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Loudoun County School Board, Equity Committee Meeting, Thursday, May 4, 2023

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Place Loudoun County Public Schools / School Board meeting (see BoardDocs / LCPS-TV)
Length 1h 48m (video)

- Official meeting video (Vimeo / LCPS-TV): <https://player.vimeo.com/video/823935104?rel=0>
 - BoardDocs (School Board): <https://go.boarddocs.com/vsba/loudoun/Board.nsf/Public>
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Speech-to-text: whisper.cpp, model large-v3-turbo. Produced 2026-10-22. Each paragraph starts with its time [HH:MM:SS] in the meeting video.

[00:00:01] Good evening everyone this is Brenda Sheridan I'm calling to order the Loudoun County Public Schools equity committee meeting today is May 4th 2023 and we have established a quorum in the room our first order of business is I've been informed that Miss Corbo would like to ask for remote participation so can we get Miss Corbo can you stop presenting for a second so we can see Miss Corbo thanks so Miss Corbo if you could tell us where you're located and

[00:00:38] If anyone is with you and if you're asking for a medical or personal exemption this evening, we can almost see you. Can you hold on one second? Sorry.

[00:01:07] Oh, thank you. We're working on it, Ms. Corvo. So we're just going to go ahead. As long as we can hear Ms. Corvo, that'll be fine. So Ms. Corvo, again, could you tell us where you're located, if you're with anyone, and then what type of exemption you're requesting?

[00:01:24] Thank you. I'm home. I'm alone. And under policy 2420, I'm asking for remote meeting participation due to an ongoing disability and medical condition. It's also recommended by HRTD under federal ADA disability law.

[00:01:41] Thank you. Just so everyone, make sure everyone can hear because sometimes the connection isn't great. Ms. Corba was asking for remote participation due to a medical condition. And at this time, I

will ask for a motion for that.

[00:01:58] Moved is there a second been moved and seconded moved by Tiffany seconded by Tom Is there any discussion seeing none all in favor of the motion to allow miss Corbo's participation for medical reasons?

[00:02:17] Please raise your hand and say aye. Can you leave them up? Thank you anyone opposed please raise your hand and say no no if that will carry 13 to 2 and I believe was there one abstention did someone abstain or did I just not count correctly?

[00:02:40] So that'll carry 14 to 2. Thank you. Ms. Carbo, you're part of the meeting. Thank you. All right My understanding is that there is no public comment this evening. Is that correct? All right, so we'll move to item 3 the minutes So is there a motion to approve the minutes from our March?

[00:03:07] 2023 meeting remember anyone in the anyone on the committee can make the motion to approve just turn your mic on Say your name and I make a motion to approve the minutes from the March 23 Needy, thank you. That was Michelle correct. Correct. Thank you. Is there a second second and Haley singer?

[00:03:31] Thank you, Haley. It's been moved and seconded Is there any discussion or changes to the minutes seeing none all of those in favor of the minutes from the March? 2023 meeting please raise your hand and say aye anyone opposed that will carry unanimously. Thank you All right We always like to welcome when we have a new member join our committee and so this evening I believe for the first time tonight, sorry to put you on the spot Raquel, we'd like to

[00:04:08] welcome Raquel Chapman from, she's a member of the MSAC, the Minority Student Achievement Advisory Committee, and you're one of their nominees and you were approved by the school board. So welcome to the committee. We hope you feel the welcome of the room and of course participate.

[00:04:28] And if you would like to just introduce yourself really quick, I've already said your name and who you're from, but if there's anything, why you're excited to be on the committee and why you asked to be nominated would be a great way to share. Thanks. We made everybody else do it, so I feel like I have to make you do it too. Go ahead. Okay. As you said, my name is Raquel Chapman.

[00:04:48] I am new to Loudoun County. My husband served 30 years in the military and last duty station was the Pentagon. So he actually got stationed up here when I was nine months pregnant. And so I decided to just come up, and we, once he retired, we just railed our home here.

[00:05:09] And we've had an interesting experience in Loudoun County. So I am excited that I was introduced to MSAC and provided the opportunity to be a part of the equity committee so that my son can have an equitable education, and I can advocate for other students to have the same.

[00:05:28] We did raise three daughters in North Carolina, so my experience here was a little different. So that's why I'm joining. We're excited to have you and your voice here on the committee. And I'm just looking around the room. I want to make sure I didn't miss anybody during the first round of why you're here. And if I did, please raise your hand, and I will be happy to call on you to share your why.

[00:05:47] Make sure I don't leave anyone out. All right. Great. All right. So now we're going to move to number five, our information item, which is 501, next steps from incident reporting.

[00:06:04] And I'll ask Lottie to take that one. Lottie. It'll be very brief. - Good evening, committee members. Great to see you all here. I'm glad we're able to move forward with our meeting. Part of this info update will really be just an announcement of the ongoing work that we continue to do.

[00:06:24] If you will recall our first meeting for this 2023 term, we really started with our serious topic and focusing on how we're addressing racial incidents and slurs. And so as we continue to do that work with our schools, I also wanted to let you all see a person who's named by role in the protocol for responding to racial slurs and incidents.

[00:06:52] And so I'm introducing Shahid Muhammad, who is the supervisor of equity, and we want to welcome him. He's not officially a member of the committee, but I do want to let you all know that he is named by role in the protocol. And so to kind of put things in context and names and faces together, allow you all to meet him tonight.

[00:07:12] And we are looking forward to rounding out this school year with providing an update on where we stand at the end of the year with our slurs, incidents, and progress that has been made. Thank you, Lottie, and welcome, Shahid.

[00:07:38] I'll put you on the spot if you want to introduce yourself and tell us anything you might, a little bit about yourself, if you would like to. Well, good evening everyone. My name is Shaheed Muhammad and I'm super excited to be the new supervisor of equity, joining Loudoun County after 26 years in Montgomery County, Maryland as a middle school principal and elementary school principal. And I'm excited to be here and work with everyone as we look for great outcomes for all students here in the division. Thank you.

[00:08:08] Thanks so much and welcome. We look forward to all of our future endeavors with you. All right we're going to move on to our presentation and program this evening and so item number six under committee discussion 601 is restorative practices circles and I'm going to turn it over now to Jen Evans the director of student mental health services and we go by first names here I hope you're okay with that I've known you so long I feel like I only know how to call you Jen so welcome and I hope that you will introduce everybody that's here and before you get started that you'll make sure we all know who everybody is so I'll let you do that

[00:08:48] thanks will do thank you so much good evening everyone as Brenda shared I am Jen Evans the director of student mental health services for Loudoun County public schools when we were here last was our March meeting and what we talked about was restorative practices and there were lots of questions and great questions about what is a restorative conference so this evening I want to demonstrate. And I have a team here of very skilled restorative practices facilitators who are actors this evening. And I will have them introduce themselves as they begin to speak. But

[00:09:22] before we do the demonstration, I want to introduce Darren Madison. He is our supervisor for student assistance services. So before we get into the demonstration, I want him to just do an overview of what restorative practices is and what it's not so that you have a better understanding before we do the demonstration. Thank you. Thank you, Ms. Evans, and good evening, everyone. Happy to be here. So, like Ms. Evans indicated, I'm going to give a brief overview of restorative practices and followed by a demonstration of a restorative conference. So, what are restorative practices?

[00:09:59] Restorative practice is an evidence-based framework designed to help build relationships and repair harm when harm occurs. It's restorative, within that restorative ethos, there is a continuum of practices that range from informal proactive practices to more formal reactive practices and that that would be the the tier three would be more the formal reactive restorative conferencing circles in a sort of language would be like more your tier one tier

[00:10:34] two levels circles can foster acceptance respect for differences help build community and conferences bring those who did harm and those who were harmed together. Conferences allow participants to hear each other's perspectives, repair harm, and provide an opportunity for reflection to allow students to develop an agreement moving forward.

[00:10:57] So restorative practice is based in the philosophy of restorative justice, and the driving hypothesis behind restorative practices is that students are happier, more cooperative, and more likely to make positive changes when people and authority do things with them as opposed to to or for them.

[00:11:17] And here are our restorative principles. We focus on the harms of the wrongdoing rather than the rule of law that's been broken, empowers the victim and show equal concern for the restorative process. It supports students while I encourage them to take responsibility.

[00:11:34] It's meaningful accountability. It provides an opportunity for a dialogue between students. Participation is voluntary and it encourages collaboration and reintegration rather than punishment and isolation so our restorative process begins with a referral once referrals made we have a screening process to make sure it's appropriate if that referral is appropriate we continue on to the next step and we contact all the effective parties during that that conversation we're explaining the the expectations of restorative

[00:12:09] practices that is voluntary we're giving the the effective party an idea of what is that restorative conference looks like in terms of what questions you will be asked, who will be part of that conference. Once that's done, we scheduled a pre-conference. The pre-conference, from a facilitator perspective, is where a lot of the work is done. It is where we're actually sitting down with all the affected participants, and we're going through the restorative questions.

