

Oak Park and River Forest High School

Joint Committee on Student Discipline Thursday, February 14, 2013

Present: Aletha Clardy, Mark Collins, Kris Johnson, Matt Malony, Sharon Patchak-Layman, Jonathan Silver, Tom Tarrent, Nate Rouse (chairperson) and Deloris Collins (recorder)

Minutes from previous meeting of February 7, 2013 were reviewed.

Code of Conduct Review: In an effort to assist Student Intervention Directors (SIDs), a report has been created, that allow the SIDs to be able to see and address their students quickly for their “Failure to Serve” detentions. The majority of these detentions are given by PlascoTrac for tardys.

Areas of Concern: The new building security measures that went in effect on Monday, February 11th, were discussed. It was stated that all students were in the building and in class by 8:15 on Monday. All tardy’s were removed from student schedules on the 1st day. Although the North Entrance and South Mall Entrances had great student flow, the Main Entrance had a line due to those students who needed temporary IDs. Tuesday’s ID check was very successful as less students were required to obtain temporary IDs. The new security measures and ID policy coupled with the Hard Lockdown Drill on February 13th reinforced to the students the importance of everyone’s safety.

It was reported that ID scanners are now in use in the Counseling Offices in addition to other areas thru out the building so we are able to account for where students are. All visitors and parents are checked in at the Welcome Center and are escorted to the room they are visiting. Students have been respectful of these changes and have addressed and discussed the restrictiveness of unsupervised movement in the school via the “Huskie Huddles” with are chaired by Principal Rouse.

A question was asked if there are any practices in place to help kids make the right decisions, especially for seniors who will be going on to adult life and to higher learning institutions. The Tutoring Center was cited as a good transition for kids to make right decisions as they must show responsibility to be in this unsupervised space. It was mentioned that other high schools use different reward systems to allow their students to move thru out their building unsupervised. It was shared that we must be careful about being too restrictive with students so that we can have “free thinkers”.

Suspension Reduction Program: This program was discussed and it was shared that for those students who get into fights the process for them to come back to school involves parental involvement and a behavioral contract which outlines expectations for students. Most students don't usually commit the same egregious offense again while under the contract. Repeat offenders are recommended for expulsion. There are various outside influences that affect kids' behavior and each case is different. For our students who are struggling, there are many services and resources available to them however, the parents must be part of the support team and their involvement is necessary.

Matrix: The proposed new infraction matrix codes were discussed. It was stated that since the definition of key terms are already defined in the student planner, we are looking to pull this information out so students have this reference. The question was asked how we make sure that the students know and understand what the infraction is. It was spoken that students need to define the infractions for themselves so they know the consequences beforehand. It was stated that younger, female students are aggressive and that a large percentage of fights stem from cyberbullying. The Stepback Program addresses cyberbullying, but we need to look at other ways to combat these behaviors.

A suggestion was made that a student peer mediation/jury panel would be helpful to introduce another way to look at issues when they arise.

The Committee was asked to go over certain portions of the proposed infraction and consequence matrix to voice their concerns. We would want to apply less punitive consequences to the infractions. This matrix will be presented to the BOE for their approval. The 1st Semester discipline statistics will be vetted thru this Committee and will be presented to the BOE on 3/12/13.

The question was raised if we could survey all our student via Facebook regarding student discipline, ID's, use of the Code of Conduct. We would want to ask our students 1) what inconsistencies they see and 2) have we compromised the safety of the building due to the lower threshold of consequences.

The Committee was asked to be prepared to discuss their concerns for the Code of Conduct at our next meeting on Thursday, February 28th.

The meeting adjourned at 4:55 p.m.