

## Community Café Summary

### Safe Students/Safe Schools, free from Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying (HIB)

April, 2018

Community cafés, titled “Safe Students/Safe Schools”, were recently facilitated to solicit input from varied constituencies on ways the District can create more positive welcoming and safe environments for students, free from HIB, and how best to respond to allegations of HIB to ensure students and families are heard and safety remains paramount. Four community cafés were facilitated throughout the district in January. The Parent Alliance of Black Scholars (PABS) hosted a community café on the topic in February and Bellevue Special Needs Parent Teacher Association is hosting a similar event on April 24, 2018 at Phantom Lake Elementary School at 6:30 PM.

Community cafés were advertised utilizing varied modes, resulting in approximately 120 participants. Emails were sent to each of the District’s families, posters were displayed in high traffic areas in school and district buildings, advertisements were displayed on the district’s social media sites and through Principal newsletters, and flyers were passed out to parents as they dropped off and/or picked up students from schools. Additionally, feedback was solicited from students during routine school visits.

Information ascertained from these sessions are being considered when making recommendations to School Board members for revisions to School Board Policy 3207, Prohibition of HIB, <https://bsd405.org/wp-content/pdf/policy/3207.pdf>, and when presenting proposed revisions to the Board Policy Sub-committee, related to School Board Procedure 3207P, Prohibition of HIB, <https://bsd405.org/wp-content/pdf/policy/3207P.pdf>. Additionally, information will also be utilized to continue to strengthen the District’s anti-bullying and socio-emotional curriculum. Additionally, findings will be shared with district and building administrators, curriculum developers, and key school personnel.

At the community cafés, facilitators posed two key questions to table group participants, as follows:

- 1) In what ways could Bellevue School District create a more positive, welcoming and/or safe environment, free from harassment, intimidation and/or bullying?
- 2) After reporting an allegation of harassment, intimidation and/or bullying, what would you want to experience, hear, or see from building and/or district personnel?

Below is a summary of trend information gathered to date, categorized under key headings for ease of sharing and processing.

#### Prevention/School Climate and Culture

- ❖ Look at videos in schools to proactively detect incidents of HIB
- ❖ Create an environment of respect through varied avenues (programs, assemblies, curriculum, school and classroom climate and culture, etc.)
- ❖ Nip behaviors in the bud right away
- ❖ Ensure staff are building positive relationships with students
- ❖ Utilize and access parent volunteers for greater adult visible presence

- ❖ Model, embrace and deliberately foster positive relationships between adults and students in less structured environments (lunch room, recess, etc.)
- ❖ Send common standard messaging home to families related to HIB and Non-Discrimination
- ❖ Send a statement to the community that the District won't tolerate any form of HIB and/or discrimination
- ❖ Display posters throughout the school, classroom and offices of children of all races, religions, and/or backgrounds
- ❖ Have designated bully-free zones throughout the school buildings and in classrooms, heavily advertising and promoting
- ❖ Continue to facilitate sessions like the community cafés, providing parents/guardians, students, and community members an opportunity to engage in meaningful dialogue and discussion
- ❖ With school shootings, the lens and focus needs to be on carefully detecting bullies as bullies may result in more escalated violence
- ❖ A hotline/channel for students to anonymously report bullying – an avenue for students to express their point of view and be taken seriously
- ❖ More clearly define HIB in Policy and/or Procedure
- ❖ Incorporate hate crimes in HIB Policy and/or Procedure or disciplinary procedure
- ❖ Reference malicious harassment definition in Classroom Management Procedure within the HIB procedure
- ❖ Communicate clear policies for students and staff about what happens when safety is a concern.

### **Training and/or Education of Varied Constituencies**

- ❖ Train staff to be much more observant, listening for incidents that don't appear to be quite right, with early intervention being key
- ❖ Educate staff, particularly teachers, on how to handle and/or address bullying and intervene and stop bullying.
- ❖ Educate staff on common comments, language, and/or behaviors occurring that look like, sound like, and/or feel like HIB
- ❖ Require staff and students to participate in sensitivity training, like that mandated related to drugs and/or alcohol and/or weapons
- ❖ Educate teachers on the impact they have having to students based on what they are saying and/or doing and how that is coming across and/or interpreted by select students
- ❖ Stress to teachers that inconsistent and/or a lack of a real-time intervention by them when perceived incidents are occurring promotes lack of trust and contributes to a negative and/or unsafe learning environment
- ❖ Teachers need to be trained and held accountable to treat racist comments as more significant—currently they are treating them the same as swearing – Need to take a powerful stance against comments
- ❖ Educate staff, students and families on what constitutes HIB and how to report alleged incidents and what type of behaviors and/or actions constitute misconduct versus HIB
- ❖ Educate all constituencies on how to complete and submit HIB Reporting forms, which are available online and in school offices, and the HIB investigative processes

