

Best Practices in School Discipline Workgroup Meeting Notes November 16, 2012

I. Introductions and Expectations- Dr. Sally Dorman

Participants shared their affiliations and expectations for the workgroup. General themes were that the group shared included producing a practical guideline that not only incorporates research but is user friendly and serves the needs of all students.

II. History & Purpose – Mr. Chuck Buckler

DISCIPLINE: comes from the Latin root “to teach...to lead”

-Board Report issued in July 2012 is filled with a lot of suggestions-Not all of these are going to be addressed in this workgroup.

-The purpose of this workgroup is to identify school discipline best practices and the professional development needs of teachers, administrators, and school resource officers to implement these practices.

-On p. 19 of the report the board has identified and now published in the Maryland Registry for public comment revisions to the Maryland Code of Conduct regulations. This workgroup will not be working on these regulations. The regulations are in the open comment portion of the process until December 2, 2012. The State Board of Education will consider the comments at their January meeting. Most of these revisions/definitions were already part of the Maryland Student Records Manual and are being implemented in all 24 jurisdictions.

-The report also has recommended that the Code of Conduct committee’s work start up again after it was suspended during the Board’s research. The first meeting of this committee is being held November 27, 2012. See Toni if you wish to attend.

-Another initiative that has come out of this work is a partnership with the Advancement Project and the Open Society Institute to provide school teams with access to national speakers on the issue of discipline. Both of these entities have done similar work across the nation and in Baltimore City. A state conference will be held on Friday, December 14, 2012 at Turf Valley from 8:30am – 4:00pm
Title: “Courageous Conversations: A Look at Discipline in MD Public Schools”
It will be a respectful, ongoing conversation around discipline and participants will hear the same people talk from a national perspective on discipline.
There will be breakout sessions on local data discussions.
The Advancement Project will work with regions around the state to plan follow up conferences.
See Toni if interested in coming.

-MSDE has also had a long history with working within schools with a systems approach through the work of the PBIS Maryland team, which is a partnership with

Johns Hopkins University and Sheppard Pratt Health Systems. PBIS Maryland has done a lot of work with schools taking a multi-tiered systems framework to addressing behavior along with academics. PBIS is a framework through which strategies can be implemented and not a program.

-Chuck emphasized the difficult job that teachers and administrators have everyday dealing with the individual needs and personalities of every student in their classrooms and schools. He hoped that we keep this in focus during our work.

-Maryland is a very diverse state and each school system is very different with different needs, different populations, and different resource allocations. The work of this group will need to consider what the identified best practices would look like in all the counties across the state.

III. Charge & Timeline of the Workgroup – Dr. Sally Dorman

-A timeline was distributed to the group and includes the meeting dates and final report. Included in the timeline were some of the significant dates for the other Board initiatives. The Best Practices Group will feed information to the Code of Conduct Group throughout the process. The Code of Conduct group will meet monthly beginning in November 2012.

FINAL DUE DATE OF OUR REPORT: JANUARY 2014 (so draft must be finished by summer 2013)

-An initiative being supported by the Advancement Project are surveys and focus groups with stakeholders. Initial surveys have been developed and are on the MSDE website. The Advancement Project has done this before in Denver and they have also surveyed other stakeholders such as: Superintendents, Central Office Staff, and Boards of Education. The group discussed suggestions to getting stakeholder input and was asked to provide suggestions. There were some concerns about how the surveys were announced and if the information is being accessed by stakeholders.

The surveys can be accessed from the main page of the MSDE website in the “in focus” section and they are located under “News Room” – “Student Discipline Survey” on the MSDE website

http://marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE/newsroom/special_reports/sds

-The Advancement Project along with MSDE plan Focus Groups with parents, staff over time. There was a central office focus group conducted earlier in the month and this will be an ongoing discussion.

IV. Response to Reading Activity-Participants check articles that they thought were important to discuss as a large group. All articles are available on the dropbox that was shared with the group. There is a supplemental resource folder for new items.

A. Practices – Ms. Andrea Alexander

- Articles discussed were the restorative justice article, the Walla Walla article, and the Alaska power point
- topics from the highlighted articles included that while restorative justice historically has been a subset of the juvenile justice field and more offender focused, there are practices that can be applied to school settings including restoring relationships through strategies such as conference circles and family group discussions that help with dealing with feelings and affect. It was shared that incorporating these practices into infrastructures in schools such as PBIS is possible as PBIS is neither a program nor strategy. There is an alternative school in Howard County that is using restorative practices and has been having a positive effect on the ability to decrease suspensions.
- a key piece in the Walla Walla article is the focus on relationships. This was true in the Alaska power point and how we cannot assume that everyone “knows” how to do this work.

