, the student will immediately be reassigned to an alternative educational assignment (as determined by the Superintendent or his/her designee) until the charges are resolved so as to reassignment is permitted under Virginia Code § 22.1-254 (F). (RPS SCORE, p. 44)

Since this policy was enacted in 2015, the primary alternative placement for students charged with any offense listed in Virginia Code § 16.1-260 (G) has been “homebased instruction.” Homebased instruction is provided after the school day for 5-10 hours per week by an RPS certified teacher. According to SCORE, each school should have a designated homebased instruction coordinator who is responsible for ensuring homebased students have the appropriate work from their comprehensive school teachers.

Reportable Offences: The report shall notify the division superintendent of the filing of the petition and the nature of the offense, if the violation involves:

1. A firearm offense pursuant to Article 4 (§ 18.2-279 et seq.), 5 (§ 18.2-288 et seq.), 6 (§ 18.2-299 et seq.), 7 (§ 18.2-308 et seq.) of Chapter 7 of Title 18.2;
2. Homicide, pursuant to Article 1 (§ 18.2-30 et seq.) of Chapter 4 of Title 18.2;
3. Felonious assault and bodily wounding, pursuant to Article 4 (§ 18.2-51 et seq.) of Chapter 4 of Title 18.2;
4. Criminal sexual assault, pursuant to Article 7 (§ 18.2-61 et seq.) of Chapter 4 of Title 18.2;
5. Manufacture, sale, gift, distribution or possession of Schedule I or II controlled substances, pursuant to Article 1 (§ 18.2-247 et seq.) of Chapter 7 of Title 18.2;
6. Manufacture, sale or distribution of marijuana or synthetic cannabinoids pursuant to Article 1 (§ 18.2-247 et seq.) of Chapter 7 of Title 18.2;
7. Arson and related crimes, pursuant to Article 1 (§ 18.2-77 et seq.) of Chapter 5 of Title 18.2;
8. Burglary and related offenses, pursuant to §§ 18.2-89 through 18.2-93;
9. Robbery pursuant to § 18.2-58;
10. Prohibited criminal street gang activity pursuant to § 18.2-46.2;
11. Recruitment of other juveniles for a criminal street gang activity pursuant to § 18.2-46.3; o
12. An act of violence by a mob pursuant to § 18.2-42.1.
Homebased instructors are required to provide four core courses in math, English, social studies, and science. While on homebased instruction, students are not able to earn necessary electives for graduation or participate in any extracurricular activities.

The policy effectively operates as a zero tolerance provision. It does not currently allow the superintendent or his/her designee to consider mitigating factors or routinely exercise discretion in the reassignment of students. RPS reported that during the 2016-2017 school year, 101 students were placed on homebased instruction for an average of 4-6 months, with many students remaining out of their comprehensive school placement for one to two years. RPS has hearings twice a year, August and February, to review students who have been found delinquent (guilty) to determine further placement.

RPS tracks the disposition outcomes of cases reported by the CSU in order to determine if/when a student should return to their home school. Of 160 students tracked for the 2016-17 school year, half did not have a disposition recorded by the start of the 2017-18 school year. These cases may have still been open in court and pending disposition, or the disposition information may have not be known or recorded by RPS. Of the 80 cases with a recorded disposition, 76% were deferred, dismissed, or not convicted. Thus only 19 (12%) of the justice-involved youth being tracked by RPS for the 2016-17 school year were recorded as being found guilty of the offense that likely forced them onto homebased status.
Additionally, the data showed a trend of alternative education students (Richmond Alternative School [RAS]) being placed on homebased education at higher rates than other students.

Thus, the questions I explored are:

1. When, if at all, should RPS students be removed from school for a court charge?
2. How does RPS ensure young people being moved from their comprehensive school environments receive a high quality education (before, during, and after the removal) and the necessary wraparound supports to ensure a successful and healthy future? Specially, what do we know about trauma and restorative justice that can support justice-involved youth?

3. What conditions are necessary for cross-sector organizations to work together to successfully support RPS students whose education has been interrupted due to a court charge?

In the following sections, I will first discuss the relevant literature that guided my approach to this project. Then, I will describe the events that occurred during my capstone, highlighting three specific case examples. Finally, I will provide analysis of the project, including implications for self, involved sites, and the sector.

**Review of Knowledge for Action**

To best inform my actions as a Children’s Cabinet and VDJJ fellow, I will use the following questions to guide my knowledge for action. Exploring these questions will allow me to: gain a better understanding of the impact RPS’s policy and practices have on students whose education has been interrupted due to a court charge, imagine the possibilities of a resilience-enhanced system that supports RPS charged youth, and reflect on aspects of organizational change essential to my own leadership as I execute my strategic project. Thus, my Review of Knowledge for Action focuses on two levels of the work. First, I determine what is needed to make policy and program improvements for
RPS youth whose education has been interrupted by a court charge. Second, I explore the leadership conditions and moves necessary to collaborate across sectors.

**Adolescent Development**

**Question 1: What do we know about adolescent development as it relates to justice-involved youth?**

As I began my work with RPS, it was imperative that I not only listened, but mapped out or created a flow chart of the particular internal processes and practices that routinely placed students out of their comprehensive school environments and on homebased instruction. I captured these processes in a systems flow chart entitled, “Supporting RPS Justice-Involved Youth” (see Appendix A). After spending significant time with RPS central administration and staff, the flowchart allowed me to mirror back both the technical aspects and decision points that created the pathway for students to be removed from their comprehensive school environment. The process up until this point had not been captured, and the map provided an awareness and sense of clarity of how the system currently operated. However, what the flow chart did not capture was the impact each decision had on the very youth it aimed to serve. Learning about adolescent development as it relates to justice-involved youth and the impact exclusionary practices had on them helped unpack the magnitude of each decision point.

Originally created for judges to reference in delinquency hearings, the following principles of adolescent development provide a strong foundation for making decisions relating to justice-involved youth. Each of the five principles was derived from a comprehensive body of research on adolescent development cited by The United States
Supreme Court (National Juvenile Defender Center (NJDC), State Justice Institute (SJI), and National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges (NCJFCJ), 2017).

**Principle 1: Adolescents are not just small adults; they are constitutionally different.**

According to RPS’s current policy for delinquent activity, the decision to remove a young person from their comprehensive school environment is based on the severity of their charge. Currently, the decision does not consider the important distinction between children and adults made by the United States Supreme Court. In reference to this distinction, “The Supreme Court’s affirmation of the constitutional difference between children and adults for the purposes of sentencing, culpability, and custody is rooted in three key developmental characteristics of youth: 1) the (in)ability to self-regulate, 2) sensitivity to external influences, and 3) a poor ability to appreciate long-term consequences of their actions” (NJDC, SJI, and NCJFCJ, 2017, p.1). Moreover, to look at a charge in isolation from the “adolescent actor” immediately dismisses the developmental aspects and motivations that drive adolescent behavior. In addition, this principle sheds light on three characteristics of adolescence that cannot be ignored when making decisions that significantly impact the futures and health of RPS students. (NJDC, SJI, and NCJFCJ, 2017)

**Principle 2: Adolescents are more capable of reform than adults and are therefore less deserving of the most severe punishments.**

The second principle raises an awareness of the natural and normative processes of adolescent risk-taking, specifically, that most conduct during adolescence involves
risk-taking (NJDC, SJI, and NCJFCJ, 2017). The Supreme Court documented this normative process in *Roper v. Simmons*, which recognizes that over time the normative behaviors of adolescents will, “generally lessen as youth mature and become less likely to reoffend as a direct result of the maturation process” (NJDC, SJI, and NCJFCJ, 2017). Additionally, research conducted by Dr. Edward Mulvey at the University of Pittsburgh found that most youth adjudicated for serious offenses “demonstrate low or zero involvement in criminal activity years after court involvement” (NJDC, SJI, and NCJFCJ, 2017).

According to this principle, the students RPS’s policy targets is a population that is not only extremely capable of reform, but also a population that is less likely to commit serious offenses in the future. Additionally, this principle questions the belief that charged students are inherently dangerous and pose a continued threat to the safety of other RPS students. Throughout my interviews with RPS staff, strong beliefs resonated from many that charged students are inherently dangerous, and their removal would increase safety within this district. The truth is many of the assumptions about zero tolerance policies as a means of effective violence prevention are false.

In response to controversy on whether or not zero tolerance policies make schools safer, the American Psychological Association convened a task force to evaluate current zero tolerance practices. Their findings concluded that critical and deadly violence only constituted a small proportion of school disruptions (American Psychologist, 2008). After an extensive review of zero tolerance literature, the task force determined the following,

- There is no evidence that zero tolerance has increased the consistency of school discipline.
• Schools with higher rates of suspension and expulsion appear to have less satisfactory ratings of school climate, school governance structures, and spend a disproportionate amount of time on disciplinary matters.

• After controlling for demographics such as socioeconomic status, recent research indicates a negative relationship between the use of school suspension, expulsion, and school-wide achievement. (American Psychologist, 2008).

**Principle 3: Adolescents develop at different rates in social, emotional, physical, and cognitive domains.**

The third principle speaks to the latest research in brain science, which caused the Supreme Court to recognize:

Adolescence as a period of continued brain growth and change based on research showing that frontal lobes, home to key components of circuitry underlying ‘executive functions’ such as planning, working memory, and impulse control, are among the last areas of the brain to mature. Research shows that the rate of growth varies for each youth, but for most, this growth continues into their mid to late twenties. This period of development impacts a youth’s ability to delay gratification and understand the long-term consequences of their actions. (NJDC, SJI, and NCJFCJ, 2017, p. 1)

According to this principle, charged students have not fully grown in their cognitive abilities or fully tapped into their executive functions critical for sound decision-making. This principle highlights the fact that many decisions made by charged students are not because they are inherently bad or delinquent, but rather a result of underdeveloped aspects of their cognitive development. Thus, students are hardwired neurologically to operate in a space where impulsivity is a natural part of their maturation.
**Principle 4: Adolescent development and learning are profoundly affected by early childhood experiences.**

The fourth principle speaks to the way in which traumatic experiences during childhood and infancy can have a prolonged impact into adulthood. This principle is extremely important given that many justice-involved youth have significant histories of trauma; “although children are resilient and the impact of trauma can be ameliorated with appropriate care, traumatic events can significantly alter the brain and interfere with a child’s normal growth and development” (NJDC, SJI, and NCJFCJ, 2017, p. 2). Also noteworthy, in addition to the impact, is the resiliency of justice-involved youth.

In classrooms all over the country we find students experiencing severe trauma and therefore exhibiting typical stress reactions: fight, flight, or freeze (Stevens, 2012). As a result, there is a growing movement to provide students with “compassionate,” “safe and supportive” and/or “trauma informed” schools (Stevens, 2012). Although the language is different, all of the aforementioned terms are based on evidence that suggests “students who are experiencing the toxic stress of severe and chronic trauma just can't learn. It's physiologically impossible” (Stevens, 2012, p.1). Thus, when making decisions regarding justice-involved youth, one must consider the developmental neurobiology underlying children’s reactions to traumatic experiences (NCTSN, 2007). To understand adolescence is to understand trauma and the effect it has on the adolescent brain. Growing research in this field shows the significant ways in which, “trauma exposed children exhibit a wide range of post-trauma reactions that vary in their nature, onset, intensity, frequency, and duration” (The National Child Traumatic Stress Network [NCTSN], 2007, p. 1. Given this knowledge, isolation of these students in the
community without the necessary social-emotional and wraparound supports provides an incredible missed opportunity to aid those who are in most need of our support.

