

Discipline Equity/Advisory Task Force
January 28, 2016

Present:

Katie Ahsell, ACTIONS
Gwenetta Posey, Dr. Howard
Laurie Scott, Mellon
Orlando Thomas, Mellon, Chair

Stephanie Hayek, CECC
Bryan Yacko, Central
Ellen Thomas, ACTIONS
Jeanne Smith, Mellon, Recorder

Legal Review of Code of Conduct

Orlando shared the redlined version of the Code of Conduct that attorney Jennifer Smith provided at the District’s request, in light of changes needed to be in compliance with SB 100. Jennifer had only had time to review the consequence sections but will review policy and other verbiage later. The majority of changes were made to eliminate language that calls for mandatory suspensions. Wording was changed to read: “up to” (stated number of) days.

Orlando asked for feedback to the changes proposed by legal counsel.

Katie Ahsell noted that for schools that have tight discipline systems in place, this wording will provide greater flexibility in determining consequences. For schools that don’t have good systems in place, professional development may be necessary for administrators and/or teachers.

The task force discussed how much information should be included in the Code regarding Restorative Justice since different campuses are at different stages of implementation and parents might misconstrue the level to which their child’s school uses this intervention. It was suggested that the term “Restorative Practices” rather than “Restorative Circles” be used since Restorative practices run the gamut.

The group discussed whether a third column that lists interventions should be included in the Code itself or possibly just on the back of the laminated Discipline Code Reference Guide that administrators use since they will be the ones determining whether or which interventions should be utilized. Orlando favored having a third column or list of interventions in the Code itself in order to provide transparency for parents.

Suspension Letter Templates Provided by District Counsel

The group reviewed suspension letter templates provided at a recent training by Franczek Radelet attended by Tom Lockman. Separate letters for suspensions of 1-3 days, 4 days, and 5-10 days were shared. The group reviewed these templates in comparison to current District templates for elementary and secondary use. Ultimately the two templates will need to be merged and reviewed by Jennifer. Suggestions for revised letters included:

#6 – “Was the student given an opportunity to respond to the Allegations? _____ Y _____ N
Student response: _____”

It was suggested that a universal statement to the effect of: The student was provided an opportunity to respond to the allegations,” be inserted.

#7 “Date and means of parental notification: _____”

It was suggested that a drop-down menu be available to select the date and means of notification.

#9 “Does the student’s continuing presence in school pose a threat to school safety or a disruption to other students’ learning opportunities? _____ Y _____ N”

It was suggested that template language to the effect of: “Due to the nature of the incident, this behavior constitutes a safety risk and/or disruption to other students’ learning opportunities.”

#10 “What steps have been taken to resolve such threats or minimize disruptions?”

It was suggested that we use current suspension letter verbiage regarding interventions and supports.

#11 “Is a shorter suspension appropriate? _____ Y _____ N”

It was suggested that a universal statement that provides the rationale for the duration be used, such as: “After careful consideration by school administration, the duration of your child’s suspension was deemed to be appropriate.”

#12 “Plan for reintegration: _____”

It was suggested that the wording for what we currently term the “re-entry conference” be worded in a more positive vein emphasizing the fact that the school “welcomes your child back to the school community” in order to “plan for his/her success.”

Additional Suggestion: Revise “Introduction to ACTIONS” parent letter that is attached to all Notices of Suspension to make it more friendly and welcoming.

Other

Katie Ahsell indicated she would like this task force to discuss how different schools conduct re-entry conferences.

Homework

Orlando asked the group to start thinking about how best to communicate to administrators and staff the disciplinary changes resulting from SB 100. Bryan suggested beginning with a disclaimer: SB 100 does NOT mean you cannot suspend.

Next meeting: February 11, 2016, 4:00, Mellon North Conference Room.

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