



AGENDA
Durham Public Schools Board of Education
Support Services Committee
February 4, 2014
Fuller Administration Building, 511 Cleveland Street, Durham, NC

1. Call to Order
2. Moment of Silence
3. Agenda Review and Approval
4. Public Comment
5. Committee Meeting Minutes
 - I. January 7, 2014
6. Reports
 - I. Playworks Update
 - II. Community Conversations Feedback and Updates
 - III. Summary of Follow Up Items
 - IV. Adjournment

Mission Statement

In collaboration with our community and parents, the mission of Durham Public Schools is to provide all students with an outstanding education that motivates them to reach their full potential and enables them to discover their interests and talents, pursue their goals and dreams, and succeed in college, in the workforce and as engaged citizens.

Durham Public Schools SUPPORT SERVICES COMMITTEE PRECIS

Agenda Item: Support Services Committee Minutes

Staff Liaison Present: Debbie Pitman, Ph.D.

Phone #: 560-2774

Main Points:

Attached for committee consideration and approval is a draft copy of the following minutes:

- January 7, 2014

Fiscal Implications:

- None

Strategic Plan Alignment:

- N/A

Purpose

Information

Discussion

Action

Consent

Reviewed by:

Finance _____

Attorney _____

MINUTES
Support Services Committee
Of the
Durham Public Schools Board of Education
February 4, 2014

The Support Services Committee met on Tuesday, January 7, 2014 in the Fuller Administration Building, 511 Cleveland Street, Durham, North Carolina.

Board Members Present

Omega Parker, Chair; Leigh Bordley, Vice-Chairperson, Natalie Beyer, Heidi Carter, Nance Cox, and Pastor Fredrick Davis. Minnie Forte-Brown was not present for the meeting.

Administrators Present

Dr. Debbie Pitman, Assistant Superintendent of Student, Family and Community Services; Dr. Richard Lemke, Michelle Hedgepeth-Smith, Director of Student Services, Pamela Taylor, Student Services Coordinator, and Dr. Stacey Wilson-Norman, Deputy Superintendent for Academic Services.

Attorney Present

Benita Jones

Call to Order/Moment of Silence

Chair Omega Parker called the meeting to order and presided over a moment of silence.

Agenda Review and Approval

The agenda was approved as presented.

Public Comment

Cheryl Murphy provided comment on the Revised Policy 4403 – Head Lice.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes were approved as printed.

Committee Reports

Revised Policy 4403 – Head Lice

Public Comment: Cheryl Murphy provided comment on the Revised Policy 4403 – Head Lice.

Dr. Pitman and Dr. Lemke worked with the Durham County Department of Health to provide the recommended revisions to Policy 4403 – Head Lice to reflect current healthcare practice for consideration and subsequent approval.

Board members had a full discussion and a motion was made, moved and seconded to place this item on the agenda at the January full Board meeting for action.

School Counselor Programs

Public Comment: None

Dr. Pitman, Michelle Hedgepeth-Smith, and Pamela Taylor provided an update on school counselor programs in Durham Public Schools. The update provided information on legislation regarding the duties of school counselors, the role of the school counselor in 21st century learning, the American School Counselor Association (ASCC) National Model and framework for school counseling programs, and service delivery. In addition, administration discussed alignment with the new K-12 guidance essential state standards, responsibilities by grade levels, prevention programming and school initiatives and responsibilities.

This report was presented for information only. Board members had a full discussion regarding this update.

Summary of Follow-Up Items

- 1) Update on Counselor Programs – What is the counselor allotment formula for Durham Public Schools?
- 2) Update on Counselor Programs – Work with PICE to recruit volunteers for the specific purpose of assisting guidance departments in schools.
- 3) Provide a list of mentoring programs in elementary, middle, and high schools.
- 4) What is the status and amount of the contract with Futures for Kids?
- 5) Include mental health program update in future Committee meeting including status of System of Care, Child and Family Support Teams, School-Based Support Programs, school psychologists, etc.
- 6) Describe the “PowerLunch” program at Southern High School.

There being no further business, Ms. Bordley adjourned the meeting.



One Vision. One Durham.

Date: **February 4, 2014**

Durham Public Schools
Support Services Committee
PRECIS

Agenda Items: Playworks Update

Staff Liaison Present: Emmett Tilley, III

Phone #: 919-560-3730

Main Points:

- The administration will provide an update on the Playworks programs in Durham Public Schools.
- The administration presents this agenda item for information.

Fiscal Implications:

- These efforts are supported through federal, state, and local funds.

Strategic Plan Alignment:

Goal VI.3.4 – Expand the school-based Positive Behavior Intervention Model which includes anti-bullying strategies and professional development.