- ❖ Educate support staff working with students (lunchroom, after school programs, childcare, recess, front office, registrars, etc.) on HIB, intervention, proactive measures, etc.
- ❖ Require all Bellevue School District (BSD) leaders and/or select staff to be trained in Cultural Compliance, Cultural Competence, and/or Diversity
- ❖ Provide more education to students and parents on equity, such as Beyond Diversity
- ❖ Engage more students in Students Organized Against Racism (SOAR)
- ❖ Train students on know what to do and/or how to intervene as a bystander, particularly when a student is wanting to protect a friend from being bullied
- ❖ Initiate and ignite more conversations with students around positive thinking and courageous conversations
- ❖ Ensure all constituencies learn that there is a law against bullying in schools, I think perhaps writing or having it on paper for people to get a handout of it so they may learn the rules and consequences. Possibly handing it out during ‘Taking Care of Business’ day.
- ❖ Bring in skilled presenters, such as psychologists, to facilitate training sessions for varied constituencies
- ❖ Facilitate unpacking of privilege in public school setting

### **Curriculum, School-wide Events and/or Activities**

- ❖ Address related issues in the curriculum, embedding lessons in relevant units
- ❖ Incorporate related curriculum into content-specific courses (incorporate Black history into American history, incorporate Japanese History into History courses, etc.)
- ❖ Refrain from depicting particular racial subgroups in negative light within our curriculum
- ❖ Highlight in curriculum representatives of varied cultures who are heroes, particularly racial groups typically marginalized
- ❖ Expand celebrations of particular groups beyond just one assembly, one day, and/or one cultural night
- ❖ Plan and facilitate assemblies and/or plays that include scenarios that teach students specific strategies on how to handle and respond to alleged overt and/or covert HIB behaviors; practice transfer of those skills in various settings
- ❖ Facilitate assemblies that build community versus isolate communities
- ❖ Facilitate assemblies that are inclusive versus exclusive
- ❖ Engage students in planning and implementing multi-cultural assemblies
- ❖ Initiate the Freedom School Afterschool Program, accessing PABS members for support

### **Response to Allegations of HIB – During Investigation**

- ❖ Ensure unbiased investigation and response, particularly given demographics of administrators don’t align with the demographics of students we serve
- ❖ Have an individual from central office investigate all allegations against staff of HIB, Non-discrimination and/or complaints to reduce opportunities for biases and instill greater confidence in the investigative process and findings
- ❖ Have a member of PABS or organization, representing the diverse community we serve, conduct investigations and/or determine findings
- ❖ Contract with an un-biased ethnic ombuds person (non-district staff) to assist families through the process

- ❖ Clearly delineate what to expect when multiple Board Policies and/or Procedures may be applicable
- ❖ Share if and when an allegation and/or concern of HIB and/or non-discrimination has been brought to the attention of the alleged perpetrator and/or the alleged perpetrator's parent/guardian
- ❖ Conduct investigation and interviews in a thorough manner and with fidelity, reporting back findings to relevant parties
- ❖ Investigative findings should not be determined by school administrators and/or white administrators in the school and/or district office
- ❖ Response time to allegations needs to be more swift
- ❖ Investigators need to talk directly to students
- ❖ Parents need to be notified anytime a report and/or complaint is filed or a report is made against the child
- ❖ Teachers of students need to be informed of all HIB allegations filed and/or reported
- ❖ Time-line for feedback to reach decision-makers and what will be the next step?

### **Response to Allegations of HIB – After Investigative Findings**

- ❖ Be transparent about the results
- ❖ Show not just what the result of the HIB allegation; also include how many allegations result in consequences
- ❖ Ensure those who commit HIB and/or non-discrimination "feel the actions"
- ❖ Ensure tough action on those that commit HIB; no excuse making and/or covering for student's actions
- ❖ Ensure BSD sends a strong statement around instances that happen
- ❖ BSD needs to ensure consistency in their responses to similar allegations and findings
- ❖ Ensure the consequence and/or outcome to HIB is visible
- ❖ Find ways to share more about the outcome to others while not violating the privacy of the other student(s)
- ❖ Staff need to facilitate conversations with and/or between the perpetrator's and victim's families
- ❖ When allegations of HIB in the classroom are not conclusive, have an outside observer collect data on observable actions in the classroom, particularly when alleged perpetrator denies and evidence is challenging to obtain
- ❖ Develop and implement safety plans, as needed
- ❖ Introduce students in the playground to a safe adult
- ❖ Be more transparent about the findings and outcome
- ❖ Clear and transparent reporting process – to inform both parents and students the resolution
- ❖ Have consequence for leaders who do not report abuse and/or investigate with fidelity
- ❖ Require the perpetrator and his/her parent/guardian go to related classes together
- ❖ Take much stronger actions on micro-aggressions
- ❖ Follow through when students do report – then need to see that something has happened and they need to be taken seriously
- ❖ Reinstigate short-term suspensions for HIB and/or non-discriminatory actions
- ❖ Students that commit HIB and/or non-discriminatory behaviors need to be sent home for a period of time

