

DAVENPORT COMMUNITY SCHOOL DISTRICT
ACHIEVEMENT SERVICE CENTER
JIM HESTER BOARD ROOM
1702 MAIN STREET
DAVENPORT, IOWA 52803
TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 4, 2018
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING

The Board of the Davenport Community School District in the Counties of Scott and Muscatine, State of Iowa, met on Tuesday, September 4, 2018 for the Committee of the Whole Meeting. The meeting was held at the Achievement Service Center, 1702 Main Street, Davenport, Iowa, in said District. President Johanson called the meeting to order at 6:00PM. Present: Director's Johanson, Hayes, DeSalvo, Potts, Beck and Mayfield. Director Gosa participated by phone.

1. Special Education Audit Report - Disproportionality Discussion

Dr. Tate noted that Dr. Sandy Schmitz, Implementation Advisor, and Patti Pace-Tracy, Director of Special Education will be presenting this evening. Tate said the main topic of discussion concerning this report will be looking at the issue of disproportionality which he emphasized is a system wide issue that involves everyone in the District, not just Special Education. He noted they have an abundance of data they are analyzing to a level where it has meaning for the district. He reviewed expulsion and total suspension data for school year 2017-18 which indicates a disproportionate number of number of African Americans expelled or suspended. Office referrals for 2016-17 and 2017-18 according to race and percentage of population in the district also indicated an imbalance. Tate emphasized the data reveals an issue the district has to look at and address. Tate emphasized he doesn't believe there is intent to create this disproportionality, but the data does reveal there is something going on that needs to be addressed. Tate explained that after the audit report he and Patti Pace-Tracy met with someone from the Department of Education to discuss this and assured them that addressing disproportionality is a top priority for the district. Tate discussed some of the things being done by district leadership currently and into the future to address the issue and noted that the teacher professional development plan has already been changed to include an action plan and training for addressing disproportionality. Tate also discussed recent changes to procedure regarding in-school suspensions and placing an emphasis on managing behaviors that may come up in the classroom.

Dr. Tate explained some important changes for Keystone Academy. There are both general and special education students currently at Keystone Academy. The general education students at Keystone are going to have to change because the definition from the Department of Education is that if a general education student is assigned to Keystone Academy this has to be counted as an out of school suspension. Between now and first day of the second quarter they are going to assess every general education student at Keystone Academy and decide where they belong. Tate emphasized they need to also look at how to rebalance the positive things like AP and honors courses, show choir and band. He is challenging staff to be aware of the mix of students in these activities and see how representative we are across the board and if there is not balance to go out and recruit students for these activities in order to create more balance if that is what is necessary.

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Director Mayfield asked for the breakdown of male and female students in the statistics presented. Tate said he didn't have this data this evening but could get it. Mayfield said there is overwhelming numbers of black males identified for special education and we need to find out why this happens and how do we learn to think differently than we have in the past since this situation has existed for many years. Tate reinforced Mayfield's comment about the need for a different way of thinking and the importance of making this change and how one of the first steps is having a national expert on cultural competency provide trainings for staff. Mayfield said he doesn't question anyone's intention but emphasized the importance of doing this the right way in order to see results that make a difference. DeSalvo stated she wants all students to succeed and wants to make sure the board offers all the support necessary to make necessary changes.

Patti Pace-Tracy then presented information and data related to disproportionality and the specific areas of citations from the audit which include the three areas of Identification, Suspension/Expulsion; and Seclusion and Restraint. She reviewed district-wide demographics for 2017-18 will indicated the following: African American-20%; Hispanic-14%; two or more races-10%; White- 54%. Students on an IEP's-African American-29%; Hispanic-13.6%; two or more races-11%; White-45.2%. Ms. Tracy emphasized this data reveals a disproportionate number of African Americans on IEP's at 29% compared to demographics of 20% of the district's total student population. She reviewed additional data on the percent of students with IEP behavior goals who are African American from 2015-16; 2016-17 and 2017-18 was over 50% each year. She also reviewed the data related to suspension/expulsions and seclusion and restraint according to race. President Johanson questioned the table of data related to suspensions and expulsions of IEP students since the numbers didn't add up correctly, however, Ms. Tracy emphasized the data does reveal a consistent pattern of African American students with IEP's being suspended at a much higher rate and the data also indicated this was true in the case of seclusion and restraint data regarding African American students.

