

Discipline Equity/Advisory Task Force
October 13, 2016

Present:

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

Celebrations

- Jill reported that ACTIONS had a positive article in *The News-Gazette*.
- Cari Vanderpool wrote an opinion piece in *The News-Gazette* in support of the referendum.
- Suzanne Meislahn and Rick Carr, teachers of Behavior: Functional Assessment, Planning and Data Collection, had several people attend this class which looks at the function of behavior and integrating positive supports to teach different replacement behaviors.
- Orlando reported that the District had a goal of training 200 people in PBF this year. Only 10 people showed up for the first session of four sessions, so the PBF training team met to discuss ways to encourage more people to enroll. A “refresher” will be held tomorrow at Jupiter’s, but staff need not have taken PBF in order to attend. Food and give-aways will be provided. The PBF planning team will later develop a plan for refreshers throughout the year.

Discipline Data

DR and suspension data comparing this year to last year was shared. It was noted that Garden Hills was missing from last year’s data. Bryan Yacko reported numbers for 2016-17 referrals do not match the data the school has. Given these discrepancies, it was difficult to know whether the slight downward trend of DRs and suspensions among African-American students was real. The racial disproportionality of the data, nonetheless, is continuing.

Interventions

Orlando asked those around the table to name a Tier 2 support used at their campus. The following responses were given:

Franklin – Teachers go to ISS to reconnect with students before students return to classrooms.

Edison – SAIGs being used to address academic or social interactions. Edison has girls’ groups, peer mentoring, and other smaller groups.

Jefferson – Jefferson uses mentors from the community.

CECC- CECC uses informal problem-solving team before progressing to RtI.

Dr. Howard – Dr. Howard uses colleague consultation. Colleagues go into other classrooms and advise on different ways to handle various student situations.

Orlando reported that in response to SB 100, all suspensions this year range from 1-3 days maximum unless expulsion is being sought. He explained that research does not support that longer suspensions change behavior. MTSS is thought to be more effective than a longer suspension duration.

Building Positive Relationships with Students

Since building positive relationships with students is key to an environment conducive to learning, Orlando asked everyone to share a way to do this. Responses included:

- Greet students at door with smile
- Headlines – Student writes a one-line description of them or what they did, balls up the piece of paper on which it's written, throws it in middle of a group of students, and students guess which headline fits which student.
- Ask about students' interests and respond with enthusiasm.
- Spend non-instructional time with them (cafeteria, going to games, performances, etc.)
- Say "hi" and be unconditional with students who may be more difficult to get to know.
- Try to have more positive interactions than negative interactions with each student.
- Find an area where a student is successful and develop relationship around that (behavior-specific praise).
- Be real with students. Show you care about them even if they make mistakes.
- Show your own vulnerabilities in order to build connections.
- Increase opportunities for them to respond in order to experience academic success.
- Keep current with trends and culture so you know what's happening in their world and connect on that basis.

Recruitment of African-American Teachers

Orlando reported that the Minority Recruitment Committee holds social events (three this year) in an effort to recruit and retain minority staff. Minority recruitment is a high priority for HR. Minority teachers represent a shortage area nationwide. June 6 will be the Committee's culminating event, the Minority Retention Retreat.

Cultural Awareness

Orlando reported that Eddie Fergus, cultural awareness consultant used last school year, has a new book entitled: *Solving Disproportionality and Achieving Equity: A Leader's Guide to Using Data to Change Hearts and Minds*. He encouraged the group to read it.

PBF

Orlando asked for input on ways to increase PBF enrollments and this group's impression of PBF's value, since many of the committee members were trained in it.

Mallory – Second favorite training ever received. First three days are like therapy. Makes you more aware of yourself and the things you do and think. PBF forces you to grapple with your biases. First favorite training was Cognitive Coaching.

Gwenetta – Took it first year of teaching. Learned about water line and that sticks with me today.

Kim – Important for entire staff to take it. Need immersion as a building.

BTW and GH did whole-staff trainings in the past.

Rick - PBF threads are often interwoven in other trainings.

Jill – We have staff conversations about whether issues are about them or the students. Common language is helpful and allows us to have more difficult, deeper conversations.

Orlando reported he believes the “healing environment” facet of PBF is key to improving classroom behavior. He read aloud from Dr. Olive’s PBF textbook the characteristics of a healing environment. He indicated teachers can control the classroom environment, but can’t control what kids bring with them to the environment. He reported that the next elementary-wide Culture and Climate professional development session will focus on the healing environment.

A committee member asked what the thinking was in offering PBF training only at the elementary level. Orlando reported that with PD time being at a premium, middle and high school administrators expressed a desire to focus on academic priorities rather than culture and climate.

It was reported that trauma training being offered by the District will dovetail well with PBF.

PBF January Training with Dr. Olive

At the last meeting, Orlando reported that Dr. Olive would be in town and available to give a presentation to parents/community members. He asked this group for input on designing this speaking engagement.

Many ideas were discussed. By the end of the meeting, the following ideas were solidified:

Date: January 4, 2017 is the preset date. The group discussed the fact that this is a Wednesday night and maybe not the best day given the conflict with church obligations. The group advised Orlando to investigate the possibility of a different date during second semester. The suggested time is 6:00 – 8:00 p.m.

Location: Franklin Middle School

Childcare: To be provided by volunteers. Jill will speak to Greg Johnson about the possibility of using Centennial Interact or Little Chargers students.

Food: Wood and Hog BBQ. Determining how much food to order remains a question since RSVPs may not be a good determiner. Can PTAs help in this regard?

Transportation: MTD

Messaging: Much discussion ensued regarding how to make PBF relevant and interesting enough to parents to entice them to attend this informational evening session. It was mentioned that the District has difficulty attracting *teachers* to enroll in PBF, so the draw has to be strong to entice parents. (It was acknowledged that PBF training is 32 hours and this session would only be two hours.) Towards the end of the meeting, the consensus was to hold a resource fair to include community agencies and school representatives that could offer assistance to parents in a variety of ways and to have Dr. Olive as the keynote speaker. More discussion on this topic will take place at next month's meeting.

Next meeting: November 17, 2016, Mellon North Conference Room, 4:00 p.m.

:jes