

**School Site Visit and District Department Presentations Observation and Recommendation
Response Report**

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Broward County Public Schools

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Diversity Committee 2023/2024

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Chair Narrative

From our site visits/revisits and presentations from various departments, the Diversity Committee for the 2023-2024 school observed and documented ongoing systemic non-compliance as it relates to the CCC settlement. In most schools, textbooks were present, yet consumables were being used primarily. Technology was present in an inconsistent manner while there was confusion with standards of service. Advanced Placement (AP) based on data provided and site visit observations demonstrated availability however, the information on said courses, including the benefits, understanding of AP and graduation criteria are not as available to the parents and community at large. Facilities for athletics are not up to par and extracurricular activities are not advertised well on individual school websites. Media centers are working with little to no funding. Discipline seems to be an evolving issue that can be better organized. Facilities are a major issue in this district even after the SMART program. There is a consistent lack of information sharing, interdepartmentally. The 5 Five Year Capital Plan only met one indicator item, which is the publishing aspect of it. Student assignments/reassignments appear to be inconsistent district wide with information not forthcoming. **NOTICE** This committee has too many staff appointees, while we appreciate their perspective (and it's vital) the number of appointees supersede non-staff.

Despite our findings we believe that Broward County Public Schools (BCPS) has the greatest opportunity to not only be a leader in education but the catalyst for other districts. This report will provide the district with observations, recommendations, and insight from not just the perspective of this committee but the communities that BCPS serves. We ask that the School Board genuinely consider our recommendations, ask questions, and implement a plan to address

our findings. This committee's goal is to ensure that the educational environment at BCPS is one that promotes diversity, equity, and inclusion for all its students, volunteers, and staff.

TEXTBOOK CONDITION

Superintendent CCC settlement annual report 2023/2024, (*for the purpose of continuity “2023/2024 Annual Report” will be in the beginning of every condition summary*) states that the textbook condition has been met in all indicator criteria. While the committee will agree during site visit/revisits textbooks were physically present in many classes; there were classes that consumables were the only materials present. In addition to consumables being present in some classes, in all classes consumables and worksheets were the resources that were primarily used. For condition 1, of all instructional materials ordered and distributed, what was observed in use was primarily consumables. The committee observed the inconsistencies with textbook availability in the form of teacher discretion on how textbook distribution is handled in the individual class level. The committee also observed textbooks out on pallets in the open unattended. The committee also believes that the district could be moving towards a digital based education based on observations during these site visits and Policy 5306 that states “to assure technology shall play a predominant role”. Consistent with the annual report of school year 2022/2023 funding in general is a constant hindrance.

Committee Recommendations:

- School textbook coordinators need to make sure textbooks are secured in designated textbook rooms.
- Allocations need adjustments to account for consumables, beyond standard “Maintenance of Effort” funds.
- Consumables need to be added to the inventory tracker, if they are not already tracked.
- If the District moves fully to digital textbooks, there must be an allocation earmarked for these resources and processes and procedures in place.

- If the District moves fully to digital textbooks, amend policies 5306 and 4140.

TECHNOLOGY CONDITION

The 2023/2024 Annual Report states the technology condition met two (2) out four (4) indicators. I would comfortably state that only 1 out of the 4 indicators are met. Indicator 2.1 in the annual report states “(ninety-five percent) 95% of schools meet or exceed a 1:1 student to laptop ratio”. Annual Report year 2022/2023 this indicator was met stating “District currently exceeds the ratio of laptops to students.” What appears to have changed is the laptops (Lenovo are out of warranty) and a refresh program is taking place. However, in the interim schools like William Dandy Middle and Collins Elementary are down several laptops and have still not received replacement laptops placing them in 2:1 ratio status. Funding is a huge issue with technology, the district is charged to provide ‘no cost or low-cost internet access to staff and students in need’ The district stated no funding was allocated to provide such a service. Not only is there no funding but there is no written take home procedure implemented. Policy 5306 has NO provision for taking home “internet capable devices.” I asked staff for clarification on technology funding: “budget vs actual related to the \$37 million in technology in the document attached labeled Florida Department of Education Project Award Notification.” I also asked staff to provide an explanation of what is being pulled out by the district for the teacher raises which is \$19.6 million from ARP for technology. No response for said request at the completion of this report.

Committee Recommendations:

- Explore a new vendor for laptops and begin getting new laptops, district wide.
- Revise Policy 5306 to have clear language on provisions required for taking home “internet capable devices” and communicate these provisions with parents.
- Provide additional funding in school budget for internet capable devices.

