

BHMS Governance Meeting

10.30.25

Transcript

<https://otter.ai/u/fqvCCUgcwTf-vh7frG5chtuRpME?view=summary>

The BHMS Governance Meeting focused on discipline data, showing a significant reduction in referrals from 354 in 2022 to 171 in 2025. The school has implemented a step-by-step behavior correction system, reducing vape incidents from 18 in 2023 to 3 this year. The school achieved a Title One Reward status, with ELA scores improving by 5.53 points and math by 4.81 points. The discussion also covered the need for clearer cell phone policies to ensure responsibility is shared between teachers and students. The school budget included ordering additional radios for enhanced student safety.

Action Items

- [] Review the wording of the cell phone policy to ensure shared responsibility between teachers and students for turning in devices at the start of the instructional day.
- [] Communicate the expectation of consistent rigor and support in co-taught classes to all teachers.
- [] Provide additional training for paraprofessionals and coaches who are providing special education services.

Outline

Discipline Data and Procedures

- Speaker 1 discusses the discipline data from October 30, highlighting 171 referrals and the importance of teaching undesirable behavior rather than immediate punishment.
- Speaker 1 mentions the use of paper triangles with paper clips as a form of punishment, referencing a football coach's approach to discipline.
- Comparison of discipline referrals over the past four years shows a significant reduction, with 171 referrals this year compared to 354 in 2022.
- Speaker 1 shares an example of a student caught vaping, emphasizing the effectiveness of metal detectors and the importance of consistent discipline.

Consistency in Discipline and Academic Impact

- Speaker 1 emphasizes the importance of consistent discipline, especially in a small community, to avoid favoritism.
- The impact of consistent discipline on academic performance is discussed, with Speaker 1 noting that students are more engaged in class when not in ISS.
- Speaker 1 praises the restorative practices used in the alternative school, highlighting the importance of teaching students from their mistakes.
- The top three referrals for the year are identified: student incivility, completed step plan, and unapproved item (cell phone).

School Performance and Achievements

- Speaker 1 brags about the school's performance on the Georgia Milestones, noting it is the first time the school has been a Title One Reward School.
- The school saw a significant increase in content mastery, with English Language Arts (ELA) showing the least gain due to increased rigor and teacher turnover.
- The math department is praised for its outstanding performance, with a 4.81 gain in scores.
- Speaker 1 mentions the upcoming return of a science teacher from maternity leave and the positive impact of new curriculum and seasoned educators on social studies scores.

Special Education and Co-Teaching Challenges

- Speaker 1 discusses the challenges faced by students with disabilities, noting that co-taught classes often do not meet the same level of rigor as non-co-taught classes.
- Speaker 4 suggests that better communication and training for co-teachers and paraprofessionals could improve the situation.
- The importance of scaffolding and maintaining high rigor in co-taught classes is emphasized.
- Speaker 1 acknowledges the need for more training for paraprofessionals and the potential for system-wide improvements.

Budget and Safety Measures

- Speaker 1 reviews the governance team budget, noting the purchase of new radios for student safety.
- The importance of transparency in budget decisions is highlighted, with Speaker 1 explaining the urgency of ordering radios due to a long turnaround time.
- Speaker 1 praises the school's resource officer, nicknamed "Big Smooth," for his quick response and effective handling of safety issues.
- The use of radios during after-school programs and for coaches at sporting events is discussed.

Cell Phone Policy and Procedure Clarification

- Speaker 1 introduces a discussion on the Ben Hill Middle School cell phone policy, with Miss Wilson suggesting clarifications to ensure responsibility is shared between teachers and students.
- The current policy states that cell phones will be collected by the teacher and securely stored, but Miss Wilson proposes changing the wording to make it clear that students are instructed to turn in their phones.
- The importance of clear policy wording to protect the school and teachers from procedural issues is emphasized.
- Speaker 5 suggests specific wording changes to ensure that the policy clearly states that teachers will ask students to turn in their phones, sharing the responsibility between students and teachers.

The BHMS Governance Meeting focused on refining the cell phone policy. Speaker 1 highlighted issues with current procedures, such as inconsistent phone collection and the impact of ISS on instruction time. Speaker 2 suggested updating the policy to increase student responsibility and proposed a consistent two-day ISS penalty for first offenses. Speaker 4 emphasized the need for severe consequences to deter students from violating the policy. The group agreed to revise the policy to clarify responsibilities and ensure fairness, with a focus on progressive discipline for non-legal issues. The meeting concluded with plans to draft and review the updated policy.

Action Items

- [] Rewrite the cell phone policy and send it out to the team for review
- [] Draft an updated version of the cell phone policy
- [] Review and provide feedback on the updated cell phone policy

Outline

Cell Phone Policy and Procedure Discussion

- Speaker 1 explains the current policy where students turn in their phones, which is documented but not always followed by teachers.
- Speaker 2 suggests updating the policy to make students more responsible and mentions the need to review procedures with substitute teachers.
- Speaker 2 advises parents to keep phones at home if their child doesn't have an away athletic activity to avoid issues.

- Speaker 2 notes that refusal to surrender a device results in a three-day home suspension, but this hasn't been an issue this year.

Concerns About ISS and Progressive Discipline

- Speaker 1 criticizes the current policy of removing students from instruction time for first offenses, suggesting alternative punishments like detention.
- Speaker 1 compares the current policy to high school practices, where first offenses result in parental notification and increasing penalties for repeat offenses.
- Speaker 2, as a varsity soccer coach, mentions receiving messages from students during the day, highlighting the difficulty of enforcing the policy.
- Speaker 4 emphasizes the need for consistent enforcement to avoid losing their jobs, sharing an example of students using "shanks" in class.

Challenges with Cell Phone Use and Social Media

- Speaker 2 discusses a TikTok challenge causing issues with cell phone use among students.
- Speaker 4 describes a strategy where students caught with phones are treated like they have a weapon, leading to a significant reduction in incidents.
- Speaker 4 explains the need for severe consequences to deter students from bringing phones to school.
- Speaker 2 agrees to rewrite the policy to better reflect the discussed changes and ensure consistency.

Progressive Discipline and Legal Considerations

- Speaker 1 argues that the current policy should be progressive discipline, but Speaker 2 insists that it cannot be applied to violating the cell phone policy due to legal requirements.
- Speaker 3 points out that the law goes into effect in January, but most schools are already implementing it.
- Speaker 1 suggests changing the wording to protect students from procedural errors by teachers.
- Speaker 2 and Speaker 1 agree on the need to adjust the wording to ensure fairness and consistency in enforcement.

Responsibility for Cell Phone Collection

- Speaker 1 argues that teachers should not be responsible for collecting cell phones, as it should be the students' responsibility.

- Speaker 5 shares their method of collecting phones after announcements, emphasizing shared responsibility.
- Speaker 1 agrees that teachers should not be expected to collect phones, but students should be responsible for ensuring their phones are collected.
- Speaker 2 and Speaker 1 discuss the need for clear procedures and responsibilities to avoid confusion and ensure effective enforcement.

Final Remarks and Next Steps

- Speaker 2 mentions the upcoming after-school program and the need to finalize the updated cell phone policy.
- Speaker 2 thanks everyone for their participation and expresses hope for future meetings with more teacher involvement.
- Speaker 2 and other participants express appreciation for the meeting and each other's contributions.
- The meeting concludes with a positive note, looking forward to implementing the discussed changes and improvements.