Purpose

Information

Discussion

Reviewed by: **Finance** **Attorney** _____

Playworks Update

Support Services Committee

February 4, 2014

Emmett Tilley, III
Interim Area Superintendent
for Elementary Schools

Playworks Objectives

- Playworks provides an opportunity to foster the physical, social and emotional development of students.
- Playworks' coaches lead and organize games and activities, teaching valuable lessons along the way.
- Students are engaged in more vigorous physical activity.
- Helps to develop good sportsmanship and character.
- Schools are proven to have less bullying.
- Students feel safe at school.

DPS Schools Participating in Playworks

- Bethesda
- E.K. Powe
- Eno Valley
- Fayetteville St.
- Glenn
- Hope Valley
- Lakewood
- Merrick Moore
- Parkwood
- Sandy Ridge
- Spaulding
- Spring Valley
- W.G. Pearson
- Y.E. Smith

5 Components

CLASS GAME TIME

Learn recess games and problem solving tools in a small setting.

Out-of-SCHOOL TIME

Before school recess
or
After school program.

RECESS

Organized
Multiple games to choose from
Conflict resolution
Safe, meaningful play
Fun!

JUNIOR COACH PROGRAM

Peer Leadership
on the playground.

INTERSCHOLASTIC LEAGUES

Developmental
leagues for students in
the Upper grades.

Lakewood Elementary School

- **Playworks is a valuable part of Lakewood Elementary School:**
 - It has aided in the decrease of playground conflicts through structured play.
 - Students are taught conflict resolution.
 - Stations require teacher assistance with monitoring students.
 - The Junior Coach program promote student leadership.
 - Junior Coaches truly honor the responsibility that comes with putting on the purple t-shirt. They lead games and ensure students are playing fairly. They often take an active role on helping others avoid and solve conflicts.

“I have the responsibility of looking after younger children and helping them at recess. I make sure to get my homework done every night so I can be a leader as a Junior Coach.”

-5th grader, Lakewood Elementary
 - Playworks offers extracurricular sports for students to compete in after school.
 - Teachers implement some of the strategies during class time.

“It has greatly changed our school for the better. I am truly a fan.”

- La’Kesha Roberts, Principal

C. C. Spaulding Elementary School

- Playworks is a valuable resource for our school.
 - It has decreased bullying during recess.
 - The program has increased student participation by encouraging all students to be involved, included and active during recess.
 - The coaching is extremely effective.

“We love Playworks at Spaulding.”

-Kecia Rogers, Principal

Bethesda Elementary School

- Years one and two our staff, students, and parents were ecstatic about Playworks. This was due to the phenomenal coaches; they immersed themselves in multiple aspects of the school, they established a great rapport with our community, and engaged everyone in fitness activities.
- We are currently in year three, and Playworks is great with a great coach.

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Discussion

Date: February 4, 2014

**Durham Public Schools
SUPPORT SERVICES COMMITTEE
PRECIS**

Agenda Item: Community Conversations

Staff Liaison Present: Dr. Debbie Pitman **Phone #:** (919) 560- 2554
Dr. Kristin Bell (919) 560- 3775
Theresa McGowan (919) 560- 2122

Main Points:

- Administration is providing a summary of the findings from the Community Conversation meetings held on December 7, December 9, December 10, and December 16, 2013 at locations across the district and community. The purpose of Community Conversations was to gather input from parents and community stakeholders on discipline policy and practices regarding out-of-school suspensions.
- Community Conversations were facilitated by the Superintendent’s Closing the Achievement Gap Task Force co-chairs (Donna Rewalt and Martinette Horner) with welcome and closing remarks made by a board of education member (Heidi Carter, Minnie Forte-Brown and Pastor Davis).
- All of the information gathered from the Community Conversations was transcribed. Data was analyzed by an independent policy researcher.
- Administration is presenting to the Board for information.

Fiscal Implications:

- These efforts are supported through federal, state and local funds.

Strategic Plan Alignment

- **Goal VI.3** – DPS will increase efforts to ensure a supportive and culturally-responsive environment for students as measured by out-of-school suspension data, student and parent surveys and school culture assessments.

