

Equity Task Force Meeting Minutes  
June 4, 2018  
Cameron Park Elementary Media Center

Present: Nedra Bradsher, Kiley Brown, Sherita Cobb, Patricia Coleman, Jocelyn Glazier, Jason Johnson, Victoria Mattison, Elvira Mebane, Kelly Monroe-Porco, Phyllis Portie-Ascott, Latarndra Strong, Todd Wirt, Teresa Bunner, Engaging Schools Facilitators M.J. Austin (On site) and Carol Lieber (Skype).

AGENDA

Welcome by Superintendent – Superintendent Wirt welcomed members to the meeting.

Introduction of Engaging Schools Partnership / Agenda Review - Director of Student Support Services Sherita Cobb introduced visitors/facilitators: M.J. Austin (Engaging SCHOOLS) Facilitator on Site and Carol Lieber (Engaging SCHOOLS) Facilitator via Skype. Ms. Austin reviewed:

Essential Question for the Meeting: What recommendations for revisions to the Code of Conduct and disciplinary and student support practices will serve each and every student effectively and equitably and meet the multiple interests of all stakeholders?

Outcomes for the Meeting:

- A clear understanding of the “charge” for the task force, the schedule, and scope of work
- Establishing an environment in which people can share thoughts and feelings respectfully
- A deeper understanding of a restorative and accountable orientation to the revised code
- Written input from the task force that informs the vision for a revised Code

Gathering – Quote Cafe

Activity: Group exercise – committee members read quotes posted on the wall and responded to:

- What grabbed your attention about this quote?
- If all school staff truly believed and acted on this statement, how might student outcomes change, particularly for student who struggle in school?

Activity: Interest Behind Revising the Code – Committee members reviewed *First Thoughts about Code Revisions*.

Individual groups discussed 3 questions:

Question 1. What are some of your interests behind revising the Code?

Question 2. What are some disciplinary data points or trend lines that concern you the most?

Question 3. What policies or practices in the District generate the greatest controversy or greatest differences in opinion?

Groups shared with the full body, comments to include, but not limited to:

Question 1: Code should be consistent; fair to students of color; meaningful; engages student voice; equitable for all students; driving accountability for all staff; does not rehabilitate or change the behavior; not restorative or educational, should be a learning experience; shift the mindset of adults working with children; current code is not working.

Question 2: overrepresentation of students of color being suspended; look at reason for suspensions; inconsistency with interpretation and application; cultural norms not considered with the application; kids have triggers as well – not mainstream triggers; suspensions and referrals and disproportionality African American men; gender disparities in the discipline code – dress code; repeat offenders – why not getting rehabilitated?; parent involvement and disciplines.

Question 3: student suspension at the high school if serious offense-10 days – problem if kid is out for 10 days ensures failure for that quarter; restorative practice - is it working, who is it benefiting?; interpretation application is subjective; parent communication in general is inconsistent.

The Charge and Overview of Code Revision Initiative

Facilitator Carol Lieber – goal is to engage you in conversation; record your words and issues to start with a vision.

Attendees reviewed *The Charge for the Task Force and District Code Team* discussing: timeline for approval by the Board for the Code to be launched in 2019; importance of community having an understanding of what the Code means; restorative interventions.

Attendees reviewed *Building Commitment to Implement a Revised Code Involves*: and discussed in groups about what this document outlines identifying the action steps included as part of the process.

Attendees reviewed *Suggested Scope and Sequence of Task Force Meetings* discussing how to get information out and not just “sent home”, meetings to be held, involvement of middle and high school students and at risk student(s).

#### An Introduction to a Restorative and Accountable Orientation to the Code

Attendees wrote on Post-It notes as to what a restorative, accountable school culture would look like sharing thoughts with their individual group.

Input: strong communication; trust; non-judgmental; positive; healthy partners with parents and guardians.

Cluster themes: reflection – students and adults reflect; accountability – admitting to the person who was wronged; student centered; learning centered – role playing; good intents; restoration – if body sick and go to dentist to restore, get healthy so you feel healthy again; Code of Conduct title is a deficit – problem with the word CODE – think about what you call it; character building; nurturing; fair; inclusive; teachable; acknowledgement or celebration of positive change; dialogue to understand; trusting; healthy; respectful; nonjudgmental; strong communication and listening; partnership – parents, community, guardians; culturally responsible; learning from mistakes.

Attendees reviewed *Five Essential Qualities of a Restorative School Culture* discussing what language, words or phrases and mindsets were liked in the document.

Comments from facilitator:

- A restorative and accountable school culture is MORE than the use of specific restorative practices like Circle and Restorative Conferencing.
- It involves a set of beliefs that all adults hold.
- It involves a set of practices that all adults use. These practices are not part of a school culture until at least 2/3 of adults are using them.

First Thoughts on Revising the Code – Task Force members will complete *Capturing First Thoughts about Code Revisions* at a later date when the current Code of Conduct is reviewed.

Next Meeting Date: June 18, 2018.

Recorded by: Patricia Coleman