

Restorative Schools Grants Final Report

January 2002-June 2003

A summary of the grantees' evaluation

Nancy Riestenberg
Prevention Specialist
Minnesota Department of Education

In the fall of 2001, the Minnesota Department of Education awarded five grants to school districts with plans to provide training to staff on restorative measures and classroom management. Part of the Prevention & Intervention Funding Process, the grants were funded by the federal Safe and Drug Free Schools Program, and were allocated through a competitive granting process in which 85 applications were reviewed. Teachers, administrators and paraprofessionals who used the skills and applied the philosophies taught reported various levels of improvement in discipline, classroom participation and professional satisfaction. The more intensive the training program, the more significant the outcomes.

The decision by state staff to allocate the money for staff development in restorative measures was based upon a three-year evaluation of 4 districts' implementation of restorative measures in individual school buildings (Legislative Report, 1998-2001). While using grant money to hire staff helped programs start applying restorative practices quickly, those "specialist" staff were the most likely to be let go once the grant money ran out. In the buildings that offered training to administrators, teachers and aides the changes were slower in coming, but the staff was less likely to lose their jobs at the end of the grant, thereby ensuring some continuity in practice after the grant ended. Given the uncertainty of grant awards and general funding for education, as well as the natural mobility of teaching staff, it seemed to be more cost effective to teach a lot of people "how to fish," rather than have them depend on a guide with a good boat for a limited amount of time.

The five grantees varied geographically and by scale and plan. They included:

- ◆ **Cass Lake-Bena Elementary**, a K-4 building on the Cass Lake Indian Reservation in Northern Minnesota. They trained all staff in a classroom management program (Responsive Classrooms), and included problem solving and helping students make amends in their discipline plans.
- ◆ **Tartan High School**, a 9-12 high school in the St. Paul suburban North St. Paul Maplewood Oakdale School District. They hired a teacher on special assignment who, along with one of the assistant principals, received training in conferencing, circles and restorative discipline, and then offered workshops, demonstrations and restorative conferences to staff.
- ◆ **Minneapolis Public Schools** is the largest district in the state, with 47,000 students speaking upwards to 87 different languages. Individual buildings submitted plans for staff development, and upon approval, received training and

coaching in the circle process, classroom management (Responsive Classrooms), or behavior management (Glasser/Gossen).

- ◆ **The Minnesota Association of Alternative Programs (MAAP)** is a statewide coalition of alternative learning centers and programs. MAAP member schools submitted plans for staff training and implementation, and upon approval received training in the circle process and restorative discipline, a behavior management approach.
- ◆ **Red Lake Falls School District** served as the fiscal agent and coordinator of the **RePoNaNoKi Restorative Schools Initiative**, serving districts in the Northwestern Minnesota counties of Red Lake, Polk, Marshall, Norman and Kittson. The predominantly rural districts and individual schools of this area requested funding for staff training, coaching and written resources on problem-solving discipline, circles and conferencing.

Summary of staff participants and training hours

<u>Grantee</u>	<u># participants</u>	<u># training hours</u>
Cass Lake-Bena	69	530
Tartan High School	93	972
Minneapolis Schools	680	2474
MAAP	434	4692
RePoMaNoKi	616	4602
Total	1892	

Training and Program Outcomes

The grantees programming and outcomes cannot be evenly compared one to the other, but they do provide lessons for staff development approaches. By far the most effective approach is to provide intensive training sessions followed by coaching, mentoring and additional advanced training. The buildings that were able to offer such staff development were able to show change and innovation: decreases in suspensions and behavior referrals to the office and innovation in teaching and skills applications. Training participants that were not part of a school-wide training effort found application to be more challenging—trying something new is easier with colleagues’ support or mentoring—but even so, there was satisfaction and application among individual trainees as well.

Cass Lake-Bena Elementary School identified “the need for children to be provided with the opportunity to learn restorative and relational skills,” and the district selected a research-based model of classroom management called Responsive Classrooms. Ninety-six percent (80/84) of the instructional staff participated in a week long training, and each grade sent a representative to additional consultations. “Staff attitude regarding the implementation of Responsive Classroom was very positive” as evidenced on staff surveys.

Staff consistently used key elements of Responsive Classrooms: 100% held morning meetings to teach social skills and “create a sense of belonging.” In the second year, an early problem solving intervention, “take-a-break for small things” and use of the Buddy Room to resolve conflicts increased. As a result (and even the principal was a bit surprised at the rate of change), their discipline referrals, in and out of school suspensions, expulsions and time in suspension decreased dramatically.