[00:12:40] We are, in some way, it's like a rehearsal before you get to the conference. Also during that pre-conference, we're continuing to assess to make sure that the conference is appropriate. In that decision-making process, one of the major decision-making points we look for is to make sure that no harm could happen if we go forward with the conference. We want to make sure that the person that was harmed, the person that was the victim, is not re-harmed through the conference process. The facilitators that will be facilitating the conference, we want to make sure that they're

[00:13:19] impartial and they stay objective. The facilitator in the conference process is really the least most significant person in that process. The facilitator is not there to tell participants what to do or make decisions. They're there really to facilitate the process. The participants, We want to make sure that all the stakeholders are there at the table, and as you'll see in the conference tonight, the seating and the questions that we ask, the ordering of the questions is a very important part of the restorative conference.

[00:13:52] So this school year, we had 12 restorative conferences that have been facilitated due to hate speech and racial slurs. Three of those were hate speech and nine of those due to racial slurs. And here's some of the feedback from those 12 conferences in our evaluation process.

[00:14:10] It's a big part of our, after we, when we go through the conference, we have a piece where we do evaluations, where we want the feedback of the participants. And here, if you look, you can see here some of the feedback. I'll just highlight some of the statements here that I could know why she did that and her part of the story.

[00:14:31] So, you know, giving some, that student a voice. The fact that we were heard equally and had guidance through it, that all voices were viewed as being valuable. I think it was an amazing process and helped reach an agreement. And I think this was essentially powerful. I learned something I didn't know and it helped me move forward. So, you know, this is restorative practices is sometimes it can be the beginning, starting point of healing that could occur from incidents like this when they occur.

[00:15:04] At this point, we will go ahead and we'll assemble and we'll get ready to demonstrate our restorative conference. Before we get started, I do want to say that this demonstration is focused on an incident of hate speech, racial slur that happens quite a bit. And I recognize that it could hit home for some of you. It could trigger some of you. So I just want to put out that warning that if it's uncomfortable for any reason and you want to leave, we understand and it's okay to step out so I just wanted to share that I also am going to read

[00:15:42] kind of that the situation to all of you before we get into the conference but I don't know if Gary and Darren Gary Ricky is our RP specialist that will kind of explain the setup which Darren didn't mention but I'm going to share the situation that we're going to be addressing and then Gary and Darren can explain the setup of the circle because they will be facilitating the conference okay so we have gabe gabe wants to raise his hand he's a student and jackie who are both in eighth grade and have

[00:16:19] science class together they are considered friends to each other and have known each other since sixth grade with no previous issues in science class gabe frequently makes comments to jackie that make her feel uncomfortable but she usually just laughs them off on tuesday gabe said she's cool with the jokes she's my n and jackie screamed at him hit him in the arm and stormed out of the class at least one other student overheard the comment and is also aware of the comments gabe makes to jackie the teacher was unaware of these comments the teacher mrs m and had not witnessed

[00:16:58] any previous conflict between the two except for the latest incident where jackie hit him and stormed out of the class the AP elected to pursue an RP conference for this matter and after discussing discussing RP as an option with parents gaining permission and speaking with the students regarding potential participation a referral was made to the RP facilitators note that Gabe did admit to his actions the RP facilitators contacted both sets of parents and I'll have the parents raise their hands so Gabe's mom and Jackie's

[00:17:36] mom. Both sets of parents gave permission for the students to participate in the RP and the mom for each student accepted an offer to participate as well. The facilitators then conducted pre-conferences with each student as well as each parent, the moms who are participating. So again I'm going to give you kind of a synopsis of the pre-conference because we're only doing the conference here.

[00:18:02] So Gabe initially thought his comments were okay because Jackie laughed them off in the past. He was surprised when she got mad. He has had no previous conflict with her. He is remorseful. He realizes that Jackie, his mom and her mom, the teacher and the class were all affected by this.

[00:18:24] Jackie says that Gabe makes comments all the time. He always tries to joke around. He laughs it off. She laughs off some of the inappropriate stuff. This statement crossed the line and set her off. She thinks Gabe is not a bad person, but just needs to understand what's funny and what's not.

[00:18:43] Using the N-word is not okay, even if joking. Those impacted included her, her friends in the class, her mom, the teacher, and Gabe's reputation. She just wants an apology and for Gabe to not cross the line with his comments. Jackie's mom was very angry about the incident when the school relayed what happened, and then again when Jackie gave her a summary at home.

[00:19:05] grateful for the RP process because she wants Gabe to understand why those types of comments are so hurtful. Gabe's mom was mortified to learn what Gabe said. She wants Jackie and her parents to understand that that's not something we teach him at home. The teacher, who was unaware of any of this conflict, said they usually work well together. She was surprised when Jackie hit Gabe.

[00:19:30] It disrupted the entire class, and a couple students told her afterward that Gabe jokes around a lot, including inappropriate comments. So at this point, do we have a mic? Okay. I'm going to turn it over to Darren and Gary, who are the facilitators.

[00:20:02] Okay. So with our restorative conferencing, like Jen described, we go through pre-conferences first. We meet with every participant.

[00:20:20] Oh, sorry. We actually live stream this meeting. So if there are viewers, we'd like them to benefit of the room dynamic. If you could just hang on a second.

[00:20:40] Thanks for your patience, everyone.

[00:20:54] Yeah, so like I was saying, we pre-conference with everybody that might be participating in a conference because we don't just bring people together and hope for the best.

[00:21:16] In that pre-conference process, we assess as facilitators whether, for example, if it's the person who did the harm, whether they are genuine with their remorse and accountability and they take accountability. We never put a person in a circle or into a conference that has not admitted to the wrongdoing.

[00:21:34] We also, for the person who has been harmed, again, we make sure, especially for them, because this process is really about them, so they have a voice and are able to speak about how they've been impacted and what they need moving forward. So we make sure that when we speak to them that it won't be a situation that they might be further harmed by this meeting that we have, this conference.

[00:21:55] And, again, it is always a voluntary process. We never force anybody who does not want to participate into a conference, and that's the message that we get across to our schools. Other than that, when we think about who we're going to start speaking with, our questioning, we have set questioning that we use, but we're very purposeful about who we start with.

[00:22:18] We want to give the person who caused the harm that opportunity to talk about how and be accountable, because that is usually, in this process, very beneficial for the person who's been harmed to hear that from that person immediately. And then we have the supporters, in this case, we do have parents participating as supporters for their children, and then we also have the teacher participating because she was the one who was there.

[00:22:43] We want to have a school representative there to be able to speak to what they saw happened, who they saw impacted, and things like that. So we're going to go. I just wanted to point out that you all have a kind of a note catcher, so you can capture some of the questions that arise while this is happening.

[00:23:02] Thank you. So we're going to go ahead and go through the conference. um, Darren and I are going to be facilitating, uh, we could, we're going to co-facilitate this conference. So we'll be trading off with our questionings. Uh, but every conference that we do follows this exact structure. Uh, we don't switch the structure. That's why this, this process is, is nice because it's the same thing every single time. We always focus on the three main things are, we're going to talk about what happened. We're going to talk about who was affected and how, and we're going to talk about finally what needs to happen to make things right.

[00:23:33] And when we do that at the end, we actually come up with an agreement that we document and that agreement comes from the students. It is not the adult saying that you're going to do this and you're going to do that. It is the students that come up with what they need in order to move forward. And we don't put anything in agreement that everybody has not agreed to.

[00:23:53] But that's how we finalize each of our conferences. Like Darren mentioned before, we do an evaluation. Everybody fills out an evaluation after the fact. So I think we, do they have copies of the, right? Yeah, yeah, Lottie gave you, I think, yeah.

[00:24:09] So you guys have the scenario in front of you and then also the expectation sheet. We start out each meeting with an expectation sheet that talks about how this is a voluntary process and it also talks about how this is a confidential process. I don't know if we've mentioned that yet, which what it means is what's said here stays here.

[00:24:28] So everybody knows it's not okay to go out and talk to friends about what was said and things like that. We do that every conference that we do. Anything else, Darren? Talking pieces, yes.

[00:24:45] So we do use talking pieces also to focus the conversation, okay? So it's not people trying to talk over each other. And as facilitators, again, we guide this process with the questioning, and then whoever's turn it is gets the talking piece. We're going to use the microphones as talking pieces tonight so people can hear everything that's going on.

