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Loudoun County School Board, Student Behavior and Accountability Committee, Wednesday, May 24, 2023

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[00:00:01] Good evening, I am calling to order today's committee meeting for the Student Behavior and Accountability Committee for the month of May. Joined with me this evening is Tiffany Polifco.

[00:00:18] We will start with item two, public comment. Do we have anybody signed up for public comment? We do not. Okay, so moving on to item three, I'd like to make a motion for the approval of our April 24th draft minutes. Second. All those in favor, please raise your hand and say aye. Aye. That motion will pass unanimously with both committee members present and Mr. Mehedeve absent. Moving

[00:00:51] on to item four for the information items, we will start with item 4.01, presentation on discipline data. Thank you. I also have a packed house of doctors here. Dr. Tyler is here when we go through the data. Dr. Bowers is here, Dr. Lodi is here, often with Dr. DiNicola. I'm sure there's a comedy sketch in there somewhere that we could do. But we wanted to present this information and start with discipline data. And I do apologize. A lot of times we try to bring this in March because this is semester data. I know we were backlogged a little bit on policies and some of the other

[00:01:29] things that were required, including our placement program. We will show this. This is also an opportunity for the committee to look at that and say information that you would want for end-of-year data you can let us know that we usually provide in August or September at the the s back committee will provide the end of year data for this past year in July we have to submit the final information that we do

have to the state at that time and then we can gather all that data and put it together for you if you know to see things that you want to look at and that's okay these are relevant

[00:02:08] questions that we use for the discipline data the number of students refer number of incidents number of violations and students and number of students impacted nature of the discipline and outcomes the state does divide up the discipline now in the s bar into six different sections that we look at and then we look at the suspension rates and referral rates for student groups violation type nature of the violations and discrepancies in numbers of students impacted by certain violations So we do something called an equity reflection or equity audit when we look at student violations.

[00:02:43] And then the outcomes, which might include discipline suspensions. Go ahead, next slide. At the end of the first semester, as it says, violations had increased in 21-22 year but remained below what they were for the 19-20 school year.

[00:03:00] So at the semester time, you see that we had 7,116 violations as compared to 5,331 from the year before. And where we were in 2019-20 at semester, remember 2020 was the pandemic year, so we did not have a full year of school.

[00:03:17] But at semester at that time, we were nearly at 10,000 violations. It was January, yeah, in January, the end of the first semester of January 2020, at that time, we had nearly 10,000 violations for that school year.

[00:03:38] These are the most common behavioral violations as used by the state code. of behaviors of safety concerns that might include tobacco, alcohol, vaping violations, bullying, and possession, relationship behaviors, and behaviors related to school operations.

[00:03:57] They tend to fall in that area. And if you were to look at it, you know, I think at one time in 2012, we might have had 12 or 15 tobacco violations in the entire school division, but the amount of vaping violations have increased dramatically since about 2016, 17.

[00:04:14] In 2019, a lot of those violations that we saw, that nearly 10,000 of them, the big increase in spike was due to a lot of vaping violations. We use in-school restriction as one of our in-school discipline consequences.

[00:04:33] As the first time vape violation, there will have an in-school violation. VDOE does call that in-school suspension. While we refer to it as restriction, they still consider that as an in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension. And then the state code, Virginia code, since 2008, does not allow us to put a student in an in-school or out-of-school suspension for truancy violations.

[00:04:57] And those are the truancy violations. So the understanding there is you don't suspend a student for not coming to school and send them back home and tell them not to come to school again. And there's their suspensions and the comparison for the time.

[00:05:17] While we have more violations this year, you can see our suspensions at the end of the first semester. were down so the interest to clarify so the difference between the red line and the blue line is that there are students who are suspended more than once in that academic year so total yes the repeat behavior thank you and then we've had this increase from last year this year and the number of students who are ISR

[00:05:49] violations again there is repeat behavior among those students but it's not the same students doing it all the time as you can see there were 1,418 Total violations have included 1,101 students.

[00:06:08] And we have that bump from, jump from the 2021-22 violation. But we are not at where we were in 2019 and 20 in the number of those. The interesting point of those of in-school restriction because of the policy changes, more of our drug and alcohol violations, first-time offenders are in-school violators.

