

Discipline Equity/Advisory Task Force
February 9, 2017

Present:

Rick Carr, FIC

Stephanie Hayek, CECC

Gwenetta Posey, Dr. Howard

Joel Wright, Jefferson

Orlando Thomas, Mellon, Chair

Gianina Baker, Board of Ed.

Jill Johnson, ACTIONS

Tomeka Whitfield, Edison

Bryan Yacko, Central

Jeanne Smith, Mellon, Recorder

Celebrations

Jill Johnson reported that ACTION's ice cream social/open house was a success. She also reported that ACTIONS staff are competing in their own Biggest Loser contest.

Gwenetta Posey reported that one of her students won a writing contest for his/her grade level (5th). She also has students entered into the Pens to Lens competition and is hopeful they will do well so she can accompany them on the red carpet!

Joel Wright reported that the America Reads curriculum being piloted in co-taught sections of reading is progressing nicely.

Orlando commended Mindy Smith, Youth Employment Services (YES) director, for her accomplishments which included developing a new website to include all necessary program forms and securing new donors and/or increased donations from existing donors. Orlando also reported on the partnership that has been forged between YES and Care for You which is anticipated to assist students in qualifying for acceptance into the Summer Youth Employment Program. If these students are accepted into the program, they will represent an increase in enrollment of approximately 25-50, bringing the total enrollment to 125 or 150.

Discipline Data

Orlando reported that current discipline data looks positive with African-American suspensions going down 7%. The District goal this year is 5%. Suspension data submitted to the State will look extremely good since students who served their suspensions at ACTIONS will count towards in-school not out-of-school suspensions. Orlando noted that the data shared at the EEE Committee will differ from data reported to the State since suspensions served at ACTIONS will be counted as out-of-school suspensions for purposes of EEE reporting.

ACTIONS/Restore Update

Jill Johnson gave a detailed report (and handout) on the work of ACTIONS and Restore staff over the past semester. Topics included:

- ACTIONS attendance
- Early intervention supports
- Restore enrollment and student progress
- Tier 3 supports: safety aides, restorative conferences, classroom observations, support to grade level teams, and individual student support
- Professional development offerings

- Presentations to outside groups
- Administrative support for other campuses
- Participation in Adaptive Schools, TCI, and trauma trainings
- Middle school transition assistance
- Community outreach
- Various additional supports for students and staff

Jill noted that the criteria for acceptance into Restore may be tweaked next year. With this being the first year of the program, she and staff are learning as they go. In the future, they will also send letters of explanation to principals when they deny a student from participation in the program, so schools are clear on the reasons for denial.

Referencing the Kids Plus training ACTIONS staff did on Jan. 4, 2017, Gianina Baker noted that multiple trainings for Kids Plus staff would probably be helpful.

Rick Carr mentioned that he recently went to a legal conference for teachers of ED students and representatives from other districts were clamoring for a program like ACTIONS in light of SB 100. He noted that the Restore Program goes a step beyond ACTIONS, so he feels our district is “ahead of the curve” regarding alternative suspension programs and alternative learning options for students with behavioral difficulties.

SEL Status Report

Orlando reported that he and Jill are fleshing out a three-year, four-pronged MTSS Plan to support the District’s culture and climate professional development goal. The four components of the plan will be:

- 1) Integration of SEL standards into curricula,
- 2) Continued teaching of Positive Behavior Facilitation concepts,
- 3) Restorative Practices, and
- 4) Youth Mental Health (trauma) First Aid

Joel Wright said he would be interested in knowing more about successful Restorative Practices being used in other schools.

Tomoka suggested that students be pulled from Encore for a quarter in order to teach SEL objectives to pre-identified students, if permissible.

Rick reported that according to research on impacts to student learning, poverty, trauma, and outside influences account for 70% of the impact and what is done in school accounts for 30%. This means whatever schools do, they need to do really well.

Champaign Community Coalition

Orlando reported on the activities of the Champaign Community Coalition and invited members of this task force to attend. Meetings are the second Wednesday of the month in the Champaign Public Library Pavilion Rooms A and B at 3:30 – 5:00.

Code of Conduct

Orlando reminded the group that the second semester goal of this task force is to suggest revisions to the Student Code of Conduct for next school year. He asked members to elicit feedback from fellow staff members regarding suggested changes to the Code. He asked members to remind their colleagues that major revisions were made to the Code last year in light of SB 100 which resulted in giving administrators greater latitude in determining disciplinary consequences (“up to” language used to denote duration of consequences) with the goal being to reduce the length of time students are out of school due to disciplinary consequences. He also reminded members that research shows that longer suspensions do not result in improved behavior. He also asked that task force members let their colleagues know that it is the District’s philosophy that no suspensions should exceed three days unless expulsion is being sought.

A discussion of CICO as a Tier 2 intervention ensued. Comments included:

- Too many students on CICO.
- CICO being misused in some circumstances. Is it effective as a Tier 3 intervention?
- If student on CICO is required to carry “tally” sheet with them, it calls negative attention to them.
- If rewards (characterized by Tomeka as “bribes”) such as candy are provided to students, many of whom are African-American, it could be viewed as a racist and/or condescending practice. The example of white teachers throwing pieces of candy to African-American students was given, saying it was comparable to patting a dog on the head and providing a treat for good behavior.
- CICO can be helpful for tracking behavior and to keep in communication with parents.

Tomeka said an alternative to ILC needs to be created if suspensions cannot exceed three days. Orlando asked Tomeka if she had voiced her concerns about rewards and an ILC alternative to her building’s administrative staff. She indicated she has voiced her concerns but nothing has changed. She invited Orlando to visit Edison. He indicated he visits Edison. She suggested that he attend a grade-level team meeting to get feedback from teachers “in a safe space.”

Orlando said he would bring a sample MTSS plan (created in-district) for the group to review.

Next meeting: Thursday, February 23, 2017, 4:00 p.m., Mellon North Conference Room.

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