

DORCHESTER COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION

Board Citizens Advisory Council on School Environment

Minutes

April 12, 2018

Present: Katie Holbrook, teacher; Donna Payne; parent;; Wendell Meekins, Jr., parent; Dr. Casey Scott, Health Department; Elder Craig Mathies, Larry Windsor, parent; Erin Hill, parent; Shamonie Gaines, C-SDHS student; Melissa Coleman, teacher; Lt. Shane Hinson, Cambridge City Police; Lesley Jackson, parent; Morgan Wright, NDHS Student; Katie Tolley, parent; Phil Rice, Chairperson, Laura Layton, Co-Chairperson.

Absent: Sheriff Jimmy Phillips.; Zulieka Horsey, Pupil Services; Greg Meekins, NAACP; Clare Spillane, Social Services;

Mr. Rice conveyed that he and Mrs. Layton have names of community members who are interested in serving on a subcommittee. He explained that he and Mrs. Layton will review their lists and forward the contact information to the appropriate CAC member, so they can be contacted to serve on their subcommittee.

Mr. Rice conveyed that he would like to revisit the concern from our previous meeting regarding the student statement – to make students college and career ready. He feels that it should read – to make students life and career, or college ready. There was significant discussion and it was decided that the two-student representative will meet with their student governments to develop a new student slogan that is appropriate for students countywide from elementary to high school and present at the next CAC meeting.

A question was raised regarding who decides if a student is college ready and what classes the student takes. It was noted that there are students who are strongly encouraged by the school counselor to take AP classes but don't really want too. They were told that there are slots in the class that needed to be filled. Any student that takes a AP class is required to take the AP test, if they don't pass it they don't get the AP credit but an Honors class. It was noted that it is problematic to schedule meetings with the school counselors. It was stated that the school counselors are overwhelmed and are dealing with more mental health issues.

Mr. Rice stated that a suggestion was made at an open meeting that DCPS teachers should be armed. He asked for the opinions of the CAC. There was significant discussion and it was unanimously agreed that teachers should not be armed. Mr. Rice will share this with the Board at the April 19, 2019 Board Meeting.

There was discussion regarding SROs and the need for transparency with students. It was felt that there should be more communication between students and SROs to help bridge the gap.

There was discussion regarding gangs and Mr. Rice stated that he would like to meet with the leaders of the gangs to discuss school areas be designated as a “safe haven.” It was felt that a person in the community that the gang leaders respected would be a more viable person to meet with the leaders for this discussion. Elder Mathis will reach out to his counterparts to see if there is anyone who could do this.

There was discussion regarding perception of students because of their looks. It is important to remember not to make judgements on how someone looks. There is a need to build support in the community and provide mentoring help.

Mrs. Hill shared information on an Active Shooters and Suicide Event sponsored by the Mental Health Association of the Eastern Shore and the Rural Maryland Council at the Wicomico County Civic Center on May 4.

Mr. Windsor shared that Bay Country Security could install a door security monitoring system at C-SDHS for approximately \$15,000. Mrs. Tolley stated that she could get donations for this project. Mr. Rice explained that a RFP would need to be developed and put out for bid by the Board. Mr. Rice will share with the Board at the April 19, 2019 Board Meeting.

Mrs. Payne shared a concern with regards to the outside door at NDHS that leads to the portable building that houses the nurses. This door is locked, and students and nurses must bang on the door until someone hears them to let them in. Dr. Scott stated that this has been discussed at NDHS and a buzzer will be installed in July. As a temporary fix it was recommended that a wireless doorbell be purchased at Wal Mart and installed. Mr. Rice will share with the Board at the April 19, 2019 Board Meeting.

Mr. Rice asked what the committee felt about photo id badges for all students. It was stated that high school students already have them but do not display them properly. It was felt that this would be a safety issue, you teach them stranger danger, then you provide their name.

There was discussion regard finances and security. Mr. Rice explained what is covered under the DCPS local and Capital budgets. Elder Mathis stated that since it is an election year there could be a referendum asking the citizens if they would support a tax increase to for the costs of school security. This would allow what course of action would be needed.

Lt. Hinson stated that his son attends DCTC and he is concerned about the lack of communication between DCTC and C-SDHS when there have been lock downs or other security incidents. Students from DCTC have walked into C-SDHS when these events are going on and they and their teachers are unaware. This will be discussed with administration.

Mrs. Jackson reported that the safety in the hallways at C-SDHS has improved. There has been a decrease of students roaming the halls. Dr. Barnes is vigilant in patrolling the halls.

The next meeting of the CAC will be Thursday, May 10, 2018, at 5:30 p.m. in the Board Room at the Central Office.

Recorder: Chris Dayton, Administrative Assistant