EEE Committee Meeting Minutes
October 25, 2018

A meeting for the EEE committee took place on October 25, 2018, in the Mellon Board Room. Committee members in attendance were: Dr. Susan Zola, Angela Ward, Dr. Elizabeth deGruy, Orlando Thomas, Dr. Laura Taylor, Kathy Richards, Sara Sanders, Dr. Raina Dyer-Barr, LeeAnn Kelly

Those not in attendance were: Jennifer Enoch, Dr. Jennifer Ivory-Tatum, Jen White, Kathy Shannon, Minnie Pearson, Stephanie Eckles

Welcome and Introductions

Mrs. Ward welcomed everyone to the meeting. She noted today's meeting is the second half of our data presentation and will focus on Special Education and Discipline. The first half was presented at the August 23rd meeting and focused on academic data throughout each grade level. Mrs. Ward asked members of the committee to review minutes for approval. Angela mentioned a note would be taken regarding the district collecting data on students selected for gifted classes but chose to decline those classes. A motion for approval was made by LeeAnn Kelly. Angela requested to redact a sentence and then seconded the motion for approval.

Special Education Data Presentation

Dr. Elizabeth deGruy presented the data for Special Education (SPED). Explaining the relative risk ratio as a way to express the probability of something happening to a particular group compared to the probability of the same thing happening to the comparison group, a binary comparison. 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, if you are a student who is Caucasian, your risk ratio is .8%, slightly less than the rest of the group. If you are an African American student, your risk ratio is almost 1.6% as being identified as a child with a disability and having an IEP. Most of the numbers have stayed fairly consistent. Numbers for Pacific Islanders, Asians, American Indians usually look very skewed due to not having a huge population in the district.

Specific learning disabilities (SLD) is based on a dual discrepancy model, meaning they have significantly lower scores at any point in time and over time. African American students are approximately 3.8% more likely than members of other groups to be identified as a child with a learning disability. Dr. deGruy states, “this is not about poverty and that discussion must end. This is an issue about race and it should be addressed this way.” The district has been monitored by the state due to the district percentages being above 3.0 for the last 3 years. The state asked the district to analyze the pieces going into special education identifications, procedures, and policies. The state then reviewed that information and responded, the districts disproportionality was not the result of miss-identification or discriminatory practices. It will continue to be a violation until it drops under 3.0. The district has non-procedural things to work on. Autism within special education is over-represented in caucasian students, which happens nationally in this category. Unit 4 does not
require a medical diagnosis, unlike some districts. Intellectual Disability numbers have improved. The district used to be in the 3% range back in 2013 but has since then decreased to 1.6%.

Dr. Raina Dyer asked, “if there is an over-representation of African American students in SLD, what accounts for the over-representation of Caucasian students in autism?” Dr. deGruy responded, “there are a number of theories and emerging research associated with fathers that are having kids at an older age. Also associated more with higher SES and white communities. No definitive answers but there are some theories at this point.”

Developmental Delay (DD) is related to birth/trauma, access to services, lack of early intervention. Students qualify for developmental delay if they have not qualified in another area such as; communication, motor, emotional delay. Students can only qualify as DD until they are 8 years old.

LeeAnn asked if there has ever been tracking of students in the Early Childhood Program (ECP) or Head start program of where students fall in these categories? Does lack of access have to do with this? Dr. deGruy stated preventative programs are hard to track until it is done in the community. Our districts students in ECP can be tracked, but it is all preventative, no comparison.

Emotional Disability (ED) numbers are really looked at when the number gets to 2.0. The highlighted chart shown in the presentation represents when the Pavilion residential treatment center opened more beds in that school year. The state does not count in their numbers, our district does. So a higher risk ratio for ED as well.

Discipline - Culture and Climate Data Presentation

Orlando Thomas started with the district suspensions trend data. Stating numbers have decreased due to students attending ACTIONS (Alternative Center for Targeted Instruction and ONGoing Support). Students that attend ACTIONS, their suspension does not count towards an out-of-school suspension, hence the drastic decrease in numbers. The combined systems of support are designed to work synchronously to replace students’ undesirable behavior with appropriate social skills.

Elementary suspension data has increased as a result of 18 K-3 students. The district is spending some time really developing foundational skills; sitting on the carpet, walking down the halls appropriately, playing with others. No real changes in Middle School and High School trend data. Moving in the right direction but still a large disparity if you look at the ethnicity of the students that are being suspended. Physical Confrontation has been the leading reason for ‘Suspension by Incident’ in 2017-2018. Students do not have conflict management skills other than to get physical. The district is actively teaching those skills in ACTIONS. 96% of our district's students come to school and have never been suspended. 36 out of 10,000 students have had three or more suspensions.

A request was made to change the “Expulsions” slide to read, “Placement in Lieu of Expulsions”. Unit 4 does not expel students to the street. The 35 students shown for 2017-18 are students that have been re-assigned to alternative education programs.

Multiple initiatives are in place to support students and families in the community. The district meets quarterly with the chief of police to keep lines of communication open between the two. Centennial High School hired a new resource officer. Unit 4 continues to work with the Youth Assessment Center, which recently relocated to the Round Barn Center. YAC has hired four case managers assigned to our five secondary campuses.
Dr. Laura Taylor mentioned a new boys high school group called Goal Getters. A meeting with the district, the city, and the Champaign police department felt they needed to wrap around some students from the high schools last year. 15 boys attended group meetings in the summer with numbers rising now that school is back in session. Students meet during Lunch and one meeting at night on Monday’s. Core kids in the group doing well and behavior is better. Outside services are provided and connections are made for these teens as well.

Mrs. Angela Ward mentioned her Portfolio boys group, which has not been brought up in a while. The boys were in 3rd grade when the program started, those same boys are now in 7th grade. None of them have been in trouble for suspendable offenses.

Angela also shared a new initiative Unit 4 has started called Brilliant, Bold, Beautiful (BBB). A group created by the district administration and Dr. Zola for black girls within our schools. Community members have joined those meetings and are involved in the initiative as well. The three areas of focus are mentorships, availability of good outside experiences and professional development for staff and teachers who may not know what it is like as a young black girl. Next district/community meeting will be November 19 from 5:00-6:30 pm at the Mellon Administration Building.

Orlando Thomas gave a special thank you to the READY Program. They take some of the most challenging students in our district and do amazing things with them such as the 5k race students participate in. The district is in the process of writing a competency-based education grant. Unit 4 has volunteered to partner with the READY Program and Carle Hospital. It is a non-traditional way for students to receive credits and a pathway into a career. Carle is opening up tech positions for the students who participate and complete the 8-12 week program, guaranteeing them a position at Carle once they have finished.

LeeAnn Kelly mentioned under, “Suspensions by Incident, Orlando stated physical confrontation is something that is taught in ACTIONS. How much of those SEL skills are taught in the regular classroom?” Social Emotional Learning curriculum was purchased for every school and schools are able to pick and choose those lessons based on the discipline within their school. Trauma-based interventions going on in every school, as well as, Psychologist and Social Workers already teaching the Second Step in the middle schools.

Next EEE meeting will take place on Thursday, February 21, 2019.

Respectfully submitted,

Liz Smith