[00:25:04] But it helps people focus on who's supposed to. It's, again, very structured, this process, and it follows the same structure every time that we do a conference. So it doesn't differentiate based on the incident or the theme of what the incident was or what the harm was.

[00:25:21] It's the same process every single time. And we as facilitators navigate that process based on things that are said and responded. And again, the pre-conference that Darren mentioned is the most important part of what we do because that's when we explain what the process is all about.

[00:25:36] That's when they can ask questions to us. We can ask questions to them. And it kind of gets the people involved comfortable, so it's not the first time that they're seeing us, hearing what it's going to be about. We explain what it's going to look like in a circle, the talking piece, et cetera, so they're completely prepared by the time they come to the circle.

[00:26:05] So welcome. As you know, my name is Mr. Rickey, and Mr. Madison and I are going to be facilitating this conference. Thank you for all attending. I know it might be difficult for one of you or all of

you, but by being here, it helps us deal with the matters that brought us together in the first place. It's an opportunity for all of you here to be involved in repairing any harm that's been done.

[00:26:25] The conference referral was made due to Gabe using an inappropriate racial slur about Jackie and how this incident has affected each of you and others. We're not here to decide if anybody's a good person or a bad person. This is not an investigation. What we wanted to do was explore who's been affected and in what ways, and then hopefully work toward repairing any harm that's been done.

[00:26:46] At the end, we ultimately would like to reach some sort of agreement, which we will document to move forward in a positive direction. does everyone understand this? Gabe, you have admitted to your actions regarding this conflict. Again, this was a voluntary process. If you wanted to, you could leave the conference at any time.

[00:27:06] However, if you did leave, the matter might be handled by the school in a different way. The conflict, however, may be finalized if you participate in a positive manner and comply with the conference agreement. Does everybody understand this? At this point, I'd like to explain the circle process and some of the guiding principles. We just ask you to bring your truth, knowing that your truth is your point of view. We ask you to exhibit respectful behavior, listening one at a time, using body language, facial expressions. We use a talking piece. We use a talking piece to focus the conversation. When it's your turn to speak,

[00:27:44] like we explained in the pre-conference, you have the talking piece. You'll be the only one speaking. Everybody else will be listening respectfully. Again, this is a confidential process. What we say here stays here. It's not okay to go out after this and share with friends who said what? This stays here. Everybody will have an opportunity to speak. You might hear something you don't agree with. That's natural in conflict situations. However, please remember, it is most productive to participate in a positive manner. Again, we're not here to blame anybody.

[00:28:11] It's about moving forward, as all of you said you'd like to do. We'll be asking many questions similar to the ones that we asked in pre-conference. Try to stay on that topic. We use a talking piece the whole time. Sometimes Mr. Madison and I may jump in without it. That's okay for us, but everybody else follow the talking piece rule. Before we start, what I want to do is just pass around the sign-in sheet. The sign-in sheet is the expectation sheet. Again, it says that you've agreed to be here. It said that this is a confidential process, so I'm going to pass this around. If you could

[00:28:40] please sign that. Okay, thank you very much. Does anyone have any questions before we get started?

[00:29:00] Okay, Gabe, I'm going to start with you. Gabe, could you just talk about what happened, please? So Jackie and I are in the same science class. We sit at the same lab table, and that day we were working on a lab project during the lab project it was it was pretty quiet everybody was working and Jackie and I usually joke around with each other because we've been friends for a long time and during that time I said something that was just really inappropriate at the at the time that I said it I thought that it would be okay because it was something that a YouTube

[00:29:38] blogger says we watched the same youtuber and and I said it not not really thinking that it would hurt her feelings but um but it did she got very upset um she she hit me um and then stormed out of the room um and then that's when it disrupted the whole class and um that's basically what happened and

were the other kids who were around did they hear you say this too or did they react um they definitely reacted because they you know they heard jackie get up and and heard me heard the punch um but they i guess the a few kids around around us did didn't hear it

[00:30:16] and notice it would you say that their reaction was were they laughing were they shocked um they were shocked they were definitely not laughing i think they were um just yeah definitely in shock and then the the teacher did the teacher respond to did you have to talk to the she came running over um right away but she jackie ran right past the teacher and out the door and then after this happened did you have to go talk to somebody in the office or I was yes I was I was pulled out of the classroom I talked to my teacher regarding the situation and you know she said that I would

[00:30:51] need to go down to to the main office and speak to the assistant principal okay and when you talk to the assistant principal did they mention this process or not right away basically they wanted to know what happened um they called home right away to let let my mom know um but then after um after that that's when they talked about the rp process and what that would entail okay and then uh have you had any interaction with jackie since then things have been um pretty quiet we we really haven't talked to each other much um and we've kind of given each other space you said

[00:31:29] you two were were pretty friendly before this yes yes thanks so much jackie could you talk about would happen please so um we were in group and like gabe said normally we joke around about what happened in class or what happened over the weekend and out of the blue like we were joking about something and then he used the n-word and i was very shocked and so i hit him and ran out of

[00:32:03] the room because i felt like that's that really hurt like he's never used that language with me before we talk about everything even about sensitive stuff so for that to come out of his mouth was hurtful and the look on his face like when I looked at his face after I said after he said it I thought wow that was my friend who said that to me and so I immediately ran out of the room ran to the bathroom and that's when one of the students came and found me and then you mentioned before you said you know joking around happens a lot had he ever said anything with you

[00:32:43] know racial comments like this before no um you said the student found you so then after that did you talk to somebody else after that like a teacher or counselor or anything so after the student came to find me um she told me miss m wanted me back in class i told her i wasn't going back to class um that i felt like blasted by gabe and there was no way i was going back in class so i have a very strong relationship with my school counselor so i immediately went to their office and sat in there and just bawled and cried for a while.

[00:33:20] And then she was able to calm me down. And then after that, she got a call that someone from the main office, the assistant principal, wanted to see me. So after that, I was able to have them come down to the counseling office because I wasn't leaving that office. And so the assistant principal came in.

[00:33:39] And then I guess when you go home, you talk to your mom about it? Oh, yeah. I tell my mom most things. And then since then, And have you had any interactions with Gabe since then? No, not at all. Jackie, thanks so much. Can you pass that around to Ms. M, please? Yes.

[00:33:58] Ms. Mionis, could you talk about what happened in class and then what happened after that? Sure. Students were working in groups on an activity, and I was kind of circulating around, and everything seemed to be going fine. And then I heard Jackie yell and turned around right as I caught her hitting Gabe.

[00:34:20] So I rushed over there to see what was going on. Jackie ran out of the room before I could talk to her. I sent a student to find her. I pulled Gabe out. I ended up sending him to the office for a referral.

[00:34:36] And then we were able to locate Jackie, and she ended up in counseling. Have you noticed any negative interactions between the two of them previously? No. They work really well together. They seem to be friends outside of class as well. But they've always worked really well together and had like a very typical peer relationship.

[00:34:56] I was really surprised because that behavior is really out of the norm for Jackie as well. It was a huge disruption, and that's not like her. She's very on task. She's very warm and friendly. So I was definitely concerned. But no, I had never seen anything.

[00:35:11] I will say some students came up to me after class and mentioned that Gabe had regularly been making comments to Jackie and that sometimes what he says is inappropriate. - Thanks so much. Could you pass that to Gabe's mom?

[00:35:27] Mrs. Kaye, could you talk about how you learned about what happened and then what happened after that? - So I was home when I got a call from the school from one of the assistant principals, I think it was, describing to me what had happened that day.

[00:35:44] And I was just mortified to hear that he had used that language to anyone, but especially to someone I've only heard kind of good things about um their relationship um so I was just I was confused and and disappointed um and from there um Gabe came home I wanted I wanted to hear directly from him more about what had happened and what he was thinking and and at first he kind of continued

[00:36:23] to try to write it off as a joke and in a way that they have engaged before and just I think with time and maybe through working through this process maybe the meeting he had with you he's really started to see just to see how hurtful this choice he made was and and using that language so I've seen a change in how he's describing what happened okay thanks so much can you pass that around to mr. C please mr. C could you talk about how you learned about what happened

[00:36:58] and what happened from there sure the school called me to let me know that Jackie was in the counselor's office they explained to me what happened and I immediately left because they told me she was very upset and refusing to leave the counselor's office so I immediately went to pick her up we got home she wouldn't talk on the ride home she was still very upset we got home and she calmed down and settled a little bit and we talked and she told me exactly what happened She explained to me that she and Gabe are friends, and I know they are friends outside of school.

[00:37:34] So it was very shocking. She was very upset. I was very upset. I was hurt for her. It's just been kind of rough since that happened. Has she mentioned any other incidents between the two of them since then? She did admit that there have been some other inappropriate comments, but nothing like this.