	<u>01-02 school year</u>	<u>02-03 school year</u>	<u>% change</u>
Discipline Referrals/ISS	335	153	57%
Average time spent in ISS	150 minutes	98 minutes	35%
Out of school suspensions	57	13	77%
# Of OSS days	114	68	
# Of students in OSS	41	13	68%
Expulsions	7	1	
Expulsion days	170	10	

The one area that they did not make a significant dent in was attendance, which actually decreased from about 92 % in the first year to 90 % in the second. The evaluator in the final report noted, “Attendance continues to be a stubborn deterrent to student achievement at Cass Lake-Bena Elementary School.” While student surveys indicate that students have a highly favorable feeling about school, they “in many instances have little or no say in whether they get to school or not.”

The evaluator attributed “extraordinary drop in discipline referrals and severity” to a number of factors:

- ◆ Responsive Classroom discipline program that provides for early intervention through ‘take a break for small things’ and a Buddy Room prior to formal referrals.
- ◆ Effectiveness of morning meeting in establishing a true sense of belonging for students;
- ◆ Buy-in by staff and time/experience with the program
- ◆ Ongoing training and support by Responsive Classroom consultant; and
- ◆ Effective administrative leadership and direction provided by elementary principal.

In addition, 69% of the students reported “they are better able to resolve conflicts since the program implementation.” The evaluator concluded, “Full implementation of responsive classroom had dramatically decreased lost instruction due to formal discipline referrals and suspensions.”

In addition to this effort to improve social skills of students, the school has several other enrichment programs, including an art and technology grant as well as a staff community building effort using the FISH Program. Even though the district is about 70% Native American and 90% of the students participate in the free and reduced lunch program, the

school's academic program rates 3 stars (of MDE's 5 star school report card system), on par with 70% of the rest of the elementary schools in the state.

Tartan High School used the grant to hire a teacher on special assignment (TOSA) who was to get training on restorative practices and train others at the school in those practices. The TOSA along with one of the assistant principals was trained in and used circles to repair harm and restorative conferencing. They also attended seminars, workshops and an international conference to gather the latest in practice and evaluation. Back at school, they offered information sessions, arranged for outside speakers on discipline, offered workshops to staff, developed a curricula, set up a library of restorative resources and conducted restorative circles and conferences with students and staff, students and students, and staff and staff.

In addition, the plan included enhancing a restorative component to the building's School Within A School (SWAS) program, an alternative program within the school for students that are struggling academically and with behavior. Teachers or parents refer the students to the program. There is a core staff of six who provide instruction and support to the students. The TOSA provided training on restorative measures to all SWAS staff. All staff also participated in a conference or circle to repair harm. The SWAS team conducted a circle each Monday as a means of building community and connection with the students.

This district also had an alternative to out-of-school suspension program. When a rule violation is serious enough to warrant such a suspension, the parents or guardians of the student are offered the option of having the offending student spend the suspension time in CAPP, which is housed off-campus. The staff helps students with academics, problems solving/making amends and community service. CAPP staff also received training in restorative practices.

By the end of the second year, 36% of the high school staff members had participated in a restorative process with a student. More significantly, all three administrators—the disciplinarians of the school—had used restorative measures 4, 25 and 30 times a month by the end of the second school year. One of the administrators had been partnering with the TOSA, but the other two assistant principals also used the option. 75% of the staff had received some training on restorative measures. Finally, in a survey at the end of the grant, 53% of staff, students and parents polled responded “yes” to the question, would you recommend this to others?”

The TOSA and administrator conducted 398 conferences, 145 of them consisting of the student, the teacher and the facilitator, and 253 conferences with only students and the facilitator. Twenty-nine circles were conducted, mostly with youth.

The number of behavioral referrals to the main office actually increased from 5667 in 01-92 to 5933 in 02-03, which could be due to staff feeling that the office was more effective in handling discipline so they sent youth there more often, or it could be due to the normal fluctuation of referrals, or due to students' inappropriate responses to extra stress

such as testing, the onset of the war, or other elements outside the control of the school that affect student behavior. At least three years of referral data is needed to establish the trend of behavioral referrals over time.

