



PRESS RELEASE

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San Diego County District Attorney & San Diego County Office of Education Pioneer School Restorative Practices Partnership with San Ysidro School District

SAN YSIDRO – San Ysidro School District (SYSD) kicked off the 2019-20 school year for over 500 teachers, staff and administrators with a Welcome Back Event on Wednesday, July 17, 2019 which included an unprecedented restorative practices training collaboration with San Diego County District Attorney, San Diego County Office of Education and San Ysidro School District. For the first time in the county, and likely in the nation, a County District Attorney partnered with a public school district to launch and provide hands-on instruction on how to implement school restorative practices. San Diego County District Attorney Summer Stephan and her team provided this robust professional development training for over 300 SYSD teachers and instructional aides!

School focused restorative practices help reduce crime, violence and bullying, to improve behavior, strengthen community, provide effective leadership, restore relationships and repair harm. Restorative practices are growing at schools around the country. It is a theory that focuses on mediation, empathy and agreement rather than punishment. The program uses restorative practices and social emotional learning strategies to improve behavior, attendance, and academic success while building community. Results from other school districts who are using restorative practices have seen it strengthen campus communities, prevent bullying, and reduce student conflicts. This has led to significant reductions in suspension and expulsion rates and, according to students, happier and safer campuses.

“Restorative practices in schools build strong and supportive relationships, develop empathy and communication and cultivate community” said District Attorney Summer Stephan, who provided the closing statements at the event. “The practices in turn prevent conflict and wrongdoing and help dismantle the school-to-prison pipeline.”

“Our district is grateful to San Diego County District Attorney Summer Stephan and her team for their steadfast dedication in ensuring the students of San Ysidro have access to cutting edge restorative practices that will guide them to become valuable contributors and leaders in our society” said Dr. Gina Potter, San Ysidro School District Superintendent.

The San Diego County District Attorney’s team, led by Marissa Bejarano, Deputy District Attorney Community Prosecutor South Bay Branch, coordinated the training. SYSD teachers, staff and administrators had the opportunity to learn about the positive effects restorative practices have on students and schools as the district moves forward in positively addressing the social emotional needs of our students.