**Principle 5: Secure and healthy relationships promote adolescent success and positive development.**

Separation is one of the most notable practices used with charged youth. For example, RPS’s policy first removes young people from their comprehensive school environment. Second, students are isolated from peers, adults, and wraparound supports during the school day. They are also disconnected from the comfort and relational bonds of their school community. Research tells us:

Secure attachment is associated with decreased engagement in high-risk behaviors, fewer mental health issues, and enhanced social skills and coping strategies. The emotional bonds that develop from secure relationships, such as staying connected to parents (a protective factor) and stable, caring, relationships with friends, community leaders, or school staff, among others, are important for healthy adolescent development and should be fostered through all stages of development. (NJDC, SJI, and NCJFCJ, 2017, p.2)

Thus, detaching charged students from their attached communities and relationships is not only detrimental to their continued development, but also can significantly increase their engagement in high-risk behaviors.

**Disproportionality**

Although there is a vast amount of literature on racial achievement and dropout gaps, often unnoticed or understudied is the interconnectivity of zero tolerance policies and these problems (Youth United for Change and Advancement Project, 2011). Adolescents across the country are finding themselves products of harsh zero tolerance
policies in struggling school systems. Research out of the Center for Education Policy at Indiana University showed the correlation between high suspension rates and lower levels of academic quality. In their studies, they found that schools with extremely high suspension rates also spend more time on discipline-related matters and have decreased quality of academic instruction as well as poor school governance (Youth United for Change and Advancement Project, 2011). Moreover, Black and Latino students were overwhelmingly overrepresented among students struggling academically and suffering the effects of zero tolerance policies (Youth United for Change and Advancement Project, 2011). This disproportionality is particularly true in RPS where hundreds of their 24,000 students, the majority Black, have been pushed out on a path to juvenile and criminal justice systems each year. According to the VDOE (Memo to RPS, 2015), during the 2014-2015 school year, RPS:

- Issued 8,309 short-term suspensions, 266 long-term suspensions, and 30 expulsions
- Short-term suspended 3,869 students – the most of any division in Virginia
- Had the highest rate of long-term suspension among all Virginia school divisions, and
- Expelled 30 students – the second most of any division in Virginia

Despite the disproportionate representation of youth of color and youth with disabilities in the juvenile justice system, “research studies controlling for race and ethnicity found no significant difference in the key characteristics of adolescent development, such as impulsivity, sensation seeking, susceptibility to peer influence and limited future orientation across all age groups” (NJDC, SJI, and NCJFCJ, 2017, p. 2). As a result, the advice given to all judges when making decisions regarding youth of color is
that they take the viewpoint, “that the youth is exhibiting normal adolescent behavior and is amenable to redirection” (NJDC, SJI, and NCJFCJ, 2017, p. 2).

RESTORATIVE JUSTICE AND TRAUMA

Question #2: What would a trauma-informed approach look like for justice-involved youth?

For the purposes of this capstone, I used the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration’s (SAMHSA’s) definition of a trauma-informed approach: “A program, organization, or system that:

1. Realizes the widespread impact of trauma and understands potential paths for recovery;
2. Recognizes the signs and symptoms of trauma in clients, families, staff, and others involved with the system;
3. Responds by fully integrating knowledge about trauma into policies, procedures, and practices; and
4. Seeks to actively resist re-traumatization. (SAMHSA, 2017, p. 1)

Additionally, rather than a prescribed set of practices or procedures, trauma-informed approaches adhere to the following six principles (SAMHSA, 2017):

1. Safety
2. Trustworthiness and Transparency
3. Peer Support
4. Collaboration and Mutuality
5. Empowerment, Voice, and Choice
6. Cultural, Historical, and Gender Issues

Next, I will explain how two trauma-informed approaches, restorative justice and trauma stewardship, can support justice-involved youth. Restorative justice in education has been widely discussed and broadly defined across educational settings. In defining restorative justice, Evans and Vaandering (2016) assert, “Restorative Justice in education
encompasses a variety of terms and approaches. Some of the most common include restorative practices, restorative discipline, restorative approaches, restorative measures and restorative justice practices” (p. 7). Specifically, I will focus on restorative justice as it relates to restorative discipline while recognizing that much of the restorative justice literature uses many of these terms interchangeably. Primarily, what makes restorative discipline a trauma-informed approach is that it

…promotes values and principles that use inclusive, collaborative approaches for being in community. These approaches validate the experiences and needs of everyone within the community, particularly those who have been marginalized, oppressed, or harmed. Furthermore, these approaches allow us to act and respond in ways that are healing rather than alienating or coercive. (Amstutz & Mullet, 2005, p. 15)

In other words, restorative discipline is intentional about serving the well-being of each child. Amstutz and Mullet (2005) name the basic principles of restorative discipline as follows:

1. Acknowledges that relationships are central to building community
2. Builds systems that address misbehavior and harm in a way that strengthens relationships
3. Focuses on the harm done rather than only the rule-breaking
4. Gives voice to the person harmed
5. Engages in collaborative problem-solving
6. Empowers change and growth
7. Enhances responsibility.

These principles provide the foundation of restorative discipline, but also represent a grave departure from the exclusionary practices used in many urban schools. In the 2014 report, Protecting Civil Rights, Advancing Equity: Report to the President and Secretary of Education, Catherine E. Lhamon, Assistant Secretary of the Office of Civil Rights, declared that “despite much of our progress as a country, discrimination remains prevalent even more than four decades after the passage of Section 504 of the
Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and Title IX, and more than half a century from the enactment of the Civil Rights Act of 1964” (p. 4). Additionally, the Civil Rights report presented a striking portrayal of the vast inequalities and injustices in our American education system. Findings from the report speak to countless equity gaps, historical systems of oppression, and years of unchecked exclusionary practices in schools. Some of the notable findings from the report around discipline and exclusionary practice are as follows:

- In many educational institutions, students of color are disciplined more harshly and more frequently than other students, resulting in serious, negative educational consequences, particularly when such students are excluded from school.
- Black students of all ages are suspended and expelled at a rate three times higher than that of White children. Even as boys receive more than two-thirds of suspensions, Black girls are suspended at higher rates than girls of any other race or most boys. More than half of students involved in school-related arrests or referred to law enforcement were Hispanic or Black. 
  

For many students and families, these are not just findings; they are the harsh reality of a system that has continued to exacerbate unequal treatment of students of color and those from economically disadvantaged backgrounds (Evans & Vaandering, 2016). These exclusionary practices have undoubtedly led in many circumstances to what scholars deem the school-to-prison pipeline. Although some leaders may view restorative discipline as the next new program or add it to the long list of new school initiatives, restorative discipline is neither; it is a mindset shift. Specifically, it is a shift in terms of how people think about crime and punishment. The shift to restorative discipline requires us to put people at the center, moving away from blame and punishment, to that of healing and repair (Zehr, 1997). A restorative discipline approach could help to counteract the exclusionary practices that disproportionately affect minority and
disadvantaged students. School leaders are at the center of this work as they decide on the specific structures needed to implement a restorative approach.

One of the districts leading this work is Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS, 2014). FCPS has experienced a tremendous decline in their discipline referrals and recidivism after implementing a district-wide restorative justice approach. FCPS attributes a large part of their success to a laser focus on the goals listed below. Each goal has helped the district not only develop a more trauma-informed approach on how it responds to discipline, but also provide clarity for the larger community on how a restorative justice approach leads to a safer community (FCPS, 2014).

1- Accountability – Restorative justice provides direct opportunities for students who have harmed others to be accountable to those they have harmed, including themselves and their families.

2- Character Development – The practice of restorative justice recognizes the need to educate students who have harmed others about the effects of disruptive behavior on those harmed, as well as the school community. Participants in a restorative discipline process learn the underlying factors that lead to making poor decisions. They practice social skills and learn self-improvement strategies that encourage better decision making in the future.

3- School and Community Safety – The practice of restorative justice recognizes the need to keep the school and community safe by building relationships that strengthen the school social structure. Restorative Justice creates opportunities for community involvement in the resolution of wrongdoing, and empowers students and staff members to take personal responsibility for the well-being of the school community (FCPS, 2014, p.5).

I had the opportunity to interview FCPS teachers, restorative justice coaches, as well as the district’s restorative justice director. What stood out in all of the interviews was the explicit way in which district leadership made restorative justice/discipline a priority. Evidenced by funding for district-wide restorative justice specialists, coaches for all schools, and ongoing professional development for teachers to implement restorative practices in their classrooms, restorative justice remains a central district priority.
A second trauma-informed approach to supporting justice-involved youth is a concept called trauma stewardship. More than an idea, trauma stewardship can be defined as:

A daily practice through which individuals, organizations, and societies tend to the hardship, pain, or trauma experienced by humans, other living beings, or our planet itself. Those who support trauma stewardship believe that both joy and pain are realities of life, and that suffering can be transformed into meaningful growth and healing when a quality of presence is cultivated and maintained even in the face of great suffering. (van Dernoot Lipsky & Burk, 2009, p. 11)

Trauma stewardship is a practice necessary when working with justice-involved youth. It allows individuals working with youth to deal with the trauma of others while also attending to their own trauma (van Dernoot Lipsky & Burk, 2009). We all have unique personal narratives that we bring to this work, and trauma stewardship allows us to question those narratives along with our deeply held beliefs regarding justice-involved youth. Trauma stewardship focuses on educators staying present and demands we embrace the paradox: “If we are truly to know joy, we cannot afford to shut down our experience of pain” (van Dernoot Lipsky & Burk, 2009, p. 15). It is this paradox that lies at the center of working with young people who have both harmed as well as experienced harm.

Massachusetts and Washington State recognize this paradox and have led the country in adopting district-wide approaches to integrate trauma-informed practices with hopes of state-wide adoption (Stevens, 2012). Both states cite two research breakthroughs that provided the evidence necessary to create the urgency and insight to change practices. The first was Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s Adverse Childhood Experiences Study (ACE Study), which sheds light on the impactful link between
childhood trauma and the chronic diseases people develop as adults (Stevens, 2012). To explain a person’s risk for chronic disease, researchers assigned an ACE score, which falls into three types – abuse, neglect and household dysfunction (Stevens, 2012). Evidence suggests that justice-involved youth have more exposure to early adversity and thus, higher ACE scores. For example, one study found that:

97% of justice involved youth reported one ACE, and 52% reported four ACEs. Moreover, as seen in scientific studies, high number of ACEs correlate with worse outcomes in adults. Adults with four or more ACEs are more likely to experience worse physical and mental health and more likely to engage in risky health behaviors as compared to adults who have no ACEs (Center for Youth Wellness, 2015, p.3).