The TOSA set up a comparison study of students who participated in a restorative conference and students whose offences were handled in the formal system of the school. She matched students in the test and control groups with the same offence, i.e., students who went through a conference for insubordination with students who also were referred to the office for insubordination. There was a 1.6% decrease in recidivism for the same offence with students who had participated in a conference, versus those who had not. These students had been sanctioned in other ways—in school and out of school suspension, Saturday school—and had several offences on their record before being referred to conferencing.

Not measured was any increase in pro-social behavior, however, in several instances a restorative response resulted in significant positive youth development. Racial name-calling during lunch one day resulted in an argument in the hall among a group of girls confronting the name-caller later in the day. The assistant principal intervened, and with the TOSA conducted a circle to discuss the problem. Everyone agreed that there were problems with “racism and diversity at our school and that something should be done to try to fix them.” The girls set up weekly meeting with the TOSA to discuss and propose programs about diversity to improve the climate of the school, to be implemented the next school year.

The report concludes, “...all of the girls involved have become friendly with each other...the girls have become more invested in our school...the school as a whole will also benefit from the increased involvement of these students....”

The Minneapolis Public Schools Restorative Schools/Violence Prevention (RS/VP) project “was a capacity building initiative to deliver targeted staff development” and to embed restorative principles in the district discipline policy as well as at school sites. In addition to providing training to 18 of the 125 schools in the district, training was also offered to the district’s after-school program, Minneapolis Kids, to the district Team Building Support Group, the school nurses, social workers and chemical health specialists.

Altogether, about 680 staff participated in presentations and workshops on:

- ◆ Restorative principles and their application
- ◆ Circles as a communication process to teach, build community and repair harm
- ◆ Restitution/control theory, a behavior management approach
- ◆ Responsive Classroom, a classroom management program
- ◆ Application of restorative principles to bullying, sexual violence and team building
- ◆ Plan development.

The sessions ranged from one-hour introductions to intensive 4 day trainings with follow-up sessions or mentoring. Forty parents also participated in trainings and an estimated 700 students participated in circles as part of the modeling process.

The evaluation included action research, staff surveys, key informant interviews and suspension data from case study schools. There was much to glean from the final evaluation report, but two main issues stood out: the effect of intensive all staff training on suspensions, and the attempt to find the balance in a training plan between intensity, time and affordability.

Two buildings had significant changes in their suspension rates as a result of their application of restorative measures, Nellie Stone Johnson Elementary and Ramsey International Fine Arts Center, both K-8 schools. Ramsey built on 6 years of staff training on restorative discipline approaches, and developed an innovative community building activity that provided staff with a structure and reason to practice the circle process with students once a month (see SEAD in the Appendix). They also increased their use of circles to repair harm, especially for some challenging issues dealing the cultural differences.

Nellie Stone Johnson immersed its staff in the circle process. To start the 02-03 school year, the entire staff participated in 4-day circle training with three facilitators. In addition, the facilitators mentored teachers over the course of the year, observing them and in some instances facilitating circles in the teachers' classroom. Administrators used circles to repair harm, again, for some especially challenging issues in the school. (See Stories). Staff cohesion and support for each other was particularly high, given that the majority of the staff was new both to the school and to the profession: staff had, on average, under 4 years of teaching experience.

Both schools had success in getting staff to use circles as part of their practices. Both schools had strong administrative support and staff leadership. The outcomes regarding suspensions are striking:

	<u>01-02</u>	<u>02-03</u>	<u>% change</u>
Nellie Stone Johnson	800	292	63% reduction
Ramsey Fine Arts	272	149	45% reduction

The goal for the grant and the district goal is a 5% reduction in suspensions. The data from other schools was not available at the time the report was submitted.

In regards to training approaches, several techniques were reported back by all of the participating schools as very helpful.

- ◆ **Make the process accessible to staff.** For instance the SEAD model incorporated the circle process into the social emotional curriculum of the school, and gave teachers an opportunity and reason to practice the process. Responsive Classroom teaches staff to use the class meeting as part of the routine of the day.

