

KILLEEN ISD Disciplinary Alternative Education Program (DAEP) Task Force EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

In the Fall of 2012, Dr. Robert Muller, Superintendent of Killeen Independent School District (KISD) formed the Disciplinary Alternative Education Program (DAEP) Task Force. This task force, appointed by the Superintendent, consisted of nine community citizens who were charged with providing recommendations to the superintendent on ways to address and correct the over-representation of African American male students in the DAEP system.

APPROACH

Task force members met bi-weekly from October 2012 – June 2013. Specific information gathered and evaluated included DAEP staff, parent, and student interviews; KISD demographic and discipline data; overall KISD best-practices; State of Texas school disciplinary guidelines; and state and national education and alternative education program research, trends and practices.

FINDINGS

In accordance with the Killeen ISD's mission to 'teach to maximize student's potential', the task force supports KISD's efforts to provide a district alternative education program (DAEP). Furthermore, the task force recognizes that all stakeholders: students, parents, teachers, administrators and the community each play a key role in impacting the disproportion number of African American male students in the KISD DAEP program. The task force focused on providing immediate impact within the KISD sphere of influence, specifically with students, teachers and administrators.

RECOMMENDATIONS

See attachment

FURTHER CONSIDERATIONS

At an appropriate time in the future, the data correlations with campus leadership, DAEP referring teacher accountability, individual school trends of the DAEP and student populations and performance should further be explored.

ATTACHMENT:

RECOMMENDATIONS
KILLEEN ISD Discipline Alternative Education Program (DAEP) Task Force

The recommendations of the Task Force are:

- 1. Require campuses to stand up intervention teams to review and recommend strategies and interventions for students who are at risk for DAEP placement based on code 21, persistent misconduct. Additionally, require staff to communicate with parents regularly regarding these students.**
- 2. Create a DAEP post-graduate training program to prevent recidivism. It should include parents where possible and certainly should include students that are repeat offenders. The main focus should be to train students to become better and to avoid recidivism.**
- 3. Require cultural diversity training to address educating and building relationships with children with various ethnic and racial backgrounds. Also, establish strong teacher classroom management and set expectations of such.**

KILLEEN ISD DAEP TASK FORCE STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES ON DISCIPLINE

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

The Killeen Independent School District DAEP Task Force has been constituted to examine the Disciplinary Alternative Education Program (DAEP) of Killeen ISD and to offer recommendations to the superintendent to address and correct ***the over-representation of African American boys in the DAEP system***. The task force was comprised of community representatives and was challenged to work in a collaborative and impartial manner to determine what the problem is in the DAEP system, to assess what is causing the persistent problem, and to create a set of recommendations which, upon approval of the superintendent and staff, can be implemented to correct the problem.

The task force has undertaken several critical steps to carry out their assignment. It has examined discipline data, conducted interviews with DAEP staff, students, and parents, interviewed sending school staff including principals and teachers, conducted individual explorative activities and made reports to the entire task force, examined research on what works around the state and the nation, and looked into what is occurring in the district to determine what is working and showing positive results to determine what current programs and activities might be expanded for implementation across the district.

The task force has also undertaken other activities to ensure that they:

1. Operate in a coherent and uniformed way as a group;
2. Reflect a common point of view as a basis for any recommendations it may offer;
3. Reach some common stated agreement about what is desirable regarding behavior, personal responsibility, and the use of a “moral/ethical” compass to guide interaction in a public place like school;
4. Lay an appropriate foundation for shifting the systemic regularities which have produced a persistent over-representation of minority boys in the DAEP to a new and improved set of systemic operations that will lead to a different and more desirable set of outcomes for the DAEP.

A COMMENT ON THE NEED

The DAEP has been established as a way to remove students who have committed infractions on a home campus that are severe enough to potentially effect the learning environment of that school. When a student is removed from the home campus and placed in the DAEP, instruction continues for that student. Additionally, the student is provided with an array of social/emotional/behavioral training in how to be successful when they return to the home campus. The purpose of the alternative discipline program is to provide students with an

alternative to the home campus setting, continue their academic progress and provide behavior modification/skill development in order that students can achieve long-term success in school.

The task force agreed that there is a legitimate need for a DAEP system in the district, it also agreed that the DAEP system:

1. Should continue a rigorous system of teaching and learning so that students temporarily assigned to the DAEP do not miss out on the benefit of a sound educational experience because of their misbehavior;
2. Should provide assigned students with life skills development so that they will acquire skills necessary to prevent their return to the DAEP;
3. Should be a part of a larger system of discipline within the district that is built upon teaching all students personal responsibility, accountability, and acceptance of the consequences for one's actions;
4. Should assist students in learning to make good and appropriate choices and to exercise the right options to ensure their school success with the right supports, resources, and assistance necessary to create the desired results.

