

May 2025

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# Restorative Justice Scoop



**MS447**

THE EXPLORATORY SCHOOL

**RJ Department:** Dallas Alexis, Sameera Abadi, Joy Canning, Administration

## CoCreate 2025

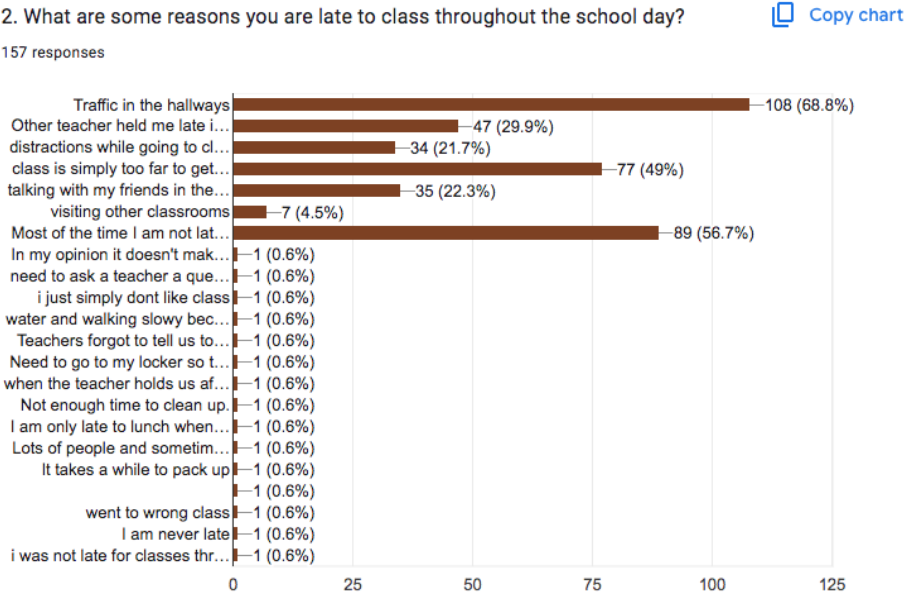
Paulo Freire, a revolutionizing Brazilian educator, believed that education should not be limited to theoretical learning but should also involve **action aimed at transforming the world**. He argued that engaging in **social activism** and **community organizing** is essential for achieving true liberation. He advocated for education that liberated students from the shackles of oppression and ignorance and believed that it should equip people with the knowledge, skills, and critical thinking necessary to **challenge oppressive systems and bring on a more just and equitable society**. For the past two years CoCreate has been a way to create change. It is a lunchtime conversation that includes multiple voices that lead to a collaborative plan of action. The students who participate are special advisors that use student voice to influence school and classroom practices through their expertise on what they and their classmates need or want. We believe in it as a transformative, liberating opportunity.

**6<sup>th</sup> Grade:** This year's 6<sup>th</sup> graders worked to educate the students on our "**Call It Quits**" protocol for ending hate speech, bullying, and unkindness. They were collaborators early in the year on the "Call It Quits" Advisory lessons. They also have worked throughout the year to **create lunchtime clubs** that increase feelings of interconnection and belonging, recognizing that belonging is crucial for positive and affirming school culture and is foundational to Restorative Practices. They have started the following clubs: Rock Climbing, NY Mets, Fashion, Board Games, and Food/Food Stories Share.

**7<sup>th</sup> Grade:** This year's 7<sup>th</sup> graders worked to address the **need for more courtyard play equipment** during lunch. They recognized that having more to do/play with each other increases opportunities for belonging and connection, both key MS447 values. They created a Donor's Choose Fundraiser to purchase items they selected for outdoor use. They also helped to assemble an outdoor storage unit to hold the new equipment. Currently they are working on a **School Lunch Petition** that they will send to the Chancellor, Superintendent, and Office of Food and Nutrition Services demanding healthier and more appealing lunch choices in hopes of limiting food waste and increasing healthy eating during school. They recognize that change needs to come from the system and institution and are demanding budgeting that was cut be reinstated. Next week they are meeting with our building's food services staff to get a tour of the kitchen and ask them their opinions about what they need and would dream of in their roles as food providers. They have created a survey for students to take and a [petition](#) for them to sign. They will begin this advocacy work next week.

**8<sup>th</sup> Grade:** This year’s 8<sup>th</sup> graders are addressing the **problem of student lateness** throughout the school day and the inequity of teachers “holding students after the bell” as a consequence. They created a student and teacher survey to gather data and have determined some root causes for student lateness in between classes. They dreamed up some solutions and are currently working on a presentation to share with the school administration. They hope to change this trend so that students are able to get to their classes in a timely manner and begin to encourage and hold each other accountable for timeliness. They also want to address some challenging institutional circumstances.

**Data collected by 8<sup>th</sup> graders from Student Lateness Survey:**



**RPET The Restorative Practices Equity Team**

**RPET** continues to meet monthly and functions as a **Thought Sanctuary** that translates dreaming and thoughts of equity and justice into action. Recently the students used **Dotmocracy**, also known as dot-voting or idea rating, a technique used in participatory processes to collect and recognize levels of agreement among a large number of people, to select the following **Action Teams: “The Rummage”, “Fairness Circles: Peer Facilitation”, MS447 Therapy Pet, Equity in Distribution of Work between subjects, and Snack Time/Food Equity**. These teams will collaborate together throughout the end of this school year and into next Fall.



**Restorative Practices  
Equity Team**  
(not all pictured)

**Student Equity Team**



## CoCreate

### Student Equity Team: Rummage Sale and Fundraiser for Justice

First annual “**The Rummage**” raised \$75.00 for [The Trevor Project](#), \$33 for [The Pad Project](#), and \$46.00 for [City Harvest](#) – Tons of excited thrifting was enjoyed by 447 and Brooklyn High School of the Arts, LEAP staff, and families. Thanks for donating your clothes, shopping at The Rummage, and donating to the organizations. This project was the culmination of several months work by The Student Equity Team. The organizations that were selected reflect the team’s passions for justice, equity, and dignity. The project generated a bunch of excitement and ended with a lot of pride and recognition of their agency to change their world! All donated clothing that wasn’t thrifted is being picked up by St. Mary’s Clothing Drive– the love continues!



### Update on RJ Book Discussion Group: For Grown-Ups at Home - now available, chapters 1-14

In the midst of the busy lives of families it has been challenging to gather enough interest to do a formal reading and discussion group. So, in lieu of a formal book discussion I will be including a few chapters at a time from **Talking Stick - Peacemaking as a Spiritual Path** in the RJ Scoop. While these are low quality images of the pages, I think that for those interested in learning more about the basics of keeping circle/holding council, restorative practices, and living restoratively, they can serve as a valuable resource. You can find the images [here](#). Currently the folder now holds chapters 1-14. I would also encourage those really interested in applying this work to your lives to purchase the book or reserve it from a library.

***Talking Stick*** presents an opportunity to establish deeper connections with others. By learning to speak honestly and listen devoutly, we can overcome our culture's hierarchical and punitive approach to conflict and relate to each other in a sacred manner that is egalitarian, liberating, and transformational. The book explains how to apply this practice with large and small groups and on an interpersonal level. It focuses on deepening relationships, healing old wounds, and restoring harmony among people.