- ◆ **Provide, rather than offer, observation and feedback.** One teacher leader at Follwell Middle School offered help, and got few requests. When she began doing classroom observations and giving feedback, she was well received. Staff participated in daylong site visits by Responsive Classroom trainers who did the same.
- ◆ **Use the communication techniques and skills that are taught to students with staff.** Several staff conduct staff meetings in circle, planning meetings in circle, use mediation skills for staff to staff disputes and dialogue circles in planning.
- ◆ **Provide modeling.** People learn best by doing, but sometimes it is easier if you can watch first. Many teachers felt more confident if they watched a circle with students, and they also saw their students in a different light, which was helped them expand their expectations for their class.
- ◆ **Identify and support advocates.** Teacher leaders or committees that developed the trainings, called the follow-up meetings, offered mentoring and support, or created innovations, are essential to keep momentum going. Many teachers have learned new ways of working that they like and find effective, but without support, have defaulted to the old way they always did things, however ineffective. School leadership must identify and support advocates, who in turn inspire and support of the staff.
- ◆ **Provide effective, practical whole school trainings.** When the majority of staff, teachers, support staff, administrators etc., goes through a training and all are familiar with the same concepts and skills, it is more likely that staff will respond consistently. In addition, the shared experience may improve staff cohesion.
- ◆ **Offer regular opportunities to reflect and process.** Trying anything new will have successes and failures, and will raise new questions. Debriefing sessions (circling about circles, as one staff puts it) helps to continue the training after the trainer has left, and allows staff to support and learn from each other.
- ◆ **Identify and support staff to be trainers.** One of the goals of the Minneapolis RS/VP grant was to build an infrastructure within the buildings: staff with experience and training that could in turn train or support others.

The main point from this list is that trainings cannot be offered alone and expect to be effective. Some kind of follow-up is required and should be planned for, either with the trainer, or with the leaders and advocates on the staff.

To view the citywide discipline policy, go to www.mps.k12.mn.us/discipline.

Minnesota Association of Alternative Schools (MAAP) is a statewide association of alternative learning centers and programs that provides training and advocacy for their members. With the awarding of the grant, MAAP established a leadership team of 25 who represented the association's nine regions. They served as a source of information about the grant to schools in their respective regions.

The leadership team participated in a 3-day training on restorative principles and practices, particularly the circle process. They then worked with schools in their regions to develop training and implementation plans. While the goal was to have 9 pilot schools,

sixteen schools sent staff members and community partners to trainings the first year. Over the 2 years, 295 individuals representing 47 programs attended at least one restorative schools training. The trainings ranged from one day to three-day sessions for a total of 782 training days. Many participants attended more than one training or follow-up training day. The topics included Circles, Non-Coercive Discipline, and Restorative Group Conferencing.

Goals for the grant included establishing the leadership team and pilot sites, and offering the trainings. The planners also wanted to also to increase community connection to the schools, and 8 programs were successful in involving community members in trainings. This was most successful with programs that were located where active community restorative justice programs or corrections agencies that used RJ practices existed. Pre-post web-based climate surveys were developed, and a number of youth filled them out; however, because of turnover in the student population, there were not enough students who had taken both surveys to make any comparisons. The web surveys can be viewed at www.maapmn.org.

In the staff surveys, staff reported that they use restorative principles and practices, the most common of which is the circle process, in a variety of ways. Here are some applications.

- ◆ Weekly, daily or homeroom classroom circles: used as a means of connecting with students and to build community and creating a positive school climate.
- ◆ Topics circle: challenging topics are discussed (politics, religion, racism). Students reported that they learned social skills: how to listen, how to talk respectfully, how to respect people who think or believe differently from yourself.
- ◆ Circles to repair harm: set up when students broke rules or caused harm. Fewer training participants reported using the process to repair harm, as that is a more difficult process. However, as the result of restorative measures training, individual schools reported significant changes in the way that they handled discipline.
- ◆ Study circles and writing circles: teachers would send around the talking piece to solicit responses from all students to questions or to conduct creative writing groups.
- ◆ Relapse circles: a recover high school used the circle for students who violate the sobriety requirement of the academy. The student could choose to facilitate their own circle explaining their relapse and plan to stay sober.
- ◆ Staff circles around administrator challenges, staff issues with leadership and each other.

In addition, a curriculum was developed on restorative principles, health realization and problem solving, infused with a language arts component.

Part of the evaluation of the grant included trainee satisfaction. Participants consistently ranked trainers above average, but even with high quality training, many participants reported that they were less confident they could do facilitate a circle to repair harm, the most complex of the processes taught. Every one wanted lots of practice and needed

support back at the school. The comprehensiveness of the training with lessons on multiple techniques, follow-up training sessions helped to solidify for some their skills. The schools that have the largest number of staff people trained and using the ideas and skills reported the highest level of satisfaction.

Gathering information about suspensions and expulsions, behavior referrals and average daily attendance was difficult. Each school kept different statistics.