[00:06:28] We were still at times suspending students in 2019 and 20. So that 2019-20 really is reflecting the amount of vaping that was being used where it wasn't determined if it was THC or tobacco. And we saw that significant increase that was going on from 2016 to early 2020 of the number of vaping violations.

[00:06:49] This is not a new concern. It is around and hasn't been around, but that does impact those number of student violations for ISR. And the Discipline Task Force, which was formed by the school board in 2014 to address some of the issues that the state looked at in violations and inequities and consequences.

[00:07:13] So LCPS has taken steps to reduce the suspension of students based on the behaviors that are classified as more subjective in nature. Relationship behaviors, defiance behaviors, behaviors that are disruption to school operations. And I'll give you time to look at that a little bit.

[00:07:33] And that does not mean that a student was not consequent.

[00:07:50] Students were a consequence, but the suspensions is an out-of-school suspension for the violation.

[00:08:12] And these are the suspensions for subjective violations, disorderly conduct defiance, disrespect, and disruption. The incidents that also know this year, the communication remarks of a sexual nature or cyberbullying that might have included inappropriate comments, those would have been a Title IX referral first.

[00:08:43] So this is reflecting those that were not gone through a Title IX investigation process but were actually handled by the school. So they're not at that level that it became a Title IX violation. And these percentages are the same as the ones that were on the preceding page, right?

[00:09:02] Yes. This is the same data. Yes, yes. Okay. And again, these are subjective behaviors.

[00:09:19] I will say many of these subjective behaviors also included another infraction. for instance the eight incidents where they're bringing or allowing unauthorized persons in school that also included a fight or altercation or drugs with the student who brought it in so that was the result of the suspension so it wasn't propping a door open and you let your friend come in late to class which might have fallen under that but it didn't wasn't a suspendable offense

[00:09:43] one of our jobs too is we review these to see if the disposition matched the uh the violation of the offense so dr d nicola works in our office uh and we review the suspension so if a student is suspended for a violation that's not under our level response as a suspension we do contact the school about it we have worked with schools so if there are layers of infractions for instance i

[00:10:21] mentioned you bring a student in that would fall in a physical altercation and somebody getting hurt that was a suspendable offense in one of those eight cases there so the school said here's the SBAR violation, but it was coupled with another SBAR violation that was a suspendable

[00:10:34] offense. And then here's our patterns by ethnicity.

[00:11:01] And suspension counts by gender. The most common demographic in any school system to determine if somebody is going to be suspended or not is their gender. Males are suspended at a much higher rate than females. We do not want the female line to go up, but we have looked at what are some of our responses and our multi-tiered level of responses

[00:11:40] to students, to male students, who have some behavioral infractions that may have resulted in suspensions, but are not suspensions that are of violence or safety, and that we can find other ways to address the behavior and keep that student in school.

[00:12:04] Do note that the state does require administrators to record all their responses to any student behavior with the new SBAR. That was not true prior to 2019, or in 2019 and 2020, when we were just moving over to the SBAR.

[00:12:25] So starting in 2020, all administrative responses do require that to be entered in a student information system. So, you know, we actually thought we were going to see a drastic jump in number of incidents that were entered in there because of that.

[00:12:42] We do think that there are teachers and administrators that are using other supportive measures in MTSS for removing a student from class or difficulty with doing their academic work that might have resulted in a student being removed from class from a period of time or an in-school restriction that they're finding different methods to address that behavior in perceptions of the principles about last year and this year the mental health related issues they do feel they're disciplined for students for mental health issues where the behavior has become a safety issue our concern for the student and to address that and

[00:13:19] mental health does not follow under IDEA as a disability it's not and so if a student is struggling with some of those mental health issues and that behavior becomes a concern of a safety issue a lot of times schools do have to suspend that student but put the process in place but then they have to we have to figure out ways to work with a student who's struggling through mental health challenges and school leaders have expressed interest in having a more alternative placements of areas that they can play students and work with them whether it's for mental health challenges students coming back from a residential replacement and whether they're treated for mental