[00:37:52] But nothing since then? No. Thanks so much. Okay, can we pass this over to Gabe, please? Gabe, can you talk about when this happened? What were you thinking at the time? What kind of thoughts were going through your head? So at the time we were working together, I really was just trying to have fun and make her laugh.

[00:38:11] That was the only thing that was on my mind. And when it went the other way and it went in another direction, I immediately felt horrible. I felt, first of all, I was in shock because she's never been

upset with anything that I've said before.

[00:38:28] So at first I was in shock and I immediately felt bad. I felt horrible, not because I hurt her feelings, but I also ruined the class. I ruined the day 'cause everybody was just on edge. And since then, I've really just, I haven't wanted to come to school.

[00:38:51] I just feel so horrible because everybody knows what I said. And in no way did I mean it to be wrong, but now that I've talked to my mom about it, I could see how it's been taken in a horrible way. So I've just felt horrible and very anxious.

[00:39:08] Thanks, Gabe. Becky, same question for you. Could you talk about what you were thinking at the time? I was shocked because we had just finished a unit in Black History Month. So that was addressed in class.

[00:39:24] It was talked about. It was something that wasn't like a new subject. And plus, you know, I had told Gabe that there were boys in the hallway using that word. And he agreed that it was a bad word. So for him to use it in a joking manner was hurtful.

[00:39:44] So I don't know if he understood that until it actually came out of his mouth that what he said was hurtful because of the context that it was used as a joke in his mouth. But we had just had a lesson about that in history class.

[00:40:02] So, yeah. And what have you thought about since then, from then until now? my mom is trying to help me um look at the big picture um i still don't want to go back to class i feel humiliated i i've been thinking do i even really want him to be my friend i really don't want to be around him um i definitely don't want to go back to the classroom where it all happened

[00:40:31] um so since then it's just been kind of foggy thanks jake thank you so gabe we're now we're going to go into the next part of this, our conference here, talk a little bit about the impacts. So Gabe, if you can tell us who do you think has been affected by this incident and how?

[00:40:55] Well, first, definitely Jackie's been affected. The fact that I heard you just say that, you know, you don't want to come back to class, just that hurts. I feel horrible that you feel that way. So definitely you've been impacted by what I said. Your mom has been impacted because she's had to take time out of her schedule to be here to talk to you and I can't imagine you know the stress that that she's under because of this situation definitely my mom because she she had to get a

[00:41:31] call from from the school and that's never pleasant especially if it's a negative call my classmates they see me in a different light now and you know talking to my mom I have to regain their their trust and their respect and that's that's been difficult and of course Miss M you know ruining her class that day while I had no intention that it did it did ruin your class and students couldn't get back on task that day so I think everybody's been affected I think also the school administration has been

[00:42:06] affected because they had to take time out and coordinate this meeting they had to make all the phone calls home so I know that takes that takes a lot as well thank you Gabe you pass talking piece to Jackie Jackie what was your reaction at the time when this happened? I was horrified. How do you feel about what happened to you, Jackie?

[00:42:38] I still feel hurt by it. I'm not sure how to move forward or how to go back to class, knowing that that's the way that one of my, I mean, really Gabe was one of the closest friends and everybody in the class

knew that. So to know that one of my closest friends feel that way, I don't know, I've asked my mom about potentially not going back and to go online because I feel like it's going to be hard walking in the hallways. I'm now knowing that's what happened. So what's been the hardest thing

[00:43:14] for you? Repeat that, please. What's been the hardest thing for you? Knowing that my one friend that I had feels that way about me or views me that way. And how does your family or your friends react when you heard about the incident? My mom and dad are both still having a hard time knowing that that happened, especially since we moved to an area that we felt like was more diverse and the same thing is happening and so with all the stuff that's been in the news lately

[00:43:53] it's just been kind of like did they make they're asking themselves did they make the right choice with us moving this way thank you jackie jackie please pass talking piece to uh miss him miss him um who did you see being affected by this incident and how um well several people but first of all mostly Jackie.

[00:44:19] Jackie was not only affected that day, but her attendance has kind of suffered when she is in school. She has a hard time, it seems like, coming to my class. She spends a lot of my class blocks in counseling, office, or when she is there, she's not very engaged.

[00:44:35] I did move their seats and separate them and give them new lab partners in class, but there still seems to be a lot of tension. So that's also impacting Gabe. Both students seem pretty, distracted when they're in class now there's a tension um maybe between them between other classmates that is definitely coming in with them and maybe impeding their ability to fully learn and focus on our task at hand um the other students were impacted too um it did i appreciate you gabe for saying that it kind of turned class upside down that day because it did um but it kind

[00:45:14] of continues to for some of the students even though they're there now and they're on task the students that overheard what gabe said some of them were harmed as well they've been upset they've been in the counseling office trying to process some things as well and then of course like our administrative team our counseling team and everybody that's kind of been working to pull this together is who i see being impacted thank you miss m if you can pass the talking piece of miss k miss k who do you see being affected by this incident and how

[00:45:46] um well obviously at home i was seeing how gabe was affected um he he's been really upset over what what he's done and and all the fallout that's come since um until now i've had to kind of just imagine how jackie's feeling and now to hear it from you i'm just so sorry and mom to mom i'm just i can only imagine how it was to get your kind of call that you got from the school and to hear that

[00:46:20] that that happened to your to your child at where they learn um you know and sometimes i don't see the full picture but the whole class and administrators and counselors it just sounds like this a lot of people have been affected um thank you miss k and what's been the hardest thing for you um for me it's been it's been really hard to think that maybe this has been

[00:46:57] reflection on how we've raised our son or or who we are as a family um this is not how i want him to represent himself or how i want him to make other people feel when he goes out into the world and um so there's kind of been a lot of reflection at home on on on how we got here thank you pass okay pass talking miss miss miss c thank you miss c who do you see be has been infected by this

[00:47:32] since it now? I definitely think Jackie has been affected. Our family has been affected. Jackie has younger siblings that we have had to explain what happened. What does this mean? They weren't really aware at the time of what that meant and the impact of that. So it's definitely impacted our family as a whole. Definitely Gabe and Jackie's relationship, their classroom. Jackie oftentimes doesn't want to go to school so I've had to take time off to stay with her and you know support her

[00:48:07] at home so it's definitely been an all-around impact for sure MSC what's been the hardest thing for you um just watching Jackie go into herself like she's she spends a lot of time in her room she's not interacting with her friends as she used to it's affecting her grades because she's not participating in a lot of her classes she spends a lot of time in the counseling office So I feel like the hardest part has been trying to coach her through this and teach her that this is teachable.

[00:48:43] You can get through this. We can get through this as a family. So just trying to make sure she knows those skills and knows that she can and will get through this. So that's been the hardest part for us. Thank you. Gabe, before we move forward to this last part, is there anything you'd like to say or add at this time?

[00:49:05] Yes. First of all, I need to apologize mostly to Jackie for what I said. crossed the line and i'm so so sorry um you were my best friend for a very long time um and and i'm just so sorry that that i said something that was that hurtful to you so i do apologize i want to apologize to your mom as well um i i like i said before in no way did i mean to hurt your daughter um but i am very sorry for for what i've said um i'd like to apologize to my teacher as well miss m

[00:49:42] That was wrong of me, so I'm sorry for everything that you've had to do in the class and my mom as well for all the stress that I've put on you, I'm sorry.

[00:49:58] And I think moving forward, I think the best thing for me to do is really think before I speak and know, you know, I've had this talk with my mom, what is an appropriate joke, what is funny, and that's something that I need to work on. And that was going to be my next question to you, Gabe.