Purpose

Information

Discussion

Reviewed by:

Finance _____ Attorney _____

Community Conversations

Support Services Committee

February 4, 2014

Dr. Debbie Pitman

Assistant Superintendent

Theresa McGowan

Director, Preventive Services

Dr. Kristin Bell

Executive Director of ECP

Dr. Cassandra Davis

Research Analyst

Background

- **Community Conversations** were held on:

❖	Saturday, December 7	10:30 -12:00 PM	Staff Development Center
❖	Monday, December 9	6:30 – 8:00 PM	Northern High School
❖	Tuesday, December 10	6:30 – 8:00 PM	Southern High School
❖	Monday, December 16	6:30 – 8:00 PM	White Rock Baptist Church
- **Purpose** was to gather input from parents and community stakeholders on discipline policy and practices regarding out-of-school suspensions including Black students, students with disabilities, and Black students with disabilities.
- **Welcome and Closing** remarks were provided by a board of education member (Heidi Carter, Minnie Forte-Brown and Pastor Davis); Superintendent’s Closing the Achievement Gap Task Force Co-Chairs (Donna Rewalt and Martinette Horner) served as **Meeting Facilitators**.
- In addition, feedback was gathered from the Superintendent’s Teacher Advisory Council, principals, and district staff.
- **Analysis:** All of the input gathered from each session of Community Conversations was transcribed. Data was submitted to an independent researcher for analysis.

Methodology

1. Organized data within Excel
2. Printed out all open-ended comments from each event within the first question
2. Open coded all comments and generated a list of themes
3. Put themes into Excel spreadsheet and aligned each comment with identifiable themes
4. Reviewed each opened-ended comment to make sure each comment fit within the desired theme
5. Tallied all thematic responses
6. Repeated steps 2-6 for the remaining three questions

Findings

Table 1: Themes from the community’s, principals’, teachers’, and district personnel’s open-ended comments on what is working well within Durham Public Schools

Question 1: What is working well in your child’s school/Durham Public Schools, with student discipline policy and practice?

Rank Order	Community	Principals	Teachers	District
1	Non-traditional learning programs	Non-traditional learning programs	School culture	Communicating/ School culture
2	Interventions/ School culture	Interventions	Interventions	Awareness of behaviors & policy/ Interventions
3	Parent & community involvement	Collaboration/ Support	Support	

Findings

Table 2: Themes from the community’s, principals’, teachers’, and district personnel’s open-ended comments about their concerns with student discipline policy and practice

Question 2: What are your concerns with the student discipline policy and practice?

Rank Order	Community	Principal	Teachers	District
1	Need for support	Need support	Need support	Need consistency
2	Need for consistency	Need assistance with Exceptional Children	Need consistency	Need clear expectations
3	Lack of communication/ Negative stigmas	Lack of alternative programs	Lack of communication/ Need assistance with Exceptional Children	Negative classroom & school climate

Findings

Table 3: Themes from the community’s, principals’, teachers’, and district personnel’s open-ended comments about their recommendations to reduce suspensions

Question 3: What strategies can you recommend to DPS to reduce suspensions?				
Rank Order	Community	Principal	Teachers	District
1	Support	Support	Support	Training
2	Training	Training	Training	Data & research
3	Alternative programs	Alternative programs/ Resources	Mentoring	Amend policy

Findings

Table 4: Themes from the community’s, principals’, teachers’, and district personnel’s open-ended comments about how the community can assist/partner with the district to address

Question 4: How can the community assist/partner with the district in addressing the suspension rate?

Rank Order	Community	Principal	Teachers	District
1	Engagement	Collaborate	Mentoring	Support
2	Support	Internship &volunteering	Resources	Collaborate/ Engagement/ Training
3	Collaborate	Support		

Themes

- Review policy and procedures
- Provide earlier intervention—student-specific strategies
- Provide mental health supports (focus on prevention)
- Understand root causes
- Provide professional development for school administrators, teachers and parents
- Provide alternatives to suspensions
- Improve collaboration between schools, parents, and the community.

Limitations

- The representation of the community may not have been as culturally and socially diverse as intended.
- During the community conversation, participants did not indicate if they were a community member, a parent, or both. Since this was not recorded, we were not able to determine the demographics of the individuals during the community conversation.

Next Steps

- Develop a Comprehensive District Plan on Discipline that incorporates federal *Guiding Principles for Improving School Climate and Discipline*, *National School Board Association* recommendations, evidence-based research, and feedback from community conversations stakeholders (community, principals, teachers, district)
- Conduct a gap analysis of existing DPS initiatives/ programs/strategies and guiding principles (including implementation fidelity)

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Discussion

Durham Public Schools Addressing Student Suspension Policy and Practice

An Analysis of Four Community Conversations from 12/7 to 12/16

Cassandra R. Davis, Ph.D.
1/21/2014

Working Well
(N=202)

In response to the question “What is working well in your child’s school/Durham Public Schools, with student discipline policy and practice?” Respondents tended to focus on using non-traditional learning programs, using interventions, maintaining a positive school culture, involving parents and the community, providing support to students and staff, collaborating and communicating with key stakeholders (Tables 1 & 2).

