



Disparities in Educational Outcomes Task Force

March 3, 2015

Notes Summary

Welcome and Introductions

- Initial meeting at Knoxville Area Urban League, convenience, free parking
- Open to other organizations hosting future meetings
- Use this meeting time to organize and set the foundation, make sure we are on the same page

Purpose for Task Force

- Our charge is to examine any disparities in student academic achievement and discipline outcomes that might be correlated with income, race, language or disability.
- Identify and recommend strategies to address disparities and ensure equal access for all students for a quality education
- Strive to be to be efficient and effective to maximize our time, make real progress, and make a difference.
- We have had similar conversations in the past, we have put some strategies in place, but we have not made enough progress.
- We need to acknowledge what has been done before and look at the state of the affairs as of today so we can move forward.
- Identify and analyze what the problems are; put together solutions, strategies and plans for implementation

2006 Study

- Examine the issue higher suspension and expulsion of African American students
- The scope was to look at data at individual building level
- Information was gathered from various sources
 - Students
 - Parents
 - Concerned citizens
 - Community members
 - Principals' panel
 - Web resources
- Key findings confirmed that there were disparities
 - Supported that there were a disproportionate number of African Americans were being suspended
 - Poverty was a more significant indicator of disparity than race
 - Male twice as likely as females to be suspended or expelled
 - Student to student intolerance
 - Need for classroom management support
- 11 recommendations were made
- The timing of the report and recommendations unfortunately coincided with transition of former Superintendent

Meeting norms/agreements

- Meeting guidelines and structure
 - Establish a time keeper/facilitator, to stay on task
 - Share agenda prior to meeting
 - Limit agenda to no more than 2-3 items
 - Focused recommendations that are realistic and effective
 - Solution-oriented, establish short and long term goals
 - What can be put into action 6 months from now? Not wait another year?
 - Honest, transparent safe place to think together
 - Assume goodwill; challenge ideas, not people
 - Respect that we will have differences of opinions
 - Talk to each other with grace, but also with truth
 - Evidence based conversations
 - Relaxed Robert's Rules with a focus on consensus
 - Be accountable, capture the substance of meetings in notes and share on public web page
 - Notes will capture nature and substance of the dialogue, but not who said what
 - Free to deliberate amongst ourselves, provide a summary to the public, the topics and the nature, the agenda, and decisions

- DEO Task Force Chairs, Elizabeth Alves and Phyllis Nichols will act as spokespersons. Dr. McIntyre will also be spokesperson as necessary.
- Student Participation
 - Need to hear from students, living the real day to day experience
 - Diverse student group
 - May want to consider a larger group of representatives from each Middle and High School (29), such as the school climate group
 - Select a few representatives to serve on DEO Task Force, and report back to all students
- Parent Contribution
 - Input from parents with children who experience these disparities
 - Create opportunities (a focus group?) to reach out to parents
 - Meet at a time to accommodate parents' work schedules/availability
- Data and Background Information
 - Board Policy
 - Administrative Procedure
 - Discipline/Achievement Gap reports- Knox County Schools and perhaps UT
 - School disciplinary practices that are keeping kids out of school, and potentially impact student learning
 - Research on best practices
 - Evaluate evidence based strategies that have been effective in other areas
 - Look at Community Schools, evaluate their data and expand on their model

Next Steps

- Next meeting
 - **Tuesday, March 31, 2014**
 - 4pm-5:30pm, at Knoxville Area Urban League
 - Materials for this meeting will be sent in advance
 - Agenda
 - Board of Education Policy
 - Administrative Procedures
 - Current Discipline/Achievement Gap Reports
 - Meeting objective will be to discuss materials and establish a common understanding of the issues
- On-going/Future meetings
 - Scheduled the last Tuesday of each month
 - 4pm-5:30pm
 - Offers to host made by Pastor Daryl Arnold & Rabi Alon Ferency
 - Meetings held through May

- Consider to divide into sub committees to more effectively address and work during summer
- Establish opportunities to gather input from the community
- Reconvene in the Fall
- Conclude and present recommendations with Town Hall meeting in late Fall

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