

Citizen Advisory Committee Meeting
January 25, 2021
6:00 p.m.

1) Brief opening remarks on the CAC manner of proceeding.

For policies coming up for Board review, the CAC will learn about and then discuss some of the policies – tonight, related to student discipline.

Basic student behavior.

Alternative Education Policy

At the February meeting, the CAC will discuss policies so that we can give feedback to the Board as they prepare to review policy. The goal is to collect CAC feedback prior to meeting so that CAC is aware of particular issues we may want to discuss.

2) Call to Order and Approval of Minutes.

Minutes from the Nov. 23, 2020 meeting were approved.

3) Update from Dr. Curry.

- Information regarding covid vaccinations (first dose):
 - Employees in 7 priority groups.
 - First group vaccinated on or about 12/30.
 - Groups 3 and 4 vaccinated the previous week Thurs/Fri, at school site rather than health Dept site for school nurses to administer vaccine.
 - This Friday, the rest of group 4 and then group 5.
 - Then 6 and 7, smallest groups – middle school and high school teachers, and central office staff. Perhaps within the next two weeks.

Governor press conference with State superintendent, head of MD health Dept. More effort to get back into school, new guidelines for return to school. Research, experience in other states where students have been in school. Regardless of positivity rate, schools do not typically become spreaders of virus. Challenge to have students who want to be back in school return by Mar. 1. CCPS back to hybrid – special programs and K-2 two weeks from January 25.

Q: Bus drivers? Where are they in the groupings? A: In previous week's group.

Q: Is CCPS following President Biden's guidance? And best practices for schools clearinghouse?

A: Guidance comes from MD Dept of Health and Education. Also best practices with regard to safety will continue, and Dr. Curry is not aware of any changes.

4) Alternative education policy.

Ms. Roof provided an overview of the program:

Alternative programs – two elementary programs, two middle school regional programs (govern all 6 middle schools), every high school has designated position – alternative programs teacher. County has an alternative school at CTA, covers grades 6-12.

Limited # of students in program (4-5). Particularly at elementary level, limit # of kids in program. Program limit around 12 students.

Designated teacher and assistant at middle school level.

High school limit 12 students, certified teachers.

Alternative school has 6 full time teaching positions, services students with disabilities and regular education populations. Limit no more than 20-22 students at any one time.

Options range from intervention to removal of student from home school due to disciplinary reasons.

Program in place since at least 2007/8.

Remove perception that student in alternative program is there because there is something wrong. Students just need an alternative place to work. Being in the classroom is difficult, student needs a quieter place or a more one on one relationship with teacher. Sometimes different skill sets need to be worked on to return to classroom. Goal is to change behavior rather than be punitive.

High school -- working with students to look at alternatives in receiving their education. Especially at alternative school, students enjoy and would rather stay.

Q: Approximate amount of time student might be in alt ed program? A: Try not to hold longer than 45 days. Goal is to return student back to home school. Sometimes two weeks, sometimes it's about academic remediation, sometimes social/emotional skills. For the duration of the alt ed program, constant communication with administration/parents. At the high school level, students drop in and then move to next class – one period or more a day. Try to break it up so student isn't there for long periods of time. There is no set amount of time for the alt ed program for a particular student. Reevaluate in certain time period. Daily communication with parents, middle and elementary a log goes home to parents every day.

Q: Process for student to get into that program? A: Parent talk to administrator. Administrator can talk to parent. From a discipline hearing at central office. Out of county placement of a similar fashion. Or parent has asked if they could use that to transition before going into school they don't know.

Q: At HS level, is the alt ed program used for in school suspension? A: No. In-school suspension is separate from alt ed.

Q: What schools have elementary programs? A: Mutual houses elementary programs. Administrative procedures are on the CCPS website following the policy.

Q: If student commits violent crime outside school are they automatically sent to alt ed. Is there a difference whether it happened on school grounds? A: CCPS is still legally obligated to educate them. Situation-dependent. No blanket answer – we work closely with law enforcement. Talk with superintendent to determine best placement – in alt ed or alternative means to educate student.

Q: What is the process by which a student returns back to home school? At elementary and middle school level, there are communication with home school to make sure everyone is on same page. Classroom teacher in alt ed program shares information. When close to the transitional process, there are more meetings between the home school and programs. Then a date is set for the transition. CCPS encourages home school to visit students while in alt ed. At the high school level, there is communication between teachers and administrator in charge to work the student gradually back in. The same thing happens at elementary and middle, transition is gradual.

Mr. Mister meets with the student and meets with alt ed to see what is going on, and then meets with student again. Mr. Mister meets with students during transition. A safety advocate or school counselor will follow through and report to Mr. Mister how things are going on and will check on students as they transition back into building.