- Review the policy/procedure for charging students for lost technology and/or equipment.
If technology is insured by the District and staff is not charged for lost technology/equipment, then students should not be charged.
- Provide report of the funding source for the allocated budget and the actual expenditures to get the District to 1-to-1 student to device ratio.

STANDARDS OF SERVICE

At the time of the 2023/2024 Annual report the district did not have results back. However on February 13, 2024 during a regular scheduled school board workshop Deputy Superintendent Dr. Hepburn of Teaching and Learning presented an outlook on academic plans for the 2024/2025 ([Teaching and Learning Presentation Part 1](#)) school that had the results for 2024 from the PM1 and PM2 achievement level 3 and above for elementary, middle and combination schools as well as graduation rate year 2022 vs 2023. In the CCC settlement it states **“The SCHOOL BOARD agrees to implement the developed Standards of Service for all schools. This will establish a countywide grade level benchmark and a diagnostic/prescriptive procedure to identify all students’ needs. The SCHOOL BOARD will analyze this data and implement plans to address the conclusions of said analysis”.** We need to point out that there is no longer a “Standard of Service” as well as Policy 5312 “Standard of Student Services” mentioned below. As we look at 3.1-3.2 indicators description, we see that those standards are necessary. The results provided in the Teaching and Learning presentation provided some clarity on indicator 3.1 and 3.2 in terms of the CCC settlement requirement. In reviewing the information provided in that presentation (1) the information was district-wide, and (2) the information is labeled “informational baseline” that is a result of the assessment change from FSA to FAST. Based on the presentation, BCPS Grade is a B and is ranked 2nd highest amongst Florida's largest districts in ELA math and Social Studies achievement. However, they dropped a point on both ELA and Social Studies from the 2021-22 to 2022-23 school year. BCPS ranked lowest in science achievement amongst the largest districts in Florida but increased 3 points from the prior year. Middle School Acceleration ranked lowest among the large districts and decreased

by 4 points compared to prior year while College and Career Readiness ranked lowest among the large districts but remained stable at 60%.

Graduation rate increased 1.5 percentage point from 2022. Based on these provisional baseline results we believe several factors may be contributors towards these rankings. Our committee submit through site visits/revisits observation that (1) some's schools are not using effective learning hours in school, (2) we would like to see the effectiveness of personalization periods and study halls, (3) we observe some school are not fully following instructional focus calendars and cover material as outlined, (4) there is a huge need of resources to support curriculum, (5) lack of effectiveness of training and professional development, (6) Gaps in ESE staff development, certification and support and the development of standardized of technological resources and use in the classroom. Questions for staff: Is canvas use required via educational professional contract? Also, why policy 5312 for Standard Student Services was repealed during Dr. Cartwright's tenure? I've added the Explanation and policy link [Policy 5312 Repealed Policies](#) The committee believes this policy needs to be reinstated with revisions as it was a completion of a trio of policies.

Committee Recommendations:

- Use provisional data to identify at-risk schools.
- Use provisional data to set goals, while prioritizing schools with the most need & work up to bring schools into parity.
- Maintain ongoing monitoring quarterly and provide this committee with quarterly reports.
- Provide this committee with any new program implementations that enhances standard of service.

- Reinstate Policy 5312 with revisions and direct correlations with the three other policies it indicates under its description.

ADVANCED PLACEMENT/HONORS COURSES

The 2023/2024 annual report provided data that appear to demonstrate all indicators have been met. However, based on departmental presentations and site visits/revisits the Diversity Committee submits that indicators 4.3, 4.4, and 4.5 are questionable and require further data to support compliance. During our October 2023 meeting we had Mr. Barmoha, Director from the Department of Secondary Learning to discuss Advanced Academics. Mr. Barmoha provided the same information that was used for this annual report. We have recommendations for the district based on 1) the questionable findings and 2) this department's presentation and this report's data provided.

Committee Recommendations:

- Create a strategic plan to aggressively inform students and parents on Advanced Academics, as a whole.
- Create a toolbox for each school to use to engage in discussions related to Advanced Academics.
- Review and revise the tools for qualifying students for Advanced Academics.
- Establish, review, and/or revise procedures for measuring students' interest in Advanced Academics.

ATHLETICS/EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

The 2023/2024 annual report states two (2) out of three (3) indicators have been met. Last school year's report is identical in nature which demonstrates a level of consistency that is unacceptable to this committee and should be equally unacceptable to this district. The committee accepts the district's assertion and agrees with the findings. During site visit/revisits the committee observed that the athletic facilities at all schools (K-12) **do not meet district standards** or state standards. The report states that a district staff performs an annual site visit. This site visit performed by district staff was not included in the annual report as a backup document. The committee wants to know how this annual visit is conducted, its procedure and process as well as follow ups.