Table 1. Themes from Participants’ Open-ended Comments on what is working well within Durham Public Schools

Most Common Themes (listed in order of frequency)	Illustrative Quotes
Using non-tradition learning options to support students (38)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“Small high schools, such as New Tech, have the ability to know and recognize students.”</i> • <i>“Alternative means to suspension to keeps kids on track.”</i> • <i>“Broad range of extracurricular activities to engage students in positive ways: clubs and sports.”</i>
Using interventions to identify students in need (36)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“PBIS works well-implementation with fidelity.”</i> • <i>“Intervention teams-understanding the process and team training.”</i> • <i>“Schools try to [identify] issues early, be proactive in dealing with problems.”</i>
Maintaining a positive school culture (36)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“Providing a safe and orderly learning environment- improves student achievement and well-being.”</i> • <i>“Visual presence of Administration in school hallways.”</i> • <i>“Schools are safe and have consequences.”</i>
Involving parents and/or community (29)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“Transparency (Parents encourage to come into schools to examine data).”</i> • <i>“Parent involvement in the classroom.”</i> • <i>“Parental opportunities for involvement.”</i>
Providing support to students and/or staff (20)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“Schools are trying to be in tune with students' individual conditions and engage parent/guardians in the process”</i> • <i>“Identifying and matching appropriate supports for students and parents to promote students.”</i> • <i>“Layered support in the schools to address behaviors (case manager/PBIS/Social Worker)”</i>
Collaborating with parents and/or community (18)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“Relationship building at home and school.”</i> • <i>“Cooperation among professionals to modify behavior (teamwork).”</i> • <i>“Building relationships between students and staff.”</i>
Communicating with key stakeholders (14)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“Communication is positive when parent initiates it and staff provides family members with feedback.”</i> • <i>“Communication with parents about positive and negative issues.”</i> • <i>“District conversations”</i>

Source. Open-Ended Responses from Community Conversation

Table 2. Differences in themes amongst events

Ranked Themes	First Event	Second Event	Third Event	Fourth Event
First	Non-traditional learning programs	School culture	Non-traditional learning programs	Intervention
Second	Intervention	A Non-traditional learning programs	Intervention	Involvement
Third	Involvement	Involvement	School culture/ Support	School culture

Source. Open-Ended Responses from Community Conversation

- Although participants from each event shared a variation of responses, overall the themes identified were consistent across events.
- When asked what was working well with student discipline policy and practice, participants from the first, second, and third events were more likely to identify alternative programs as a positive aspect.

Concerns with Policy and Practice
(N=278)

In response to the question “What are your concerns with the student discipline policy and practice?” Respondents tended to focus on the following themes, a need for support and consistency, a lack of communication, a presence of negative stigmas, a lack of parent and/or community involvement, an overused policy, a lack of interventions and alternative programs (Tables 3 & 4).

Table 3. Themes from Participants’ Open-ended comments about participants’ concerns with student discipline policy and practice

Most Common Themes (listed in order of frequency)	Illustrative Quotes
Need for support (47)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“Some student populations in need of support are not receiving it.”</i> • <i>“Students with disabilities (IEPs/504s/etc.) not getting follow up support/tiers of intervention and behavioral support.”</i> • <i>“Principals, teachers and administration lack of preparation to promote methods of positive school discipline (understanding underlying causes of discipline) professional development, infrastructure for staff.”</i>
Need for consistency (45)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“Consistent application of policies and practices across the district.”</i> • <i>“Inequity in the application of school behaviors/discipline policy across the district with race and disability.”</i> • <i>“Subjective application of consequences.”</i>
Lack of communication (18)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“Evaluation of the effectiveness of PBIS-parents are not aware of PBIS and there is confusion of the program from school to school.”</i> • <i>“Not enough communication between parents and administrators in terms of discipline.”</i> • <i>“Community needs conversation about acceptable school behavior for all students.”</i>
Presence of negative stigmas (18)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“Criminalization of learning environment-blurred lines between discipline and law enforcement (stigma and challenges returning to school environment).”</i> • <i>“Negative stigma attached to Lakeview alternative school.”</i> • <i>“Overall mentality of treating our most vulnerable population of students.”</i>
Lack of parent and/or community involvement (17)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“Parents not notified and not informed of discipline and suspension”</i> • <i>“Schools not being proactive with parents in building relationships and being reactive when something happens -too much info at the wrong time.”</i> • <i>“All stakeholders need to be involved, all stakeholders don't know what's going on till after the fact.”</i>
Policy is too harsh and overused (16)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“Zero tolerance-overuse without considering context or history.”</i> • <i>“Too many students pushed into court system without intervention.”</i> • <i>“Overuse of suspension as a way of correcting student misbehavior and not using other interventions.”</i>
Lack of appropriate interventions (16)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“Interventions not handled in a timely manner due to overcrowding.”</i> • <i>“Too many students pushed into court system without intervention.”</i> • <i>“Lack of therapeutic interventions.”</i>

