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2013-2014 Annual Review Summary Anti-Harassment/Bullying August 15, 2014

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The Metropolitan School District of Decatur Township and the United States Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division, voluntarily entered into a Memorandum of Agreement to improve the District's ability to prevent and appropriately respond to peer-on-peer harassment based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, and other characteristics protected by federal civil rights laws. This agreement was entered into intending to ensure that the District's policies, procedures, and practices are comprehensive and consistent. Our intention with this agreement is to strengthen the District's ability to address bullying that also constitutes harassment and to provide consistent procedures for reporting, investigating, and responding to such conduct.

Third-Party Service Providers

The District has entered into a third party agreement with The Great Lakes Equity Center, the Region V Equity Assistance Center at Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis. The Great Lakes Equity Center is one of the ten regional Equity Assistance Centers funded by the U.S. Department of Education. They provide technical assistance, resources, and professional learning opportunities related to equity, civil rights, and systemic school reform throughout a six-state region of Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, and Wisconsin. The Equity Center supports the District's outcomes in establishing equity-oriented policies and practices aimed at eliminating bullying and harassment based on race within the district. In 2013-14 the Equity Center provided consultation in rewriting District Policies, helped develop training on harassment and bullying for our administrative, certified and classified staff, conducted monthly consultation calls with the District Non-Discrimination Coordinators, and scheduled a series of site visits.

The Center and the District determined that additional data collection and analyses would be useful in informing the District's actions, as well as the Center's

support in this regard. Therefore, the Center and the District scheduled a series of site visits over two consecutive weeks in January, 2014, purposed to examine contexts and cultures of selected schools through individual and focus group interviews and site walk-throughs in order to inform the District's efforts in eradicating bullying and harassment. The primary role of Center staff was to gain insight that would strengthen the Center's effectiveness as a critical friend. The limited nature of data collection in terms of frequency and duration of visits, as well as participant pool size limit the generalizability of findings. The findings warrant preliminary recommendations for areas of concern, along with commendations regarding promising practices for additional development and/or expansion to other contexts within the District. The Center provided a detailed summary of the visit. (Exhibit A)

Policies and Procedures

The District reviewed and revised the following policies:
Board Policy 2260- Nondiscrimination and Access to Equal Educational Opportunity
Board Policy 5136- Wireless Communication Devices
Board Policy 5516- Hazing
Board Policy 5517- Anti-Harassment
Board Policy 5517.01- Bullying
Board Policy 8400- School Safety

The District Non-Discrimination Coordinators researched model policies of other districts around the country. The policies were rewritten and submitted to the Department of Justice for input and approval. The District received final approval from the Department of Justice on May 8, 2014. The policies were reviewed by the District's attorney and sent to the School Board for final approval. The Board conducted two readings of the policies in open meetings on June 3, 2014 and July 15, 2014. The Board gave final approval on July 15, 2014. The District posted the anti-harassment, bullying, and non-discrimination policies on the District website in Spanish and English. (Exhibit B)

The District Non-Discrimination Coordinators also developed administrative guidelines for the anti-harassment, bullying, and non-discrimination policies. (Exhibit C) The complaint, investigation and appeal procedures are outlined in these guidelines. An effort was made to ensure these procedures were uniform and consistent throughout the policies and process.

The sections in the student handbooks addressing code of conduct that related to bullying/harassment were rewritten to reflect the language and definitions in the policies. The reporting and investigation procedures are also included in the student handbooks. (Exhibit D)

The Superintendent appointed a District Nondiscrimination Coordinator for the District on April 1, 2013. The District Nondiscrimination Coordinator ensures and monitors compliance with the Department of Justice memorandum of agreement; coordinates the District's submission of reports to the United States; ensures consistency of all District-wide and school-level policies, regulation, procedures, trainings, and related materials regarding nondiscrimination, harassment, and bullying; provide and publicize updated information on a periodic basis to all administrators, faculty, staff, students, and parent/guardians on the District's policies, regulations, procedures, practices, training, and related materials, and ensure that all public materials are up-to date; and monitor District-level and school-level responses to complaints of harassment based on race, color, national origin, sex, religion, and disability (including incidents of bullying, hazing, and similar conduct that is based on those classifications.)