The second breakthrough discovery was determined by a group of pediatricians and neuroscientists that identified a causal link between toxic stress and brain damage (Stevens, 2012). The research from both of these studies lays the foundation for why trauma stewardship is vitally important, especially for justice-involved youth who may have increased exposure to stress or traumatic experiences. Moreover, the discoveries from both research studies were too compelling for Massachusetts, Washington State, and a growing number of other states to ignore, for each study addresses the reality that:

Children with toxic stress live much of their lives in fight, flight or fright (freeze) mode. They respond to the world as a place of constant danger. With their brains overloaded with stress hormones and unable to function appropriately, they can’t focus on schoolwork. They fall behind in school or fail to develop healthy relationships with peers or create problems with teachers and principals because they are unable to trust adults. Some kids do all three. With despair, guilt and frustration pecking away at their psyches, they often find solace in food, alcohol, tobacco, methamphetamines, inappropriate sex, high-risk sports, and/or work and over-achievement. They don’t regard these coping methods as problems. They see them as solutions to escape from depression, anxiety, anger, fear and shame. (Stevens, 2012, p. 1)
Van Dernoot Lipsky and Burk (2009) argue that an organization or system is a reflection of the collective capacity for trauma stewardship of all individuals involved. They argue, “the way individuals manage their own trauma will have a direct impact on the experience of already traumatized young people” (p. 21). Therefore, it is imperative for anyone working with justice-involved youth to understand the extent to which their experiences have a direct impact on young people, especially those most vulnerable, whom they serve. Furthermore, to build one’s capacity for trauma stewardship, van Dernoot Lipsky and Burk (2009) named five directions to support building a cadre of trauma stewards: inquiry, focus, compassion, balance, and centering. Each direction serves as a navigational tool that:

Offers a description of the world and a set of instructions for making our way through it. They guide a process through which we can create and maintain our well-being, even during the most turbulent times. Honoring traditions from around the globe, we allow each of these directions to assist us in returning to the place where our greatest hope for understanding, peace, health, fulfillment, and joy exists, within ourselves. (van Dernoot Lipsky & Burk, 2009 2009, p. 145)

Given the toxic stress justice-involved youth experience on a daily basis and the way it effects their developing brain, it is imperative to create spaces where individuals can recognize their own trauma while simultaneously creating structures that do the same for young people.

The two trauma-informed approaches of restorative justice and trauma stewardship could benefit all students in an educational system but specifically help justice-involved youth. Justice-involved youth experience exclusionary practices that keep them out of school at racially disproportional rates. A culture of restorative justice would reduce these discipline practices, increasing educational opportunities and
reducing disproportionality. Furthermore, justice-involved youth may experience a higher intensity of toxic stress, and trauma stewardship could alleviate the related negative consequences. Meanwhile, the student body as a whole also benefits from these approaches.

**CROSS-SECTOR RELATIONSHIPS AND LEARNING**

*Question #3: What processes or approaches are necessary to build cross-sector relationships and facilitate new learning for the Richmond City community and relevant stakeholders to best support RPS justice-involved youth?*

Marshall Ganz’s organizing framework along with Mark Moore’s strategic triangle are essential to supporting cross-sector collaboration and learning. In “What is Organizing?,” Ganz asserts that organizing is a form of leadership that requires:

accepting responsibility for enabling others to achieve purpose under conditions of uncertainty. Conditions of uncertainty require the “adaptive” dimension of leadership: not so much performing known tasks well, but rather learning what tasks are needed and how to perform them well. It is leadership from the perspective of the “learner” – one who has learned to ask the right questions – rather than that of a “knower” – one who thinks he or she knows all the answers. This kind of leadership is a form of practice— not a person or a position – and it can be exercised from any location within or without a structure of authority. (2008, p.1)

Leadership from the perspective of a learner is, in many spaces, a novel idea. Yet, through Ganz’s organizing perspective, learning is a central piece of leadership. It is through learning that you can support communities to help tell their story (Ganz, 2008, p. 1). It is through storytelling that communities can both mobilize and strategize to “turn resources they have into the power they need to get what they want” (Ganz, 2008, p. 1).
The community has an immense amount of potential power and the leader’s role is to support the community to acquire the agency they need. Mark Moore’s Strategic Triangle is a framework that can help leaders and organizations do the following:

- Declare the overall mission or purpose of an organization (cast in terms of important public values),
- Offer an account of the sources of support and legitimacy that will be tapped to sustain society's commitment to the enterprise, and
- Explain how the enterprise will have to be organized and operated to achieve the declared objectives. (Moore, 1995, p. 71)

The Strategic Triangle also places heavy emphasis on the role of the community (constituents) in their ability to create public value.

A leader’s ability to create learning spaces and work across sectors requires all aspects of the strategic triangle to be coherently aligned. This alignment is explained in more depth in the forthcoming analysis section.

**Theory of Action**

If...I (a) understand how adolescent development and trauma affect justice-involved youth and (b) determine key ways to build relationships and collaborate across sectors,

Then...I will be able to lead/guide meaningful conversations about how the district's policies, programs, and practices are (or are not) supporting charged RPS students and share research about how to best support this group of students,

So that...The school district and community can make the necessary mindset shifts as well as policy and program improvements to ensure charged students have access to a
high quality education and the necessary wraparound supports to lead successful lives and healthy futures.
DESCRIPTION, EVIDENCE, AND ANALYSIS OF THE STRATEGIC PROJECT

DESCRIPTION

On June 5, 2017, my residency began, and the structure I once knew and craved from my prior leadership experiences seemed to immediately disappear. During my first two weeks, I was introduced to not one, not two, but three different organizations that would play an important and pivotal role in my strategic project: VDJJ, RPS and the Children’s Cabinet. Each organization had their own distinct culture and theory of action guiding how they approached their work. What’s more, each of the organizations was also going through major leadership transitions. To that end, I have provided a timeline of my residency, along with key organizational and administrative transitions:
Specifically, the 2017 Richmond City School Board had recently terminated the contract of their division superintendent and was entering a national superintendent search. The Richmond City school system had also been placed on corrective action by VDOE given more than half of its schools did not meet the state’s accreditation standards. As a result, the school system would begin a stringent memorandum of understanding (MOU) with city and state leaders. Simultaneously, Virginia’s Governor, Terry McAuliffe, was entering the last six months of his administration, which had huge implications for all organizations, but especially for the Children’s Cabinet and VDJJ.
As noted before, legislation authorizing the Children’s Cabinet was signed in 2014 under executive order by Governor McAuliffe, and the end of his administration also marked the end of the Children’s Cabinet. It was not clear when or who would carry on the work of the Children’s Cabinet, which caused great uncertainty and anxiety for all involved. This uncertainty permeated every conversation in my first six months as a resident. It was the underlying question in every meeting, decision-making session, and brainstorming.

VDJJ was in a similar position, as their director was also an appointee of Governor McAuliffe. In 2014, VDJJ began to shift its culture drastically, with its new director quickly cultivating a fast-paced, performance-based culture. Therefore, for VDJJ, the end of McAuliffe’s administration meant “move faster,” with everyone working at what felt like lightning speed to get as much accomplished before the end of the term. Staff across the organization worked tirelessly to codify and sustain the organization's transformation efforts. Often hard to keep up, I saw the powerful ways in which a system can transform, with exemplary leadership, in a short amount of time.

Learning about the strengths, fears, and challenges of each organization was crucial given the immense amount of uncertainty and transition approaching. I was working amidst anxious people, many of them fearful of what was around the corner. As a result, it was imperative that I craft my role as a fellow who was working “with,” rather than “for” each organization. This distinction gave me the flexibility to move fluidly between each organization, but more importantly, it gave me the space to reflect on how each of the organizations interacted and/or conflicted with one another without totally being attached to one in particular.
I wish I could say in those early summer months that I appreciated this fluidity, but it was extremely challenging. I had three work spaces, three supervisors, and multiple mentors at each organization. However, with reflection, I know wholeheartedly that the majority of my learning, as well as ability to move the work, was a direct result of my unique position of being situated between all three organizations.

To fully understand the complexity of my strategic project, intended outcomes, accomplishments, and implementation strategy, I take you through the following two phases of my residency experience. Phase 1: The Learner (June through September), explores what I was called to do as a leader, whereas Phase 2: The Influencer (September through February) marks my shift from “I” to “We,” fully embracing my role as facilitator and leader in collaboration with the Richmond community.

Phase 1: The Learner

My role as resident was to serve as a resource from the Children’s Cabinet, in partnership with VDJJ, to support RPS and explore the complex relationship between schools and justice systems. This focus was a priority area of the Children’s Cabinet’s “Classrooms Not Courtrooms” (CNC) initiative. Specifically, Richmond City’s leadership at the time wanted support for students whose education was interrupted due to a charge. As noted earlier, we sought to explore the following problems of practice together:

1. When, if at all, should RPS students be removed for a charge?

2. How does RPS ensure young people being moved from their comprehensive school environments receive a high quality education (before, during, and after the
removal) and the necessary wraparound supports to ensure a successful and healthy future?

3. What conditions are necessary for cross-sector organizations to work together to successfully support RPS students whose education has been interrupted due to a court charge? Specially, what do we know about trauma and restorative justice that can support justice involved youth?

To begin to answer these questions, I hit the ground listening! I did this by attending meetings all over Richmond City and by holding over 80 interviews with community members, parents, students, advocates, staff, government officials, and various stakeholders within my first couple of months. Despite not knowing exactly where to start or where to go, I decided to take the following advice from Richmond City Mayor, Levar Stoney, “Always err on the side of showing up.” Following this advice for the first couple of months accomplished two things. First, it allowed me to interact with people in a more informal setting. In these informal settings, I noticed people share more during meetings about how they felt about justice-involved youth and the Richmond City community.

Secondly, it gave me the visibility needed to counter my presumed, yet accurate, designation as a “Richmond Outsider.” Some of the comments I frequently heard during my visits to community meetings, events, conferences, staff meetings, and shadow visits were:

“Wow, you’re everywhere!”
“You must like it here—you go to everything.”
“Will I see you at the next event, Shadae?”
“You’ve really been out in the community.”

“Seriously, she’s actually in the community!”

In many ways my visibility gave me the platform to share my story and expertise, but more importantly, it allowed me to get proximate to the people most impacted by RPS’s policies, programs, and practices.

Some of my most meaningful experiences during this period were the times I spent with the actual students on homebased instruction or in the Richmond City detention center. Perplexed at the numerous ways I saw restricting access to education as a method of punishment, I found myself diving deeper into the stories and narratives of RPS students who had been placed on homebased instruction. The more I talked to students and their families, the more I could see the powerful ways in which narrative change and narrative sharing would be indispensable to bringing to life the real people behind RPS’s policy and practices.

A good example is what I learned while shadowing Mary, a Richmond City probation officer. Almost half of Mary’s caseload was on homebased instruction, and she had very strong views about the practice, “It’s awful, absolutely awful; I see so many of my kids reoffending during the time they are out of school. Some of the offenses literally have taken their lives away, so imagine if they were in school or had the supports they needed.” Mary went on to talk about the severed relationship between the justice and school systems, specifically pointing out the lack of communication between the two.