Other items discussed:

- Integrating the application piece of this work is critical.
- Soft skills and how to interpret it to a real framework still eludes us.
- Action planning for specific steps to implement this.
- Psychology and learning go together and we need to bridge research into practice.
- Make sure that application follows practice and what are the training needs?
- School building climate improves the likelihood that students will achieve.
- As we identify which best practices work, we have to line them up to best instructional practices so that it translates for classroom teachers. We have to make sure we line them up – that was what was powerful about the PBIS article.
- What is missing is a piece about ACCOUNTABILITY and LEADERSHIP.
- 2 categories: (1) Front loading through relationships, teaching, and prevention and (2) End loading-how do we deal with it when it fails?
- There is a continuum of behaviors, so we must have a continuum of responses.

B. Policy – Mrs. Martha Essenmacher

- Articles discussed were the NIRN article on implementation science, the zero-tolerance article, the child trends article, the Evaluation & Cost of Implementing PBIS Article
- Evidence Based Practices (EBP): are they dead and if not, why not?
- We can identify best practices well. There is the “What Works Clearinghouse” list and many other lists of EBPs
- What we don’t do well is outlining what the best practices look like with a tiered framework linked to data-specific outcomes. Here is how it is anchored to data,

supporting staff; the contextual fit based on the needs of the students and the skill sets of the teachers.

-The equation says it all – you have a great practice that works (100%) and multiply that by a bad implementation (0) equals nothing!

-Syringe example was great in the article. I can have a cure but if I don't have the mechanism to distribute it (framework) then it is worthless!

-Zero Tolerance Policies: these came when things were going poorly and we have fear and safety concerns, the pendulum swung to the far side. Now we are trying to be more reasonable in the middle. The problem is with policies is that "words can't think" and so we get literal interpretations/zero tolerance.

Everyone needs to be able to feel like they can get forgiveness. Portions of it need to remain, but it needs to be fleshed out on how kids can get redemption and how we can be more thoughtful in our policies. The Maryland Department of Education has moved away from Zero Tolerance. Educating parents and community are the keys.

-The Zero Tolerance PDF article talks about the alternatives to zero tolerance.

-We have to ensure that there is a consistent, thorough process for determining the guidelines we follow to make our decisions. Be careful that the process is there to ensure that everyone follows a solid process to make good decisions.

-“We don't necessarily want to fix problems – we just don't want problems.”

-Principals appreciate having the discretionary power to make their own decisions. Zero tolerance is the easy way out – it is more difficult to have good leadership following a process and making good decisions.

-Focus on the PROCESS not the PRODUCT!

-“Evaluation & Cost of Implementing PBIS” Article- Susan Barrett the author shared her insights into the cost issues

- it is really about reallocation of the resources

- embedding PBIS into district professional development trainings means a great reduction in costs

- as you move through the phases of implementation the costs reduce

-Anne Arundel: highlight successful schools and incorporate it into the district plan. Leadership has to push it and believe in it. Their most recent push is to incorporate PBIS for TEACHERS as well as students. Staff recognition is done weekly and monthly to make them feel valued and they get good results from it.

-How do the Unions come into play? They will need to be at the table for the discussions about how to do the training and get this down to the teacher level. When they aren't properly trained, they cannot truly implement it and then they give up on it saying it failed.

C. Research & Data – Dr. Sally Dorman

-Articles discussed included the Alternatives to Expulsion and PBIS Journal articles on cultural competency

-the alternatives to expulsion gave a great overall summary of all the issues we have addressed today. The data says that implementation is inconsistent and there is a culture that the classroom is the teacher's domain.

-How do we get teachers in a place where they can do what they know best?

-How much behavior intervention pre-service training do teachers get?

-We are getting staff that needs ongoing training since it is not a part of pre-service training.

-High quality instruction is also important. If the instruction is not relevant and meaningful, then there is going to be misbehavior. It is not an either or.

-Always look at "is the instruction of high level and relevant and meaningful to students?"

-There are many reasons feeding into the causes of misbehavior.

-We need to look at research around specific behaviors of the adults as well.

-In many cases, a clear understanding of childhood psychology and development would have helped! The beliefs piece is clearly an issue.