[00:50:14] What do you think you need to do to try to make things right for your actions? Well, that's the first thing, is just really think before I speak. what's what's appropriate to say um and know that you know not to cross the line um with with my words um and just be be more respectful of of people in general thank you jackie question for you is um what do you need in order to make things right for you time anything else besides time um

[00:50:53] i don't know if miss m will allow this but if gabe could get in front of the class and apologize to the class so that the class understands that that behavior is unacceptable I don't know if it'll make a difference but I feel like that would help um so you mentioned time I'm sorry time to heal I guess from this or time to prep yes and Gabe apologizing to the class anything else that you need in order to move forward in a positive way not it not right now this is Gabe she mentioned about apologizing to the class is that something that you'd be willing to do

[00:51:32] yes I think so I think I'd have to work that out with Ms. M on how that would work but yeah absolutely okay fine okay thank you Jackie thanks Gabe um can you pass that over to Ms. M please Ms. M what do you think are the are the main issues in moving forward do you think there'll be any obstacles that will get in the way of them moving forward I think based on what we've said here today I think that it does

just maybe need some time and space I've separated them in the class I think if they're gonna stay in the same class together we don't have many weeks left in the school year I think maybe Jackie and Gabe

[00:52:08] should work separately they shouldn't be lab partners anymore I won't put them in group work anymore so that they have some space while they're working out how they're gonna move forward and certainly if that's something we agree on today for Gabe to address the class we can make that happen in class but I really think that's the main thing I think that if we can learn today what we need to move forward in a positive way I think things will kind of settle down in class and we'll be okay. Okay, thanks so much. Can you pass it to Mrs. K? Mrs. K, what do you think might be the main issues in moving forward? Well, I like to think that Gabe has learned this lesson

[00:52:47] the hard way and I have confidence that he will think a lot more carefully before he speaks and acts. But I imagine it's going to be hard and take that time, Jackie. You said you need to heal and I hope today was helpful in that but I know we can't brush that so that will kind of dictate how we move forward. Thank you so much can we pass that around to Mrs. C and Mrs. C same question for you what do you think might

[00:53:24] be the main issues in them being able to move forward in a positive way? I think part of the main issue was making sure that Gabe understood how helpful his comments were and the impact that they had and I do feel that you know listening to him I do feel that he understands that now the next part would be making sure that Jackie feels safe and comfortable at school she spends a lot of time there majority of their day is spent at school so I want to make sure she's safe and comfortable while she's there thank you so much

[00:54:01] so as we stated in the beginning the goal is to try to move forward in a positive direction and we're going to attempt to write up an agreement that states this. That being said, this is what I've heard regarding what needs to happen to make things right with the situation. I heard Gabe apologize to Jackie, Jackie's mom, also to his mom and the teacher. I heard Gabe also say that he needs to think before he speaks and understand kind of with Ms. C's words, understand the impact of his words and where to draw the line with his

[00:54:36] comments. Jackie stated she needed time to heal and that she would want Gabe to apologize guys in front of the whole class, which he's agreed to do. And then Ms. Mionis has taken steps to separate them in class moving forward. So that's what I heard. Is there anything else that anybody thinks needs to be in disagreement? I just want to clarify, Ms. Em, in terms of Gabe and Jackie being separated in classes, is that assigned seats or what does that look like in your classroom? That would be their assigned seats. So they were lab partners before, which

[00:55:13] means they collaborated and worked on every lab together they sat next to each other they did a lot together so I've assigned them each new lab partners and they're in kind of different spaces of the classroom so they have some physical space but they're also not working closely together anymore thank you okay so I'll add that to the agreement just to make sure we make sure we specify that design seats would be different where they're gonna be separate okay so this is what I wrote down in our agreement okay so I'm gonna pass this around for each of you to sign. Your names, again, are already printed on there. And so with this agreement,

[00:55:50] everybody here will get a copy of this before we leave. If there were to be any issues with this agreement moving forward in the future, the school would pull this out and say, hey, you know, this was

the agreement that you all agreed upon on May 3rd and take appropriate action after the fact. Before we formally close the conference, I always like to give everybody a final opportunity to speak. I'm just going to pass a talking piece around. It's not required.

[00:56:22] It's just an opportunity if you'd like to. I'll start with Gabe. Again, you don't have to, but I apologize to everybody here taking their time out today, but I appreciate you giving me the opportunity to, you know, work things out with Jackie. Thanks, Gabe. I am not proud of what you did that day, but I am proud of you owning your mistake and being here to help make it better.

[00:56:52] And Jackie, I just hope this will help you because I hate the idea of you looking to go to different schools or avoiding your school or your classroom. So I really hope that can be somewhere you feel like you belong again.

[00:57:08] Thanks, Ms. Kay. I just want to thank everybody for being here too. Jackie, it was really brave of you to be here today and to come kind of speak your truth and have your say. And Gabe, I'm really, it takes a lot for you to show up today too.

[00:57:24] And I think this says a lot about you and trying to move forward. And Jackie and Gabe, I'm here for both of you. Let's keep the lines of communication open, okay? And then parents, please just reach out if there's anything you need. But I'm really glad that you guys were here today.

[00:57:40] Gabe and Jackie, this is something a lot of adults can't even do and come together and try to talk through an issue. Jackie, I just want to say I'm very proud of you. It took a lot to be here today, so I'm very proud of you.

[00:57:56] And Gabe, I thank you for your apology, as well as your mom. And I'm grateful for the opportunity to have this done. So when it initially happened, my parents pulled me aside in my room.

[00:58:13] And one of the things that my dad said was, it may hurt now, but later, like you'll understand that people are people. And sometimes we all make mistakes. I don't know if I agree with that. but i hope to get to that point because like i said gabe was my best friend so i'm really hoping that my dad is right um thanks everybody and as a facilitator i just want to say thank you all for participating it's not it's not always easy for people to come together like miss m said uh you

[00:58:46] know many kids would decline at the offer um so i appreciate your your courage in doing so just i'll just reiterate that just really thank you for all taking part in this participating um to Jackie and Gabe. I know this is, you know, it's very difficult. So thank you for showing the courage to come here and have this conversation today. So one final thing as we, we're going to pass around the agreement. We're going to make copies for everyone. You all be provided

[00:59:21] a copy. We'll also have a copy for the school to have. We also have evaluation forms that we want everyone to fill out. We really value your, your feedback and your opinion, how we make this process improve this process but also want to hear your voice to make sure your voice your needs are met um and also just want to you know just once again thank you for participating in this we have some refreshments and food in the back if you want to stay after and you can you're welcome to do that um to further just have conversation over some some food and drinks water

[00:59:58] ball of water thanks everybody all right well first let me give them a round of applause You did a great job. I want to give each of you some time to talk at your tables about five minutes about things that

you observed, things that were interesting, things that you didn't think would happen in a conference, and then we'll open it up for questions. So five minutes, if that's okay.

[01:00:34] Thank you. Charles. I have one. Yes.

[01:06:41] Great job, everybody. I have a couple questions, but my main one is what I noticed how the circle started. And I wonder if it's always the person who caused harm that speaks first versus the student or individual who was harmed. So I wonder if that can set the stage for power imbalance, power dynamic, if you can speak to that. Yeah, it's a great question. So a lot, many times it's a decision that we need to make. In true form, you would want your person

[01:07:21] who caused the harm to go first so they have that opportunity to show accountability right however when we pre-conference and when we might be talking to somebody who caused the harm that in the pre-conference they have acknowledged it but they might not be as articulate in acknowledging it okay however the person who has been harmed almost always will put out exactly what happened the full story things like that so depending on the situation if we thought the person who's been harmed, it might be too emotional, for example, depending on the

[01:07:57] incident, to go first, then we would have the person, the offender go first. However, if we thought that that offender or the person who caused harm was going to have a difficult time showing that, we might have the person who's been harmed go first so they can lay it all out on the line. And then that way, it kind of, in some ways, helps the offender to put that stuff out there about the things that they did. So it's a decision that we do think about.

[01:08:24] Yeah, and something I was going to add, sometimes it's not really clear who's the victim and who's the offender. So it's kind of that gray area. So it is just, you know, through that pre-conferencing process, it's really critical. Sometimes we have cases where we pre-conference two or three times just to make sure that we can make that decision as far as like that dynamic, like, okay, who needs to go first?

[01:08:46] But we do often get cases where, you know, maybe with students, both students did some harm and since so it's really depends on after we go to that pre-conference process and i would say most often the cases that we get are usually kind of dual offender people with harm you know kind of they're both culpable in some way um are true situations like this true uh harm wrongdoer true person that's been harmed uh we don't get a percentage wise we probably get less of them as you know conflicts in schools a lot of times it's both kids

[01:09:20] question yes so i think first of all the process was pretty well demonstrated so thanks for that so i feel definitely this process is definitely worth trying if there is a willingness and especially there's a remorse factor there but the question that i have if this in this case the action was unintended but the if the action is intended and the trust factor is not there in terms of friendship then how this process is going to play out or are you still going to go with this process? So, yeah, the process itself is not intended necessarily for if there was

[01:09:58] wrongdoing for the people to come together and be friendly. It's just what needs to happen to either repair harm or move forward in a positive way. And like you mentioned, we would never have anybody participate that didn't agree to participate or didn't show remorse. But again, what you mentioned with your question was, yeah, we would not, we're not looking necessarily for these people that then now

have a relationship it's about repairing the harm that has been done does that answer the sure our parents always invited to participate in

[01:10:34] the conference and if parents choose not to can the kids students we encourage parents to participate it is not mandated that they participate but we do encourage that when we speak to parents explain the process we will offer that many times parents will say you know it's okay but the kids can go ahead and move forward again we need to get parent permission for kids to participate in these conferences but parents a lot of times will say you know we want our child or our student to learn how to resolve conflict so we do move forward with students just students quite often and like Darren might have mentioned before we'll have a school representative in every conference that we

[01:11:13] do whether it be in this case was a teacher sometimes an administrator the person who knows most about the incident and can speak to what happened who's been impacted in potential issues moving forward. And I would just add, like, in terms of developmentally, you know, with the student, where the student is in elementary school, middle school, typically in high school, a lot of times in high school we'll see students that, you know, will conference without the family.

