EEE Committee Meeting Minutes
April 30, 2019

A meeting for the EEE committee took place on April 30, 2019, in the Mellon Board Room. Committee members in attendance were Angela Ward, Dr. Jennifer Ivory-Tatum, Dr. Laura Taylor, Orlando Thomas, Dr. Susan Zola, Kathy Shannon, Stephanie Eckels, Minnie Pearson, Jennifer Enoch, Jen White, Dr. Elizabeth deGruy

Those not in attendance were: Sara Sanders, Dr. Raina Dyer-Barr, Lee Ann Kelly, Raya Hegeman-Davis

Others in attendance were Mr. Bondurant (NAACP) and Katina Wilcher (Unit 4)

Welcome and Introductions

Mrs. Ward welcomed everyone to the meeting, stating this meeting will cover second-semester data from Special Education and Culture & Climate. Mrs. Ward asked members of the committee to review February minutes contained in their meeting folders. After minor corrections, Jennifer White, seconded by Jennifer Enoch to approve the minutes, made the motion of approval.

Culture & Climate Data Presentation

Orlando Thomas presented data from the first semester of the 18-19 school year for Culture and Climate. A dramatic decrease shown on District Suspension trend data is due to the district having a program called ACTIONS (alternative to suspension program), which is a program students can choose as an option to serve their suspension. If the student does not choose to attend ACTIONS they will be at home during their suspension, counting as an out-of-school suspension. A benefit of this program is access to missing schoolwork so students do not fall behind. If needed, transportation is provided for students who do not have transportation to the program. District suspensions are down from 502 to 241. Elementary suspensions have decreased from 316 to 141.

Q: Jen White asked if the next presentation could include a graphic on the pie chart showing data for suspensions not spent at ACTIONS and then show the percentage of students who attended ACTIONS.
A: Orlando replied, ‘yes’.

Middle and high schools have similar data trends with not much change. Many of those students using ACTIONS. District Suspensions by Ethnicity shows African Americans with the highest number at 191.

Q: What part do parents play in the ACTIONS program?
A: Parents help with transportation to the program as well as participate in family focus nights. Parents attend some evening meetings to talk about strategies students can use in school as well as outside of school.

Most students resort to physical confrontation to resolve conflict. As a part of the districts Second Step curriculum, the district is constantly working to fix and search for alternative ways to teach
80 to 90 percent of students would be responding to Tier 1 support.

Q: Jennifer Enoch asked, “Are the students attending ACTIONS included in the 98% of students never suspended?”
A: Orlando answered, “No they are not included in that percentage. It is a raw number”

There are 21 total alternative placements in the first semester. Students are encouraged to attend the READY Program as an Alternative Placement option. READY has a 10:1 ratio students to staff. A comprehensive approach to meeting students where the student is. Students who do not choose to attend READY are placed under homebound.

Q: Jennifer Enoch asked if the READY Program is state-funded and does the district pay for students to attend READY?
A: Yes, READY is state funded. Yes, the district pays tuition. The amount depends on what quarter the student begins at READY. A full years’ tuition at READY is less than what the district would receive from the state if the student were to stay in the district.

Mr. Bondurant stated, in reference to the homebound program, there are many discussions about how the homebound instructors are selected. He suggested having an identification system of what the students’ needs are and then given to the homebound instructor to help the student.

Dr. deGruy stated homebound goes through the Special Education department and is a voluntary service for teachers. The district tries its best to match teachers with the student’s needs but sometimes the district does not have the match.

Q: Is there specific training for the instructors?
A: There is an orientation explaining what homebound is and what teachers are designed to do but no specific training. Teachers are paid but on a voluntary basis.

Jen White will take homebound information back to CFT meetings to suggest teachers to apply.

The district's goal is to create avenues and options for students to be successful. Program initiatives the district is currently collaborating with are as follows:

- Novak Academy
- READY Program - Alternative to suspension program
- Early warning system to support students going from 8th to 9th grade
- All administrators are participating in equity work around race and will continue next year
- Partnering with Conflict 180 - restorative practices
- Brilliant.Bold.Beautiful (BBB) initiative - supporting brown and black girls district wide
- Goal Getters - in combination with the City of Champaign to wrap around our most challenging high school African American males
- Lead4Life
- Social Justice Seminars
- RISE - boys and girls in the district

Minnie Pearson recommended district members go out periodically to churches or other places and briefly present the initiatives the district is doing.

Kathy Shannon added, “two years ago administration put together a presentation and board members canvassed the community with the same message and everyone was involved. Info is
not just filtering through one person but through everyone."

Q: Listening to the different programs, how do you assess different accomplishments in the district's programs? How is the district changing them or making them better?
A: The district has added additional formal evaluations, one evaluation for Lead4Life with two years of data. Tracked reading levels and discipline for boys from Op Hope Jr. and four years of data on the Portfolio boys group.

Suggested the data being collected from the district programs be added to EEE meetings

Special Education Data Presentation

Dr. Elizabeth deGruy presented data for Special Education. The relative risk ratio of one person means this group has the same risk as a member of all the other groups to have a certain characteristic. Less than one, there is less risk and if greater than one, there is a greater risk in the group than in the comparison group. In Illinois, ISBE measures risk ratios of 3.0 and above to determine disproportionality findings. Looking at overall special education, African American students are 1.55 times more likely to be evaluated as SPED. Most of the numbers have stayed consistent. Numbers for Pacific Islanders, Asians, and American Indians usually look very skewed due to not having a huge population in the district.

Q: How does SPED account for students that fall into multiple disabilities?
A: Students may have more than one disability reason but the district only charts the primary reason. The district does not chart secondary because the state does not count it. The core team to make this decision is the administrator, parents, SPED teacher, general education teacher.

Q: Do you count English Language Learners as a category?
A: Emotionally disturbed, no, but it has been looked into. Not as good of a measure due to parents declining services even if kids qualify for them.

Q: What is the risk ratio for African American kids for all special education if you included all categories except autism?
A: We do not choose. Trying to look at disparities overall. We would not pull out disability categories that way.

Q: Minnie states is there ever a time that we will look at ourselves as Black people?
A: Dr. deGruy stated this data does pull as black but the EEE committee has asked it to be reported as African American. The district can take a look and the committee can decide if we want to go back to stating black.

Q: Jennifer asked, “as a district does everyone try to treat African American Vernacular English as a language rather than an improper version of a standard?”
A: In ELA we try to measure the skill versus the articulation and subject-verb agreement. The skill is more can you make a claim and support it with evidence rather than measuring if the sentence was said in accordance to traditionally recognized standard English.

Specific Learning Disabilities (SLD) - Our African American students are 3.7 times more likely to be identified as SLD. This is the area where the district has been cited by the state multiple years in a row. The district did not always have this issue until the state changed guidelines on the identification process for what they consider SLD.

Q: What was the change from the state?
A: It used to be an ability-achievement discrepancy, where an IQ test and an achievement
test were performed. If the achievement test was too low the student would be identified as SLD no matter the difference between the two. Now they use what is called dual discrepancy formula. Used by looking at a single point in time, which is the achievement test, and then over time. They look at the student’s progress in instruction compared to the average student. That is what was changed at the state level, which then affected a big population of our students.

Adding better, more effective Tier 1 supports at the younger grades in the district to boost all of our African American achievement would more than likely decrease this risk ratio.

Dr. deGruy continued presenting with Intellectual Disability, Speech/Language, Developmental Delay, and Emotional Disability.

Mrs. Ward pointed out the opportunities for summer school at the middle school and elementary school levels, brochures were placed in committee members’ folders.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by:
Liz Smith