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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