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NHCS TITLE IX COMMITTEE

A LOOK BACK AND A LOOK AHEAD.....

**First Steps Dec 18-
Mar-19**

Request to investigate 6 cases leads to board recommendation of TITLE IX COMMITTEE

Meetings with Chair Estep, Board member Beaulieu and District Leadership establishes structure of committee and necessary membership.

First meeting March 7th 2019.

**Building the Plane:
April 19-Sept 19**

Established objective and purpose for Committee during first meeting

Established 3 subcommittees : Resources, to talk about how we could work more effectively with our community partners

Education to talk about how we could better inform our students and staff

Policy which worked with our experts to craft a clear district wide TITLE IX Policy.

**A New Direction:
Sept 19-February 20**

As a result of the work of this committee we hired a new Title IX coordinator August 2019

Director Lewis quickly worked to bring the district in line with TITLE IX with training, running investigations, and updated policy.

Department of Education announces plan to issue new Guidance on TITLE IX that would effect our policies.

It became clear that K-12 schools across the U.S. were struggling with this issues. Our work is unique in NC.

**Covid-19 Pause:
February 20-Sept 20**

In February the Superintendent resigned after news broke that Peter Franks had been arrested for inappropriate sexual behavior.

Dr Burns arrived 13 days before our schools shut down.

While here he put new procedures in place for logging and handling student, parent, and citizen complaints.

He reorganized HR and put TITLE IX under it. Jarelle now has a full time investigator working for him

Getting Started

- In December of 2018 a group of community members addressed the board asking us to investigate 6 separate cases.
- The Board met in closed session in January to discuss the cases and decide next steps.
- As a result of that discussion a recommendation was made to take a broader look at how the district was handling its responsibilities under TITLE IX

Our First Meeting

- After working with Administration Chair Estep identified key people who had to be around the table.
- Our first meeting was March 7th 2019.
- The Following members were present: Board Members Nelson Beaulieu and Lisa Estep. Deputy Superintendent Rick Holliday. Dr John Welmers. Attorney Wayne Bullard. Julie Varnum, Kristin Jackson, Russell Rivenbark. Patrick McCarty. Keith Moore. Fred Lynch. Kristi Times-Brown. Eric Davis. Adrienne Gale. Diane Hendrix. Leslie Cohen. Andrea Stough. Janie Dowda. Bernice Johnson. Robert McGee. And Amber Restar.

First Meeting Cont:

- The meeting began with introductions and a discussion of how the district was handling TITLE IX and a broader conversation about what TITLE IX was.
- This conversation acted as a sort of starting point on a map. It seemed clear that there were several things that we could be doing better and a few things that we weren't really doing at all.
- This immediately changed the make-up of the committee as we recognized that Athletic Directors SHOULD NOT be running investigations. We also realized that we needed to establish subcommittees for Education, Policy, and Resources.
- There was also substantial discussion about what the school system was legally allowed to do and what the Sheriff's department expected.

Changing the Table and Building the Plane

- At our second meeting in April the Sheriff explained usual practices regarding TITLE IX investigations and what his office would like to see. The committee explained the obligations of the district under TITLE IX. We discussed how these two could be reconciled.
- Amy Feath from the Carousel Center, and Jayne Emma joined the committee and headed up work on the resources and education subcommittees respectively.
- We broke out in to subcommittees and talked about what each committee hoped to achieve.

Subcommittees

- Amber Resetar and Robby McGee led the discussion of the policy sub-committee and looked at our current policy and the group decided to create a policy that would be clear and accessible for any people that might need to access it.
- The Education subcommittee looked at WHO needed to be educated about TITLE IX and talked about HOW we were reaching our students, faculty, and parents. They talked about an awareness campaign for our students.
- The resources subcommittee looked at some things that would be helpful like website links to community resources, parent and student feedback forms. They talked about how to create a safe and productive space for our students and families.

Moving Forward

- The initial meetings would inform our work over the summer and into the fall.....so what have we accomplished?
- We updated our website and made sure that everyone had easy access to the District's TITLE IX policy and the name and number of the director (this was required by law)
- We hired a new Title IX coordinator whose sole responsibility was managing TITLE IX, a rarity in K-12 education.
- Director Jarelle Lewis implemented new procedures to make sure that the district was in compliance. It became clear that K-12 Title IX issues were a state and national problem. and the Model this committee built has been inquired about all over the state.

Accomplishments

- At one of our meetings Amy Feath said we needed to look at a survey to answer the question of “Where are we?”
- We spent months trying to determine appropriate questions and how we could deliver the survey. The Pandemic halted that work but we are prepared to move forward as our students get back in school.
- In September of last year Betsy Devos announced changes coming to TITLE IX regulations for the Department of Education. The changes required us to pause our policy development as we waited for further guidance. After being issued in Late July the district updated its’ TITLE IX policies and passed them at the August Board meeting.

Accomplishments

- Dr. Burns reorganized Human Resources and the District hired a full time investigator to assist Director Lewis. Thus two full time positions have been created and thanks to the reorganization the District now handles ALL title IX complaints in a comprehensive and systematic way.
- The topic has been added to Growth and Changes so all of our students are now getting information on their rights and their responsibilities under TITLE IX.
- After nearly two years, this district is in a wildly different place then it was with regards to TITLE IX. We have accomplished much and I think we should PROUD.
- **The initial reasons for the formation of this committee have been satisfied....but where do we go from here?**

Next First Steps

- I'd like us to consider a few things so we can develop our next steps.
- **What have we missed or failed to accomplish?**
- **We are in a different place, but is it the BEST PLACE WE CAN BE IN....Should we be doing more? If so WHAT DOES THAT LOOK LIKE?**
- **What needs to be done to maintain this NEW NORMAL with regards to TITLE IX and what role does the committee need to play?**
- **Finally what groups might we be missing? Who else needs to be at the table?**