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1 All quotes in the subsequent sections are from interviews conducted in the RPS community during job shadowing, home visits, and community meetings. All names have been changed for the purposes of this capstone.
Over the course of my residency, I shadowed Mary and heard from many students previously or currently on homebased instruction. One of those students was Miles, a 10th-grade RPS student who had been placed on homebased instruction for two years. Miles candidly shared his experiences with me: “Ms. Shadae, it was a joke. For several months I had no teacher. Then they want me to stay out of trouble, but there is nothing to do all day but to get in trouble. I just want to go to school. Actually, I don’t even want to go back, it’s been so long now.”

One afternoon while sitting on Miles’s porch, Miles’s grandmother shared her frustration with the policy: “It’s just not right, he’s now going into 10th grade, he’s reading at a fourth-grade level, and been out of school for two years. He needs services, he’s slow. How is that right? I can’t take care of him all day.” Miles’s grandmother had recently lost her husband to cancer and was the matriarch of her family, taking care of eight of her grandchildren and relatives. Miles’s grandmother was sharp in her comments, but highlighted her reality of raising a child with severe learning disabilities and lack of access to a comprehensive education.

In a short amount of time, I went from knowing no one to being recognized at almost every event I attended. I used every interaction, whether attending a town hall meeting or attending a neighborhood block party, to listen and understand a variety of perspectives. I began to trust and find peace in my ability to connect with people from all walks of life and to make complex ideas understandable and relatable to a variety of audiences. Phase 1 was truly a grassroots approach, and I found incredible joy connecting and bringing light to people who historically, and often intentionally, had been left out of conversations and decisions at the state level.
Thereafter, at the end of those early summer months, I realized two momentum-changing things. First was the simple and difficult realization that I was looking for my authority in the wrong place. I was certain I needed the leadership at RPS to grant me permission and access to be able to work on behalf of its staff and students. Yet despite having no formal authority within RPS, I had spent several months increasing the knowledge base and capacity of community members who demanded change; they became my authorizers! Second was the epiphany that everything I had been doing was essentially the work and leadership of an organizer. Marshall Ganz in his “Organizing Notes” discusses this style of leadership:

Organizers engage people in understanding how they can act by deliberating on their conditions, locating the responsibility for those conditions, devising ways they could use their resources to change those conditions, a theory of change, and translating that theory into specific goals. (2008, p. 1)

I started to see the strength in my uncertainty, the power in my role as a learner, and the impact of my willingness to serve. It was a wonderful moment that reframed my language of, “not having any authority or power” to a role in which I could “build power from existing assets in the community to achieve a common goal” (Ganz, 2008, p. 1).

Continuing to build on the relationships and networks I was forging, I used two critical documents (RPS Flow Chart [Appendix A] and a RPS Problem-Context-Solution Memo) to make visible what had been invisible. I used my interviews during the months of June and July to shape these documents, often meeting with RPS staff and community members to make sure I captured everything correctly. I then used these documents to facilitate learning conversations in July and August to develop consensus around RPS’s context, problems of practice, and possible solutions. It was an extremely powerful exercise, as it forced me to confront my own assumptions and beliefs about the issue. I
had to remind myself, I was not acting as an advocate, but rather a learner and facilitator of knowledge.

Some of my most meaningful facilitations were with an East End group of community leaders who demanded they be at the table to engage in conversations about what next steps should be: “These are our kids; this is our community; we continue to be left out of conversations, decisions, and policy moves that directly affect our children.” While these partners were engaged and motivated from the beginning, conversations with RPS were a little slower to develop. RPS recognized the need for more alternative programs, academic and social supports for charged youth, and increased accountability for their homebased program. However, given recent violence within many RPS schools as well as strong feelings among staff and students that RPS schools were unsafe, RPS was extremely hesitant to even entertain a system where students remained at their comprehensive school despite a charge. One senior level staff member said, “These are serious charges. Many of these students are really, really violent. If you were a parent, would you want your child sitting next to that kid? It is my job to keep the thousands of kids who do not have charges safe, too—what about them?”

Phase 2: The Influencer

As different organizational interests and focus areas arose, it was critical that I get a more intimate look at the organizations with whom I was working. I also needed to be clear about my own theory of action and how I would be approaching the work. Embarking on both of those things was challenging and September seemed to bring new feelings of uneasiness. I worked hard to situate myself in the community, but felt
disconnected from the very organizations that were enabling me to do the work. I did not feel like I was taking advantage of the vast resources or connections within the Children’s Cabinet or VDJJ. Extremely aware of the voices not at the table, I felt it necessary to connect with the students, families, and community members most impacted by RPS’s policy. It was necessary and powerful learning, but it was also extremely one-sided. Yes, it gave me tremendous insight, but it did not give me the knowledge and skills necessary to navigate the very systems I was trying to influence.

I still remember the morning I received several phone calls from my mentor regarding an inquiry from Jackie, an administrative assistant in the Secretariat’s office. Jackie had reached out to my mentor regarding my office time, specifically asking if I still needed office space on “her” floor. Jackie had also expressed to several people in the office that she never saw me in the office and would be taking my badge if I was not going to be working there. Completely floored, I struggled to understand why the culture of that particular department based productivity on how much time you physically were in the office? I felt I was doing the important work in the community no one else wanted to do. However, it appeared my lack of presence was sending a very different message.

It was in that moment, after a couple of deep breaths, reflection on potential triggers, peer coaching, and prayer, of course, that I realized the same presence I worked so hard to establish in the community was also needed among the multiple organizations with whom I was working. To that end, I had to create the structure I so desperately longed for. I divided each day, morning, and afternoon between two organizations (Children’s Cabinet and VDJJ). I made sure each day I did what I called “community rounds.” I would walk around the floors speaking and connecting with leadership and
staff from various departments, making sure I knew everyone by name and at least one thing about their work and personal life. I then used this information to follow up with them each day during each of my rounds while I continued to build meaningful connections. Furthermore, I was strategic about scheduling community meetings and shadow visits on specific days and made sure everyone had access to my calendar. This new approach allowed me to see the dynamics and tensions at and between the different organizations I was working with. Unexpectedly, it helped me build an identity separate from my supervisor or mentors, all of whom had strong personalities and reputations in their own right. I used my nebulous position as a form of leadership, learning and borrowing as much as I could from the very different organizations with whom I worked.

It was not about pushing solutions on people, but rather creating spaces to develop the knowledge base and experience of the people within the system. I was moving from a space of learning to influencer, facilitating knowledge conversations and guiding people towards new insight. My hope was that their insight and participation in the process itself could lead to meaningful and sustainable actions for students. During the fall months, I saw firsthand how my conversations with RPS senior level staff about actual student experiences, homebased data, adolescent development research, and best practices across Virginia quickly turned into action steps to better support this population of students. During bi-weekly meetings with senior RPS staff, I shared information about students like Miles, Tyson, and Michael, all students who had been placed on homebased instruction for over a year due to alleged related offenses to *Virginia Code* § 16.1-260 (G). Discussing in more detail the experiences and social history of these students, along with any services the students were being provided by the courts, allowed staff to begin
to humanize students, a grave departure from its current zero tolerance practice of immediately removing students from their comprehensive school for an alleged charge. Insight by a senior level RPS staff member at one meeting prompted her to reach out to Richmond’s local court service unit, Department of Justice Services, and police department, to create what is now called the RPS school justice collaborative. Moreover, over the next couple of months I continued to give presentations across the city, hold cross-sector focus groups, and support two newly-created RPS initiatives. The first, a product of my leadership meetings with RPS Senior Staff, was the ASPIRE Academy for students who have been charged with offenses related to Virginia Code § 16.1-260 (G) along with RPS’s school justice collaborative.

Next, I will describe specific case examples to provide evidence of my work. Throughout my residency, I had the pleasure of working with and supporting three entities: VDJJ, RPS and the Children’s Cabinet. Each organization allowed me to support their development in a variety of ways, but for the purposes of this capstone, I will focus my evidence on three cases. Each case serves as an example of how I successfully 1) built relationships with relevant senior level and middle management leaders within VDJJ, the Children’s Cabinet, Richmond Department of Justice Services, Richmond Court Service Unit, RPS, and RPD; 2) led meaningful conversations about how the district's policies, programs, and practices were (or were not) supporting charged RPS students; and 3) shared research about how to best support justice-involved youth.
EVIDENCE: THREE CASES

Case 1: Community Presentations

Recognizing I was very much an outsider in the Richmond community, it was crucial that I gain both a historical context of the city as well as get to know those most impacted by RPS’s policies and practices – students and families. To accomplish these tasks, I spent June through August interviewing over 100 people within the Richmond community and across various city agencies. Throughout this experience, the most powerful aspect was the opportunity to listen and empathize with people across the sector and from completely different walks of life. Some days I was in the Governor’s office, shadowing his most senior cabinet members, and other days I sat in the living rooms of families in what many deem Richmond’s most dangerous housing projects. During this time, I began to develop both trust and credibility in the communities I wished to serve. Bryan Stevenson (2014) refers to this in-person knowing as getting proximate to the people you aim to serve (Stevenson, 2014). Moreover, it is “in this proximate stance, we can understand that we are not dealing with people in need of saving, or with people who are inherently challenged or responsible for their own poverty. Instead, we must acknowledge advantages, privileges, and power dynamics, and approach our work alongside individuals to fix or replace broken systems” (Burton & Barnes, 2017, p. 1).
I went to many community meetings, workshops, church services, and agency meetings. Quickly, I began to see some of the same faces, and they would invite me to more community events. As people introduced me, they began to say, “This is Shadae. She is working with the Children’s Cabinet and VDJJ, but she’s different; she is actually in the community!” The idea that someone associated with the Children’s Cabinet and VDJJ was in the community was surprising to them. Therefore, my unique position as connected to, but not necessarily of any of the agencies, was powerful! I used the information I gleaned from the interviews to create a systems map of how charged RPS students moved through both the school and justice system. This artifact was one of the most important elements in my strategic project. It was a colorful visual, but more importantly, it humanized and brought to life the narratives of so many of the young people I met while in the community. It was more than a flow chart of boxes; it was Miles’s journey, Tyshawn’s journey, and Lisa’s journey.
I used this positioning to bring awareness about my project, but more importantly to get the feedback and perspective of the community. With this visual, I was now able to go back into the community during August and September to do three things: 1) confirm that the process I captured was accurate, 2) build awareness, and 3) identify existing assets and resources in the community. From October through January, I completed significant action steps. Most importantly, I met regularly with established key groups and stakeholders to share research, project updates, and get their guidance on next steps. One of those groups was East End community members, Laura, Tyrone, and Joyce. All three of them were powerhouses and organizers in one of Richmond’s most vulnerable communities. Regularly meeting with this group completely changed my perspective and facilitated my realization that I needed to take a more asset-based approach. They shared with me the existing assets and resources in the community and asked me to present this information to various groups at the state level. Over the next couple months, I added to my presentation information gathered during my meetings in the community. So much of my time was spent traveling around the city bringing awareness to the problems of practice we were exploring. The presentations always ended with questions and meaningful discussion that deepened my understanding of the many root causes to the issues we were trying to solve. After each presentation, I learned so much from the various audiences and continued to share that information with others, as well as integrate it into tentative policy and program recommendations or improvements.

