District Accountability Advisory Committee

Meeting Minutes
March 19, 2015

I. Call to order
Merrie Jones called to order the regular meeting of the District Accountability Committee at 5:40 pm on Thursday, March 19 in the Dr. Ed Lord and Patricia Lord Board Room (Educational Services Center, Peoria Building).

II. Roll call
The following persons were present: Ella Hart, Merrie Jones, Karen Porter, Julie Rapone, Dan Wright
Board of Education Liaison: Amber Drevon
Guest(s): Kelli Pfaff – Zero Dropouts
Speaker(s):
Natalie Powers – Student Engagement Advocate
Davian Torres – Student Engagement Advocate
Bruce Wilcox – Multi-tiered System of Supports (MTSS) Partner
Angelique Green – Multi-tiered System of Supports (MTSS) Partner

III. Welcome & Introductions
Merrie Jones welcomed and gave an introduction to DAC members and guests

IV. Restorative Justice
Natalie Powers, Davian Torres, Bruce Wilcox, and Angelique Green presented a PowerPoint presentation to DAC members on restorative justice practices (also listed on the DAC web page under the March 19 minutes)

Handout(s):
- Connection Circle Guide
- PowerPoint Presentation

V. Questions
Q. Where are you at as far as implementing Restorative Justice Practices
A. We’re in the stage of training staff districtwide. We’ve started to do professional development with teachers. We’re also in the process of forming a districtwide language.

Q. Are you going to incorporate Restorative Justice Practices in rule books in regards to suspensions and attendance
A. District policies related to student behavior are remaining consistent. Restorative Practices may be an important aspect of the student behavioral process at sites that wish to adopt a full implementation. It is likely that these processes would be represented in a school’s student handbook. However, the district-wide expectations are represented in the school board policy and reinforced in the APS Safe Schools Policies and Regulations Handbook.
Q. Can you tell me how you will select a representative for each school
A. We’re looking for someone who is available to come to professional development once a month and will be committed to the responsibility. The individual will need to take back learned material and share the information with school team members

Q. When you’re talking about phase II being voluntary are you primarily talking about the high schools
A. No

Q. What would a home visit look like
A. Reaching out to families to find out what’s going on in order to provide support. It may involve aurora mental health team, but definitely talking to teachers and family, and in some instances having a proactive approach at the beginning of the school year

Q. If it’s not a preventative need do you setup an appointment before visiting families
A. Yes, but in some instances we just go if we don’t hear back from families

Q. For staff protection do you tell other staff members before going out to homes
A. Most of the time we go out in pairs, and if we go alone we generally have already built a rapport with families

Q. In regards to the connection circles – Does that mean that schools have only implemented some of those pieces
A. All schools have implemented pieces at different levels

Q. I would like to see a progress orientated chart posted at all schools, as well as a progress chart of all schools that shows where they are in the process
A. That is a good idea – We’ll take the comment back to our team

Q. Do you include stakeholders and parents with this process
A. This is a good point – There is an expectation to implement

Q. At what point are there limitations on this program
A. There are certain legal requirements, and there are certain non-negotiable aspects as well. We need to change behavior, because this has greater success than just suspensions

Q. Are you running into cultural issues with this program – How do the students perceive this practice/program
A. We’ve been implanting pieces at every level – The students have control over fixing issues, and we really haven’t had a whole lot of push back

Q. Do you think students think they’re getting away with something if just suspended
A. It’s harder for kids to apologize for their actions and go through a class verses taking a suspension

Q. Are you teaching recipients on what to say when someone apologizes, saying “it’s okay” is not acceptable
A. I generally tell students to say – “Thank you for apologizing. I’m really going to think on your words.” Hearing from peers, it’s that part that makes a difference

Q. What’s the impact to restorative justice – Is it turning things around in classrooms
A. So it depends on the implementation of the program. We do have some pushback in places. We need that feedback loop so we can clarify perceptions, and we’re going to implement this in hopes to reduce the pushback and change building cultures.

Q. Can we talk about confidentiality and what is documented on a child’s record, what is the documentation standard used?
A. Slightly dependent on the building – Some buildings use infinite campus. Being able to document and track is important.

Q. What line item is this – Where is it funded in the budget book?
A. Presenters will get the answer and follow-up with Julie. We do know that four pilots have been funded through the Denver Foundation.

Q. How long is the contract with reSolutionaries?
A. Presenters will get the answer and follow-up with Julie.

VI. Adjournment

In closing comments the DAC members agreed that it would be nice for all presenters to have the following structure when presenting an item:

- Outline of implementation process
- Cost
- Scope
- Progress
- Is additional equipment necessary to implement the program

DAC members were asked if they had any additional ideas of items they would like to see on upcoming agendas. The response was they would like to see an item on discussing testing students. But more specific, conversations around types of tests, testing schedule/calendar, and equipment used for testing.

Merrie Jones adjourned the meeting at 7:31 pm.

_______________________ ATTEST______________________
Chairperson Secretary