[01:11:37] But elementary school, middle school, typically the parents are involved. I have a few questions. My first question is, is this just for incidences that are happening in the building?

[01:11:54] Well, no. Okay. So, because sometimes there's instances that happen in the community that, you know, trickle over into the school. So, my concerns, like social media, texting, things like that, that can be facilitated by one of those meetings.

[01:12:09] Yes. And then how, if, let's say, an admin is not responsive to the parents and students, how does this go on or can be initiated without that response? Let me make sure I understand.

[01:12:25] So, let's say if an administrator is not offering RP or. My kid's getting bullied, and it's bad, and there's these text messages. And I go to my principal or assistant principal, and they're like, there's nothing we can do. It's not happening in our building. Is it then the parent's responsibility to kind of figure things out on their own?

[01:12:45] Can they initiate this? What I would say is that the parent should ask for a restorative conference for that to be considered. Who would they ask? You can ask the administrator. Even if they're saying there's nothing we can do, you can say, I know this is an option. I want to explore this option. so how do you get your contact information to do this for this team yeah you could talk to the administrator but on our website you can find gary's information as well as ryan's information and you could reach out and then they could get in touch with the school and share your concern and say we want to explore this and then what happens if the other party involved isn't admitting

[01:13:23] to harm most likely we would not go forward with the conference so then what happens like what are consequences look like? Depends on the situation, depends on the incident. I mean, it just wouldn't be a restorative conference. Like I said, we don't, we don't bring people together who don't want to participate. I will, I will say this. Or admit. Yeah, there's been, there's been incidents where we've had referrals and I've gone through just a pre-conferencing part of it. And from the victim's perspective, it's like, you know, that's, that was enough for me. I think sometimes, a lot of times they just, they want a place to be able to have, to be safe, to have a voice, to listen to

[01:14:00] someone's impartial. So like that, that restorative process starts really when we have that pre-conference. So it doesn't always go to conference, but you know, there's still some positive impacts that could happen just from the pre-conferencing. And then what happens if one or both of them decide that the space in the classroom isn't good enough, that they want out of the class, who gets to leave or who gets to stay? And how is that decided? Because in my experience, it's usually the victim that has to be removed instead of the harm whatever you want to call them

[01:14:35] that would be an administrator's decision and they would consult with the office of school administration to determine who in that scenario but typically it's not the victim that should be moved it's usually and what if that's the response that you're getting from the admin I can't remove the bully but I can remove your your victim yeah that's probably dependent on the specific situation maybe they don't have enough with the discipline side of things so there's probably a lot of layers to that but I would you know advocate with the administrator and even reach out to the office of school administration who handles the discipline piece and then would there be any

[01:15:13] consequences for her punching him in retaliation because y'all never got into that I knew that was going to come up thank you miss Scott potentially there could be because that is not appropriate behavior in the school building either but it is out of character for her so there might have been a conversation with a parent about that there could be an in-school restriction but yes that would be addressed as well right in regulation 8 to 15 restorative practices can be used in conjunction with

[01:15:48] discipline yeah one of one of those responses just now jumped out at me something about doing one of these restorative practices in response to something that was on social media outside of the school it's my understanding and maybe this is a wrong understanding but this is an alternative to discipline disciplinary action how is it that anything any disciplinary action or alternative disciplinary action can be applied to something that happens on someone's personal social media that's outside of the school that's effectively

[01:16:25] their you know protected speech I could take that we we can use restorative conferencing when it's not specific to discipline so if we are able to determine that whatever has happened on social media is having a direct impact on our students or multiple students then that would warrant a response not necessarily a discipline response so how do we move forward with this because the students are in our building so could we do a restorative conference okay so if it affects if

[01:17:00] something outside of the school affects conduct in the school or something like that, who makes that determination? Because I think that's the kind of scary part to me. So based on my experience, I've had incidents like that occur. Usually it's, especially with like social, you know, with the social media, there's been some level of harm where the whole school has been impacted.

[01:17:28] A lot of times it's administrators reaching out to that restorative practice lead, Um, and we're setting up a conference and it's, you know, it's, it's to the fidelity to what we saw today, but it, it may look a little different in terms of the situation. Um, and I can think of a situation I had where we're very similar.

[01:17:47] It was a social media incident, um, where we came in and, um, the, the victim did not want to participate. So what we did was we did, we, we, we had a victim impact statement from the victim. We met with the, the students that did the offending on social media.

[01:18:04] But we also did, we generated like a whole lesson from that, and we promote that through the school based on what happened from the RP. So there's, you know, it's really about like, you know, when those instances happen, sometimes they can affect the whole school.

[01:18:24] So to answer your questions, usually the administrator will take the lead in that referral. Thank you. And I would just add that they're probably talking to school administration to determine the level of impact. But we have seen like Instagram pages that were created to blast one particular student and a lot of students were sharing that or part of that.

[01:18:44] So that is something that would need to be addressed within the school building because everyone is talking about it and it's a distraction from education. So there's lots of different creative ways that we can address it even if like Darren said the student doesn't want to participate who was targeted. but we address it within the school community and as a tier one kind of universal classroom lesson.

[01:19:06] Question. So three quick questions. Easiest one first. Is there always going to be two facilitators in a conference? That's our best practice. We try to always have two facilitators. Yes. That was an easy one.

[01:19:21] We'll get harder. Second, in the pre-conference process, I know somebody can always withdraw at any point during this process, but have you or would you exclude somebody from participating because you just don't feel they're ready to participate in the conference probably I would guess it would be most likely a parent that would want to participate but I would assume it could be any party other than obviously the two parties that were directly involved but would you have a situation where you would decide to exclude somebody from the conference yeah and I was going to say so again when we pre-conference that's why we talk about how that's the most important part of what we do because we are assessing

[01:19:58] um, appropriateness for participating. So when we go to our, our two basic criteria that people are agreeing to participate, um, and then if it's the person who was the wrongdoer, they have acknowledged and admitted, you know, what they've done. But also I think somebody over here mentioned about, um, you know, showing remorse. Okay. So those are the three main criteria for the person who did harm. Um, really for the, if we have a true offender victim type of situation, the victim, it's just you know agreeing to participate or that we when we're doing our pre-conferences assess if going through this process might cause that person more harm then we might not go forward

[01:20:35] now when you talk about other people who might participate parents etc we explain to parents in our pre-conferencing that this is this you're there to support your child this is not an opportunity to engage in conflict with another parent.

[01:20:54] This is not an opportunity to point fingers. This is about moving forward in a positive way. This is not an investigation. We are here to move forward and support everybody who's here. So we have that conversation with parents in our pre-conferences and even school personnel also in our pre-conferences to make sure they understand that it's not an opportunity for them to point fingers at a child or things like that.

[01:21:18] So if we in our pre-conference assess that that might be the case, then yes, we would say we would like to just move forward with the students, for example. I would also add what other factors that may weigh against us moving forward with the conference, legal implications. So based from the incident, if there's legal involvement from the assault or something, we would not go forward with the conference.

[01:21:43] So on the expectations form, you mentioned about keeping identification or identifying information confidential. And then, of course, a portion of this is going to be shared outside of this group with the agreement, which would assumably contain identifying information.

[01:22:03] So how do you protect that? And then is that agreement about how the agreement will be shared part of the agreement itself? Yeah, so the agreement itself, right, you're talking about confidentiality. Yeah, so in our pre-conference process, again, going back to that, we have the whole conversation about what the expectations are about being voluntary, being confidential, et cetera. With the agreement itself, that does not get shared because it just goes to the people that are involved in the conference. So that's an expectation. I can tell you I've been doing this

[01:22:43] for 10 years. I've done over 600 of these. I can count on one finger the number of times that that was not followed. And just finally, I just wanted to say, I know we didn't invent the process here in Loudoun County, but boy, I wish this had been something that had been available when I was in school. This is a fantastic thing. And by the way, if you could mandate this happen on Capitol Hill, we could solve a lot of problems. Thank you. I know we had a hand up here. Well, I think we're here first. Okay, we're here. All right. Thank you. I echo the sentiment. A quick question. So is it

[01:23:19] correct then that it's the school administration? Is that really just comes down to the principal who decides which incidents are eligible for this? For example, I think last time somebody, some of the board member asked, not board member, but one of us asked about whether like what constitutes race, not race, but hate speech, hate incidents, like misogyny and sexism, are those part of that?

