Discipline Equity/Advisory Committee Meeting  
January 9, 2020

Present:
Sushma Bridgemohan, Westview  
Kathy Shannon, Board of Ed.  
Heather Vazquez, Board of Ed.  
Joel Wright, Jefferson  
Jeanne Smith, Windsor (recorder)  
Jessica Hines, Jefferson  
Gwenetta Posey, Dr. Howard  
Moriah Ward, Central  
Bryan Yacko, Central  
Orlando Thomas, Windsor (chair)

Celebrations
Gwenetta Posey shared the flyer from this year’s U of I Field Trip Day (Nov. 5, 2019) and recommended this activity for students in grades 4-12. Students spend the morning at the State Farm Center engaged in interactive activities with U of I colleges and then watch a live women’s basketball game.

Orlando announced that the District would be receiving 400 new radios with repeaters once FCC approval is granted, which is anticipated soon. He credited John Gutzmer for taking the lead on this.

Heather Vazquez reported that the District pool at Centennial looks amazing and has the names of each high school on the blocks. Orlando reported that South Side renovations are about done and look very nice!

Code of Conduct
Orlando explained that most of the future meetings will be spent considering revisions to the Code of Conduct. He said major changes were made three years ago in response to SB 100. Those changes included more individualized consequences for offenses (“up to” language), more administrator discretion, and an emphasis on restorative actions (listed on all consequence pages). The decision to use restorative actions rather than punitive consequences was discussed. It was noted that restorative actions are almost always considered and may be used alone or in conjunction with a suspension. Kathy Shannon stated sometimes time away from school is restorative for the students and staff affected by the offending student’s actions. Administrators take into consideration a number of factors prior to determining a disciplinary consequence such as:

- the student’s age
- seriousness of the offense
- frequency of inappropriate behavior
- circumstances and intent
- potential effect of the misconduct on the school environment
- relationship of the behavior to any disabling conditions

Orlando reported that despite ACTIONS being in its sixth year, some parents whose children get suspended still don’t seem to be aware of the ACTIONS option. The group discussed ways to
better “advertise” this program. Ideas included a more detailed description in the Code of Conduct and a press release via the Communications Dept.

Copies of this year’s Code of Conduct were distributed and members were asked to review them and bring any concerns they or fellow staff/parents have to future meetings.

**Students Wanting to Dispute School Rules**

Committee member Jen Hinds had sent an email to the group asking for a “democratic process” by which students could contest school rules. After speaking with Jen about the issue the day before this meeting, Orlando agreed to have a discussion with the full group. Jen was not present at this meeting, but Orlando explained her goal to the committee. It was noted that a process exists already for appealing suspensions, but this is generally initiated by the student’s parent, not the student. It was thought that Jen’s intention was more rule-related than discipline/consequence-related. The group discussed several possibilities: peer juries/mediation, Building Council, and Student Council. Bryan Yacko brought up a recent issue initiated by a Central student regarding the school’s tardy policy. He explained that the student emailed school administrators about his concerns and Principal Joe Williams informed the student he would consider his email and respond to him.

After much discussion, the group agreed that an informal, internal process exists whereby students can speak to any staff member or administrator about rules they might want to contest. Some rules are subject to consideration for change while others may be mandated by law, safety concerns, etc. It was thought that a codified process is not needed; however, at the beginning-of-the-year behavioral expectations assemblies/meetings, administrators should highlight the fact that students may contest rules or discuss concerns with any staff member or administrator either verbally or via email. Orlando’s office will provide administrators with verbiage that should be shared with students in these assemblies/meetings beginning fall 2020.

**Next meeting:** January 23, 2020, 4:00 p.m., Windsor large conference room.

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