Children’s Cabinet Presentation / Resilience Enhanced Model

One of my final presentations was at the last Children’s Cabinet meeting in December. This presentation not only marked the end of Governor McAuliffe’s
administration, but also served as the culminating presentation of my work with the Children’s Cabinet. I was incredibly nervous, as it would be one of my last opportunities to tell existing cabinet members the stories of the dynamic and resilient RPS students and families who so graciously let me into their homes. I crafted my presentation to the Cabinet as a case study, highlighting ways in which government agencies could partner with specific localities to examine data and collaborate on targeted problems of practice. The presentation took place in Governor McAuliffe’s Reading Room, and as I looked out into the sea of people gathered, my nervousness immediately faded as I recognized almost everyone in the room. Over 80 people from across the sector had gathered, and I used the opportunity to emphasize our unique ability in state government to listen, empower, and work alongside communities, especially those that have historically been disenfranchised.

Towards the end of the presentation, I flashed backed to the systems map that had started my journey in July and ended with a similar map that represented the possibilities that lie ahead (see Appendix B). In this new model, rather than RPD being the first point of contact, the community is, followed by the school. For, it is the collaboration and resources embedded in each of those settings—mental health, employment, core instruction, Virginia Tiered Systems of Support (VTSS)—that allow for more of a prevention rather than punishment orientation.

Furthermore, the resilience enhanced model I described focused on diversion at every level, leaving the most restrictive placement, homebased instruction, as the last resort. The resilience model was a product of the many community conversations I facilitated that always placed the community at the center. Both visuals helped show the
complex relationship between schools and justice systems, beginning with how the system currently operated in June 2017 and ending with the possibility of a more resilience enhanced model. After my presentation, I was approached by numerous boards, community organizations, and agencies who asked me to present my case study to their boards or entire staff. Each conversation expressed confirmation of my ability to communicate a clear problem of practice, tangible action steps, and community-based solutions.

Case 2: School Justice Collaborative

On one of my home visits, I met Tyshawn and his mother, Candice. Tyshawn was on probation and as we sat in his living room, I listened to Tyshawn’s mom name all the different child service agencies she had been interacting with. She said one person was trying to call her, but she didn’t have her phone service on. Then she explained she couldn’t stay long because she was on her way downtown to get something from another office that had been hounding her, but she wanted to make sure she was home in time to meet with Tyshawn’s probation officer. As Candice shared the complexity of interacting and communicating with numerous child service agencies, it became clear how each
agency or organization operated in a silo. For example, information RPS desperately wanted and needed to make a decision about his school placement was listed in Tyshawn’s comprehensive social history interview conducted by Richmond’s CSU. In a September meeting, I shared Tyshawn’s story, as well as the VDJJ data I had collected on the previous year’s homebased population. It was in that meeting that RPS senior staff, Tina Johnson, emailed members of Richmond’s Court Service Unit and others at VDJJ to create what is now called RPS’s school justice collaborative (SJC), a cross-sector group of organizations committed to improving policies and practices for justice-involved youth. I believe mapping out the system as it currently operated—using inquiry rather than blame, holding data driven discussions, and sharing relevant research on adolescent development, restorative justice, and trauma—led to the insight and empowerment needed for Tina to extend past her own boundaries to create the SJC. Tina made it clear that she would need support in starting the collaborative, but also said it would be a priority for her. Throughout the next couple of months, her staff coordinated all the meetings, planned agendas, and co-facilitated meetings with my support. The collaborative decided its focus would be on students placed on homebased instruction and would work across agencies to determine root causes, future preventative measures, and immediate action steps to best support this population of students.

The table below represents SJC meetings to date, our areas of focus, and action steps taken. At the end of our first meeting, the Director of Richmond’s Court Service Unit said, “this was really good, should we do it again?” Everyone agreed and we spent the last 10 minutes planning the next meeting that would be held at the site of our new
and improved ASPIRE Academy program. I served as a facilitator of knowledge at this meeting, but it was clear the meeting was convened and led by RPS.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Collaborative Meeting Date</th>
<th>Focus</th>
<th>Actions Taken</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 October</td>
<td>Who do we want to be? Purpose</td>
<td>Resources for ASPIRE Academy</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Data &amp; Research Presentation</td>
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<tr>
<td>2 November</td>
<td>ASPIRE Academy</td>
<td>Partnership with RPD Life program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 December</td>
<td>Life Program Planning</td>
<td>Collaborative case management for all ASPIRE students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 February</td>
<td>Expanding Out Efforts: Collaborative</td>
<td>Expanding program to all grade levels</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Membership</td>
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**Case 3: ASPIRE Academy**

Despite the initial lack of district leadership, there were phenomenal people within the RPS system who held tremendous power and authority to try new things to support charged RPS students. I found myself attached to one of these people for the majority of my residency. She was a rock star, well-respected in the community, and completely burnt out. Meeting with her was a gem, but almost impossible to make happen due to her schedule. I went from seeing her at various meetings to meeting with her occasionally. From that point, I began to shadow her around the district, which led to standing bi-weekly meetings. We both loved our meetings, as she often referred to them as “therapy.” From our standing meetings, she allowed me to represent her in RPS external meetings as well as created the space for me to aid her in the facilitation of a cross-agency collaboration we created together – the RPS School Justice Collaborative.

In these conversations, we gave ourselves permission to ideate, going beyond the constraints of what seemed to be a paralyzing system. In one of our meetings, I
aggregated the homebased instruction data and presented my findings as well as a financial analysis of how the program was currently operating. As a result, we realized the following:

- The majority of students placed on homebased instruction during the 2016-2017 school year were 9\textsuperscript{th} graders.
- The closest estimate of running homebased instruction per year was $275,000 – 300,000 per year per 100 students.
- RPS currently funded a morning/afternoon (AM)/(PM) alternative program but only operated the (AM) session.
- Students were remaining out of school for an excessive amount of time, were not receiving a full education, and were unable make progress towards graduation.
- Several “blanks” were found in data entry on homebased instruction over the past three years, which could account for increased numbers and length of time students were placed on homebased instruction.

During the fall months, I saw firsthand how sharing narratives of students and families, relevant data on adolescent development, and trauma and restorative justice impacted this zero tolerance provision with RPS senior level staff and community members; this information quickly turned into action steps to better support this population of students. One of the most notable actions was the creation of the RPS 9\textsuperscript{th} Grade ASPIRE Academy. This academy was created as a direct result of my conversations with RPS to develop additional alternatives for homebased students. We started with 9\textsuperscript{th} grade, as the data I presented indicated 9\textsuperscript{th} graders represented the majority of students on homebased instruction. Already in operation, ASPIRE (AM) provided four hours of instruction to over-age, under-credited RPS students. Already funded for a full day, we began ASPIRE (PM) which would solely service 9\textsuperscript{th} grade students who had been charged with offenses related to \textit{Virginia Code} § 16.1-260 (G).

Effective October 1\textsuperscript{st}, all 9\textsuperscript{th} grade students with charges related to \textit{Virginia Code} § 16.1-260 (G) now receive letters to attend the ASPIRE (PM) Academy instead of being
placed on homebased instruction. ASPIRE provides students with 20 hours of instruction per week, more than double what they would have received while on homebased instruction. Additionally, while at ASPIRE students are able to earn electives and receive the necessary wraparound support necessary for a healthy and successful future.

One student who made the transition from homebased instruction to the ASPIRE Academy said, “It’s good—well, it’s better than home. At least I’m doing something and I’m around people.” Many of the young people I spoke with expressed similar sentiments with the majority of the feedback pertaining to the need to be in a community. As a result of the success of the 9th grade ASPIRE program, during a February leadership meeting it was decided to expand the ASPIRE program to all students with charges. Effective February 1st, all students who receive charges related to Virginia Code § 16.1-260 (G), with the exception of sexual assault, will no longer be placed on homebased instruction. The director of support services attributed this change to my ongoing focus on this population during our standing meetings, external pressure from the community to increase instruction and support services and the financial demands to maximize the ASPIRE Academy as a resource to as many students as possible.

The creation of the academy was a start, but it was clear that in order to meet the needs of all students, as well as continue to confront beliefs regarding justice-involved youth, we would need more people at the table. To that end, the RPS school justice collaborative referenced in Case 2 provided the space we needed to have multiple agencies at the same table working together. Our focus was twofold: improving conditions for students whose education was interrupted due to a court charge and building our capacity to communicate across agencies. As we shared ideas and resources,
we were able to leverage the RPD’s LIFE program that provided life skills, collaborative case management, and life skills to Richmond City youth in the justice system. As a collaborative, we designed a new model where RPS agreed to partner with RPD to launch its LIFE program with all 9th grade students enrolled in the ASPIRE (PM) session. On February 9th, we launched LIFE 2.0, which resulted in all students having access to ongoing mentorship, yearlong collaborative case management, and access to necessary mental health and family services. Over the next couple of months, I continued to build power from existing resources in the community. Specifically, I achieved this by connecting the school with community members and groups who were passionate about supporting RPS and students who allegedly committed offences related to *Virginia Code* § 16.1-260 (G). This practice allowed the newly created RPS school justice collaborative to see existing assets in the community as well as identify, recruit, and develop the leadership of others (Ganz, 2009, p. 1).

**Analysis**

In each of the aforementioned cases there were both successes and struggles. Brand new to Richmond, not only was I an outsider, but I had a tremendous amount to learn about the city itself. All three cases highlight aspects of my theory of action and directly connect to the problems of practice we sought to explore. Yet only in reflection and analysis have I truly realized that both my successes and struggles were a direct result of what I call the three Ps:

- **Position** – where I was situated as a leader
• **Public Value** - my ability as a leader to both “imagine and articulate a vision of public value that could command legitimacy and support and was operationally doable” (Moore, 1995, p. 1)

• **Proximity** - my ability as a leader to get close or proximate to the people I aimed to serve

**Position**

Language is incredibly important, and during the first couple of months of the residency, I struggled with my title. I was working with three organizations: The Children’s Cabinet, VDJJ, and RPS. The Children’s Cabinet was my host organization, VDJJ senior staff served as my direct supervisors, and RPS was the environment in which my strategic project was situated. I was connected to all of the organizations at different levels, and depending on who was in the room, for very different purposes. I learned the importance of introducing myself, as well as the work, with precision and clarity. One of the reasons this proved to be most challenging is each organization had a very different idea of both my role and the work I would be doing. For example, VDJJ did not select my strategic project. Although they were supportive of the work, they were not directly connected to its outcome and struggled to see its connectivity to their organizational goals in my beginning months.

As a first-year Ed.L.D. student, I remembered the dreaded problem/context/solution memos we had to write when providing recommendations for real-world problems of practice. The practice was tedious, but it helped me norm external parties around the context as it pertained to the problem of practice, as well as develop consensus around the problem of practice itself. Creating a problem/context/solution
memo for my strategic project not only allowed me to both clarify my role as a “student”
serving in a learning and support capacity, but more importantly, name the way I was
connected with each of the organizations. It helped me sharpen what my role would be
and communicate with all three organizations about my theory of action for the work.
This was pivotal as I learned each of the organizations I was working with had their own
very distinct reputations. Thus, not being associated with just one of them was a huge
benefit. For example, “working with” VDJJ and the Children’s Cabinet allowed me
entrance into spaces I may have not normally been able to access, but not “working for”
the Children’s Cabinet and VDJJ created spaces where people felt more comfortable to
give me honest feedback.