The District Superintendent also appointed building level Non-Discrimination Coordinators at each building on April 1, 2013. The School Nondiscrimination Coordinator serves as the primary point of contact for, and coordinates the school-level investigation and response to, all complaints of bullying, harassment, and discrimination. Each School Nondiscrimination Coordinator provides quarterly written reports to the District Nondiscrimination Coordinator describing all incidents of and/or complains received by the school regarding bullying and harassment, and a description of the school's response to each such incident or complaint.

(Exhibit E and F)

Tracking and Monitoring Bullying and Harassment Incidents and Complaints

The District has implemented an online reporting system on the District website, www.msddecatur.k12.in.us. The link to the reporting form can be found on the District webpage and also on each individual building webpage. An individual who believes a student has been or is the victim of discrimination, bullying, harassment, hazing, or similar conduct can file a complaint on the electronic complaint form. A written or verbal report can also be filed with the building Nondiscrimination coordinator. Complaints may also be made anonymously. If the Nondiscrimination Coordinator receives a written or verbal report, it is entered into the online system for consistency and record keeping. All incidents of bullying and harassment of which the district knows will be recorded and investigated. (Exhibit G, H, I)

Training and Professional Development

During the 2013-14 school year, the District developed and provided mandatory training on bullying and harassment for all District-level and school-level personnel who handle bullying and harassment prevention, complaints, and response specifically including: District-level and school-level administrators, counselors and

social workers, school safety personnel, and the District Nondiscrimination Coordinator and School Nondiscrimination Coordinators. The training included the types of conduct constituting harassment, including examples of harassment based on race, color, national origin, sex, religion, and disability. The impact on school climate was discussed as was the harms resulting from such conduct. The District's responsibilities under Federal law were outlined and consequences of neglecting the duty to investigate, intervene and support were explored. The District-level and school level Nondiscrimination Coordinators were identified and made available to answer questions.

After the initial training of the District-level and school-level personnel who handle bullying and harassment prevention, complaints, and response, all staff at both DCHS and Gold Academy who regularly interact with students at any grade level received the training outlined above.
(Exhibits J and K)

Our intention was to provide at least one training to all students at DCHS and Gold Academy on harassment/ bullying and the impact of harassment/bullying on the education environment and to discuss policies and procedures for reporting. However, with the delay in getting the new policies and procedures approved, we failed to have the training with the students. We are in the process of developing training on harassment and bullying for the DCHS students and age appropriate instruction to all students on harassment at the Gold Academy for the 2014-15 school year.

School Climate Assessments

A climate assessment will be administered to all staff and students at DCHS and the Gold Academy this fall. The instrument we have chosen to use is the California Healthy Kids Survey. The survey is the largest survey of resiliency, protective factors, and risk behaviors in the nation, and is frequently cited by policymakers and the media as a critical component of school improvement efforts to help guide the development of more effective health, prevention, and youth development programs. The California School Climate Survey, and its companion the California Healthy Kids Survey, provides a venue for students to express how they really feel about their school experience and their classroom environment. The California School Climate survey is one of the most comprehensive and validated data systems in the nation for assessing factors associated with student success in school, career, and life. These surveys will provide our teachers and administrators the critical data needed to create positive learning environments in our schools and hopefully eradicate any form of bullying and harassing behaviors that may exist.

The main focus of the staff survey is the assessment of the perceptions of teachers, administrators, and other school personnel related to the learning environment and supports, academic achievement, and school improvement.

The survey will be given online with a Spanish and English version. (Exhibit L)

DISTRICT REVIEW AND ASSESSMENT

Third-Party Service Providers

The District will continue its partnership with the Great Lakes Equity Center. We renewed our MOU with the Center on April 7, 2014. We schedule phone conferences monthly and also meet face to face when additional support is needed. (Exhibit M)

Policies and Procedures

Parents

With our policies in place, they will now become the focal point of our mission to eradicate bullying and harassment in our schools. The District Nondiscrimination Coordinator with the School Nondiscrimination Coordinators will present the new policies to our students, parents and staff. The policies will be presented to parents on site at each PTO (Parent/Teacher Organization) meeting this fall. The reporting and investigation procedure will be discussed and explained in detail. The presentations will include a demonstration of the website and how to access the online reporting system.