- ❖ Consequences for racism and/or discriminatory behavior need to be like that of incidents of drugs/alcohol
- ❖ Ensure consequences are progressive in nature should incidents continue, escalating consequences for re-occurring behaviors
- ❖ Provide and/or arrange counseling for victim and/or perpetrator
- ❖ Facilitate building of friendships with students, engaging students in restorative conversations
- ❖ Ensure disciplinary records follow students all the way through their school careers
- ❖ Notify parents/guardians in advance of planned restorative conversations

### **Miscellaneous**

- ❖ BSD teaching staff needs to be representative of the district's diverse student population
- ❖ Hire Black teachers and Black leaders
- ❖ Have an adult of color in attendance in meetings with families of color
- ❖ School board members need to do more to support the hiring process and staff of color
- ❖ Ensure minority parents aren't at a disadvantage throughout the process
- ❖ Work closely with Bellevue Police Chief, ensuring Bellevue Police understand not to profile and create intimidating profiling in neighborhoods
- ❖ Have Police come in and interact with students to break the tension
- ❖ Work with store detectives and management, educating them about racial profiling
- ❖ Increase recess supervisor ratio at the elementary level
- ❖ Ensure playgrounds are accessible and inclusive for students with disabilities
- ❖ Work to "fix buses" – one adult for all those students on a bus is not enough
- ❖ Don't let students bring their own toys and/or balls on the playgrounds as it creates conflict and exclusivity versus inclusivity

An exit survey was conducted following each of the community cafés, soliciting insights as to what worked well, suggestions for improving the process, and lingering questions, concerns and/or wonderings. Related comments follow.

### **What Worked Well**

- ❖ Small groups with moderators at each table
- ❖ I think it was important that we could speak on the subject and express thoughts/concerns
- ❖ Communication amongst facilitators and parents
- ❖ Conversation-based discussion
- ❖ Listening and learning
- ❖ Facilitator was very good
- ❖ Having a frank open discussion/open dialogue was amazing
- ❖ Discussion summaries reported from each table group to the larger group after each of the two prompts
- ❖ Interesting and relevant topic
- ❖ Good ideas generated. Would like to see follow up on the suggestions.
- ❖ Sharing and jumping off each other comments and an appropriate number of people per table
- ❖ Facility was great.
- ❖ Sharing of ideas and method-lots of great open sharing
- ❖ Discussion of various topics

- ❖ Great facilitator, she listened to everyone
- ❖ Learn more about different situations
- ❖ Provides an opportunity for parents to express their experiences and concerns. Learned what other families were experiencing.
- ❖ The questions worked well to launch conversations.
- ❖ Clear and focused agenda – effort to hear from each participant.
- ❖ I could explain what I think about schools
- ❖ Coming together as one group for each question is a great idea
- ❖ Open discussions, having an understanding how our school district is educating this social problem
- ❖ Facilitator to help keep conversation flowing and to document for the group. Respectful conversation. Handout with Panorama survey results helped gain insight.
- ❖ A lot of people shared and gave some inspiring speeches
- ❖ Having small groups focused on a small topic makes discussion efficient
- ❖ The mediator listened – students participated
- ❖ Everyone was able to share. Loved hearing from the different tables; really appreciate the district's willingness to hear and listen
- ❖ Small communication circles; hearing everyone's ideas and experiences; key questions, learning about resources available.
- ❖ Group discussions, open dialogue
- ❖ District is such a good listener – great format
- ❖ That this session existed
- ❖ Thanks for providing this opportunity to share feedback on this important topic. It is very encouraging to see staff with proper authority at the BSD to hear from parents and to improve safe environments for students
- ❖ HIB has different types – I did not know this before
- ❖ Hearing personal stories, open conversation style
- ❖ Having conversations about personal experiences and how we can improve in the district
- ❖ I appreciate this opportunity – welcome more community conversations even at the school level
- ❖ This meeting is a great start towards awareness
- ❖ Also appreciate the refreshments – made us feel very welcome
- ❖ Set up in welcoming way with table cloths, writing utensils, handouts and we were greeted at the door