Committee Recommendations:

- Provide the Diversity Committee with processes and procedures District staff use to determine the conditions of the athletic facilities as satisfactory or unsatisfactory during their annual site visits.
- Provide a detailed explanation of what is satisfactory vs. what is unsatisfactory.
- Adopt a policy or procedure for collection, distribution, and online availability of a comprehensive list of student-initiated clubs/athletic programs at all middle and high schools.

MEDIA CENTERS

The 2023/2024 annual report states three (3) out of the six (6) indicators are met. Last year's annual report stated that indicators 6.2 and 6.5 were the only ones met. This year 6.1, 6.2, and 6.5 are the ones met. Indicator 6.1 showed an increase in high school "balanced collection usable library volumes" from seventeen (17%) to thirty-six (36%) while elementary schools decreased from ninety-nine (99%) to ninety-four (94%). Indicator 6.2 demonstrates that print has become obsolete but based on committee site visits/revisits print is still needed. During site visits/revisits this committee observed under indicator 6.5 that interest in book loan has decreased. We have also observed that the media centers are not really being used as in the past. The "school wide take-home procedure in compliance with SB Policy 4120" was not furnished to this committee to confirm that indicator 6.5 was met. The three (3) indicators that have immense effect on students and staff are the ones not met which are: budget, access, and up to date materials. It's this committee's observation and reaction to this annual report that indicators 6.3, 6.4 and 6.6 are the catalyst for indicators 6.1, 6.2 and 6.5.

Committee Recommendations:

- Requests that the Department of Innovative Learning provide to the Diversity Committee:
 - Any yearly updates established by the Department(as presented in the District report) to the Diversity Committee and School Board.
 - The established processes and procedures for providing support to schools that are out of compliance.
 - The established school-wide take-home procedures.

- In future annual reports, demonstrate if the current status of an indicator is an increase or decrease from the previous year.
- School Board consider providing additional funding for Media Centers as indicator 6.3 has not been reviewed since the original settlement in 2000.
- Indicator 6.4 is statutorily required, and the Diversity Committee asks the Board to make this a priority. Indicator 6.4 reads, “Students and personnel have access to media services, materials, and equipment in compliance with F.S. 1006.28(2)(b).”

DISCIPLINE

The 2023/2024 annual report states that all indicators in the discipline committee have been met. Each of the conditions, except for 7.3 and 7.4, are an act of data collection. What the Diversity Committee can offer as a tangible assessment are the observations done during the site visits/revisits. During these sites visits/revisit the Diversity Committee observed that many schools either had no place for internal suspension or no real internal suspension process. When we did observe schools that had internal suspension those classes were either mildly educationally productive or students were just sleeping. In the 2023/2024 annual report links on page 40 that provided data on suspension rates, disciplinary practices gave the committee more insight on this district's discipline practices.

In the CCC settlement it states “**The SCHOOL BOARD agrees to develop a plan to collect data on current disciplinary practices including suspension rates and additional support provided by the Standards of Student Services (SOSS). The SCHOOL BOARD shall analyze data and implement a plan to address the conclusions of said analysis and to assure equity in the administration of student discipline countywide**” first we need to point out that the SOSS Policy, 5312 was repealed in 2022 under Superintendent Cartwright as mentioned in condition six (6). The documents are linked here for your review: [repealed policies](#) and Policy. What the committee was able to ascertain from the links provided on page 40 of the annual report on “Incidents and Suspensions in Broward County Public Schools” was that consistently from school year 2008/2009 until present Black students registered higher suspension rates than did Hispanic or White students. This was true for each type of suspension. Black male students were more likely to be suspended than any other student group. Black female students registered the second highest suspension rates, exceeding the suspension rates of Hispanic and White male

and female students. In links on page 40 of the annual report the ([Brief #147](#) released 4/26/2012 on page 14) it states “The District has taken steps to ensure fairness and equity of discipline actions for all students”. This was explained to have happened since the introduction of the discipline matrix in the 2004/2005 school year. The brief further highlighted “The proper application to ensure fairness and equity of disciplinary actions through the discipline matrix tool will be stressed”. Unfortunately, this committee sees no evidence of equity when discipline is administered. Using the data provided for over fourteen (14) years this district has not been able to ensure fairness and equity of disciplinary actions. I, as chair, am afraid to look back further than 2008. Even with the so-called mechanisms as the discipline matrix put in place to combat the excessive punitive actions against black children, bias and discretion continues to overshadow compliance.

