

**DAVENPORT COMMUNITY SCHOOL DISTRICT**

Achievement Service Center

Jim Hester Board Room

1606 Brady Street

Davenport, IA 52803

**COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE**

**WEDNESDAY, JUNE 6<sup>TH</sup>**

**5:30PM**

**1.01 Violence**

Dr. Tate reported on a recent meeting to discuss violence in the schools. The meeting was attended by intermediate and high school principals, two executive directors, the district police liaison, the police chief, four members of the police force and Dr. Tate. Tate reviewed the handout provided prior to the meeting outlining the discussion points and action plan that was created. They asked the following questions in that meeting: 1) Are violent behaviors and fights on the increase in the district? 2) What are the root causes of violence and fights in the schools? 3) What must be done to positively change the situation? The group determined that violent incidents have increased, especially against staff members, in addition to an increase in student's fighting. The group concluded that violence seems to be connected with the community, and that it is more physical and in many incidents, is social-media driven. Some of the root causes identified was poverty related stress, mental health issues, social media/cell phones, Facebook and not understanding the threats and the special education cap on suspensions. Some options for how to positively change the situation included rethinking cell phone policy, Student Resource Officers at Intermediate schools, use more home instruction, parent training on social media, printed information on the dangers of social media, the digital citizenship curriculum, more teacher training on when and how to become involved in violent student behavior, providing more services to students who need them. Tate reviewed the action plans and steps that are being implemented to address this issue. Director Hayes asked about the special education students and Tate explained that according to the law special education students must be treated differently but he did say that administration will now improve response time to these situations and are exploring using home schooling more often. Director Snyder expressed his concern about social-media and how students have started recording incidents even before they start and how this could also be aggravating the situation. He also mentioned that the new cell phone policy is more lenient and that the policy committee and board may need to rethink the policy. Director Clewell stated that he believes the increase in violence is also a national trend and that the negative issues surrounding social media and abuse of cell phones is not unique to our district. Clewell asked if the new program to reduce suspensions could be a contributing factor and Dr. Tate said they are looking into this as well. Clewell thinks the digital citizenship curriculum will be very helpful.

Director Mayfield said he came to administration ten years ago to ask that something be done and this type of behavior continues to happen. He asked if the root causes of why students are disrespectful is being explored. Mayfield said that sometimes adults are too permissive and that our society, in general, has helped to create this type of scenario. He asked what needs to happen so this can change and how can we help students understand their obligations. Mayfield mentioned his concern about the same type of behavior on the playgrounds with large gatherings

of kids being unsupervised. He is against allowing this type of behavior and said kids needs more guidance and leadership. He said the solution involves more than just the kids. President Johanson asked Mayfield for more clarification on his statements about adults creating this scenario and it being allowed to happen. Mayfield responded he was speaking in general terms, meaning society in general, but that too many of our students are involved in this type of behavior and he believes students are learning bad behavior from adults in general. Johanson said he agrees that reviewing the cell phone policy is needed and expressed his continued concerns around safety and texting. He also believes that the percentage of students displaying this type of behavior is small compared to the total student population. He reiterated that the Poverty Committee is taking many positive steps to help address the root causes of the problem and believes the action plan that has been created is the right path to take. Johanson said he believes the Superintendent and administration are doing a great job and that he has 100% confidence in them. The next step for reviewing the cell phone policy is a board discussion.

### **1.02 Expulsion Process**

Johanson explained the board wanted to ensure they were conducting expulsions properly and explained that attorney, Wendy Meyer, was present to explain some of the changes she was suggesting for policy 504.05 Expulsions and answer any questions the board may have about the process. Ms. Meyer reviewed how the process was changed last year by eliminating the administrative council who used to hear the case prior to the board. With the current process expulsion recommendations come directly to the board thus providing due process for the students and their family. She explained the primary difference between general education and special education students regarding expulsions and how it is required to provide services to special education students who are expelled in addition to the requirement of going through a manifestation process to determine if an expulsion hearing will take place. There was discussion about the script which is used to conduct the expulsion hearings and Ms. Meyer clarified what is required by law, but that any additional wording to conduct the actual hearing can be determined by the board. Ms. Meyer commented that this board is doing a great job with the expulsion process. It was agreed that the script should be reviewed and updated. There was a discussion about Iowa Code regarding providing services to general education students and Ms. Meyer provided some clarification. Board members asked questions and had discussion about funding for the expelled student, the pros and cons of providing services to the general education students, how it is determined if a special education student is recommended for expulsion, and how the student and their family are always allowed to bring witnesses to testify on their behalf to the expulsion hearing. Ms. Meyer added that the district does not have the power to subpoena witnesses. There was discussion concerning a portion of the script regarding whether the student and their family understand open vs. closed meeting and the option of holding the hearing in open vs. closed session. There was a suggestion to provide a more lengthy explanation of the difference between the two types of meetings in that initial letter for the benefit of the family.