[01:23:43] Like who decides whether something is, eh, it's okay, or if some student says, you're a girl, you know, you should be cooking, you're not going to be president ever, or something like that, is that something that can be brought up to this or is that like oh that's so common to face sexism in schools that it doesn't rise to this level like how who who decides like what is harm enough okay it's great question so typically that is a great question so typically um when harm is shared like if there's something that's occurred that is caused harm has caused harm to a student they typically go to their

[01:24:18] counselor or the unified mental health team member that those individuals can initiate a restorative conference if it rises to the level of discipline which and I don't have specific information about you know what that situation might entail but that could go to an administrator and then it could go to restorative conferencing so there's lots of layers and we want to be proactive with our response rather than waiting till something gets worse like in Jackie's situation where something was happening inappropriate behavior was happening and it got to the point where she just had enough we want to address it at the soonest point so those things would be

[01:24:56] appropriate referrals whether through school counseling and a unified mental health team or through an administrator was any answer to your question or is it more specific to racial no that answers it I mean I'll be honest with you I think I mean so today's example was in high school where kids are probably a little bit more aware but I'm sure there's a lot of kids who just don't know that something is not okay um you know especially at oh maybe even high school i mean even adults you know right we we accept so much that happens i mean racial you know yeah racial ethnic any any kind of hate speech we're just tolerate it and i'm sure there's a lot of tolerance

[01:25:33] so i just wonder you know how much to and sexism is quite prevalent in schools i hear it all the time in the little interaction that i have and people just brush it off as you know what can you do about it.

So I don't know how we ever get to the point where we actually enable and empower our students to be like, no, that's not okay in your feelings and to be able to, I mean, of course reporting, that's a whole another incident, but, you know, part of it is also taking the harm seriously and actually addressing it. So I'm sure it's a long-term thing. One of the misconceptions, the biggest misconceptions about restorative conferencing especially, is that it has to be a

[01:26:08] big, huge incident and parents are required to attend and somebody from the community needs to be there. Now, those incidents do happen. However, like I think Darren mentioned before, many times it's, you know, the two kids have kind of equal culpability in whatever the incident was.

[01:26:24] I have three counselors here with me, and they'll tell you, when I go talk to schools in my job and say, you know, trying to promote what we're doing, I'll say to them oftentimes, the smaller incidents that have not reached this yet, that are bubbling, bubbling, bubbling, that our students are going to councils talk about let's go in now and do a conference because that's preventative we can nip that in the butt and I can tell you the effectiveness of this process when we look at the recidivism rates that we have it's in the single percentages of of Gabe and Jackie then having another incident down the line and just to add on to that to be some more questions you know

[01:27:01] our goal in that continuum of RP practices is that 80 should be that tier tier one tier two practices before we get to that tier three we're trying to really trying to avoid the conference right so we can put the in those those tier one two strategies first for RP and you know that should be 80 of the RP that we're doing so mine is more of a wondering that I just want to put into the room as we have these conversations which is how different might this scenario have gone

[01:27:37] if the victim was a black male student and the offender was a white female, because I just worry that in that situation, if a black male student had hit a white female student, that it would not be going to restorative practices. And so I just want to put that into the room and how might we better make sure that all of our students have access to these kind of opportunities um especially

[01:28:11] our black boys well I guess I'll answer that question I think you're you're 100 I mean you know I agree that all families should know about RP I think what we're doing now you know just continue to um make awareness that we have we have this in our schools and it's available to all students is essential, right? And then there's, you know, as an RP facilitator, as our leads and

[01:28:46] leaders in RP in our community, you know, we're trying to make sure as best as we can that we have some checks and balances in there that we're making sure that everyone is being offered those opportunities. And I can tell you my job in the last two years since I've been here as restorative practice specialist is trying to educate schools in, like Darren mentioned, our full continuum of services you know not just this conferencing that we do again when I talked to people when I got here two years ago the the word was RP was just for big huge conflicts and that was it so I've been doing a lot of educating with schools with administrators to talk about how we have that preventative

[01:29:24] part of the tier 1 and tier 2 level either in classrooms or the targeted groups of students again and trying to be even proactive with our conferencing So it's not just a response to that. So it does take educating the schools, but those are conversations I literally have every day.

[01:29:41] But can I just, oh, I just want to say that I just don't know that this would have ever gone to a restorative practice if this was a black male hitting a white female.

[01:29:57] And so I just, I'm just wondering, and this, this goes more back to administration than parents. because I have a feeling this would be strict consequences, immediate action, possibly police interference. And I just wonder how might we do a better job of protecting a black boy that might be a victim of hate speech, because the hitting wasn't even mentioned in this circle, right? But

[01:30:30] if you were a boy, absolutely, the hitting would be the big thing, and the hate speech would be secondary I mean am I wrong in making that assumption I don't think so and I think the focus of the this conference was to be on racial slurs and hate speech so the hitting yes was a part of it and like I said I think there would be discipline for Jackie for the hitting piece but you're right it might look different for a black boy but I I would hope and I hope that that part of this education and awareness would be that we'd give that student an opportunity as

[01:31:06] as well to repair harm and I can't speak to whether or not charges would be pressed police would be involved and that's likely depending on the parent and the students response to that right so there's so many layers to it but I think just for tonight's demonstration we wanted to give an idea of what a conference would be without completely ignoring that Jackie may have assaulted Gabe and there would also be a discipline piece to that but I would hope that as a division we could get to a place where we would regardless of gender we would allow students an opportunity to repair and be held accountable and even to add to that i think many

[01:31:42] times you'll see through conferencing that what the students perceive or think to them is the main issue is very different what the adults think okay and that's why when we do our agreements for example it's based on what they think needs to happen okay the adults might be thinking a very different thing many adults will be like this punishment needs to happen this you know the kids are like we just need to move on we need to kind of get moving yeah oh sorry oh yes yeah definitely it seems like there's few of these that actually take place I think 12 of them well 12 just a

[01:32:18] response to racial slurs okay um my question is what part like in this situation where it happened in this class it was obviously very impactful the class and he had agreed to go speak to the class but where's the education part going as to why we don't use this word he said hey we we watch the same youtuber they use they use that word like where is the education process and why this word was harmful because all he sees is wow i just got slapped and so that was hurtful so to me it comes across as more he's kind of sorry that he got slapped like it like it it doesn't go to the

[01:32:54] bottom root cause of why this word is harmful and and this could be and i dare say many of these could be opportunities for the students to become allies and teach students and it could be more impactful so where is that does it ever become like where he said yes i'd like to talk to the i'd be happy to talk to the teacher but instead of getting up and saying i'm sorry that i said this but why why is this word impactful and how how does that show disparity to her and why was it hurtful and harmful to her so in this scenario um you know i would say this to answer that question it you

[01:33:30] You know, restorative practices was first, you know, were based on, you know, the trying to identify, like, focus on the behavior. So, in terms of what the education part was, you know, Gabe having a deeper understanding on how he impacted Jackie, right, which is the foundation of empathy, right?

[01:33:55] So, that deeper understanding, like, oh, my gosh, I didn't realize I impacted his mom as well. I understand your question is like, you know, you've been getting deeper into the actual word, right? So, right, yeah.

[01:34:12] I'm just saying, if you're getting to this point and you have somebody that is sincerely, like, they're friends, and it could turn into a situation that it could help the other eighth graders to understand, like, why this was impactful and why this hurt, like, instead of hurt, because never, Jackie should never be that one that's teaching that.

[01:34:29] So sometimes we... I was going to say many times, I wouldn't say often because we do have so many of these conferences, but many times in a situation like this, for example, if it seemed appropriate and it was welcomed, for example, by the teacher, we'll do conferences and then maybe go into a class and do a classroom circle, kind of like that's like one of our tier one responses, and do that education piece with questions designed to address, you know, those issues and educationally.

[01:34:57] Sometimes we have parents that are, you know, sometimes a little more articulate than others, and they come in and they really, you know, I had these conferences before where parents really come in and explain, articulate, okay, why that word is harmful. But, yeah, the follow-up piece, too, in terms of, like, you know, following up with the circles, we do that as well.

[01:35:15] Well, I have the opportunity of having a multiracial family, so I have white kids and black kids in the system, in LCPS. So I see, and I see where I can teach my children how we can be allyships, how to stand up for everybody.