Each school will publish the following in their school newsletters:
"It is the School Board's commitment to provide a safe, positive, productive and nurturing educational environment for all of its students. Any individual who believes a student has been or is the victim of discrimination, bullying, or harassment should report the situation to the building principal or designee or complete the School District's Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying report form, which is available online at www.msddecatur.k12.in.us."

The bullying, harassment and nondiscrimination policies and procedures, reporting system, and contact information for the District Nondiscrimination Coordinators and School Nondiscrimination Coordinators are posted on the District website in Spanish and English. Future training dates and training materials will also be posted.

Nondiscrimination Coordinators/ Tracking and Monitoring

The building nondiscrimination coordinators received training last year on bullying and harassment (see Exhibit J). When asked the question, "What impact, if any, did the bullying/harassment training have on your practice as an administrator", some of the responses were:

"The training had a great deal of impact on me as an administrator, because as a whole we use the terminology inaccurately and this helped clarify the true meaning and differences between bullying, harassment."

“I am more concrete and specific in my documentation which helps me solve issues more efficiently and help protect students, families and my district.”

“The training provided me more insight into the behaviors and actions of students within the school setting and how to address these incidents in a supportive and consistent manner.”

“I felt like I was given a solid knowledge-base regarding bullying and harassment, but the training supported me in being more aware in identifying specific situations as well as my investigation procedures.

The theme surrounding all comments by the staff center around awareness of the differences between harassment and bullying and the support it gave them in identifying and investigating complaints. While reviewing the complaints and the nondiscrimination coordinator reports, I noticed the attention given to discriminating between bullying and harassment. I do not believe that has been happening in the past because our staff did not know the difference between bullying and harassment. They were using the terms synonymously. Because of the training, they now have a clear understanding of the differences between bullying and harassment and I believe they are correctly investigating, identifying, and documenting the complaints.

District Nondiscrimination Coordinator Report

School	# of incidents		Harassment	Bullying	Other
School	Number of Students	# of incidents	Harassment	Bullying	Other
High School	1799	23	6	8	9
Middle School	914	12	4	7	1
Gold Academy	586	7	4	0	3
Blue Academy	624	3	1		2
Stephen Decatur	544	1			1
West Newton	557	4	4		
Valley Mills	561	1			1
Liberty K Center	469	1		1	

These numbers reflect the reports from March 1, 2014-June 5, 2014.

Incidents of Harassment

	Race/color	Sex/gender	Disability	Religion	Language	National Origin
High School	2	3	1			
Gold Acad.		4				

2013-2014 was a transitional year for the MSD of Decatur Township. Reviewing and rewriting our policies on bullying and harassment proved challenging. However, on July 15, 2014, our Board of Education approved our revised policies. Beginning December 10, 2013, we began training our staff on the definitions and differences between bullying and Harassment. Our School Non Discrimination Coordinators began to diligently investigate, identify, and intervene in bullying and harassment complaints. The School Nondiscrimination Coordinators submitted their quarterly report to the District Nondiscrimination Coordinator on June 30, 2014. (Exhibit F) After reviewing the complaints, it is obvious we have had incidents of bullying and harassment. This initial data does not tell us how pervasive the problem is. On the surface, the problem seems minimal. However, one incident is too many. How many incidents are not reported for various reasons? We have just begun our efforts to gather all data possible in an effort to determine the extent of the problem and what steps we need to take to solve the problem. The student climate survey we are administering this fall will be the key to providing us with the data to put a corrective action plan in place. Learning can only occur in a safe, nurturing environment. The MSD of Decatur Township is committed to embracing this initiative in an effort to keep all of our students safe.