For example, after one meeting, a group of women asked me to stay behind and
wanted to know more about my position. I explained my connection to each organization
and that I had spent the first couple of months in the community getting to know the
students and families most impacted. I still remember the surprised look on their faces, as
each of them had strong feelings that being in the community was an uncommon
approach for the “state.” I named the many communities I visited— Mosby, Creighton
Court, etc., and they said, “Oh, you’ve really been in the community.” We all knew these
were tough neighborhoods, but also those most impacted by the policies and practices we
were discussing that day. Immediately, I gained credibility with this group of women,
recognizing that at times my nebulous position actually gave me the freedom I needed to
connect and try different approaches. My position was key and the better I became at
articulating “who” I was and “why” I was in the room, the easier the “what” and “how”
of the strategic project developed.
Authorizing Environment

For the first couple months of my residency, I was looking for RPS to be my “authorizing environment.” Moore states that an authorizing environment:

includes the large number and wide variety of people in particular positions who authorize them to take action, or appropriate money for them to use. The authorizing environment also includes those who can influence the particular individuals who make these decisions and have reasons to do so. Together, these individuals can call managers to account for their performance, and choose to continue or withdraw the authorizations and money managers need to operate (Moore, 1995, p. 6).

RPS was operating under the leadership of an interim superintendent. Although my meetings with RPS staff generated a myriad of ideas, I became frustrated that there was no one whom I felt had the authority to move on any of the recommendations we were generating. In these moments, I had a false understanding of my authorizing environment. I was operating from only a district lens. In my past experiences as both a teacher and principal, my power rested in the authority at the school or district level. My strategic project allowed me to go beyond the boundaries of the school, district, and even the education sector, expanding my thinking and creativity. At that moment, my perspective shifted from district-centered to community-centered, and I saw the distinct ways in which my grassroots approach had already created an authorizing environment – the community! The Children’s Cabinet and VDJJ also proved to be authorizers in unexpected ways. The Children’s Cabinet had the formal authority of state legislators and governmental officials that commanded immediate attention and respect. Having the Secretary of Health and Human Resources and Secretary of Education at my meetings or on correspondence created the bully pulpit I often needed to get as many child serving agencies around the table as possible. Equally important, VDJJ was an organization with
increased resources as a result of new legislation that would allow them to reinvest money saved on closing one of their facilities. Many organizations I met with along with RPS were enticed by the ways in which VDJJ could possibly contribute to supporting their agencies. Essentially, the possibility of increased revenue and support from VDJJ gave validity and credibility to the possibility of fully-funded solutions.

Public Value
The Strategic Triangle: Creating Public Value
Public Value is an integral part of what scholars at the Harvard Kennedy School of Government and Harvard Business School refer to as a “strategic triangle.” Developed to support public sector executives in a concept of “strategy in the public sector,” the strategic triangle focuses on the three complex issues in Figure 1 (Moore, 1995). Critical thought of the following is recommended by government managers preferably before, but as we know in most cases, while they are committing themselves and their organizations to a particular course of action (Moore, 1995).

“First, examines the importance of the “public value” created? Second, attends to where its source of legitimacy and support come from. Third, discusses what are the operational capabilities needed for the organization to achieve its desired results (Moore & Khagram, 2004).

In a short amount of time, as evidenced in the three cases, I was able to build relationships with relevant senior level and middle management leaders within the Children’s Cabinet, VDJJ, Richmond Department of Justice Services (DJS), Richmond Court Service Unit (CSU), RPS, and RPD, guide and lead meaningful conversations
about how the district's policies, programs, and practices are (or are not) supporting charged RPS students; and share research about how to best support this group of students. I believe the components of the strategic triangle best capture how the project unfolded along with the major shifts I made during the project.

Although all pieces of the strategic triangle were integral to my success, I have highlighted public value due to it being the most challenging and allowing for the biggest shifts in my own thinking about the project.

In, “On Creating Public Value,” Moore explained that,

Government managers secure the resources they need to operate not by selling products and services to individual customers but rather, by selling a story of public value creation to elected representatives and the people of the legislatures and executive branch positions….The people that have to be sold on the value of what is being produced, then are not those, “across the counter” at the “tail end of the production process;” they are those “upstream” customers who authorize the use of public money for public purposes. (1995, p. 5)

One of the first things I did in my project was to make visible the invisible. The process flow chart of RPS’s system in comparison with the justice system (Appendix A) was the first time that individuals, both in the school system and across sectors, could see how multiple systems were operating in conflict or concert with one another. Sharing the narratives of the young people and families who were on homebased instruction also made the invisible extremely visible for all stakeholders.

The stories, compounded by data from RPS and VDJJ, painted a picture for the community (public) of educational injustice as well as public safety. Sharing this information was difficult and extremely political. I was careful in my presentation and framing of the issue given the existing tension between RPS and various advocacy, state agency, and community groups. I worked hard to build relationships with RPS senior
staff, who openly expressed the frequent “backstabbing” that took place when they shared data or thought they were partnering with someone. Thus, it was crucial that I maintain a strong relationship with RPS while also bringing light to how their system was currently operating. I needed to be seen as someone who was helping and supporting them with an issue and as someone who could bring additional resources, not someone who was reporting on them, judging, or looking to expose them. Therefore, being a third party who could simply mirror back the process for them was extremely helpful. It allowed them to take a step back and reflect on their own practices, as well as brainstorm possible alternatives.

I used this process of reflecting on the systems map with senior and middle management RPS staff, as well as with a number of state agencies and community members. This process allowed me to gain valuable information on the complex relationships between justice systems, schools, and across sectors. Yet more importantly, after almost every presentation, there was a strong sense of outrage in the room. Whether I was presenting to the Children’s Cabinet or to a local community group, there were always gasps and endless conversation about how the current systems were operating. It was wonderful as conversations lingered and people continued to talk with me and other colleagues about what they heard. This continued conversation was evidenced by countless interactions between people who already knew about my project as well as multiple requests for me to present my research and collaborative approach across the city.

Each time I presented the systems map data and engaged people in dialogue about relevant research on the topic, I was selling a story of public value. One of the major
supports was my ability to bring to life the narratives of the people most impacted by RPS’s policy – students and families. Thus, it was through narrative storytelling about these students and families that I was able to highlight the amount of instructional time, time in community, and access to wraparound supports that young people across the city were losing. The narratives also highlighted questions of public safety and fiscal responsibility, given the amount of students receiving homebased instruction while left unsupervised during the school day. Hearing these stories, people across sectors began to develop both the urgency and hope of developing a more resilience-enhanced approach system that better supported this population of students. Specifically, working on these problems of practice created value for people in many areas. For some, solving these issues would increase public safety and reduce taxpayer dollars. For others, its value stemmed from a needed trauma-informed Virginia and restorative justice approach to educating young people. One of the community groups I met with regularly shared that their value was in “providing high quality education to Black students from their community.” They felt ownership and a responsibility to these students and wanted to build a community of people who also felt young people are more than their worst mistake.

The first four months of my residency were more than just relationship building; I was creating “public value” evidenced by community members and legislators asking for and demanding answers for students whose education had been interrupted due to a court charge. This pressure created a sense of urgency. As a result, two things happened. First, it prompted RPS staff to act on ideas discussed and generated in our meetings (i.e., RPS
School Justice Collaborative and creation of ASPIRE Academy). Second, it gave RPS staff permission to operate outside the rigid system in which they felt constrained.

Again, my ability to navigate amongst three different organizations and share information supported the creation of a public value and the authorizing environment that would push RPS toward using existing operational capabilities to implement policy and program improvements for students whose education was interrupted by a court charge. RPS had a great deal of quantifiable data but had not developed the systems or structures to regularly assess or evaluate their policies and programs. One of the main reasons was that both the policy and beliefs regarding charged youth completely governed the practices of the student services department. The provision that required RPS staff to place students on homebased instruction created a clear pipeline for students to be pushed out of their comprehensive school. The overarching beliefs in eliminating a small fraction of “violent” offenders from school permeated the department and rather than seeking alternatives, students continued to suffer the collateral damages of juvenile adjudication.

Understanding and evaluating RPS’s operational capabilities to execute policy program improvements was key to the unfolding of the project. It became clear that some of the major barriers were not necessarily a capacity issue, but rather a complicated cycle of policies dictating practices and beliefs determining both policies and practices. The creation of the ASPIRE program is a perfect example of how pressure from the public, combined with the space for RPS staff to be creative and think outside the limits of the existing policy, led them to use an existing program not operating to full capacity to create an alternative program to increase instruction for students whose education had been interrupted due to a court charge.
As I began the project, there were two clear paths I could take. The first, well-intended and recommended by most, was to focus on the needs of the Richmond community, its deficiencies, and problems. Then, based on the most current and relevant research, provide sound recommendations to support the community. The second path, and the direction I took, began with a clear commitment to discovering Richmond’s capacities and assets. During my learning phase in the beginning of residency, I learned about the deep history and resilience of the city of Richmond. Talking with people across the sectors, I saw the unique ways in which many groups with good intentions were duplicating efforts, strategies, and services in similar areas of the city. Therefore, an approach that highlighted existing assets could not only highlight the strength and resilience of a community, but also help to leverage power among its constituents. Kretzmann and McKnight call this approach “Capacity-Focused Development.” This model is based on research that shows that “significant community development takes place only when local community people are committed to investing themselves and their resources in the effort” (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993, p.1).

Beginning the project from this perspective helped me develop meaningful relationships, build credibility in the community, and establish the authorizing environment necessary to move the work in a meaningful way. As mentioned earlier, Bryan Stevenson calls this in-person knowing, “getting proximate” or close to the people you aim to serve. As an African American woman, I know firsthand what it feels like not to have or see your voice represented. This getting proximate approach is one I believe in and am extremely comfortable with. It brings me immense joy to connect and facilitate
conversations in and around the community. Richmond was a new community for me, but I quickly saw the ways in which my ability to connect, empathize, and communicate transcended geographic boundaries. However, what I didn’t realize was that the spaces I was less comfortable in, those in which I was often the only person of color in the room, were equally important for me to be a part of. My presence in these spaces provided diversity of thought and voice to issues and concerns often not represented. Despite Richmond’s diverse local leadership, the Children’s Cabinet provided a window into a still very segregated decision-making body that did not always reflect the diverse population it served. The Children’s Cabinet leadership was extremely open to talking about ways in which the cabinet could include more diverse voices and address the truth, racial healing, and transformation necessary to bring about change in the commonwealth.