### **What Would Improve the Process**

- ❖ More notice in more places about this meeting
- ❖ Just want more sessions like this
- ❖ Became dominated – as many conversations do – by the most outspoken/quick voices – perhaps have the tables that are intentionally diverse (students/parents/comm. members, etc.) rather than heavily dominated by 1 demographic
- ❖ Facilitate a session for families and students with specific problems would have been helpful vs general session
- ❖ Add teachers and administrators
- ❖ Continue discussion on a frequent basis

- ❖ More control over group discussion
- ❖ Have facilitators who are not decision makers
- ❖ Have one school board member at these meetings, at least (went to two of them and not one Board member was present)
- ❖ Have 3 questions (instead of two) and a little more time
- ❖ Create more flexibility and sessions available for these type of discussions – Coverage other medium to share ideas – A medium where the product / output of these sessions be available for others (who can't attend) and for future references Communication amongst facilitators and parents
- ❖ To have a better understanding of the HIB definitions (elevator – level)
- ❖ Get more people included, to include the Board members
- ❖ Would like to discuss more specific issues
- ❖ Have teachers advertise the event to the parents from teachers. Also maybe have sessions with teachers and parents/students.
- ❖ Results! This dialogue is great but unless changes do happen in a timely fashion it will be a waste of time.
- ❖ Unclear. Would love to see the concrete actions arising from this meeting
- ❖ A more frequent assemblage
- ❖ It was great. Would be good to hear if anything is implemented and considered
- ❖ Have this at least once a year
- ❖ Time frames for discussion – knowing how long we have to talk

### **Lingering Questions, Concerns and/or Wonderings**

- ❖ Safe schools – I would like to know what procedure is in place in case of Nuclear attack, to minimize the damage and reunion communication with parents – (in line with the CDC)
- ❖ Next steps? What is the BSD going to do now?
- ❖ I would like the Panorama results broken down by race and who filled out the survey (Were the majority of kids of color included?)
- ❖ What changes will be made to policy and/or procedure?
- ❖ I want to know the next step to see if we are making progress
- ❖ Next steps, how to bring parents into the discussion
- ❖ Follow through / will something happen?
- ❖ What can I do to help?
- ❖ I just want to see some changes happen
- ❖ What is going to be done with this information gathered tonight and how long until it is implemented?
- ❖ What will happen to our decision and why did no school board member attended?
- ❖ How to deal with really tough cases e.g. kids who truly enjoy bullying.
- ❖ No channel for students to report bullying
- ❖ Interactions with law enforcement, interaction and protection and communication / would like to see more safety alerts like they do at universities for reported crimes
- ❖ Concern about impact of PEG/G. Singleton – when will parents be told about this influence in our schools? What evidence is there of improvement in learning / student scores since the establishment of the equity department and the work with PEG? Have graduation rates improved as a result? Has the achievement gap narrowed? Is the

closing of the gap what we desire? Do we expect all students to achieve the same? Schools should not look outside the circle of schools. Students come from home cultures – let's look at the cultures that succeed. Why are their kids doing well? What expectations are in the home?

- ❖ The teachers do NOTHING!
- ❖ Thank you for reaching out and doing this program. We are so proud to see SEL being implemented in the district. It is a crucial and essential part of educating the whole child.
- ❖ How are we going to get feedback?
- ❖ To ensure that all voices have an equal value
- ❖ Are parents involved in PPL committees at a school level at all schools? As a community org/partner I would be open to communicating more and offering resources if needed or interested. As a parent I would like to know what the outcome and/or changes will be after these community cafes
- ❖ School populations are very diverse from school to school in the district. How does the district tailor policies to allow for differentiated responses?
- ❖ Are community members aware of the work and innovation that is necessary to succeed?
- ❖ Do schools with high levels of behavior problems have enough staff to help the misbehaving kids?
- ❖ How policy is set? What would I do to affect change?
- ❖ How this shared feedback today will be addressed or followed through
- ❖ Appropriate actions for parents to take if HIB is a concern. Person to contact or for further investigation
- ❖ How can we as teachers get more involved w/this at the school level?
- ❖ How can you address white privilege?

Should you have specific questions and/or comments related to the community café summary, please don't hesitate to contact Patty Siegwarth, Executive Director of Schools and HIB Compliance Officer, at [siegwarthp@bsd405.org](mailto:siegwarthp@bsd405.org).