Dr. Sandy Schmitz, Implementation Advisor, provided a brief overview of her role and purpose which includes the following: Ensure all systemic corrective actions in the Accreditation Report are completed with fidelity; Ensure the development and implementation of compliant special education policies and procedures; Provide professional development; Provide guidance/support; Monitor progress – Measure Effect not Effort!; and Report progress to the Department of Education & State Board of Education.

She emphasized they will not be measuring the number of corrective actions but whether these actions actually move the needle and improve outcome data. She will be reporting progress to the Department of Education and to the State Board of Education. The State Board of Education has asked for a monthly updates on progress. Dr. Schmitz said there are some good practices and programs happening in the District, but consistency of implementation and building on successes is what is needed. She fully expects that future models of excellence will be one of the outcomes of this process that will not only impact Davenport schools but other urban districts and AEA's in the state overall. She highlighted nine areas of emphasis in her approach as Implementation Advisor and provided an overview of the actions that have started to be implemented since May 21, 2018. She emphasized many of their efforts have expanded beyond special education to include the system since this is essentially systemic non-compliance. Ms. Tracy then provided a review of the specific citation data and updates for each of the eight citations (see full report in permanent minutes or BoardDocs <http://www.boarddocs.com/ia/dcs/Board.nsf/Public> and select this meeting date).

Board members asked questions and also expressed various concerns on reports from parents on how they feel intimidated at the IEP meetings. Ms. Tracy acknowledged that some parents are not satisfied, however they have lots of data and reports from parents who have been happy with the outcomes and meeting process. Beck asked about new eligibility criteria and Dr. Schmitz stated that due to a court

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case in another part of the state the Department of Education will be reviewing their eligibility requirements but until they come out with the new guidance they will continue as they have been. She explained it is not a huge leap from what is current practice but there will be future clarification on this topic. There was continued discussion concerning the audit and Johanson asked how the board can be of assistance and how the community may be involved. Dr. Schmidt stated they will talking about community engagement and working with community organizations and families to gather feedback on progress being made. Board members thanked Dr. Schmitz and others for all this information and that they look forward to future reports.

2. Superintendent Timeline

Director Beck, Chair of the Superintendent Search Committee, explained the committee members wanted board feedback on the possibility of using HYA-Hazard, Young, Attea & Associates which is the same firm used to find Dr. Tate in the last superintendent search. Committee members spoke with a representative from this firm and are recommending using this firm again. Beck reassured the board this firm involves the community in the search process and will provide this service at a reasonable cost. There was consensus by board members to proceed with this firm and it will be an action item on September 10th Regular Meeting agenda to formally approve hiring HYA for the Superintendent Search.

3. Extracurricular Activities Fees

Dr. Tate reported that he and Rob Scott have been in communication with the Department of Education regarding the district not being allowed to charge fees for any extra-curricular activities. He referred to the memo sent to the board that explains how if an activity is district sponsored or if the district is paying a teacher a stipend to run that activity it is the responsibility of the district to pay for that activity. If boosters want to add money for extra activities, such as a show choir trip that is above and beyond the district sponsored activity, then they can do that, but overall the district must pay for the standard extra-curricular activities. The district or boosters cannot tell a parent or student, for example, unless they sell a certain amount of candy bars or give a certain amount of money, that they cannot participate in that activity. Administration is in the the process of defining exactly what the standards are for each extra-curricular activity. Tate emphasized this is a huge change for the district because these costs will have to come out of the General Fund. Rob Scott clarified that district staff, teachers, and coaches have been informed they should not be asking for any fees for district sponsored activities, but boosters can still raise money and help students. Beck said she is happy to see this change and it is the right thing to do. Mr. Scott said the good thing is that more students will be able to participate in activities but the district will have to pay for it. Board members expressed several concerns about how this will change the budget and how it may affect the district's music program and if it will put a burden on boosters. Gosa suggested using volunteers as coaches instead of paying teachers a stipend. Beck made the comment that it really means the district is now going to treat all activities like they have treated athletics for years. Tate emphasized this change will, in fact, relieve the boosters to a certain extent because the district will be required to pay where they have not in the past. Johanson recommended the board adopt a policy on this as soon as possible and asked Director Beck to put it on the agenda for the next policy meeting.

President Johanson declared the meeting adjourned 8:30PM.

Mary Correthers, Board Secretary