Red Lake Falls: Like the other three multi site grants, the grant coordinated by the Red Lake School district was large and ambitious. The RePoMaNoKi Restorative Schools Initiative, offered training in restorative practices and classroom and behavior management to the school districts in 5 rural northwestern counties: Red Lake, Polk Marshall, Norman and Kittson. Seventeen public and two private schools were involved in the project. Six hundred sixteen staff members—certified and non-certified—attended sessions that ranged from two hours to three days in length. In addition, participating schools were given funds to buy resources for staff use.

The long-term outcome of the Initiative was for school personnel to implement a philosophy that emphasizes individual/group problem solving over rewards and punishments. Instead of excluding students, the student will make amends. Discipline will address the concerns of the victim/offender or involve the school community or community at large.

The objectives of the grant were to conduct effective staff trainings, measure staff utilization of the skills taught in the training, evaluate the effectiveness of the practices and develop policy for restorative practices in the participating districts.

Staff surveys after trainings indicated a high level of satisfaction with the training and a high level of activity after the training: 95% indicated that they understood the basic principles; 67% reported feeling comfortable using the skills learned. 67% shared concepts learned with other staff members, and 75 % of respondents indicated that they would continue to use the principles of restorative practice.

Surveys were also given regarding the outcomes of the group conferencing model. “Staff using group indicated that 83% of the time an agreement was reached” and 80% of the time the offender either “very much” or “moderately” complied with the terms of the agreement.

The circle process was used primarily in the classroom to “build better relationships among students, give them a chance to experience peace, teach them problem solving skills, and engage them in peacemaking at school in the home and in the community.” Survey questions on the effectiveness of the circle process gauged teachers and aide’s perceptions of student behavior: 35% felt that bullying and teasing were lessened and 40% indicated less student conflict and more student problem-solving.

Students were also surveyed on their experiences in the circle, which were primarily conducted in class as a social skills community building session. The elementary students indicated a higher level of satisfaction with the process than the high school students. Over 50% of the elementary students indicated that:

- ◆ They get along better with their classmates,
- ◆ They feel better about themselves
- ◆ They understand their classmate's feelings better
- ◆ They can solve more of their own problems
- ◆ Their daily school work improved
- ◆ They feel school is more fun, and
- ◆ They would like to see more circle sessions.

Forty percent indicated that they also participate in class more as a result of circle participation.

Between 10-15% of the high school students responded positively to the same questions as above, except 34% reported that they did understand their classmates better and they would like to see more circles. The evaluator concluded, "high school students are not as ready to admit as elementary students are, that the circle process is more beneficial than they would leave you to believe."

Two districts developed written School Board and Administrative policies for restorative practices. Staff felt that written policies were important; although they alone do not guarantee effective implementation, they do provide legitimacy.

Harder data about behavior referrals or suspensions was not collected at these schools. There were two reasons for this. Primarily, the funding was reduced in the last quarter of the grant period and the grant was shortened, so there was little if any time to collect the data. In addition, there often was little if anything to report from the elementary schools.

Many of the building in these rural districts share administrators, and the buildings are miles apart. Often, if a teacher wanted to make a behavior referral to the office there would be no one save the school secretary to send the student too. The consultant who provided the training found that the teachers would deal with most issues in the classroom, and if they and a student needed a break from each other, they would depend upon other teachers, sending the child to another room as a kind of discipline buddy system. Calling a parent to pick up a child is often impossible: parents may work 50 miles away from their home which may be yet another 15 miles from the school.

Continuation

The purpose of the grant was to increase the capacity of school staff in classroom management, behavior management and restorative interventions. In preparing this report, I had the opportunity to check back in with the grantees regarding continual use of the skills presented. Following is a brief report from each program.

Cass Lake Bena Elementary is continuing the use of the *Responsive Classrooms* program, with particular attention to increasing the ability of teachers to implement the academic choice component. Other grant money will be used to bring the *Responsive Classrooms* consultant back for a booster session.

Tartan High School retained the TOSA, however in her previous position as a school counselor. She and the assistant principal will continue to do business in a restorative way, but with less opportunity to work with the staff.

The Minneapolis School District again had to cut staff due to budget shortfalls, and as a result several of the new teacher who had been trained at Nellie Stone Johnson did not return in the fall. However, there was a commitment on the part of the remaining staff at both Nellie Stone Johnson and Ramsey to continue to use restorative interventions and for many staff to use the circle in classrooms for social skill building. In addition, the district received a Safe Schools Healthy Students grant from the US Department of Education, and part of the grant will be used to continue some of the training offered in the Restorative Schools grant.