[00:13:56] health or drug or alcohol use that they can have a transition back into a comprehensive school and a large school to help them with that process or students that are had maybe repeat offenders of those you saw there's over 400 of them that have repeated violations for drug or alcohol offenses that we could look at some type of alternative placement program for the students for a period of time yeah i just want i appreciated your calling that out because i know you mentioned that to me and then recently in public comment there were three successive teachers who came and spoke from their perspective of working with students who had those challenges and

[00:14:32] then also just feeling like they feel like in the classroom they're not necessarily equipped. I think it is something important that we need to look at and looking around us it is becoming apparently more of a common practice and they also shared where we had services similar to what you're talking about I think perhaps at Douglas and we don't have that now so thank you we did have a uh a program at

douglas and having worked in alternative facilities and i know dr lodis here and dr bowers can also express it i think one of the and we're working

[00:15:09] we've been working uh i've been working with jen evans and student services uh who works with substance abuse and other mental health challenges of students as to figure out alternative placement plans we've had a committee that's been meeting since january and building a program the other problem is and this can happen that we don't want to put all the students with similar behaviors in one area where you learn how to be better at the behavior that got you there and we want to make sure we have a strong program that provides support for those students so that we can eventually transition them back into a comprehensive setting or a different alternative setting where they can

[00:15:45] access their education at one and that just mentions what we are continuing to do to try to address student behavior including our yearly trainings that we do and up monthly or quarterly updates when we meet with either deans assistant principals or principals we've actually we've developed something called an equity reflection training for schools to look at their students their students that they are most addressed ones that will have the most classroom referrals bus referrals and what those measures are doing I will say that schools have

[00:16:24] put a lot of supports in place to work with students and involved a lot of people. You know, there is a constant thread that we hear is that we're dealing with some challenges that are behavioral and mental health, whether that's coming from home or the student in school, that is very difficult for schools to figure out most effective ways to work with a student, especially when they're going through some of those challenges.

[00:16:55] Do you have any questions? - Thank you, I wanted to go back to the alternative placement requests from some of the staff. My question actually is not so much about what we could do to place those students in alternative settings, even though that may be something that needs to be done in certain cases, but how are we utilizing behavior specialists right now within our county to come into the school to provide necessary training and supports to those teachers, because I know that that's a very valuable resource, and I often wonder if we have enough

[00:17:34] those specialists to to go around as as we see problems increasing in certain cases thank you yeah I'm going to turn to Mike over a few other people let him help with that response to thanks for queuing that up dr. Fulton tough question we have utilized our blanking on the title but special education behavioral specialists they have a title that's SIFBs thank you and you did the

[00:18:14] acronym would reveal it to me. SIFBs have gotten more involved in general education. They have an expertise that general education could benefit from. So we created some processes and workflows that allowed them to provide some degree of consultation without affecting their support to special education classrooms. We've better involved our school psychologists on general education behavior problems who do have expertise with behavior as well and tried

[00:18:50] to create a system of support to better address some of our general education problems additionally and this is a challenge for us and a Rubik's Cube we're trying to solve right now is most teachers get very little training in in their service learning and training in their programs and most will admit to one or none in classroom work in this area, behavioral management, applied behavior analysis.

[00:19:27] We do have trainings through PBIS called Classroom Behavior Systems. It's a five-part series. It's basically the science of behavior as applied to a classroom situation. Our challenge that I articulated is, how do we get teachers time for them to participate in the professional learning?

[00:19:48] It's not small and it's not short. It's important work, but trying to get to 6,000 teachers has proved challenging. It's tier one stuff. It's basically behavior management for the classroom level.

[00:20:06] What works for individual students has an application for your classroom with students, which has an application for a school-wide PBIS approach, of course. So these are some of the tools we're utilizing to address behavior challenges.

[00:20:23] And I think some of our data shows it's made a massive difference over the last 15 years. While Dr. Fulton didn't present office discipline referral data from 2005, I don't know if we have great access to that right now, the office discipline referral rates were north of 25 percent meaning 25 of our kids at some point during the school year were sent to the office because of behavior problems and our investment in tier one behavioral programming classroom systems has made a difference with regard to that

[00:21:00] but I know some of what your question the heart of your question has to do with more intensive and challenging behaviors that aren't necessarily responsive to classroom-level behavior management. So I kind of gave you a macro view of some of what we're doing, some of what we're involved in.