Committee Recommendations:

- Have behavioral summits twice per year.
- Mandate Indicators 7.5 and 7.6 and enhance yearly.
- Review Discipline Matrix and its corresponding policy every two years.
- Replace Policy 5312 with revisions to reflect district changes.

FIVE-YEAR CAPITAL PLAN

The 2023/2024 district annual report states that all indicators under Condition 8 Five Year Capital Plan have been met. This committee agrees that indicator 8.3 appears to have been met. However, all other indicators have not been met. This committee asserts that 8.1 and 8.2 have not been met based on the 2022/2024 report statement: “The District’s needs are far beyond what is allocated in the five-year capital plan, but an effort was made to provide resources to improve existing schools in alignment with the district’s strategic plan. To the extent that funding is available this indicator is met”. This statement clearly states an effort was made based on funding availability but not a fully executed parity to district standards. For indicator 8.4 this committee has consulted with the Facility Task Force (FTF) for input. This condition has not been met; an example of this would be Markham Elementary reduction in classroom sizes. Information from FTF is forthcoming. Our committee along with the FTF had a joint workshop in February and in the Committee recommendations section will detail changes being considered for indicators in Condition 8. For indicators 8.5 this committee asserts that this has not been met based on the statement in the districts 2023/2024 annual report “For the most part these barriers are found in schools that were built prior to the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1992.” Because of this the report explains that their ADA compliance department has ongoing efforts engaged to work on getting schools ADA compliant as the needs arise from either school request, student request and teacher request. During site visit/revisits a few schools were not ADA compliant.

During this school year’s site visits/revisits this committee witnessed the issues with construction due to problematic vendors. Vetting process for construction companies appears to be problematic with so many unfit vendors. Facilities issues with work orders and new programs

that should have streamlined the process. Portables that are extremely old and past their shelf life that are either being repaired rather than removed, not being used and or on a list to be removed and still on campus and are being used in enrollment numbers. The biggest issue for this committee has been the facilities issue.

Committee Recommendations:

- The School Board direct the Superintendent to direct the Chief of Facilities to create a bona fide timeline for the completion of the SMART bond project and share it with the Diversity Committee.
- The School Board direct the Superintendent to direct the Chief of Facilities to address concerns with Maximo to eliminate work order backlogs.
- The School Board direct the Superintendent to direct the Chief of Facilities to organize their staff to promptly address facility issues that are considered safety issues.
- Add an indicator in Condition 8 that measures an established standard for playgrounds in elementary schools.
- Review annual site visit protocols related to playgrounds to ensure effective communication and collaboration between District and School personnel on identified needs.
- Create a department that surveys all school playgrounds annually and repair/replace playgrounds, as needed.

ASSIGNMENT/REASSIGNMENTS

The 2023/2024 annual report states that indicator 9.1 was met. Based on this indicator criteria the diversity committee would agree however, the process by which reassignments are being done are not done with fidelity on the part of the individual schools. Boundary changes within the district in the past several years have not been without controversy. In a superintendent round table with all chairs of advisory committees in March it was revealed that some schools have intentionally withheld seats from the district for students only within their boundaries. Those schools reported no seats available when in fact those seats were available. This act is against educational legislation (1002.31 F.S.).

At the March 20, 2024, School Board workshop, it was also stated that schools (which are considered “good schools”) have high percentages of white student’s vs students of color. Broward County has been identified as a minority majority county with 69.5% percent of its population identifying as Black, Hispanic/Latino, Asian, Native Hawaiian, and other Pacific Islander, American Indian or Alaskan Native and two or more races ([U.S. Census Bureau Quick Facts](#)). While this committee understands that race is not a sole criterion for reassignments it is important to note that not looking at race in terms of diversifying the district has led to many schools having a high percentage of white students and students of color centralized in specific areas.

Committee Recommendations:

- Based on information collected throughout the year, the following portion of Policy 5004.1 does not reflect current practice.
- “School choice is one tool for the promotion of diversity within schools, including but not limited to the prevention, reduction, or elimination of minority group isolation. In

addition, school choice supports the District's goal to stabilize enrollment at selected schools. School choice is developed, established, and maintained, dependent on the needs of the District, in meeting identified school district enrollment and diversity goals.”

- Survey parents who request reassignments to obtain information on their reason(s) for requesting a reassignment and provide the Diversity Committee with the data for review.
- Allow the Diversity Committee to provide routine recommendations to Policy 5004.1 during the policy review process.

References/links:

- School Board Policies and briefs links below
- U.S. Census Bureau link below

<https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/browardcountyflorida/PST045223>

https://www.browardschools.com/cms/lib/FL01803656/Centricity/domain/13537/releases/briefs/2011_Suspensions_Brief.pdf

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