

CRLS Council Meeting Notes for 12-22-14

Submitted by Teresa Walker

Attendees:

Damon Smith, Principal
Greta Hardina, Family Liaison
Susie Van Blaricum, CRLS-L Dean
Ed Byrne, CRLS Diversity Programs Coordinator
Gail Stubbs, Co-Chair
John Delancey, Parent
Larry Childs, Parent
Mike Frutkoff, Community
Teresa Walker, Parent
Bob Birnbaum, Parent
Trina Abbott, Parent
Elka Uchman, Workforce
Marie Antoine, Parent
Adam Manacher, Parent
Nancy Tauber, Parent
Lace Campbell, Community
Edwidge L. Hercule, Parent
Zahara Mohammed, Parent
HaeKyung Chung, Parent
Joan Abrams, Teacher/Parent
Victoria Harris, Parent
Emily Dexter, Parent

Suspension and Disciplinary Changes regarding Behavior and Attendance

- Some changes are state level; others are city/school district level
- Recorded incidents in 11-12 are 1392, 12-13 are 1082, 13-14 are 1123 and 14-15 are 504
- In 11-12, 27% were suspended, 12-13 had 16% suspensions, 13-14 had 23% suspensions, and 14-15 had 9.5% suspensions
- Most are out-of-school suspensions versus in-school suspensions
- Superintendent challenged schools not to have suspensions during first quarter, which was not realistic for a school size of around 1800
- No suspensions until mid-October
- Students started off the year behaving well but around the end of first quarter their behavior begins to slip
- One of the SIP goals is to reduce the number of suspensions

Massachusetts General Law passed during the summer

- Zero Tolerance is eliminated (CRLS was NOT a Zero Tolerance school)
- Suspensions are a "last resort"
- Expulsions capped at 90 days except for drugs, weapons, felony, and assault on staff
- Students suspended over 10 days must have an Ed. Plan (CRLS enacts at 5 or more days)
- All students have a 10-day suspension limit

Alternatives to CLRS Suspension

- Increased frequency of conferences and meetings with families prior to determination of consequences
- Mediation Program
- Restorative Justice practices
- Changes in attendance violation policy
- Time is essential with regard to contacting families
- CRLS does not suspend without a suspension conference with family to discuss options
- In the past, appeals happened quickly after a suspension
- Students do not Fail class automatically if in Attendance Violation

During 11-12 year, the 381 suspensions were enacted quickly following misbehavior

Suspensions include expulsions

With 180 school days, CRLS is suspending 1 per day on average

Incidents can be minor (eating in class) to really major incidents

Suspensions do not appear on transcript

Principal doesn't want suspensions to follow student into college

CRLS has more information regarding occurrence and who is being suspended

The only ones who can suspend are Deans of Curriculum, Principal, and Assistant Principal

Tynes, Van Blaricum, and Di Clemente got out-of-school training, too

If there is a fight, not every student is penalized in the same way

Had "Be All Right" Conference at beginning of year to talk to students about being healthy

Suspension Analysis (results from Teen Health Survey)

Data from 2010 and 2012

Effects of race, gender, SES, OSS, extra-curricular activities, connection to adults, and feeling safe

Students of color are 2 to 3 times more likely to be suspended

Males are 1.8 times more like to be suspended than females

Housing, public assistance, and poverty is not a factor

If a student is born outside the US, there is not an increased risk

If a student receives OSS services, there is not a increased risk (which is not like national "norm")

Students who are absent because they felt unsafe are 2.5 times more likely to be suspended

Students who are worried about fights are 1.6 times more likely to be suspended

Students who are worried about peers having weapons are 2.2 times more likely to be suspended

Students who did not have an adult connection are 1.8 times more likely to be suspended

Students who reported that they had a teacher to talk to at school had a decreased risk

Students who are engaged in athletics are 2.4 times less likely to be suspended

Students who are engaged in a club or afterschool activity are 2 times less likely to be suspended

Relationships with teachers and other adults matter

Make sure students are involved

Teachers should get to know their students

Reducing suspensions doesn't always reduce parity

To reduce disparity, should get to root cause of problem

Families, students, and educators need to engage in collective problem-solving when conflicts arise

Restorative Practices:

A set of processes that proactively build healthy relationships and community to prevent and address conflict and wrongdoing.

Out-of-school suspensions place students at higher risk for a variety of negative factors

Community Meetings happen for 15 minutes twice a day with 2 teachers for 4 years

Group discussions about videos, school newsletters

Motto discussion and what does respect mean?

Cambridge Youth Council starting a mentoring program for 8th and 9th graders who might be at-risk and are not otherwise involved in extra-curricular activities

How can CRLS find out what a student needs, like at TAT in elementary school will reveal that the child is newly homeless?

Attendance Violation Policy (in effect October 7, 2014)

- An AV will no longer be an automatic F with a “buy back” opportunity
- A 10% point reduction from the student’s term grade will be awarded
- CRLS requires students to be in school 95% of the year
- 4th unexcused absence or 12th unexcused tardy
- If you AVFd a course, you failed which made student ineligible for athletics
- Parents have the right to appeal within 10 days of the AV. If the appeal is denied, parents may submit a written appeal to the Superintendent whose decision is final.

Did not print out Parent Handbook but posted it online; missing communication from CRLS about it not being handed out but posted instead

Gail, Nancy, and Greta met to discuss the creation of a FAQ or Tip Sheet of what to do if your child gets into trouble

Class of 2014 had a lot of peer support to reduce suspensions

Give students a larger, more accountable role to reduce suspensions

Does CRLS give advance warning before students hit the 4th absence or 12th tardy?

Families get either a phone call or email notification of absence or tardy which can also be checked on Aspen.