[00:21:21] So I don't know if you have any follow-ups on that. Thank you. Yes, I think, I mean, obviously my expertise is in behavior analysis, and that's my passion. And what you spoke to about general education teachers needing that training is key, I think, to continuing to provide environments where kids can be successful.

[00:21:46] Because like you said, these teachers aren't, and it's not their fault, through no fault of their own. But when they go through their programs, they're not getting coursework. And, you know, they might get like a general overview, but they're not getting intensive coursework and behavior management. And if you don't, as a teacher, as an educator, if you don't have behavior under control in your classroom, learning's not going to happen.

[00:22:09] And it's not a, you know, behavior's not a special education issue. It's a human issue. So it doesn't matter. General education, special education, I think something that would benefit our school system immensely is to have that specific training for all of our teachers and make that a priority because I think that would empower them to feel like they can then empower their students to be better learners.

[00:22:34] Yeah, thank you. I think that the introduction of the student support advisor at the middle school and the high school level next year can really integrate a lot of the supports that Dr. Lodi just spoke to because their job is to really coordinate the professional development, even to look at different behaviors from Tier 1 all the way through the top level tiers.

[00:22:53] tier three plus, which we know exists with many of our students in certain occasions. So I think that integration of that particular role to be able to pull together the appropriate staff members resources and offer that training can be very impactful as we move forward. And Ms. Plifko, one of the things that we're working at and not in that classroom instructional level, but trying to support teachers doing there, I also heard last night in that public comment is the challenges of dealing with some unique mental health

or substance abuse challenges that you know even having work with that a lot of times I know how challenging it can be to work and getting a student to learn

[00:23:31] and when they're going through those processes so working together with the department of department student services and department of instruction other offices has been very beneficial for us to look at that holistic approach of how we're working with students because we understand one of those students can be very disruptive not just for your full day for your entire week when you've dealt with some of that behavior and some of the fear that you deal with and working with a student who's facing those challenges too and we want to make sure that we have the supports in place and we also want to make teachers feel comfortable is what do I do if I see that if I don't know what to do who's my contact who do I go to what's the next way do I address that

[00:24:10] situation that empowers a teacher even if they don't feel confident they can address it correctly they know they have somebody that can go to that can help them support that thank you I think that was my follow-up question too I you know I've heard through conversation with some teachers who feel like number one there's an impression that the incidence of behaviors are on the rise in terms of specifically disrespect and then there's this feeling of not being able to hold the student accountable and I

[00:24:46] don't quite know where that comes from because I know that you know for example a focus on restorative practices doesn't mean that we're not interested in making sure that the student is accountable and is coached to also change behaviors right and so I'm wondering and it sounds like there's you know there's there's always this progression of plans but what are some other ways that we can support teachers and I know you were saying you know

[00:25:22] there's a lot of teachers to get through. It's a five-part training, but what are other ways that we can make sure that they're feeling supported and understand where they can bring that to? I mean, I heard, you know, a teacher feeling like they're walking down the hall and students are, like, you know, checking into them physically in the hallway and feeling like they can't do anything about that, which just seemed surprising to me. Yeah, and I want teachers to feel supported.

[00:25:55] I started in this job 37 years ago in my first year. I was told by teachers don't take anything to administrators because kids never get consequence for what they do and behavior. So it is something that I've heard and been aware of for a long time in this profession to do so.

[00:26:12] We do, I think part of this is also working with school-based administrators as to making sure that you have that contact and that person to go to when you're addressing that behavior and building on it because that's where the most important change will occur, and to do so.

[00:26:28] And disrespectful behavior is not acceptable at any level from students or staff or others, and it should be addressed appropriately. But with the young people, we should also be coaching them on what the expected behavior result. And that's one of the things that we're working on in developing some of our alternative placement programs, you know, is that we wanna look at, and this was asked when we presented the information about Relaunch Forward, We wanna actually have a program where we're working and talking about whether the behavior steps that you're showing improvement in that's gonna allow you to go back into a classroom setting and what are the ways that you'll behave as a citizen and working with others in doing so.