Lack of alternative programs (15)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“Lack of alternatives to suspension-elementary verses secondary.”</i> • <i>“Suspensions don't work- there are no learning alternatives in the school.”</i> • <i>“Options for students at all levels regarding alternatives to suspension.”</i>
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Source. Open-Ended Responses from Community Conversation

Table 4. Differences in themes amongst events

Ranked Themes	First Event	Second Event	Third Event	Fourth Event
First	Negative stigma	Consistency	Support	Consistency
Second	Alternative program/ Clear expectations/ Consistency/Support/ Training	Support	Consistency	Support
Third		Involvement/Overuse	Intervention/Negative stigma/Overuse	Communication

Source. Open-Ended Responses from Community Conversation

- Although participants from each event shared a variation of responses; however, they were more likely to articulate a concern with the current suspension policy and practice was that it lacked consistency and support.

Recommendations to Reduce Suspension

(N=232)

In response to the question “What strategies can you recommend to DPS to reduce suspensions?” Respondents tended to focus on supporting and training individuals, implementing additional alternative programs, encouraging community and parent involvement, implementing intervention procedures, amending suspension policy, and fostering collaborative relationships (Tables 5 & 6).

Table 5. Themes from Participants’ Open-ended Comments about their recommendations to reduce suspensions

Most Common Themes (listed in order of frequency)	Illustrative Quotes
Provide support to students, schools and families (57)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“Peer coaching/peer buddies-pair students to support one another.”</i> • <i>“Develop relationships with students and find ways to get to the cause of behaviors before suspension.”</i> • <i>“Partner with community programs-support beyond school walls (Scouts, Rites of Passage Programs, Elder’s Panels, [and] Gardening Projects).”</i>
Train students, school personnel and families (36)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“Educating teachers about implication of students being involved in juvenile justice system.”</i> • <i>“Invite parents for workshops on strategies to help their kids while the students are being tutored.”</i> • <i>“Training for students, parents and teachers on disabilities, tolerance, situations.”</i>
Implement additional alternative programs (27)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“Alternative learning environment to support students (not Lakeview).”</i> • <i>“Expanding the Second Chance Academy to all schools, having certified teachers leading the academics, transportation is now an issue.”</i> • <i>“Help kids navigate peer relationships better-peer mediation programs to prevent fighting and conflict (martial arts programs).”</i>
Encourage involvement (19)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“Getting parents involved: reach out to parents, know parents, allow parents a role in organizing activities at school.”</i> • <i>“Continue community conversations”</i> • <i>“More direct involvement between parents and teachers-home visits by teachers to learn more about home situations.”</i>
Implement intervention procedures (18)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“Early intervention at the school level when parents ask for help.”</i> • <i>“Address issues that lead to suspensions (anger management and strategies dealing with stress).”</i> • <i>“Create an early intervention pipeline from birth to early elementary.”</i>
Amend suspension policy (17)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“Create districtwide handbook for consequences with levels and tiers along with a matrix/scaffold of consequences.”</i> • <i>“Reassessment of what a suspendable offense is, clear outlined levels written in the policy.”</i> • <i>“Revisit school policies and procedures more than once a year with parents and students.”</i>

Foster collaborative practices between the family, school and community (15)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“To establish a district wide task force involving stakeholders and experts to examine the issues in greater detail and to provide recommendations based on district need and circumstances.”</i> • <i>“Lasting and consistent collaboration.”</i> • <i>“Need connections between mental health providers and educators.”</i>
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Source. Open-Ended Responses from Community Conversation

Table 6. Differences in themes amongst events

Ranked Themes	First Event	Second Event	Third Event	Fourth Event
First	Support	Support	Support	Support
Second	Alternative programs/ Intervention	Alternative programs	Involvement	Training
Third		Collaboration/ Training	Alternative programs	Involvement

Source. Open-Ended Responses from Community Conversation

- Overall there was little variation in responses amongst events. Participants from each region were more likely to recommend supporting students, schools and families as a way to reduce suspensions.

Partnering to Address Suspension Rate
(N=146)

In response to the question “How can the community assist/partner with the district in addressing the suspension rate?” Respondents tended to focus on engaging families and communities, providing supports to students and/or staff, fostering collaborative practices, utilizing resources, creating supplemental programs, increasing mentoring opportunities, encouraging involvement, and training individuals (Tables 7 & 8).