I was appalled and insulted by the assistant who felt I wasn’t in the office enough. I truly believed I was doing “the real work” and “work no one else wanted to do.” What I realized was that both of those things can be true. Starting with the community at the center and selling public value to people in the legislature and executive branches of government were equally important. For that reason, I needed to attend all the Children’s Cabinet meetings and sub-committee meetings with the same vigor as being in the living rooms of students placed on homebased instruction. This realization was a pivotal shift in my thinking — it wasn’t about one being better than the other, but more about my ability to create the dual capacity for strong partnerships across the sector. Likewise, getting proximate, or close to people across the sector, is what led to the meaningful relationships that allowed my project to advance in a short amount of time.
Additional factors that contributed to expediated outcomes for my strategic project are what John Kingdon refers to as the alignment of three streams; the problem stream (is the condition considered a problem?), the policy stream (are there are policy alternatives that can be implemented?), and the political stream (are politicians willing and able to make a policy change?) (Kingdon, 2003). Kingdon argues that windows of opportunity open when all three streams come together (Kingdon, 2003). Furthermore, on the heels of a report released by the Center for Public Integrity that named Virginia to lead the nation in sending students from schools to the police or courts (Ferriss, 2015), my strategic project's focus on exclusionary discipline practices addressed an urgent problem for Virginia. The findings from the reported added to the fuel of community members, current administration, advocacy groups and parents who demanded attention and action to Virginia’s growing school to prison pipeline.

Political and policy streams were also aligning, as specific legislation and policies called for limitations and alternatives to exclusionary practices across the Commonwealth. Further, the reality of the current administration coming to an end created a ripe political stream where issues could get on the agenda more readily. The Children’s Cabinet wanted to do as much as they could in the remaining months of the administration while incumbents built their platform on issues that were of concern across the Commonwealth. The alignment of all three streams created a huge opportunity window for my strategic project to thrive. Specifically, because the Children’s Cabinet was a cross sector cabinet, I was able to use my position as a Children’s Cabinet fellow to move across sectors, listening and influencing, to create a more resilience-enhanced system for justice involved youth.
IMPLICATIONS

IMPLICATIONS FOR SELF

One important lesson the strategic project taught me was **how I take care of myself is directly connected to how I lead.** For the majority of my life, I sought perfection at the expense of my own self-care. I worked hard to protect and nurture others while neglecting my own needs and well-being. Despite this approach coming with lots of what may have seemed like success, it took a serious toll on how I felt about myself and the energy necessary to be at my absolute best. Throughout the Ed.L.D. program, I have been intentional about working on leadership goals that make explicit the ways in which I need to take care of myself as a leader. As a result, I knew it would be important at the start of the project to first map out the key aspects of my mental, physical, and spiritual routine that were essential for me to thrive as a leader. I could then begin to structure the project in a way that could create synergy between the two. This took an extreme amount of internal discipline, but I realized what helped me the most was **my ability as a leader to articulate my value of self-care.** I had spent so much time reflecting on what I need, but for the first time while leading this project, I clearly articulated to my colleagues that self-care was one of my values. It was an interesting exercise, because every time I articulated this value people would agree or make reference to wanting to do the same. What’s more, it would always be followed with a long list of what was preventing them from doing it. I could completely empathize but was tired of making excuses. Instead, I decided that while leading this project I would be intentional about my physical health, mental health, and spirituality.
I soon realized that this dedication would require the same intensity I would put into planning for the actual project. However, for the first time, I did not see my ability to carry out the strategic project as separate from my own quality of life. I found myself creating the equivalent to lesson plans each week to ensure I knew what I was going to eat, when I was going to work out, and how I would reflect on the day. This level of preparation was difficult but offered me a couple of immediate benefits while leading the project. One, I was happier! I felt good, and I carried this exuberance and energy into my conversations with people. Connecting and building relationships has always been a strength of mine, but throughout the project I saw the ways in which I grew in my abilities to connect, provide a positive lens, recognize multiple things can be true at once, and remain calm because of the joy and internal stability I now felt. I measured this newfound stability based on my level of energy during the day. I moved from constantly adjusting my behavior to meet the needs of others to others noticing my exposed and lived core values and adjusting their behavior accordingly.

Lastly, for as long as I can remember I’ve prided myself on serving the community that has given so much to me—Springfield, Massachusetts. I’ve remained dedicated to seeking out opportunities that allowed me to learn with and work for Massachusetts’ most vulnerable children and families. I grew up bearing witness to the amazing leadership of my parents, Henry and Devonia Thomas, along with countless family members and friends who remained dedicated to lifting up Massachusetts’ African American community. Leading a strategic project outside of Massachusetts, away from everyone I knew, away from everything that was familiar, was completely terrifying. Yet, stepping out of my comfort zone to lead a project in a new city and new part of the sector
was transformational. As a result, **I learned that I had a crucial set of skills and competencies that allowed me to communicate with people from all walks of life.** For so long, I constantly doubted my abilities as a leader. This experience confirmed the immense expertise, empathy, and ethos I could bring to this work. In times of uncertainty, or even failure, I must continue to have faith and confidence in my leadership strengths.

**Implications for Site**

Richmond Public Schools (RPS)

In my role as resident, I had the privilege of supporting RPS to question their policies and practices for young people whose education was interrupted by a court charge. As we explored different problems of practice, I shifted in my own thinking about the role communities play in devising solutions. I saw the importance of placing communities at the center while simultaneously building their capacity to engage in systems that in many cases have historically silenced them. February 2018 represented a new beginning for RPS as they embark on their next journey under new leadership. Incoming Superintendent Karmas in a short amount of time has already proven to be a champion for equity. However, for RPS to continue making policy and program improvements for youth whose education has been interrupted due to a court charge, three critical steps are necessary. First, eliminate the 2015 policy and practice of automatically excluding students and reassigning to homebased instruction all students who have been charged with offenses listed under *Virginia Code § 16.1-260 (G)*. This policy has failed to make our schools safer and RPS’s implementation has often violated student’s state and federal laws guaranteeing due process of law and protections which should be afforded students with disabilities under the Individuals with Disabilities
Education Act. Virginia Code § 22.1-22.7.2 requires written notice and an opportunity for a hearing before the superintendent or his designee may reassign a student alleged to have committed an offense under Virginia Code § 16.1-260 (G). Even where notice is adequately provided, parents and students are cautioned against sharing information about their delinquency charges as that might constitute a waiver of their 5th amendment right against self-incrimination or impact their defense. This tension effectively prevents students from sharing with school division staff information about their charges or participating in a school-based hearing.

The provision fails to provide procedural due process, as the notices sent to parents unilaterally remove students from their comprehensive school environments and reassign them to homebased instruction. Many families have indicated that it has not been clear that there are opportunities for a hearing or received notification to regain the right to appeal the decision. Further data on the number of appeals held would also shed light on how this practice is being utilized by staff and families.

It is the role of the juvenile court system to assess the danger to the community in determining whether a student should be detained or released to the community to attend school and interact with peers. Judges utilize the Detention Alternative Instrument (DAI) completed by trained court service personnel to insure that evidence-based methodology informs their decision about release to the community and what level of monitoring and supervision each youth should have. All youth with 16.1-260 (G) charges are assigned a probation officer and those who qualify for a detention alternative are reviewed and approved by their Juvenile and Domestic Relations (JDR) Court Judge. Such alternatives include rules of probation, house arrest, GPS ankle monitoring and community
monitoring where warranted. RPS should rely on the JDR court judges and the ongoing supervision provided by the 13th District Court Services unit as assurance that a student is capable of re-entering and participating in the school community. Students who are not capable of safely being in community are scored high on the DAI and are detained. Further, youth who violate the rules of probation, GPS or community monitoring qualify for an expedited violation of probation and can be brought back before the court within 24 hours.

The vast majority of excluded students automatically are reassigned to homebased instruction. Homebased services are inadequate to allow students to benefit from their education. At maximum students receive 10 hours per week for high school students and only in their core academic classes and no instruction in electives. Homebased instruction is the most restrictive placement and precludes peer interaction and constitutes a change in placement for students, many of whom are students which disabilities. Homebased is costly to the division. Homebased instructors are not supported by the comprehensive schools where the students last attended and often have no work for students and when they have work, they have no books, no lesson plans, and are often untrained in the subject matter they are expected to teach. Services are inconsistent, unmonitored and dependent upon too many variables to effectuate a delivery model that lasts for more than a couple of weeks.

Originally, the exclusionary policy was believed to impact students for a short period of time (up to 3 weeks) while the delinquency charges were pending, but data now show that students are excluded for long periods of time-- upwards of two years in some cases. Students often are very young, have significant disabilities or so little familiarity
with the criminal justice system that they are not competent to stand trial. Therefore, these students must spend months undergoing training to understand the courts and their rights, a process which is called restoration. During this restoration process and while a child is not competent, or while the matter has been taken under advisement, the student is excluded from school and receives minimal services. Data indicate that students have been excluded for upwards of two years. Data also show that 57% of charges are dismissed.

Additionally, the policy and practice does not align with what we know to be good public policy. Adequate and fair due process represents good public policy because it does the following, according to Legal Aid Justice Center Legal Aid Justice Center (Memo to RPS, 2015):

• Aids in the pursuit of truth and in reasoned, unbiased decision making;
• Provides an opportunity to learn about the student and the origins of his or her problematic behavior, thereby helping to craft productive solutions;
• Promotes procedural justice (i.e., how individuals perceive fairness in processes), which contributes to lower recidivism;
• Plays an important role in student’s legal socialization (i.e., the process by which people internalize an understanding of the system of law, rules, and principles that govern their community and acquire a sense of the legitimacy of the authority enforcing that system);
• Sends a message to students, parents/caregivers, and the community that the school division respects the people it serves; and
• Teaches students important lessons about democracy, fairness, and the dignity of the individual.

RPS’s absence of due process for students who have been charged is a missed opportunity to achieve the aforementioned policy objectives and continues to widen the divide between historically marginalized communities and school systems/systems of government.

Focus on Prevention & Intervention

Second, RPS must focus on prevention and intervention. One of the best forms of prevention of discipline measures is a challenging and rigorous lesson plan implemented by a skilled and engaging teacher. Developing a district-wide strategic plan that centers on instruction as its key pillar of change is vital for success. It is imperative that RPS reallocate and garner more resources to support both academic and wraparound supports for students. For example, increasing the number of school-based social workers and psychologists would be a great step in supporting the mental health needs of all RPS students. Additionally, all RPS staff should be trained on trauma-informed practices, the adverse consequences of exclusion, effective classroom management techniques, and restorative justice practices. Special attention and focused professional development should be tailored to RPS’s rich legacy of race, segregation, and resilience. Strongly recommended is Kellogg’s Truth, Racial Healing, and Transformation framework (W.K Kellogg Foundation, 2016) to guide the district as they engage in this work (see Appendix D).

