

## **Superintendent's Advisory Council on Instruction (SACI): Thursday January 11, 2023, 7pm.**

*APPROVED. Handouts: Meeting Agenda; Tonight's Slides; Student Behavior Categories.*

**Welcome—Mrs. Vanessa Olson, Chair, SACI.** Snacks, cookies, and water available. Answers to questions should be considered informational, not binding. Please keep in mind answers will stay focused on instruction. Keep in mind many curriculum issues and questions have to do with decisions at the state level. Please keep questions coming. Working on how to distribute additional questions and answers. December minutes approved as amended—minor formatting and spelling out one acronym.

The calendar committee has diverse members. We have to meet the 180-day requirement, holidays agreed upon, etc., so there doesn't wind up being much calendar wiggle room. If you have strong opinions, please let the committee know and they can try to take input into consideration.

**Student Management and Alternative Programs—Dara Dugger, Director of Student Management and Alternative Programs & Denise Huebner, Associate Superintendent of Student Services and Post Secondary Success.** Student Management is student discipline. Behavior got a little out of control with pandemic. Trying to get back on track. School discipline is directly related to instruction. Looking to reduce exclusionary discipline rates—exclusion makes them more likely to drop out. Code of behavior based on state and county legal guidelines. Her team works to make the county code, then schools will implement, sometimes slightly differently. Purpose of code of behavior is to have a vision for improving conditions for learning. There has to be a level of prevention, not just reaction. This must be documented. We are mandated to still provide a quality education even if a student is excluded. Then we have to prepare them for a successful return. This is a partnership—everyone plays a role. Parents, counselors, nurses, teachers, administrators, community member.

The root of behavior is communication. Need to understand the message the student is trying to communicate. We must understand the cultural context—everyone comes from different environments. Know the story. Behavior is developmental, so we have to assess their social emotional development. Behavior is learned—we have to teach it.

Positive and preventative approach: be sure students and parents know and understand school norms, expectations, rules, and processes, including dress and grooming standards. Staff is responsible for establishing and maintaining a safe, supportive environment. Exclusionary discipline by student group available on the slides—obviously data from 20-21 is pandemic-related, so irrelevant. Data broken out by race, and by other categories.

Responding to student behavior. There are different behavior levels and different behavior categories—listed in the handout/slides. Can't automatically assign a high level to a category, have to respond according to the situation. Fights, for instance, are often a relationship behavior issue, not just a safety issue. So need to deal with the root issues as well as consequence.

Nontraditional Programs: There are nontraditional schools and computer-based instruction options, plus individual student alternative education plan (ISAEP) with GED for 16/17yos, or adult education. The code of Virginia has requirements for data collection regarding alternative programs.

Restorative Practices are used to build a sense of school community. Helps create positive relationships through use of regular restorative circles. Circles can be proactive and reactive. They teach skills such as listening, respect, and problem solving. There are still consequences, but seek to work together to develop core values.

**QA:** How do we ensure consistency across schools and across classrooms? The schools have to be reviewing data and make sure they are acting equitably. Looking at data frequently helps make it easier to see what the issues are and map resources to help.

How do schools work on this with staffing limitations? Look at the discipline data and try to figure out what the base issues are and allocate resources within the school accordingly.

While the students being disciplined deserve a good education, but how do we protect the rest of the students? We have to document and figure out what is going on with the student, but still need to work on the environment for all students. Need to talk with them about what happened and help restore their comfort in their learning environment. School is a community and we have to reflect that.

Some Elementary Schools do very private discipline but others do public shaming. How do we make it more private more consistently? Need to find out what's socially and developmentally appropriate for the students—and for society. PBIS discourages public shaming.

If a teacher cannot speak the student's language, how can they communicate expectations with the students? There are some resources available, and teachers need to figure out how to communicate effectively, especially in a preventative manner. Put in the work ahead of time.

Administrators receive training every year, and should be flowing that down to the teachers. Data should be reviewed every quarter. Code of behavior and data for the division mandated to review yearly.

Do/will we have data regarding effectiveness of restorative circles? MTSS department would collect and provide that data.

Prevention is key, but the code of behavior is mostly reactive. Teachers lack the time and resources. Restorative circles don't have to be huge and time-consuming and help build relationships to make it easier.

Short term suspension, school is required to keep them up—access to Canvas, ability to communicate with teachers for help. For longer term, students are required to be on camera on Zoom.