Table 7. Themes from Participants’ Open-ended Comments about how the community can assist/partner with the district to address suspension rates

Most Common Themes (listed in order of frequency)	Illustrative Quotes
Engage families and the community (29)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“Welcoming community members into the schools through Citizen School Programs.”</i> • <i>“Designate one day per month to recruit parents to attend school conferences (bringing the community into the school).”</i> • <i>“Continue to engage the community by bringing in volunteers to enrich the education experience.”</i>
Provide support to students and/or staff (20)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“Hiring people who can help support our students as teachers/mentors because they have similar backgrounds.”</i> • <i>“Partnerships with colleges, universities as volunteers to provide support services to help students at risk of suspension (counseling and groups).”</i> • <i>“Bring in mental health experts to provide group therapy.”</i>
Foster collaborative practices between the family, school and community (17)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“Form a task force in the school to discern the needs of the students and then reach out to community agencies.”</i> • <i>“Parents and schools collaborate as a team.”</i> • <i>“Partner with businesses-have them come to schools to build relationships with the students.”</i>
Utilize resources (15)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“Better alignment of community resources with current DPS resources-coordinate together to support the family as a whole.”</i> • <i>“Community resource fairs or other media to share resources with families and schools.”</i> • <i>“Connecting with NCCU and mapping other community resources.”</i>
Create additional supplemental programs (15)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“Create clubs based on student interest to create more inclusive environment.”</i> • <i>“Increase clubs and extracurricular activities.”</i> • <i>“Increase number of opportunities for extra-curricular activities in healthy ways.”</i>
Encourage involvement (13)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“Students become involved with community projects as a part of their academic day.”</i> • <i>“Involve the parent in the early stages of discipline issues.”</i> • <i>“Community should open the doors to locations to allow opportunities for meetings to take place because schools can be intimidating.”</i>
Increase mentoring opportunities (11)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“Implement student mentoring programs-create more opportunities-programs that are open to all students (intramurals).”</i> • <i>“Increase opportunities for mentoring services (Big Brother, Big Sister).”</i> • <i>“Pairing/partnering with local colleges and universities with students for role models and peer support.”</i>

Train students, school personnel and families (10)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Universities to train teachers, parents and students in mental health issues.” • “Corporate partnerships to provide professional development in human relations.” • “Have resource training with school staff to recognize community partners: mental health agencies, DSS, Housing Authority, JCPC, etc.”
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Source. Open-Ended Responses from Community Conversation

Table 8. Differences in themes amongst events

Ranked Themes	First Event	Second Event	Third Event	Fourth Event
First	Engagement/Support	Engagement	Engagement	Collaboration/Engagement/Resources
Second	Collaboration/Involvement	Support	Resources/Support	
Third		Supplemental program		

Source. Open-Ended Responses from Community Conversation

- Overall participants identified the following as groups to partner with in order to reduce suspension; Law enforcement, corporations, religious organizations, mental health organizations, colleges/universities, and the community.
- There was little variation in responses amongst events. Participants from each event were more likely to agree that the best way to partner with the district and address suspension rates, is through engaging families and the community.

Durham Public Schools Addressing Student Suspension Policy and Practice

An Analysis of Principals', Teachers', and District Personnel's Open-ended Responses to Improve Suspension Policy

Cassandra R. Davis, Ph.D.
1/21/2014

Working Well

In response to the question “What is working well in your child’s school/Durham Public Schools, with student discipline policy and practice?” When asked this questions there was a variation in responses across principal, teacher and district personnel. Principal respondents were more likely to indicate that non-traditional learning programs were effective. In contrast, teacher respondents and district personnel were more likely to articulate school culture as an aspect that works well (Tables 1,2 & 3).

Table 1. Themes from Principals’ Open-ended Comments on what is working well within Durham Public Schools

Most Common Themes (listed in order of frequency)	Illustrative Quotes from Principals
Using non-traditional learning programs (16)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“Small specialty schools and programs”</i> • <i>“Alternative school that has a focused approach for each student”</i> • <i>“Second Chance Academy, need [in kindergarten-5th grade]”</i>
Using interventions to identify students in need (11)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“PBIS (Positive Behavior Intervention Support)”</i> • <i>“Pyramid of interventions”</i> • <i>“PBIS in some schools”</i>
Collaborating with schools and families (8)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“Stronger relationships between faculty and students”</i> • <i>“Building trusting relationships”</i> • <i>“Monthly high school visits to learn best practices -sharing and collaborating”</i>
Providing support to students and/or staff (8)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“School based support team”</i> • <i>“Central office responsiveness to Principal's concerns”</i> • <i>“Student services involvement”</i>

Source. Open-Ended Responses from Community Conversation: Principal

Table 2. Themes from Teachers’ Open-ended Comments on what is working well within Durham Public Schools