-Teachers often do not realize what they bring to the table and that what they've said could be insulting.

-it was shared that the focus for teachers in their training is to look at 1.

Knowledge, 2. Skills, and 3. Dispositions of students when developing lessons.

Dispositions are critical and you have to figure out how we can get at those dispositions.

-We need to break down the silos/barriers between Curriculum & Instruction and Student Services!

-Teacher growth is essential to success!

-The impact of school wide interventions and disproportionality in suspensions has become an area of focus for the National PBIS TA center. George Sugai has spoken on this issue and there are a couple of articles in our readings.

-The research clearly demonstrates that when you control of socio-economic status, there is still disproportionality in suspensions/discipline referrals.

-Expectations and beliefs are a huge part of this. Until we get teachers to be sensitive to the cultural differences, they will not understand why they are seen as disrespectful or provocative by the students.

-Changing teacher language can make a big difference.

-Look at the research and the data around practice. Don't look at the tools in isolation of the research that is out there.

-Look at around the application of Student Services. Note that Student Services must understand instruction and vice versa.

-Do not forget School Resource Officers (SROs) as a key piece as well.

-Using your own internal school data on an individual level can have a big impact. Montgomery County did some work on this right now and they will upload an article to the extra resources folder.

-We need to provide PD for administrators in helping teachers think in a positive way and not expect/pre-sign referrals to be "ready."

V. Introduction to Gap Sharing/Gap Analysis – Ms. Andrea Alexander

What did we miss?

- The connection between common core and PBIS
- No articles on Early Childhood Efforts, Opportunities, SEFEL
- Bullying Prevention through SWPBIS
- Adult Learners
- Consistency of message of expectations
- Parent Perspective and parent education/training
- Best Practices in Professional Development
- Understanding 3 tiered/multi-tiered systems of support = PBIS. Need more understanding of multi-tiered (teams) to include WRAP services especially at high school level.
- Best Practice for professional development – move from one shot lecture to team w/admin looking at data w/coaching of performance feedback.
- John Hattie Visible Learning
- Professional Development – how to integrate with instructional PD
- There is teacher education out there. Look up CRETE (B Grochal)
- Coaching and implementation supports need consideration. I think a selection on implementation is critical to include.
- Accountability and Leadership
- Effective leadership
- Is there a currently practicing classroom teacher on this workgroup?
- Environmental Effects on learning; academic
- Additional coverage of specific EBPs:
 - Good Behavior Game
 - Check & Connect
 - Coping Power
 - PATHs
 - Second Step
- What role do BIP/FBAs play? Is there enough training on how to develop quality, useful documents? Could they help more with better training in developing them?
- Connection between Common Core and EBPs/Behavioral

VI. Developing Structure for the Workgroup – Dr. Sally Dorman

Meeting Structure:

-When doing the invitations we shared with you that there would be four large group meetings and subgroup work in between

-We discussed the need to structure the work of this group and how to proceed with the work

Discussion topics:

-there are three groups of reading and these can be a way to structure the meetings

-we need to embed training and PD as its own category at the end once we know what we want to train

- Does the training piece need to stand on its own?
- First step is to identify what we think are evidence-based best practices (and others we know are best practices and how we would evaluate these practices)
- Stages of the Discipline Process: Prevention/Policies/Practices/Restorative Justice
- Format with the Stages and Best Research Practices and then pluses/minuses
- Tiered approach to interventions
- How different interventions play out with different students.
- Have a visual and details for each level.
- Use PBIS Levels and under each:
 - Research
 - PD Needs
 - Potential Cost
 - The Conditions needed to make it work

Subgroup Work Structure:

- 2 Subgroups:
 - Evidence-based Best Practices (what)-would need to do a lot of work up front
 - Application/Implementation Practice (how)
 - Attention to adult learners
 - Prevention, Intervention, and Postvention under the “How”
- the group discussed how to spend the large group meetings. The group decided that we need to share Best Practices from counties around Maryland at the next meeting.
- Disproportionality is what we are here talking about and what we have to concentrate on. It is the framework.

VII. Next Steps – Dr. Sally Dorman

- They will work on a rubric for the critical features of the End Report so that we know what we are addressing.
- Next meeting is January 25, 2013 and the subgroups will start meeting after that meeting.
- Added an additional meeting for February 27, 2013.
- Sign up for “what” or “how” subgroup.
- Submit ideas for presenters.