I have reviewed the procedures the school nondiscrimination coordinators have been using. It is obvious from the investigation notes and documentation that everyone has devised their own process to document the investigation. There is a need for a uniform procedure. We have created an electronic form that will serve to document all information given and obtained during the process of reporting, investigating and follow-up of a discrimination, harassment, or bullying complaint. (Exhibit N)

The School Nondiscrimination Coordinators met on July 21, 2014, with the District Nondiscrimination Coordinator to discuss implementing the new policies and procedures for the 2014-2015 school year. (Exhibit O) The School Nondiscrimination Coordinators were given the dates to submit their quarterly Nondiscrimination Coordinator reports to the District Nondiscrimination Coordinator. The Coordinators were reminded that all verbal or written reports should also be documented on the Google Docs online system for consistent tracking purposes.

Training and Professional Development

Professional Staff Training

The District Nondiscrimination Coordinator will provide training again this year to the District-level and school-level administrators, counselors and social workers, school safety personnel, and staff at DCHS and Gold Academy. The training will review all aspects of last year's training with an additional focus on investigation procedures and interventions.

Based on the Equity Center's site visit recommendations, (Exhibit A), the District will provide cultural competency training for the administration and staff at DCHS and the Gold Academy. The District will contract with a third party service provider to conduct this training.

The District implemented Culturally Responsive PBIS at DCHS last year and will implement the program at the Gold Academy this school year. Culturally Responsive PBIS Indiana is a systems approach for establishing the social culture and individualized supports needed for all students to achieve both social and academic success by integrating issues of race, ethnicity, and culture. It's the integration of culturally responsive practice within the evidence-based school-wide PBS framework. PBIS (Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports) supports the staff and students in developing culturally responsive school-wide positive behavior interventions and supports while also mirroring expectations of identifying bullying or harassment immediately in order to provide a safe learning environment for all students. Rather than focusing on students as "the problem", we look at expected behaviors and set the path in developing a multi-component plan to change actions of staff first in order to support the expected behaviors in students. The program is a 3 year training for staff which enables an intense focus on teaching students about expected behaviors by clarifying, teaching, and acknowledging expected behavior, preventing problem behavior by changing suspected contributing contexts, and responding to problem behavior more effectively. The implementation of PBIS at DCHS and the Gold Academy is a key component of our mission to eradicate bullying and harassment in our District.

Student Training

We are developing a student- training program that will teach students the types of conduct that constitute harassment and bullying. We will focus on the impact that bullying and harassment have on the educational environment with an emphasis on respecting the diversity of the student body. The training will be conducted during STAR class. (Exhibit O)

Decatur Central High School has an advisor/advisee program (STAR) to help its students become successful not only during their high school years but be prepared for their post-secondary future. The program meets during the school day for thirty minutes a day four days a week. It partners a teacher and approximately twenty students for their four years of high school. During these four years, the advisor will help the student with career and college choices, character education, and help them develop a four-year plan. The program also uses Naviance, a web-based program, to help the students and parents with post-secondary decisions. With the STAR program, there has been an increase in communication with all stakeholders and an effort to see that our students meet their potential. The STAR program is the perfect venue to deliver the training to students because the relationships of trust and caring have been established with the students.

The student training will begin with a lesson during STAR that introduces the policies and procedures for reporting harassment and bullying to school officials. (Exhibit Q)

We are developing age appropriate student training for the Gold Academy. The primary children grades 1-2 will be given teacher directed lessons on “Accepting the Uniqueness of Each Person, what constitutes a good friend, and bullying prevention lessons for lunch time and the playground, which seems to be the “hot spots” for bullying and harassment. The students in grades 3-6 will be shown a power point presentation by their teachers that defines bullying and harassment and discusses prevention and reporting.

School Climate Assessments

The Superintendent meets monthly with a group at DCHS students called Student Voice. This group consists of 25-30 high schools students from the high school communities during lunch for an hour and over a catered lunch great conversation ensues. This group has been meeting for many years and provides excellent feedback for the Superintendent. Student Voice also gives student representatives at each grade level and from each small learning community the opportunity to have a direct line of communication with the Superintendent on important issues concerning DCHS. The new policies and reporting system will be discussed with the students during Student Voice. The Superintendent will be able to assess over the coming year how the policies and procedures are impacting the school climate.