[01:35:32] But they also say, but I hear this, like another black person will say this word, and they use it, or YouTubers use it, or this. And it's just kind of thrown out there, and in our school system is not taught. Like, I'm dealing with BA studies in the fourth grade, and they're not taught.

[01:35:51] It's like, well, this is in the books, so I can say it, because it's in the books. And so where in our school system on a whole are we teaching our students why, just because other YouTubers are saying it or black people, why it's impactful?

[01:36:09] That's an excellent question. And I just want to just look at it from the process that this might be one cog in the wheel or part of the process where we still have the opportunity to actually go deeper with educating Gabe and involving Jackie in some restorative activities that could take place in the school.

[01:36:29] So we do have not only the UMHT, but we also have equity leads in the buildings who might come together and also collaborate with individuals from the Division of Equity so that some of these reflective resources could take place where then now there's more concentration on the education and the circle or the conference might have just been maybe one of the initial steps.

[01:36:53] So it's not necessarily that all parts of the healing and understanding and growth may come from just the circle, but just as a part of the process and making sure that there's no recidivism with Gabe and that we've healed the harm.

[01:37:11] And then also the opportunity for student leadership and voice to help with climate and culture in the buildings. So that's also an aspect. I like the example with the high schoolers, but I guess my question is more along the lines of younger kids.

[01:37:32] Like, how do you kind of discern with younger kids whether or not they really understand what they did to even want to admit to it or want to go through the process? Because I know like elementary school, like that age, it's kind of difficult, and especially now with the pandemic and those kids in those younger grades not doing school yet, they don't really know how to do school so a lot of their behaviors

could sometimes be as a result of really not understanding so how do you kind of work with those younger kids to make them to help

[01:38:07] them understand that hi that is a good question and it is very important to make sure that they understand it in their language so a part of what we do every day as elementary counselors i know for myself is making sure I'm on my kids' level and making sure I'm speaking their language and they understand everything I'm saying. So the way we have the conversation here, I may not structure the questions the same if I'm talking to a first grader or even a third grader. The questions will be worded differently to make sure that they understand, and a lot of that will be done in

[01:38:45] pre-conference, making sure that in pre-conference I explain what the questions mean. I ask them, Do you understand all the words in those questions? If they have a question or a word, no, Michelle, well, I didn't understand what that meant, then I would explain it to them.

[01:39:01] So making sure they understand in the beginning of the process what's happening, what any words mean, making sure they understand before just kind of putting them in the circle. So that's a very important part that we do is making sure they understand and we're speaking on their level. Even in the pre-conference, we teach the word restore.

[01:39:21] We teach the word affect. We teach the word impact, especially with the little ones. You know, I was just over Cheryl a few weeks ago, to at their level. At the elementary level, it is much more of an educational process. It's following the same format, but we are definitely educating kids, again, even just with the theme of restoring an impact and effect.

[01:39:46] So we're very conscious of that when we're working with the little ones. Go here, yeah. So the conference expectations sheet, the last bullet says participants will not disclose the names of other participants or the information that they shared during the process.

[01:40:03] I was in high school once and everybody knew everything about everyone and we didn't even have Facebook back then. So how can we ensure the confidentiality of what happens in this circle apart from just signing your name on a piece of paper? Again, I can tell you from experience, 10 years I've had that happen once.

[01:40:21] And we... We follow up with our participants after the fact. And, you know, let's say like a month later, hey, was there any issue after this conference? Has there been any another incident that's happened between you two?

[01:40:37] Did you have anything happen negatively as a result of this? So we access or ask for that feedback in one in 10 years. And I don't know, I can't tell you why that's the case, but I think going through this entire process, It becomes personal for them because it is something they're going through And we talk about that in pre-conference how important that is the confidentiality etc. And even in the conference Again, what we do is not a magic wand But I can just tell you from my experience that has not been an issue. Okay, so but so there's nothing

[01:41:13] I mean, I understand your point, but as far as you know, yeah I mean that expectation sheet and the agreement is really is working a covenant. I mean, we can't enforce it we're not but i i would you know same thing with gary i've started rp doing restorative justice in 1996 so i um never had that issue before i think when i think that with part of you look at the hypothesis when people are feel like they're

part of the process right um and kids today you'd be surprised with the secrets they can hold on to you know they're but they're part

[01:41:53] that process and you know they don't want to you know a majority time they really don't want to go outside that circle and talk about Gabe's business or talk about you know they do a good job with that um be surprised um question here um so LCPS has like a zero tolerance bullying policy hate speech can you speak to that regarding free speech hate speech the first amendment as it pertains

[01:42:33] to, like, some people can say, I can say whatever I want, and there's no consequences, because it's covered under the First Amendment. I mean, it's really not an RP question, so I'm not going to respond to that, but if somebody else...

[01:42:49] I'll just start off by saying when students are in public school, they sign student rights and responsibilities, committing to following policies and procedures, recognizing that there's regulations and discipline associated with that. And that would supersede anything else, correct?

[01:43:06] I don't know the answer to that, so I'm not going to pretend to know the answer to that. But that is where we are able to enforce discipline, is based on those policies and regulations. I would like to get you a good answer to that and not give one that I believe.

[01:43:25] So we're going to follow up with that question. I think it's a good question. I think it will lead into our next discussion, but I don't feel qualified to answer that specifically. So just to clarify so we can get the right answer to you.

[01:43:42] um does freedom of speech supersede lcps policy and regulations that student science is that what you're asking within yeah and i think that that sort of gravitates out towards like the texting and the social media and when it gets really desy and maybe laws involved so not specific to restorative conferencing but just in general right okay we can we're talking about right we're talking about rachel slurs and if somebody comes in with a position that that's fine

[01:44:14] how does that resolve itself we I don't know of any situation where a student has used that as their defense or a parent has used that as their defense but we'll find out the answer to that and we will try to get an answer to that and be able to clarify that okay thank you there's there's one more thing I want to do before we kind of sign off I want to introduce our players today This is Meredith Mionis.

[01:44:46] Meredith is a teacher at Briarwoods High School. This is Monique Haslip. She is a counselor at Stonehill Middle School. Ryan Kachrasian is our full-time RP instructional facilitator. Shadia Chapman is a counselor over at Mercer Middle School. And then Cheryl Shotwell is also a counselor at Lowes Island Elementary School.

[01:45:04] So we... During a conversation, we're doing the demonstration. I thought Ryan was going to shed a tear for a moment. I was like, you're really bringing it.

[01:45:20] You're really bringing out your... Yeah, I was impressed. But I can tell you, we really appreciate, especially me, the opportunity to do this. Again, my role as a restorative practices specialist is to build this program in LCPS, and I'll take any opportunity I can to promote this work.

[01:45:38] If you ever have any questions about anything, please feel free to reach out to me, Gary Rickey or ICCI. I'll be happy to discuss these things with you about restorative practices. I do want to extend on behalf of the committee and anyone who's watching this evening our deepest gratitude for bringing this to

us because unless you've been involved in one we would never experience this so thank you all for coming back because I'm going to acknowledge the fact that you were here last month and we didn't have a quorum and you very graciously returned this evening to to do this demonstration for us and it's invaluable and we very much appreciate

[01:46:15] your time and the work you're doing every day so thank you all very much and I would like to give another round of applause so so committee members always keeping in mind the value of your time as well we'll move to our next item which is announcements I do just want to remind everybody that our next meeting is June 1st at 5 30 and as always we need a quorum to begin and that quorum has to be in the room in your seats so that I can start so I do appreciate everyone who came this evening but we were very close so we need to make sure we'll make sure that messaging out to the

[01:46:51] committee is is understood but we do think everyone who I'm going to thank you if you were here again last month I would like to thank you again for that and then also for being here this evening I will also remind you that in July this committee does not meet no one the school board takes July off so there is not a committee meeting in July but I want to signal you to August 3rd which is our first meeting back we had some difficulties last summer so I want make sure that august 3rd is on everyone's calendar and i'm going to ask you just i'm going to remind you now i'm going to remind you in june in our meeting and in an email the thing that

[01:47:30] bothers me the most outside of not being able to have a meeting is that a lot of prep and time and staff are in the room prior to us not having a quorum so if we know that ahead of time i would rather i would rather know and not put a big plan into place and i understand august is difficult and people are still on vacation i just need you to communicate that to us because the worst thing is to sit here and wait 15 minutes and then cancel the meeting when there are staff in the room so um we're going to reiterate the dates ahead of time but particularly these summer dates so it is

[01:48:06] june 1st and august 3rd and i will graciously give you july off so is there a move to the next item is there any new business seeing none we are adjourned i thank everyone for being here and again thank you to our panel that presented this evening and we'll see you on June 1st thank you



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