Q: Does CCPS track ethnic/racial make-up, disability make up and how that tracks with the general school population? Are more groups likely to be referred to program? A: Higher population in general of African American young men at secondary level. More often young boys/men than women or girls. That can change as the school year progresses. In general, more African American males and few females; if young women, usually middle school or early high school.

Q: Has there been discussion about that statistic and attention paid to addressing why that might be and how to change? A: Yes, CCPS has talked about that for years. Laws changed with amount of days a student can be suspended. Now, understanding is that suspension should be no more than 10 days except for certain infractions. There are more interventions so students can complete school. Also noted that Calvert is one of the first 5 counties in Maryland that had elementary program.

Q: Just confirming that there are administrative regs that back up policies, and that it is the content of policies the CAC is reviewing, not administrative regulations. Is that correct? A: Sarah S., Yes. We give advice to Board, and Board develops/approves policy, but that can also inform regulations.

Q: For demographic trends that you track, is this publically available or tracked internally?

A: Tracked internally. Never seen public document.

A: Is it reported to supervisory, oversight body? A: No. MSDE does not ask for data specific to alt ed.

Q: Are there any measures taken to address the fact that African American males make up a lower population in schools and higher here. A: Not that I'm aware of.

5) Student Behavior Policy – This policy comes before the board sooner but it is important to shape thinking around behavior interventions generally.

Ms. Workman provided an overview of the program.

Noted that the Board asked for annual review, and that is what is done.

Positive behavior interventions (PBI) – all schools have some form of this. 22 of 24 CCPS schools are PBIS schools. Others are implementing but may not follow PBIS structure strictly.

New – trauma-informed intervention. Students come to CCPS with trauma.

The policy lays out definitions for different interventions. CCPS had one of the highest rates of use of seclusion and restraint in MD, so the policy was reviewed by central office staff to implement new procedures for students with challenging behaviors. Under COMAR, CCPS is required to monitor and submit data to the State of Maryland on use of restraint and seclusion.

Q: Is information available to Board available to public? Yes, numbers of restraint and seclusion are publicly available. Procedures updated in 2019, so there is monitoring data but this year students have not been in school so there is little new data. CCPS has data for the first two quarters last year, but then the shut down before end of 3rd Q.

Q: Does this policy consider teachers who couldn't restrain student, teachers getting hit, their belongings taken? Is this policy stating what they can and can't do? Is this update an adjustment for some of their concerns? A: The policy is up on website for review, will go to Board for approval in first February meeting.

Q: How do procedures reflect concerns based on this policy? To make classrooms less disruptive. A: The policy looks at alternative strategies to restrain. For example, the use of a mat to block punches, not push the student away. Rather than restrain, block. Restraint is a very last resort and used only when a child in imminent danger of hurting himself or another individual.

Q: Is there a designated person to come and restrain a student when necessary? How long will it take that person to get there? A: There is a crisis team in every building, trained in physical restraint and seclusion. Sometimes it is teacher, special ed teacher. If child is escalating to point where teacher feels child may become aggressive, the need is to get the child out of classroom, talk the student down. Give the student some space so s/he can pull him/herself together. A teacher could call a counselor or psychologist. Must try other strategies before child can be restrained.

Q: A concern from parents and teachers is that the rest of the class has to leave and the disruptive child stays in the room? A: It depends. Sometimes evacuate classroom if no way to get child out. But try to get child out first.

CCPS is trying to make sure that hands are kept off every student. Sometimes physical escort as opposed to restraint. When incident in classroom, set of procedures for students who witnessed event get to speak with guidance counselor if traumatic for them. Intent for kids to understand how their behavior affects others, talk about alternative ways to deal with that behavior. Are parents notified if incident so they can have conversation with child? Parents of child involved, yes. But not mandate that every parent in that class is notified.

Q: Are there supports in place for staff member who may have felt affected by student who had to place hands on or use mat? A: School social workers, psychologists, administrators, EAP.

Q: Behavior issues are often mainstreamed and the student is not placed in alt ed, so there are more issues in classrooms than in past. If there is an issue, are they placed in alt ed or do they continue to mainstream? A: It depends. If the student is special ed, the parent, IEP team, general ed, special ed, and building administrator all discuss – it is a team decision.

Goal for the CAC is to gather feedback, figure out what kinds of Qs the CAC has so that we can pass back information helpful to inform discussion.

There is also a new way to make public comment on the CCPS website. If go to homepage, policies for review, for to fill out and submit.

6) Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 7:15 pm.