MAAP has committed \$5000 for continued training to the alternative schools, and will offer workshops in restorative practices at their annual conference. Individual alternative programs are reporting continued use of the skills and practices, particularly those programs that had the greatest buy-in by staff.

Several RePoMaNoKi training participants reported conducting their own in-services at teacher workshops in August. Several of the participants who trained to be restorative conferencing trainers, offered a training on restorative group conferencing in August to 20 school staff members from surrounding school districts. They worked with the consultant and developed role-plays for conferencing at any grade level, thereby making the training exclusively school-focused.

In addition, the Stephen Argyle School District also received a Safe Schools Healthy Students grant, and they are offering restorative practices training for 11 of the 13 RePoMaNoKi school districts.

Addendum

Restorative Schools Grantees

RePoMaNoKi

Red Lake Falls Public Schools PO Box 399
Red Lake Falls, MN 56750
Alan B. Foley 218-253-2139
afoley@redlakefalls.k12.mn.us

Tartan High School
N. St. Paul Maplewood Oakdale School District
828 Greenway Avenue
Oakdale, MN 55128
Julie Koehler, Assistant Principal
651-702-8612
jkoehler@isd622.org

Cass Lake-Bena Public Schools
208 Central Avenue
Cass Lake, MN 56633
Pamela M. Olson, Principal
218-335-2201
polson@clbs.k12.mn.us

Minneapolis Public Schools
807 Broadway NE
MPLS, MN 554
Sarah Snapp
612-668-0862
sarah.snapp@mpls.k12.mn.us

Minnesota Association of Alternative Programs
C/O TrekNorth High School
2518 Hannah Avenue
Bemidji, MN 56619
Julie Johnson-Willborg
(218) 444-1888
mailto:jjw@treknorth.org

Innovations:

SEAD: Stop Everything And Dialogue

Over 6 years, Ramsey staff had training on behavior management: Restitution and Non-coercive Discipline; mediation; a social skills curriculum entitled Peaceful Partners and restorative uses of the circle process. With additional training, the school planned to increase the staff's depth of knowledge and daily practice of the skills they had learned.

In addition to training sessions, the planning committee developed an activity designed to improve school climate, teach social skills, and integrate art and communication practice while providing teachers with a concrete way to practice using circles in their classroom. This innovative approach was dubbed SEAD: Stop Everything And Dialogue. Each month every classroom in the school would hold a dialogue circle in an identified topic. The evaluator reported: "Each circle was followed by an arts activity to help students reflect on the dialogue and solidify their learning."

SEAD provided a "structured, easy way of classroom teachers to begin to use the circle process." The idea was a success: of the 54 staff surveyed, 88% reported using circle, either in SEAD or in other, additional ways. Staff also indicated positive change in staff attitude and perception towards students. And half the staff reported, "that use of restitution/circles improved time on task."

PEASE Academy: the restorative recovery school

In a recovery school, the students commit to working on recovery from chemical dependency addiction while becoming successful students. Since all of the students attending the school have been in chemical dependency treatment, the safety of the environment is the first concern of students, their families and staff. Applying restorative principles and the process of the circle has helped one recovery school create a truly respectful, student-centered program.

PEASE Academy, located in a church in Minneapolis, was the first recovery high school in the United States. During the last two years, through staff training and application the school has incorporated the circle process and restorative principles into its program. Circles are used on Mondays and Fridays for youth to check in about the highs and lows in their sobriety. All 65 students and about 5 staff participate in the circles.

Circles are also used during the week as part of in-depth learning and community building. Sometimes students take turns being the circle facilitator, or "keeper," and pose questions for the rest of the groups of about 12. The language arts teachers use the circle in their writing class, and some other teachers pass the talking piece to find out what students know, for instance, about the War of 1812. Using the talking piece ensures that each student will have the opportunity to participate.

But it is the circle for the student who has struggled with chemical use that has transformed the school the most. At PEASE, if a student uses and immediately asks for help with it, the student is able to remain at the school. They must be willing to learn from the experience and improve their recovery program. Students who are secretive about use must leave the school. When this occurs, often the student will return to treatment and recovery. They may come back to the school after their recovery program has stabilized.

Graphs:

Discipline Reports from Cass Lake Bena Elementary School
2001-2002 and 2002-2003