

**SUB-COMMITTEE MEETING  
CURRICULUM  
NOVEMBER 13, 2008**

PRESENT: Dennis Winn, Dr. Fletcher, Ms. Pollock, Mrs. Ussach

ABSENT: None

**Dr. Fletcher** called the meeting to order at 6:32PM.

**Dr. Fletcher** Outlined the issue to be discussed and commended all parties involved for the professional and courteous manner in which they had worked through potentially sensitive topics in the Welcoming Schools curriculum. He extended the sub-committee's gratitude for work well done, and then called upon the principals of the schools involved in the project for an overview.

**Matt Riley**, Principal of the Taylor School gave background on Welcoming Schools. They spent over a year talking to kids. Name calling and bullying big issues.

Recommendation: Decide on appropriate program lessons then provide teaching and training. Two teachers from Taylor, one from New Bedford High School to pilot.

Met with parents for the last six months. Met fifty people at Normandin - Talked about lessons for this year. Selected by teachers including two from Taylor.

Dr. Bonner hadn't had the opportunity to speak with the faith community prior to discussions beginning. A couple of meetings with all parties represented since, working together to provide lessons to make our schools safe. These lessons were presented and supported by parents of three schools.

Time Frame: Presented per request of Dr. Bonner: start January, 2009.

**John Masson**, from Youth & Schools Committee on Homophobia and Violence educates Community Service Providers and parents. Feels that a concern is the effect of homophobia on youth, and looking on how to address it. Focus on bullying and name calling, which has negative effect on kids. Supports revised curriculum presented tonight. Good beginning steps. Very supportive of lesson plan presented. . Keep working together. He feels it is important that this work get started. "Our hope is that the School Committee approves it as quickly as possible."

**Pastor Steve Rodrigues** from the Inter-Church Council, spoke as a person of color, his grandmother being white, and his grandfather being black, his experiences in a variety of different treatment towards him as a student at Apponequet High School. He was impressed with the content of the videos at the last meeting. Dr. Fletcher asked if he would like to be part of the Task Force, and his questions would be addressed.

**Mrs. Pollock** had two issues regarding the above curriculum. She questioned the plan for training the teachers and the need of enforcement by the teachers. She raised questions regarding the teachers ignoring the bullying going on.

Mrs. Ussach asked Matt Riley if there was a training in place for teachers. He replied that there is a two hour overview of the program at all three sites, with an entire ten hour teacher training with selected staff who wanted to be point people at their school. Parents are concerned with the material and how staff feel about participating if they themselves are uncomfortable with the material.

Important to find teachers who are comfortable with the material and who will be able to relate it to other teachers.

Matt explains it as relating to math:

$a + b = c$  Attitude + behavior = cultural change No magic pill. Change takes time.

Need to provide more Professional Development in this area. Matt has experience with Kim Westheimer who is an independent consultant that he has worked with.

Lisa Andrade, principal of Campbell School. Ms. Westheimer talks about her lessons at school and the book *Matthew & Tilly* as well as the, "Words can Hurt" lesson in the Open Court Reading Program.

**Lisa Andrade** noted that a child's voice can be heard through writing. For many children it's their way to express themselves.

**Mrs. Ussach** talked about how keeping a journal was a very good tool for these children.

**Mrs. Pollock** asked the question will there be a gathering of materials & data to report of a climate change. Absolutely Mr. Riley responded.

She asked about the bullying going on at the Middle Schools. Matt responded that Kim Westheimer has evaluations, teacher responses as well as parent and student responses.

**Dr. Bonner** who spoke with Kim explained that we do not have documentation or pre-data .

Bullying has not been documented and there are no reports relating to it. Kim has been

evaluating pilot programs only.

**Fred Fuentes** talked about data from the AAU looking at sexual harassment that reporting is one for every twenty or thirty. An incident is really a multiplier. We know that bullying happens on the playground, in the classroom etc. When this happens there is not an adult or administrator that's hearing it. With the program we need to look at preventive issues to ensure that these types of behaviors don't happen.

**Dr. Fletcher** remarked that different teachers interpret things differently. What is bullying ?

**Mr. Winn** stated that the real key is how adults react to children, and how much ownership they take in their own responsibility to keep kids safe and welcome in school.

**Jerry Pinto** spoke on Safe Zone and the law. Re-developed a flyer since no one had a definition on bullying. What is the definition of bullying in Massachusetts? During the last couple of years they have joined with the Citizen's school program in Normandin and Keith Middle Schools. They teach a class on bullying prevention; how to handle the situation with the kids.

He sat down with Tony Cabral at the state level to try and change the bullying law. Bullying in the public schools needs to be reported by all: custodians, teachers, nurses, and as mandated by law that they report this to the principal who in turn will report it to the Superintendent and then the police department.

He spoke about the school bus situation and zero tolerance of any acts of violence on the buses, and making them a safe zone for students.

**Matt Riley** asked about the mass transit since many students take these buses. Asked if they are part of the program. Mr. Pinto said yes that Tremblay, Reliable, & Amaral are all on board with zero tolerance of any acts of violence.

**Mrs. Andrade** spoke on cyber- bullying and how this relates to elementary children starting in 1st grade. Concerns that even though this happens at home on the computer; it is brought in to school the next day.

**Jerry Pinto** mentioned that Linda Pacheco, Sherriff's Department heads up the cyber bullying department, and does on-site training. He mentioned incidents that took place and how he wants to work with the schools.

**Dr. Fletcher** noted that the group was very reasonable and thanked everyone for all their ideas.

He thanked the two teachers from Taylor School who attended.

**Mrs. Pollock** thanked everyone for volunteering and wants all children to feel safe and welcomed in school.

**Dr. Fletcher** asked for a motion to accept the 1<sup>st</sup> seven lessons to be implemented and starting in January, 09.

Motion made by Mrs. Ussach and second by Mrs. Pollock.

Other Business:

**Mrs. Ussach** stated she had attempted to contact Donald Vasconcelles, Headmaster New Bedford High School she was unable to reach him concerning students entering the workforce or college. Students don't have a solid basic understanding of personal financial credit issues. She suggested a course for juniors and seniors in money management one credit elective. Much of the material would be taught by guest lecturers; experts in the money management field. There is a need for students at the high school level to be more informed about all aspects of money matters.

**Mr. Winn and Ms. Ussach** will set up a meeting for teachers at New Bedford High School to discuss curriculum along with her proposal in the spring of 2009.

Meeting adjourned 7:50pm.