

Board of Education Agenda Item

Board Meeting of: May 22, 2019

Title and Subject: End of Year Update on Nisbet Investigation

Originator: Rob Stein

Action/Information/Discussion: Information

Time Needed: 5 minutes

Background

In the spring of 2018, we updated the board on a student incident that had disciplinary and legal implications. The district had engaged a third party, Larry Nisbet, to review this situation and present his findings to the board. Mr. Nisbet is a retired school superintendent with experience as an expulsion officer and expertise in human resources, school discipline procedures, and interest based bargaining. Mr. Nisbet conducted a document review and interviewed the involved parties as part of his investigation. His report established seven recommendations for future action. During a January board meeting, we provided the board with a midyear update on actions taken to fulfilling the recommendations offered by a third party investigator about a student situation.

During that meeting, the board requested that the district provide more information on the following questions:

1. How do provide safe opportunities for people who feel vulnerable to express their voices?
2. How will professional development for responsive services and restorative practices extend to beyond administrators to teachers and other staff members?
3. How does our approach to responsive services and restorative practices compare (1) to best practice and (2) to practices in other districts?

Report

How do we provide safe opportunities for people who feel vulnerable to express their voices?

We have policies in place that allow for individuals to report violations, and over the course of this year have made these policies more user-friendly (e.g., streamlining process, improving clarity, adding process supports). We've also worked with board members to help clarify their roles as community advocates.

How will professional development for responsive services and restorative practices extend to beyond administrators to teachers and other staff members?

Professional development for teachers in both responsive services models and restorative practices began in the 2018-19 school year. All members of the Responsive Services teams were required to attend two professional development sessions:

1. Parent-Teacher Home Visit Program, a proactive relationship-building & engagement strategy
2. Collaborative and Proactive Solutions (CPS). The CPS model is the foundational piece of intervention with at-risk students who display challenges with behavior or attendance and has two key components 1) an assessment of lagging skills and unsolved problems (ALSUP) 2) a collaborative problem-solving model that increases students' voice and ownership by having them work in partnership with an adult advocate (admin, teacher or counselor).

These two trainings will continue in 2019-20 as the Responsive Services teams expand and will include more direct "proficiency training" or coaching in the model to increase the effective use.

Additionally, we will be exploring opportunities to train someone in 2019-20 who can then serve as the internal trainer moving forward to increase sustainability. Dr. Ross Greene, the founder of Lives in the Balance, author of *Lost at School* and *Lost and Found at School*, and developer of the ALSUP and CPS model will be presenting to our entire Special Education department during early release Wednesday October 2nd, screening their documentary *The Kids We Lose* and answering questions for parents and community members (esp. Planning outreach to community mental health providers through our partnership with Aspen Strong) the evening of October 2nd and then training all administrators as well as the new RS team members on October 3rd.

Schools have developed site-specific professional development plans for their instructional staff and some additional classified staff during 2018-19. During this year, every school has provided at least Foundational Training to their staff members. This training was delivered by Lindsay Hentschel, Grace Tennant, Resolutionaries, and/or Longmont Community Justice Partnership depending on the site.

In addition, Lindsay Hentschel has provided ongoing support to the admin team and the culture and climate team in continued use and integration of Restorative Practices so they can best support their staff including the development of a disciplinary matrix to increase consistency and objectivity in response. All Crew Leads completed in-depth professional development and coaching this year on Restorative Practices for Equitable Classrooms. A number of the Leads will be attending the National Conference on Restorative Practices in Denver in June and at least one Lead or other rep from each school will be attending a 3-day Trainer of Trainers in Restorative Practices with Resolutionaries in August 2019. They will then be able to directly support ongoing staff training and implementation

In 2019-20, we have even more professional development dollars available to us through our state grant to train every staff at deeper levels and continue implementation. We also have funding to hold Restorative Practices trainings for parents in each community. These will take place November 12 (Basalt), 13 (Carbondale) and 14 (Glenwood). Lindsay Hentschel is working with Rick Holt and the exec team on how to best access and support our classified staff as a whole (i.e. through the Transportation Director, Food Services, Custodial, etc.)

How does our approach to responsive services and restorative practices compare (1) to best practice and (2) to practices in other districts?

Best Practice from Colorado Department of Education: Office of Dropout Prevention and Student Re-engagement:

- Restorative Justice, often referred to in school settings as Restorative Discipline, is a formal process facilitated by trained mediators in restorative justice that allows students to understand the harm caused, who it affected and how to repair it. It provides support and opportunity to resolve student conflicts and misconduct. In 2011, House Bill 1032 was enacted which encourages the use of restorative justice as a school's first consideration to remediate certain offenses. This law also encourages school districts to implement training and education for staff in the principles and practices of restorative justice. The goal of restorative justice is to help students build relationships with staff, teachers, and each other, to help students respect others, to encourage students to take responsibility for their actions, and to help students repair the negative effects of their behaviors (Gonzalez, 2012). Restorative Justice practices usually include peer mediation and/or youth courts (Teasley, 2014). To be successful, there needs to be effective collaboration with the justice system and law enforcement (Skiba, 2014). For more information, visit [Restorative Justice Colorado](#).
- Best Practices from the [Department of Public Health, Colorado Schools Safety Resources](#) include Restorative Justice in schools, use of Social-emotional learning and mental health supports (a key element of the case management and problem-solving process in Responsive Services) and other forms of positive behavior supports that are embedded in a fully implemented restorative school model.