[00:27:07] Still I am a right to have your student voice, but also be that voice that's gonna be respectful to your peers and your staff members that are there. So we really do think that that needs to be part of what we wanna do training, especially if we're dealing with students who have repetitive behavior that becomes disruptive to others learning.

[00:27:27] - Thank you, any other questions? Thank you. - I gotta say thank you to Dr. Tyler and his office 'cause we say, hey, there's a big change that was made, we need to put something together in a short period of time and every time we do ask them. Dr. Tyler steps up right here, so he thought he was gonna get by without saying anything, but we were gonna say thank you to Dr. Tyler.

[00:27:58] And I have Dr. Bowers here too. His office and Department of Student Services worked a lot on looking at the student transfer process and then incorporated some of the things that we were using in that process, so feel free to ask them questions about it, but there is something in the policy that you guys just adopted, constructional suitability, because the transfer requests that came in after the transfer portal had closed, and looking at doing those, so that 8155 does allow a parent-guard-interquested child to attend, special permission, or social-emotional reasons.

[00:28:35] And then we, Dr. Bowers worked on some standard, and Ms. Carpenter worked on some standard operating procedures for that transfer process when that does occur.

[00:28:52] And basically, if there is a request that comes out of that time window, or, and this is a process that we use any time we move a student for an administrative placement to, the Office of School Administration discipline request or student safety request, student services, handle social, emotional, or mental health request, And the Office of Title IX may do a Title IX request to move a student.

[00:29:15] That can be a student who is either claimant or if it's a safety issue, the respondent. Okay. So it can come through the Title IX process. And then a review process will be used to determine the placement. And that's what the review process does entail. Dr. Bowers, did you have anything you wanted to add to that?

[00:29:33] No, not at this time, but I'll be happy to answer questions at the end. Okay. Sorry for the print there. but if a placement has changed, the appropriate office will contact our office and we'll do a level two or a level one meeting. A level two is there's a safety issue that's involved.

[00:29:51] The student is being transferred because of a safety risk that they may have proposed or something happened. And a level two office is central office staff that deal with mental health, student behavior, safety and security, discipline from ours, a level director, and we get together and we figure out what supports we can provide for the school and what information the school should have in a level one plan.

[00:30:14] So that's, you know, it's a small group, about eight to 10 to represent different offices that review the student records and make that determination of what things should be put in that level one plan. The level one plan is the transition plan that happens between the schools where they talk about what are the supports are gonna be and Dr. D. Nicola runs all those level one plans.

[00:30:32] So because we already had those in place for administrative placement, we said we could continue to do that for any other placement or movement of a student that does so. We do have a process that's, I wouldn't say it's seamless, but it's a lot of work up front. But, you know, I think it's easier for us to do it.

[00:30:49] And also because we deal with so many different other aspects of student safety and other areas of concern, it allows us to be able to also contact the appropriate resources that we need, that a school may need for those supports. And then the school administrators are notified to ensure a plan is appropriate, including a comprehensive student support plan, which is what we use for protective orders.

[00:31:14] And it's, as I mentioned before, it's probably one of our most used documents by administrators. And a comprehensive support plan just consolidates all the other safety and everything else that's going on with the student, puts it in one location, and it has the administrators notify the parties that need to know of what they need to know about that plan.

[00:31:35] Whether, again, it's teachers, teacher assistants are working directly with the student, front office staff that may do a student and the nurse that may work the student, a bus driver, so that if there is a plan that's in place because of safety issue, that plan is in place to support the student.

[00:31:51] And that can be for a student who's an alleged offender or offender or a student who's a victim or alleged victim of something. And then there is an appeal process in place if the process goes in place.

[00:32:07] And if we do place a student, if a parent requests for a placement, a safety placement, they provide transportation. If we do place the student, we have to provide transportation. with the special exceptions of special education.

[00:32:22] - Thank you, any questions? When did the comprehensive student support plan process go into effect? - Well, we started in fall of 2020 when I started doing it. It didn't really go into full effect, I think probably until fall of this year.

[00:32:42] Yeah, spring of last year we're using it because it was something different and something new, we were getting processed, but because administrators often had to make sure in one location they could detail information about what they're providing for students and also including the parents in that process of building that plan.