Most Common Themes (listed in order of frequency)	Illustrative Quotes from Teachers
Embracing a healthy school culture (8)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“Children know the expectations-room and school specific”</i> • <i>“Small environment allows more attention to the student”</i> • <i>“Teaching love and logic (Five Principals-kids reflecting on their own behavior)”</i>
Using interventions to identify students in need (7)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“PBIS-provides consistency”</i> • <i>“PBIS-recognizing students”</i> • <i>“PBIS school wide”</i>
Providing support to students and/or staff (6)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“Multi disciplinary approach to address student needs (Child Family Support Team – CFST)”</i> • <i>“Character education and anti bullying on a regular basis”</i>

Source. Open-Ended Responses from Community Conversation: Teacher

Table 3. Themes from District Personnel’s Open-ended Comments on what is working well within Durham Public Schools

Most Common Themes (listed in order of frequency)	Illustrative Quotes from District Personnel
Communicating with schools and/or parents (5)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“Some schools are utilizing/communicating with parents before the situation escalates”</i> • <i>“Interdepartmental communication”</i>
Embracing a healthy school culture (5)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“Focus on engaging rigorous instruction”</i> • <i>“School staff using innovative approach and processes”</i>
Having an awareness of behaviors and/or policy (4)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“Awareness of issues to be addressed-improve action steps”</i> • <i>“Parental awareness and increased involvement of consequences and policies”</i>
Using interventions to identify students in need (4)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“PBIS district-wide standardization”</i> • <i>“PBIS in schools that implement it well”</i>

Source. Open-Ended Responses from Community Conversation: District

Concerns with Policy and Practice

In response to the question “What are your concerns with the student discipline policy and practice?” Principal and teacher respondents were more likely to indicate a concern with the current suspension policy and practice was that it lacked support for students and school personnel. In contrast, district personnel identified the main concern was that the policy and practice lacked consistency (Tables 4, 5 & 6).

Table 4. Themes from Principals’ Open-ended comments about their concerns with student discipline policy and practice

Most Common Themes (listed in order of frequency)	Illustrative Quotes from Principals
Need for support (22)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“Clinical support for students and families”</i> • <i>“Majority of high school issues are from 9th graders-need to do a better job of addressing needs of this group”</i> • <i>“District level support training for PBIS”</i>
Need assistance for Exception Children (EC)/Mental health students (10)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“Mental health support/intervention”</i> • <i>“EC support and understanding student needs”</i> • <i>“Effective EC teacher discipline training”</i>
Lack of alternative programs (8)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“Need more innovative approaches outside the school building”</i> • <i>“Need more placement options for elementary students with severe behavior problems and school based trained behavior specialists”</i> • <i>“Not having alternative elementary option-second chance”</i>

Source. Open-Ended Responses from Community Conversation: Principal

Table 5. Themes from Teachers’ Open-ended comments about their concerns with student discipline policy and practice

Most Common Themes (listed in order of frequency)	Illustrative Quotes from Teachers
Need for support (7)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“Meeting the needs of transient students and students who are new to school (background info and strategies)”</i> • <i>“Lack of access to mental health services and supports”</i> • <i>“Developmentally appropriate ISS”</i>
Need for consistency (5)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“Maintaining consistency with expectations and consequences”</i> • <i>“Consistency from classroom to classroom, school to school and teacher to teacher”</i>
Lack of communication (4)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“Intra-school communication when students move from school to school”</i> • <i>“Language barrier”</i>
Need support for Exception Children (EC)/Mental health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“Lack of access to mental health services and supports”</i> • <i>“EC students-assaultive- long process to provide alternatives”</i>

(4)

Source. Open-Ended Responses from Community Conversation: Teacher

Table 6. Themes from District Personnel’s Open-ended comments about their concerns with student discipline policy and practice

Most Common Themes (listed in order of frequency)	Illustrative Quotes from District Personnel
Need for consistency (8)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>“Lack of consistent discipline action, equity is inconsistent within racial groups and students with disabilities”</i>• <i>“Consistency of application of consequences for Code of Conduct violations”</i>• <i>“Inconsistencies from school to school and within schools”</i>
Need for clear expectations (5)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>“Clear district mandates/policy that allows flexibility”</i>• <i>“Teachers understanding the process”</i>
Presence of negative classroom/school climate (4)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>“Lack of instructional engagement”</i>• <i>“Lack of teacher classroom management skills”</i>

Source. Open-Ended Responses from Community Conversation: District

Recommendations to Reduce Suspension

In response to the question “What strategies can you recommend to DPS to reduce suspensions?” Overall, there was little variation in responses from principals, teachers and district personnel. Participants from each group recommended providing training to school personnel and families as a means to reduce suspension rates (Tables 7, 8 & 9).

