

**Discipline Equity/Achievement (DEA) Task Force Meeting
September 15, 2016**

Present:

Edie Adams, FIC	Rick Carr, FIC
Kaleb Carter, Centennial	Stephanie Hayek, CECC
Jill Johnson, ACTIONS	Gwenetta Posey, Dr. Howard
Kim Saveley, Franklin	Cari Vanderpool, Kenwood parent
Tomeka Whitfield, Edison	Joel Wright, Jefferson
Bryan Yacko, Central	Jeanne Smith, Mellon, Recorder
Orlando Thomas, Mellon, Chair	

Introductions and Celebrations

Everyone introduced themselves and explained why they wanted to be a part of this committee. Orlando discussed the goals of this committee by semester: 1) racial disparities in the area of school discipline and 2) revisions to Code of Conduct.

As a celebration, Bryan Yacko reported that Central's DRs and suspensions have decreased tremendously this year compared to the same time last year.

District Goals

To ensure this committee is action-oriented, Orlando asked everyone to take a CSI approach when discussing agenda items:

C = Concern (express)

S = Solution (offer)

I = Implement (discuss/provide ideas to)

Orlando shared information from the Lodi, California Unified School District where disparate discipline outcomes have resulted in a Consent Decree. He reminded the committee that our District was under a Consent Decree for nine years and despite supports and interventions implemented during the Consent Decree through the present, our discipline data continues to show major disparities by race with African-American students receiving more DRs and suspensions than their enrollment reflects. Generally African-American students make up 75-80% of suspensions and reflect approximately 35% of the District's enrollment.

Tomeka Whitfield suggested schools go into the community to work with families to assist them in preparing their children for the challenges of school. She said more hands-on meetings, forums, or home visits are needed to provide family/parent support. She said District staff continue to not reflect the minority makeup of our enrollment, so non-minority staff members need to pick up the mantle to provide the assistance needed by minority children.

Reducing DRs and Suspensions Among African-American Students

Orlando introduced the Superintendent's recommendation to reduce DRs and suspensions among African-American students by 5%. He asked how this message should be shared so it's not construed as, "Let's allow the African-American kids do whatever they want"? He then shared a "snapshot" of the Champaign community with statistics that showed increased poverty and violence in recent years. Orlando stressed the importance of discipline measures that are proactive, preventative, multi-tiered, and collaborative. He said teachers need to be reflective of their methods to ensure they're making efforts to keep kids in class while also keeping the classroom under control so others can learn.

Gwenetta shared a "2/10" example (developing relationships). She shared that she had a two-minute conversation with a student wherein she shared some common challenges they are both facing. After that

conversation, the student's demeanor and behavior changed for the rest of the day. She explained that the 2/10 philosophy requires that teachers spend two minutes a day for 10 days "connecting" with a student. By doing so, a closer relationship is formed that often leads to better outcomes for that student and the class as a whole.

Tomeka commented that different teachers have different tool kits to deal with students with myriad problems. She said the District needs to provide tools to teachers who don't have the tools to deal with the types of students we're discussing. Orlando responded to Tomeka's comment by saying people are who they are at their core, but they should be reflective and willing to make the changes necessary to deal with the students the District serves.

Cari Vanderpool said students experience trauma at home and there are practices that can be put in place at school to deal with such students.

Orlando reported that last year, as a result of a recommendation from this committee, a list of interventions was added to the consequence pages of the Student Code of Conduct to emphasize behavioral consequences that are not punitive. It was also discussed that, in most cases, before an administrator excludes a student from school (suspension), teachers are expected to:

- 1) Hold conference with student
- 2) Contact the parent by phone or meet with the parent
- 3) Notify the administration that a problem has occurred with a student and state the interventions that have been implemented.

Positive Behavior Facilitation

Orlando reported that this year's professional development emphasis will be on developing a positive culture and climate through the use of Positive Behavior Facilitation (PBF). He discussed the many professional development opportunities certified and non-certified staff will receive. He reported that Dr. Olive, developer of PBF, will also share concepts with the community during a January visit to Champaign. Orlando asked for suggestions on how best to recruit an audience for her message. Members offered the following ideas:

- Offer childcare.
- Offer food.
- Have social workers identify families that could benefit.
- Use volunteers and PTAs to get the word out.
- Don't target specific populations. Need to have a broad focus first.
- Put info. in elementary newsletters or in flyers sent via backpack at elementary or K-8.
- Select a location that is transportation-friendly, possibly a church like Pilgrim, Jericho, or Salem and have churches include info. in their Sunday announcements.
- Provide this training as one of several offerings to the public.

It was noted that despite doing the things listed above, trust between the community and the schools needs to exist before parents feel comfortable showing up at events like this.

Reflections on Information Shared

A couple of committee members mentioned that this year's freshmen group seems better behaved than last year's and that, combined with teachers making better use of their "tool belts," has resulted in a positive start to the school year.

Jill shared a more negative, yet real, perspective of discipline data thus far this school year. She reported that of the 51 suspensions that have occurred this year, 47 are African-American, two are Latino, and two are white. Most of the student are middle-school age. Four kids have 2+ suspensions.

It was suggested that discipline data be shared monthly with this group so that members have a clear idea of what's happening in the area of discipline month by month.

Although written feedback is provided to the classroom teacher after a student attends ACTIONS, it was asked whether a face-to-face conference including the classroom teacher, the ACTIONS teacher, and possibly the child and parent could occur. Jill explained that a re-entry conference is held with the school administrator, the child, and the parent the morning the student returns from his/her suspension. Teachers are free to attend, and do so on occasion, but everyone's time is at a premium, and additional meetings to discuss the student's time at ACTIONS might not be reasonable given everyone's other responsibilities.

Kaleb Carter stated that the reasons for the 47 African-American suspensions are multifaceted. He opined that a student's trust is gained more easily when the teacher looks like the student. He said many majority teachers don't identify or understand cultural differences among African-American students. He said, "They're noisier, their tone is sometime not good."

Tomeka asked, "What's 'good'?"

Kaleb said the point he was trying to make is that sometimes the teachers writing the referrals don't understand or share the same values as their students and this difference has to be bridged.

Rick Carr shared an interaction he observed between a minority student and a majority teacher that demonstrated how past negative experiences can taint the way kids interact with teachers in the future, resulting in the student not giving the teacher a chance because he/she is expecting a negative outcome.

Next meeting: Oct. 13, 2016, 4:00 p.m., Mellon North Conference Room.

:jes