[00:33:02] And the students also, yes, Dr. DiNicolo, the students are also involved in building that plan so they know they're identifying who their primary contact is. For instance, if a student's worried about something from a safety issue, who the primary and secondary contact they would go to, they can go to any adult, but that primary or secondary contact's gonna be aware so that we're taking information out of silos and try to consolidate it to best provide student safety.

[00:33:28] So fall 2022, fully in place, operationalized. Yes, it was operational. We were really using it in the spring, but fully operational fall 2022. It was something our office was working on or I was working on in the fall of 2020.

[00:33:47] Thank you so much. So I don't think there are other questions on this. I know the other thing we wanted to talk about was the list of policies coming up.

[00:34:04] And backing up one, I guess, two topic areas, in terms of the discipline data that you shared today and knowing that there'll be a refresh in August once you've done the annual reporting in July, when do you want, since we're off in July, when do we want to talk about, because I know Mr. Mejedevi specifically will also be very interested in this topic, so can we include in our June meeting a discussion of the data points that we would want to see in August?

[00:34:43] Yes, you can. I was also going to put Dr. Tyler in a spot. I said you could tell me seven days beforehand and he can get the data for you, but I'm not going to do it until. But yes, you can do it in June, but also if something comes up in early August, if we have time before that. It depends on where we are policy-wise, but we would like to present either in August or September meeting from the previous year.

[00:35:03] Okay, that would be great. And I think what would be really good is if we can just have a discussion with Dr. Tyler and talk about what you have and what makes sense. So we can, and we're making sure Mr. Mejedevi gets copies of these things and has an opportunity.

[00:35:21] So when we come back in June, we should be ready to discuss that. The other thing is I would like his input on the kind of priority order of the policy. So the intent is really to take a look at what we have coming up and then get committee input on an order unless staff has things that are very pressing.

[00:35:43] I know we see a couple of overdue ones. So go ahead. I'm sorry. 8205 is the one that is due in May that I have submitted already to Division Council for review.

[00:36:00] I did ask Division Council to look at 8-618-57 which have their new numbers up there to match to see if there needs to be any changes in those because 8550 is really based on what state and federal requirements require us to say.

[00:36:21] So that's going to be being reviewed by Division Council in 8273 to I'm going to send that back through Division Council and Cabinet to see if we can get any input, if there needs to be any adjustments in those. There was a recent Supreme Court decision last year, but I don't think that impacts the current policy, but I do need to get a review before we go make any changes on that. Okay, so for the purposes of looking at June, which ones were you saying would potentially come back in June? 8205 I have to have back in June, and it is possible if I get

[00:36:56] and updates, and there are not major changes to 8550 and 8273, I may be able to bring those back too. And again, those are both tied to state and federal laws, so, you know, and they're really, there are short policies, there are a couple paragraphs that basically restate what we have to do by that federal law, so that does, I'm not rewriting those, I am asking Division Council to review those to see if there's any updates or change.

[00:37:25] Okay, great. And then I think then what we can do is also spend some time in June prioritizing the other ones. And then that's a short list. So I think the other question might be, what are some other things just as a committee we want to be focusing on if this is really the totality of policies coming up for review, if there's things that committee members have an interest in?

[00:37:51] i think i don't have i don't have an easy way that i know of to pull the ones that are assigned to this committee comprehensively beyond this smaller list so if if there was a interest in from committee members to look at other things we might need some assistance from you to get the comprehensive list of ones that are assigned to this committee i can't get to that from the website right now Okay. Any other items? Any new business? Okay. Anything else from staff?

[00:38:30] I just want to make sure we're correct too. Would you like Dr. Tyler to be here in June if you have questions about what data you would like to look at? Ideally, yes, because I think we don't want to ask for things that are unreasonable or impossible. And so having, again, the intent would be to have kind of a little working session on thinking about what information we think would be helpful and to get your

feedback, not promises, but just if it's totally out there and you want to caution us about availability of things, it would be helpful if you were able to join us.

[00:39:05] I look forward to it. Okay, with that, we are adjourned. Thank you. Thank you.



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