Lastly, RPS should implement a dual capacity-building, asset-based approach for family and school/community partnerships (see appendix E). This focus will allow RPS
to work alongside families and community. Using this framework will support an asset-based approach that acknowledges the tremendous and existing resources as well as areas of support, as reported by the community. RPS must include the voices of its families and community in all decision-making, especially given its long-standing history with disproportionality and exclusionary practices. To best provide transparency, RPS should add additional members to the SJC ensuring representation from community and various stakeholders. The objective of the committee would be to:

Create a working group of stakeholders within the community – including parents, students, teachers, principals, and other community members – to rewrite the district’s discipline policies. The group should be tasked to: (a) limit the use of expulsions, disciplinary transfers to alternative schools, referrals to law enforcement, and school-based arrests to conduct that poses a serious, ongoing threat to the safety of students and staff; (b) limit the use of out-of-school suspensions to serious misconduct or to when other interventions have been unsuccessful in addressing low-level misconduct; (c) encourage the use of alternatives to exclusionary practices and referrals to law enforcement; (d) eliminate racial disparities in school discipline; (e) strengthen the protection of parents’/guardians’ and students’ due process rights during all disciplinary proceedings and placements; and (f) ensure that students and families have a legal advocate during the entire disciplinary transfer/expulsion process. (Youth United for Change and Advancement Project, 2011, p. 27)

Virginia Governors Children’s Cabinet (VGCC)
The Children’s Cabinet served as a container for me to be able to move between sectors and at times provided the necessary bully pulpit or authority to galvanize people around a particular issue of concern. Its cross-sector composition allowed entrance into spaces I may not have had access to, but more importantly, allowed for coordination across agencies who were working to support similar populations or initiatives. It has not been determined how the Children’s Cabinet under Governor Northam will operate, but its role
in altering the fragmented ways state and local government work on behalf of children is undeniable.

The structure itself breaks down silos and promotes cross-sector collaboration. It will be essential that Governor Northam keep this as a central priority. I had the opportunity to ask former First Lady McAuliffe to reflect on her experience with the Children’s Cabinet. She shared the importance of it but also expressed the need for it to be more goal-focused and connected directly to the Governor. Furthermore, the Children’s Cabinet would benefit from having clear goals and objectives attached to measurable outcomes. The cabinet as it formally operated had three key initiatives, but it was not clear how those initiatives were directly related to the collective work of the Children’s Cabinet and Governor. Therefore, being more transparent about the cabinet’s purpose, goals, and outcomes would support a larger impact on the Commonwealth.

**Virginia Department of Juvenile Justice (VDJJ)**

As VDJJ continues in its transformation plan there is one fundamental component that must be embedded in all their work – family and community engagement. Currently, VDJJ’s theory of action is rooted in what the legislature has authorized them to do – taking care of youth once they are connected to the justice system. However, over the past four years, VDJJ has expanded in their transformation to stretch that blueprint and continue to explore ways in which they can engage in more prevention and community-based alternatives and programming. As they move forward, it is critical that they expand their scope and theory of action to align with the work of their current and aspirational truth as an organization. VDJJ moves at a rapid pace and has had tremendous success in their ability to reduce, reform, and replace current systems of injustice. However, a
missing piece of the organization seems to be a clear framework of how they engage with the many families and communities they serve. Specifically, utilizing an asset based family and community engagement framework would support them in their efforts to better connect with localities across the state.

Research shows that true community engagement is not sustained unless the community is a part of its transformation. The community must be involved in VDJJ’s transformation efforts, and VDJJ should use an asset-based, internally focused, relationship-driven framework for family and community engagement. Using such a framework will allow VDJJ to specifically map assets of the communities they engage with and build upon the incredible work already going on in communities (see Appendix F). The creation of a new executive-level position would allow this area of concentration to become integrated into VDJJ’s management teams and initiatives.

Kretzmann and McKnight’s (1993) “Building Communities from the Inside Out” would be a great resource for all members of VDJJ’s executive team and used as a blueprint to launch this work.

Additional next steps could include paying particular attention to how the department communicates their theory of action, recognizing the role their institution has historically played in exacerbating racial and economic disparities in communities of color. Naming and exploring their historical role, as well as the existing tensions and polarities with the communities they engage with will allow them to better identify new ways to engage and partner with communities. Again, Kellogg’s “Truth, Racial Healing and Transformation framework” could be used to support the department as they embark on this work.
Lastly, VDJJ must play an active role on Richmond’s school justice collaborative in order to increase the transparency and understanding of justice system proceedings and decisions. For example, VDJJ should share the specific ways they determine whether a justice-involved youth is detained or released to the community to attend school and interact with peers. Specific time and attention should be spent to expound on the Detention Alternative Instrument (DAI) tool that is used to ensure that evidence-based methodology informs decisions about release to the community and what level of monitoring and supervision each youth should have. If RPS and community members better understood that VDJJ and courts only released youth deemed appropriate for the community, there may be less concern about the risk to safety for allowing those youth back into schools. VDJJ as a presence on local community-based initiatives that focus on both prevention and support will aid them in their ability to create a new narrative about the organization’s intentions and theory of change.

**Implications for Sector**

One of the most powerful aspects of my strategic project was that it operated across sectors. It was this exposure to other ways of thinking, knowing, and doing that created a significant learning container and foundation for my project to thrive. Specifically, the Children’s Cabinet in and of itself was a structure that allowed this to happen. Moving forward, more states should be deliberate in their creation of cross-sector structures that support the well-being of all children, especially the most vulnerable youth. This strategy could be a children’s cabinet, justice collaborative, or any cross sector group that is intentional about leveraging resources and aligning initiatives to
specifically address issues related to school to prison pipelines, especially as it relates to disproportionately across lines of race and disability. As a first step, cross sector collaboratives should focus on identifying assets of the communities they work in and within their own organizations. This will provide the foundation to further work on the following action steps, all of which support dismantling the school to prison pipeline. The following recommendations (Youth United for Change and Advancement Project, 2011) are not exhaustive but rather begin to address the need for clear structures to support initiatives that make the invisible visible and support the examination of the intricate relationship between schools and justice systems.

- Collect and report (on an annual basis) school-level disciplinary and climate data – disaggregated by race, gender, special education status, socioeconomic status, and English proficiency – from all schools and districts, including all charter schools and alternative schools.

- Have open and honest dialogue about the complex relationships between school systems and justice systems, their history, and the disproportionate nature with which it affects students of color and students with disabilities.

- Establish a process by which unusually high disciplinary rates – as well as pronounced disparities in such rates along race, gender, disability, socioeconomic status, and language lines – trigger required technical assistance and support, rather than punishment, from state and local educational agencies.

- Increase the availability of federal funds to support proven and promising school-based discipline frameworks to be implemented in a culturally relevant manner,
such as restorative justice/restorative practice programs, instead of exclusionary methods of discipline.

- Provide federal funding for comprehensive local or regional strategies involving multiple stakeholders – including, but not limited to, schools, the justice system, parents, and students – to reduce the use of exclusionary discipline and the number of students entering the juvenile and criminal justice system.
CONCLUSION

My strategic project allowed me the opportunity to take on various perspectives as I had the opportunity to work across sectors. Practicing humble inquiry – “paying particular attention to the way we ask questions which in turn creates the basis for building trusting relationships, which facilitates better communication and thereby, ensures collaboration where it is needed to get the job done” (Schein, 2013, p. 8) was imperative to my process. I used both my position as a “learner” and communication skills to connect with people all across Richmond City. This process emphasized my strengths as well as created opportunities for growth on how I, too, viewed some of our most vulnerable youth. Across the nation we see the ways in which young people, especially young people of color and with disabilities, are disproportionately punished. RPS’s policy regarding charged youth provided a window into how policies and practices can perpetuate the ongoing flow of students through the school to prison pipeline. However, RPS’s commitment to collaboration and communication created a proof point for the Commonwealth of Virginia on how localities can work across sectors and alongside families and communities to ask hard questions around equity and access.

Supporting justice-involved youth is work that cannot be done in silos; continued commitment across the sector is needed to make sustainable shifts in our mindsets and actions regarding those we perceive or who have actually come into contact with our justice system. America has a long history of condemning those we fear or deem unworthy of our mercy. Restorative justice is about bearing witness and seeing the humanity in everyone. My hope is that as we move forward as a country, we grow in our ability to bring to light the stories of the forgotten because
We are all implicated when we allow other people to be mistreated. An absence of compassion can corrupt the decency of a community, a state, a nation. Fear and anger can make us vindictive and abusive, unjust and unfair, until we all suffer from the absence of mercy and we condemn ourselves just as much as we victimize others. (Stevenson, 2014, p. 18)

My strategic project has bought to light the stories of young people like Miles who missed years of his education. However, based on the work I have been able to do alongside RPS and across sectors in Virginia, if Miles were charged with a related offence to Virginia Code § 16.1-260 (G), he would no longer be placed on homebased instruction. Instead he would be assigned to the ASPIRE academy, where he would be able to continue with his education, earn all necessary credits and electives for graduation, have access to a positive and supporting community, and be provided with the necessary wraparound and support services necessary for a successful and healthy future. In a short amount of time by working across sectors and in collaboration with the Richmond community, I made visible many of the collateral consequences of juvenile delinquency, specifically the ways in which school and justice systems can perpetuate the school to prison pipeline. Visibility combined with the narratives of students and families created urgency to improve outcomes and design a more trauma informed system. Martin Luther King, Jr. once said, “The arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends towards justice.” As a result of the knowledge and insight of dedicated and committed staff at RPS, as well as the efforts of the school justice collaborative, Miles, who had previously been out of school for two years, is back in his comprehensive school environment. Furthermore, because of my leadership, the power of Miles’s community, the willingness of his school system (RPS) to listen and improve its policies and practices, and support
from VDJJ and the Children’s Cabinet, Miles’s road to success bends a little bit more towards justice.


Kretzmann, J. P., & McKnight, J. (1993). Building communities from the inside out: A path toward finding and mobilizing a community’s assets. Chicago, IL: Asset-Based Community Development Institute, Institute for Policy Research, Northwestern University.


APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: SUPPORTING RPS JUSTICE INVOLVED YOUTH (RPS SYSTEMS FLOW CHART)
APPENDIX B: RESILIENCE ENHANCED MODEL (SYSTEM MAP)
APPENDIX C: KELLOGG’S TRUTH, RACIAL HEALING, AND TRANSFORMATION

Truth, Racial Healing, & Transformation (TRHT) Framework

The TRHT Framework consists of five areas, and the first two: Narrative Change and Racial Healing and Relationship Building, are foundational pillars for all TRHT work. And, the remaining three areas are Separation, the Law and Economy.
APPENDIX D: DUAL CAPACITY FAMILY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT MODEL

Figure 2: The Dual Capacity-Building Framework for Family–School Partnerships

THE CHALLENGE

Ineffective Family–School Partnerships

Lack of opportunities for School/Program Staff to build the capacity for partnerships

OPPORTUNITY CONDITIONS

Process Conditions
- Linked to learning
- Relational
- Development vs. service orientation
- Collaborative
- Interactive

Organizational Conditions
- Systemic: across the organization
- Integrated: embedded in all programs
- Sustained: with resources and infrastructure

POLICY AND PROGRAM GOALS

To build and enhance the capacity of staff/families in the “4 C” areas:
- Capabilities (skills and knowledge)
- Connections (networks)
- Cognition (beliefs, values)
- Confidence (self-efficacy)

FAMILY AND STAFF CAPACITY OUTCOMES

Effective Family–School Partnerships
Supporting Student Achievement & School Improvement

School and Program Staff who can
- Honor and recognize families’ funds of knowledge
- Connect family engagement to student learning
- Create welcoming, inviting cultures

Families who can negotiate multiple roles
- Supporters
- Encouragers
- Monitors
- Advocates
- Decision Makers
- Collaborators