Restorative circles happen within the classroom—sometimes just set aside the lesson for a few minutes and figure out what's going on with the students. Discipline should not be taking significantly away from teachers' instruction time.

Are there support groups available other than through counselors? What can we do? Everyone needs to play a role. Who in the community may be able to help provide resources? Resource map and figure out what is available and what is needed. Reach out to your community service board—schools are not allowed to provide therapy, only to remove barriers to instruction. Would be good for Gov. Youngkin's telehealth program to be offered to PWC.

What resources do we have when dealing with administration that does not believe in discipline? Division is focusing on consistency, looking at data. Data tells a story—what is and what is NOT being reported? We have re-normed and re-launched the Code of Behavior. We are retraining for consistency. Lots of training this year—though we understand we can't overwhelm teachers with too much training. Administrators have received extensive training. Yes, there is a problem, and we are looking at the data to try to help drive consistency.

Additional questions, please write them down and QR code will be out at break.

**Positive Approach to Decreasing Chronic Absenteeism—Pam Bell, Director of Student Health and Wellness; Dr. Tamaica Martin, Supervisor for Student Prevention Programs and Family Assistance.** Absenteeism relates to positive climate and culture. Policies are based on regulations—there are division and parent legal requirements. There is a list by regulation of excused absences. There are tiered levels of supports. There is a difference between truancy and chronic absenteeism. Truancy is unexcused absences. Chronic absence counts ALL absences, excused or not. Chronic absenteeism is now an accreditation issue. Chronic is 10% or more of the school year (so 18 days). People don't always notice—being sick 2 days a month doesn't seem like a lot. Parents/guardians have 5 school days to provide excuse for being absent, then becomes

automatically marked as unexcused. It is the goal to keep students involved in school, not to take them to court. Virginia code requirement that any student absent for 15 consecutive days must be withdrawn—even if the school knows why, and school will make it as easy as possible to re-enroll.

Chronic absenteeism a nationwide issue, especially since the pandemic. Students on homebound do not count in chronic absenteeism numbers. Most categories are seeing improvement, with fewer students being chronically absent first quarter than last year. Other than high school. 16% of students in the division were chronically absent first quarter. Numbers by grade and by different categories available in the slides/handout. There are many efforts under way to increase attendance. Schools move forward when students feel excited to be there. Trying to find ways in include kids. There is an attendance toolkit for administrators available to help them. Efforts to increase attendance and the campaign are underway. Partnering with Attention to Attendance to help keep parents informed and to relieve school staff from having to take that time. We can't help if we don't know. No, PWCS did not pay for the glossy Attention to Attendance flier many families got in the mail, it was not authorized—please spread the word! Trying to build relationships with students and families. There is a student-driven attendance campaign this year. Winning theme submitted by a student from Forest Park.

Q&A: In February there will be a virtual session to help parents understand chronic absenteeism, driven by Parent Resource Center.

What is the effect of Code Orange on absenteeism? We had one day last year and didn't record attendance. Will be recording attendance this year, we'll see how it goes. Attendance was amazing during the pandemic.

Chronic absenteeism only counts full day absences. Yes, we track partial days out, but they don't affect accreditation.

If parents voluntarily withdraw a student for a time, days don't count towards chronic absenteeism. If they wait the 15 days, those days will count if the student attends at least 50% of school days.

How are we trying to deal with cultural barriers when school is not a priority? We recognize that there is a problem with school priority. Our diversity is a strength, but makes it challenging. Language barriers are less now due to improved communication tools. Working on trying to get better at how communicate with people. Working with faith-based community to help understand other cultures and help learn to communicate better.

Please submit additional questions via QR code. Also complete attendance.

#### ***Break 8:33-8:40***

**Work Session: Budget and Capital Improvement Plan.** We will get the presentations the day after the school board. Capital Improvement Plan includes equipment and facilities—new schools, tracks, repaints, etc. Budget is everything else—salaries, software, benefits, etc. There is funding from multiple sources for both components/buckets. If you want to give feedback on this year's plans themselves, talk to your school board members. Our Committee recommendations and priorities go in our annual report, and can impact the budget that gets developed next year.

Ms. Olson will send a link to send in additional questions through the weekend.

***Adjourned 9:01pm. Next Meeting will be February 8, 2024 at Kelly Leadership Center.***