Table 7. Themes from Principals’ Open-ended Comments about their recommendations to reduce suspensions

Most Common Themes (listed in order of frequency)	Illustrative Quotes from Principals
Provide support to students, schools and families (9)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“Strong social workers to work with students and families”</i> • <i>“Early childhood learning and behavior support-increase [Pre-K]”</i> • <i>“Recruiting more qualified teachers and providing better support for new teachers”</i>
Train students, school personnel and families (7)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“Teacher training for top 10% of kids with behavior issues (professional development for teachers)”</i> • <i>“Parenting classes-including extended family”</i> • <i>“Diversity training”</i>
Implement additional alternative programs (5)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“Offer more creative programs for a targeted population (ex. gender specific)”</i> • <i>“More alternatives to suspension (community, Second Chance Academy)”</i>
Provide resources to students and schools (5)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“More alternatives to suspension (community, Second Chance Academy)”</i> • <i>“Increase staffing with equitable resources-human/physical (lowering class size, behavior support assistants (BSA))”</i>

Source. Open-Ended Responses from Community Conversation: Principal

Table 8. Themes from Teachers’ Open-ended Comments about their recommendations to reduce suspensions

Most Common Themes (listed in order of frequency)	Illustrative Quotes from Teachers
Provide support to students, schools and families (10)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“Establish a school based support team for all schools”</i> • <i>“More interpreters in the district and translation services for multiple languages”</i> • <i>“Counseling in ISS”</i>
Train students, school personnel and families (9)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“Cultural diversity training sessions”</i> • <i>“Professional development for parents-parenting and financial”</i> • <i>“Classroom management training”</i>
Provide mentoring opportunities for students and schools (7)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“Mentor programs for students”</i> • <i>“Mentoring-school wide and community”</i> • <i>“Strong mentoring program for young African American males”</i>

Source. Open-Ended Responses from Community Conversation: Teacher

Table 9. Themes from District Personnel’s Open-ended Comments about their recommendations to reduce suspensions

Most Common Themes (listed in order of frequency)	Illustrative Quotes from District Personnel
Train students, school personnel and families (10)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“Professional development on social, emotional and cultural sensitivity for staff”</i> • <i>“Community health university, from community to assist with training for staff and parents”</i> • <i>“Develop district-wide code of conduct and provide training for consistent implementation and communication”</i>
Utilize data/research (3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“Determine evidence based model for changing behavior”</i> • <i>“Focus group with students who have been suspended (subgroups by race and students with disabilities)”</i>
Amend suspension policy (3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“Provide plan to address repeat offenders”</i> • <i>“Develop system of best practices including how to engage students”</i>

Source. Open-Ended Responses from Community Conversation: District

Partnering to Address Suspension Rate

In response to the question “How can the community assist/partner with the district in addressing the suspension rate?” Principal and district personnel respondents were more likely to agree that the best way to partner with the district and address suspension rates is through providing support and fostering collaborative practices with families, the community and students (Tables 10, 11 &12).

Table 10. Themes from Principals’ Open-ended Comments about how the community can assist/partner with the district to address suspension rates

Most Common Themes (listed in order of frequency)	Illustrative Quotes from Principals
Foster collaborate practices between the family, school and community (5)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“Parents show up when called and work together with trust”</i> • <i>“Collaboration between schools and school system in partnerships with community mental health organizations”</i>
Increase internship and volunteering opportunities (5)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“More volunteers and partnerships in the schools”</i> • <i>“Social work interns from local universities”</i>
Provide support to students, family and/or staff (5)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“Support children and parents from birth”</i> • <i>“Prioritize mental health needs of students and families”</i>

Source. Open-Ended Responses from Community Conversation: Principal

Table 11. Themes from Teachers’ Open-ended Comments about how the community can assist/partner with the district to address suspension rates

Most Common Themes (listed in order of frequency)	Illustrative Quotes from Teachers
Increase mentoring opportunities (2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“Reach out to local colleges and universities for mentoring”</i> • <i>“Business partnerships-leaders role modeling for kids”</i>
Utilize resources (1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“Career day”</i>

Source. Open-Ended Responses from Community Conversation: Teacher

Table 12. Themes from District Personnel’s Open-ended Comments about how the community can assist/partner with the district to address suspension rates

Most Common Themes (listed in order of frequency)	Illustrative Quotes from District Personnel
Provide support to students, family and/or staff (6)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“Support parents with district family relationships”</i> • <i>“Community and DPS serve as one network to support whole child/family/community development”</i>
Foster collaborate practices between the family, school and community (3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“Community and DPS serve as one network to support whole child/family/community development”</i> • <i>“Involve community stakeholders in discipline policy discussions”</i>
Engage families and the community (3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“Engage community experts in the development of a school mental health model (targeted groups of students)”</i> • <i>“Parent/community as cultural translators/ambassadors”</i>
Train students, school personnel and families (3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“Community organizations as training providers”</i> • <i>“Involve community organizations (health, university) in training/mentoring staff and parents”</i>

Source. Open-Ended Responses from Community Conversation: District