### **1.03 Harlem Children's Zone**

TJ Schneckloth, Director of Federal and State Programs, reported on the visit to the Harlem Children's Zone in New York and what the participants learned and what is being implemented in this district as a result of their visit. Participants included Mr. Schneckloth, Director Mayfield, Vera Kelly, Ralph Kelly, Steve Mielenhausen and Kamie Swanson. Schneckloth provided an overview of the components of the program and discussed their wrap around services, academic

case management, community pride and how this is core to the success of the program. He also discussed after school programs, the employment and technology center and the details of their college program. Participants returned to the district and created actionable items that are aligned with the Poverty Committee and are utilizing data to help determine focus areas inside what is now being referred to as the JB Opportunity Zone. This group is conducting future planning to enhance the JB Opportunity Center through aligned actions. Board members discussed and asked question regarding the funding necessary to duplicate the program and Ms. Steiner provided more details on grants and other funding that is being sought to implement aspects of the program in the district. Mayfield emphasized the key to the success for this type of program is community involvement and that the people involved are the most important aspect of the program. Snyder mentioned how much he likes the idea of an academic case manager and Schneckloth said they are exploring this idea and have determined it will be a high priority. Johanson asked general questions about management of the program and Clewell said that Bi-State may be able to provide them with valuable data they can use.

#### **1.04 Wellness Program Update**

Deb Miller, Director of Human Resources, introduced Jaime Kroger and Wendy Berg, members of the team who have worked so hard on implementing the District's Employee Wellness Program. They provided a summary of the program and the first year of implementation. A 3 year contract was signed with beBetter Health. They were told that a 20% participation rate the first year would be outstanding, but this has been surpassed with a 30% participation rate for this first year. Eligible employees are participating in programs & challenges to better themselves, in turn reducing long-range healthcare costs. Buildings have Wellness Champions who help determine program activities and promote the programs and activities being offered. They highlighted the goals and vision for the program which include: 1) Reduce long range health care costs. 2) Increase employee engagement and culture/climate; 3) Lower absentee rates and occurrences 4) Support physical & emotional health/well being of staff; 5) Build a premier wellness program to attract top talent. There were 46 different types of activities available this year to participate in to earn points and each award level had different cash rewards. Gary Sloat was present and provided a brief testimonial of how the program has been of benefit to him. The goal for next year is a 35% participation rate. Board members complimented their efforts and noted they look forward to more data and results on how beneficial the program will be for employees.

#### **1.04 District Alignment Plan**

Juli Staszewski, Bill Schneden and TJ Schneckloth explained the District Alignment Plan to the board. The mission of the plan is creating a long-range plan to align resources which clearly focus and communicate goals to achieve high levels of teaching and learning for all. It is based on (MTSS) Multi-Tiered System of Support. The purpose of MTSS is to systematically provide every child with the additional time and support needed to learn at high levels. This process includes engaging a school's staff in a collective process which will guarantee every student receives time and support to meet their academic and behavior needs. Collaborative teams identify essential knowledge and skills that all students must master, analyze targeted evidence to identify specific learning needs, and plan for interventions and extended learning to support essential learning standards. Included in the plan is (SBAR) Support Plan for the Advancement of Learning Standards-Based Assessment and Reporting and Ms. Staszewski provided an overview of this aspect of the program. Also incorporated in the system is The Davenport Way

which provides the resources and instruction to support students' behavior, social and emotional needs. Davenport Way is a multi-tiered system of support focusing on universal instruction and interventions. The Davenport Way is in all district buildings. The overall purpose of the District Alignment Plan is to work smarter not harder with the purpose of aligning resources, people and plans all in the same direction, to help streamline professional development to ensure that resources are utilized wisely and go further. Board members commented this sounds like a great initiative. Clewell asked if this system identifies when programs are no longer working or being effective and Ms. Staszewski explained this component is built into the evaluation process. The presenters mentioned additional staff members who participated in the process. These include Pace-Tracy, Tarrah Parrish, Rob Scott and Corri Guy.

The meeting adjourned at 9:30 PM.

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Mary Correthers, Board Secretary/Treasurer