The Equity Center conducted a site visit at DCHS and the Gold Academy on January 23, 2014. Recommendations for DCHS and Gold Academy were:

1. to review policies and practices that allow DCHS students to operate without direct adult supervision for extended amounts of time and consider establishing and/or adjusting structures and practices that will allow students independence while ensuring student safety.
2. Address parent concerns about DCHS lunchtime procedures and/or cafeteria logistics to determine where some areas for improvement might reside.
3. The district prioritizes establishment of reporting procedures that allow anonymity for individuals filing complains.
4. Ensure that all teachers, students, and parents know and understand the Code of Student Conduct.
5. Recommends that the District undertake sustained professional learning with intended outcomes to increase cultural competence among employees.

The following structures and policies have been put in place for next year to try and address some of the concerns documented in the site visit report.

1. Students assigned to afternoon courses through the Ivy Tech Program will have a designated adult/classroom assigned on their off days to address unsupervised movement. They will be given an ID or information card to carry to identify their assignment, including students on early release.
2. We will have more assigned personnel in lunch and entry/exit times in high traffic areas.
3. We have established an online reporting system where anyone can report anonymously.
4. We will use our STAR period this year on several designated days to increase awareness of these issues for both students and staff.
5. Teachers will review the code of conduct in every classroom. The code of conduct is communicated to parents through the student handbooks which are distributed to the students and posted on the District website.
6. Cultural Competency training will be provided to all staff at DCHS and Gold Academy during the 2014-2015 school year.

Moving forward, we will try to diminish and hopefully eliminate concerns related to safety/harassment by creating structures that promote proactive communication and heightened supervision expectations, working toward preventing these situations rather than managing them.

The final piece of our culture assessment will be the student surveys. The student climate survey will be given at DCHS and Gold Academy in October 2014. We will use the data from the surveys to pinpoint where we need to devote our resources in order to prevent the occurrences of bullying and harassment.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the MSD of Decatur Township has worked diligently this year to revise policies, train staff, and streamline procedures concerning bullying and harassment. Our policies and procedures are in place and will be disseminated to all stakeholders throughout the District via the District website, District and individual school meetings, school or District newsletters, etc. We now have an electronic reporting system located on the District website that can be accessed by anyone to report incidences of bullying, intimidation and harassment. The reports can also be made anonymously online. Before the training, our staff was using the term bullying and harassment synonymously. After the training, all staff can now identify and differentiate between bullying and harassment. When reviewing the investigation procedures and notes, it was obvious that we had no clear procedures and protocols in place. With our new electronic investigation tool, all procedures are uniform and consistent when reporting and investigating. We are currently collaborating with the Equity Center on staff and student training to be delivered in the first semester. We have purchased an online climate survey for DCHS and Gold Academy that will be instrumental in guiding future staff and student training. We are committed at the MSD of Decatur Township to eradicate bullying and harassment in our District.

2013-2014 Annual Review Summary Exhibits

- Exhibit A Equity Center Site Visit Report
- Exhibit B Revised Policies in English and Spanish
- Exhibit C Administrative Guidelines
- Exhibit D Student Handbooks
- Exhibit E List of District and School Nondiscrimination Coordinators
- Exhibit F School Nondiscrimination Coordinator Reports
- Exhibit G Bullying/Harassment Complaint Form
- Exhibit H Copies of all complaints
- Exhibit I Copies of example complaints with investigation notes
- Exhibit J Training materials
- Exhibit K Sign in sheets with dates of training.
- Exhibit L Student Surveys for DCHS and Gold Academy
- Exhibit M Equity Center MOU
- Exhibit N Electronic Investigation Tool
- Exhibit O Nondiscrimination Coordinator meeting agenda and attendance
- Exhibit P Description of STAR
- Exhibit Q Student Training

