

Discipline Equity/Advisory Committee
September 14, 2017

Present:

Edie Adams, FIC	Eric Bales, Parent	Bruce Brown, Board of Ed.
Rick Carr, FIC	Jesse Guzman, Jefferson	Stephanie Hayek, CECC
Jennifer Hindes, Centennial	Cindy Lockett, Mellon	Kathy Shannon, Board of Ed.
Tatiana Stine, Robeson	Lindsey Trout, ACTIONS	Joel Wright, Jefferson
Bryan Yacko, Central	Orlando Thomas, Chair	Jeanne Smith, Recorder

Introductions/Committee Charge

Committee members introduced themselves and explained why they wanted to be a part of this committee. Orlando discussed the goals of this committee by semester: 1) address racial disparities in the area of school discipline and 2) suggest revisions to Student Code of Conduct. He also discussed the impact of SB 100 on the Student Code of Conduct effective with the 2016-17 school year.

Meeting Norms

The group decided on the following norms:

- 1) Be respectful of others' perspectives and experiences and give the floor to the speaker.
- 2) Start and end on time, use meeting time efficiently, and stick to agenda.
- 3) Be respectful of work that has been done earlier in the school year and don't rehash conversations on topics where decisions have already been made.
- 4) Maintain confidentiality—no staff or student names.
- 5) If committee cannot reach consensus, table issue until a later time. (Revisit this norm next meeting.)

Discipline Data

Orlando briefly reviewed out-of-school suspension and alternative placement data. Orlando noted that the appearance of a drastic decrease in suspensions from 2015-16 to 2016-17 is not as drastic as it appears. He explained that in 2015-16 suspended students who attended ACTIONS had their suspensions counted as out-of-school suspensions but in 2016-17 they were counted as in-school suspensions. Moving forward we will be better able to compare "apples with apples."

Highlights of the data presentation included:

- Sixty-one percent of students who were suspended last year attended ACTIONS. The goal is 70%. Transportation difficulties are a frequent reason some students don't attend ACTIONS.
- The two most common reasons for suspension are: 1) physical confrontation with student and 2) physical confrontation with staff.
- The percentage of students in the entire district who are suspended is only 3%.
- The profile of the most frequently suspended student is: male, African-American, low SES, low academic achievement, and lack of engagement in extra-curricular activities.
- Last year the District goal was to reduce suspensions among African-American students by 5%. The decrease last year was 6%.
- Teacher-student mediations were an effective deterrent to subsequent suspensions for 86% of students who participated in them. It was noted that some teachers are not willing to participate. One explanation for this could be that mediations consume 50 minutes of a teacher's "free" time (lunch, plan period).

District Supports

Orlando shared an extensive list of interventions/supports designed for at-risk students. He said the District is constantly questioning whether the inputs equal the outputs. Towards that end, the District will reinstitute program evaluation to try to ensure monies designed to improve student achievement are meeting that goal. Three programs per year will be evaluated and, to maintain objectivity, the person gathering the data will be someone unassociated with the particular program.

Orlando reported that numerous targeted supports are provided to B.T. Washington, Garden Hills, Stratton, IPA, and Dr. Howard based on their percentage of low SES students. The question was raised whether the interventions and supports provided at those five campuses could be expanded to other elementary schools or to the secondary schools. Orlando stated that some interventions need to remain targeted, but acknowledged that the District offers numerous support programs District-wide.

The group discussed ways to both 1) make known to the public and parents the multitude of interventions and supports the District offers, and 2) increase the number of students/families taking advantage of offerings. Ideas included:

- a. Develop an app. (like 211) and call it something like “Help my kid with this.” Make sure apps are smartphone accessible.
- b. Have an infographic with the list of interventions/supports scrolling on the District website.
- c. Enhance participation by determining which families are being underserved and then target appropriate interventions/supports.
- d. List parent resources on website.
- e. Share list of interventions/supports via Facebook.

Orlando said he would share these ideas with District leadership and the Director of Communication and Community Relations.

Areas of Focus

Orlando reiterated the two-pronged charge of the committee and asked members individually if there were other specific areas of focus they wanted to see the committee address. The vast majority of committee members indicated they wanted to continue to address the racial disparity issue. Other concerns included:

- Adult mindset relative to discipline
- Dress code
- Gender disparity in application of consequences
- Racial disparity, but not in an attempt to “fix” the students who are most frequently disciplined
- Making order and predictability in the classroom the norm instead of the exception
- Having conversations with disciplined students to learn first-hand what assistance they need
- Focusing on victims rather than on offenders (particularly as it relates to bullying)
- Bringing back ideas for dealing with misbehavior that could be applied to the Pre-K program since the Student Code of Conduct does not apply to that age and keeping committee abreast of the types and severity of behavior exhibited at the Pre-K program

Next meeting: October 12, 2017, 4:00 p.m., Mellon North Conference Room.

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