A COMMENT ON THE VALUES AND BELIEFS ABOUT DISCIPLINE

The task force has taken these stances about the DAEP based upon a set of **values** which represent a set of beliefs they agree should be at the base of any sound approach to discipline as well as at the base of how people should behave and interact with each other in places like the public schools of KISD. Those values and their accompanying operating principles are:

1. Civility in interactions with others

- Expect civility from both teachers and students
- Have discussions about what it means to be civil
- Listen to what is being said
- Respect others
- Tolerate divergent opinions
- Avoid bias (race, religion, ethnic group)
- Avoid partisan advocacy

2. Integrity in conduct

- Modeling how to acknowledge when you are wrong
- Discussing with students the consequences of a lack of integrity
- Discuss with students what "ethics" is
- Being trustworthy and keeping promises
- Accountability to oneself and others
- Being true to oneself

3. Accountability for one's actions and a moral compass for assessing the conduct of others.

Adults modeling proper behavior, goal setting, and 'trying'

Soliciting ideas from students on simple examples of accountability such as punctuality

Develop effective, appropriate, caring relationships with students

4. Openness – a willingness to acknowledge and explore strengths and improvement opportunities

Development of school as a "safe" place for freedom of expression and a place characterized by trust

5. Empowerment – encouraging one another to make right decisions with support, resources, and motivation

Develop staff's ability to incentivize students for exercising good behavior/judgment

6. Resilience – the ability to succeed despite adversity

Resilience is very important to student well-being.

Resilience can be developed in students.

7. Diversity – open to other cultures, communication and personal relationships

All persons can and should become more aware of the cultural diversity that is present in the school district.

All persons should have opportunities to reflect on how cultural diversity impacts individuals.

8. Use and assessment of behavioral norms to govern/assess the DAEP

Is it fair to all concerned?

Will it build goodwill and better friendships?

Is it the truth?

Will it be beneficial to all concerned?

INDIVIDUAL CONTRIBUTIONS FOR THOUGHT AND ACTION

Over time, various task force members have offered individual statements that have generally been embraced by the entire group as viable considerations about discipline, the DAEP system, and matters that should guide the overall work.

Paraphrasing one member, it was observed that there are young people who need a clear vision of what success looks like and also need to build self-confidence through succeeding in difficult challenges. Vision of success eludes many “at-risk kids.” They simply cannot see over the horizon of today. They see no future that is different from their current experience. They do not know or understand the expectations of success in the present, never mind tomorrow.

These students have not had the thrill of achieving success resulting from their own efforts. All learners seek recognition. However, when they have no achievement to which they can point, peer entanglements or simply acting up to receive attention take the place of recognition based on their own success.

. . . They, of course, need structure. [We can work] with existing DAEP attendees to mitigate their future behavior.

Another member noted that we must strive to imbue our people with a vision of a path that leads to moral and ethical choices. The more simple and direct the path, the greater will be our success potential. This path was created when mankind received the Ten Commandments. These requirements need to be brought into the 21st century.

In the 1930s, Herbert J. Taylor . . . created a test for the ethical climate of his company (Club Aluminum Products) – a simple, easily remembered guide to “right conduct”; an ethical yardstick. The result was a four-question test:

1. Is it the truth?
2. Is it fair to all concerned?
3. Will it build goodwill and better friendships?
4. Will it be beneficial to all concerned?

These twenty-four words that guide the actions of leaders around the world can give our students an awareness of what constitutes [appropriate behavior and conduct].

CLOSING

In closing, it is this body of work described above that underlies the work of the DAEP Task Force. The process has neither been perfect, easy, nor uncomplicated. However, the task force members, to a person, have been committed to working as hard as possible, “not to do a wrong thing,” as one task force member so eloquently and compassionately put it. The values and

beliefs presented above as well as the individual and collective thoughtful contributions of individual group members have led to the recommendations and the theory of action that follow in this document.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Require campuses to stand up intervention teams to review and recommend strategies and interventions for students who are at risk for DAEP placement based on code 21, persistent misconduct. Additionally, require staff to communicate with parents regularly regarding these students. Advantages are that it will establish and define a definite number of incidences that trigger intervention and then interventions can be individualized to fit the student. Also, academic interventions are already in place making for an easy transition to behavioral interventions. Furthermore, a state-wide intervention model already exists. Finally, interventions can be monitored via automation creating an additional checks and balance as the Hearing Officer monitors and reviews the interventions before making determination on DAEP placement. Strategies for implementing this include, developing a flow chart for activation of the intervention team and intervention process, establishing district-wide expectations and standards for all campuses, providing professional development on activation of intervention team on each campus, revising SCOC to align with new procedures resulting from activation of intervention teams, developing a list of interventions supported by the district, developing appropriate monitoring and evaluation processes at the campus and district levels, and establishing a bi-annual DAEP Task Force review requirement.

2. Create a DAEP post-graduate training program to prevent recidivism. It should include parents where possible and certainly should include students that are repeat offenders. The main focus should be to train students to become better and to avoid recidivism. Use challenging events like “ROPES”, and the Army NCO Academy’s Leadership course. Also, expand programs like AVID, Student-to-Student, and Early Act; First Knight, and possibly add programs like Peers Making Peace (PMP) and others from paxUnited. Additionally, adopt programs on resilience and coping to teach students how to handle the difficult things in life. Advantages of this recommendation are that recidivism is greatly reduced resulting in reduced overall cost of DAEP. Using students that are repeat offenders in the post-graduate training program as ambassadors will likely help other kids stay out of DAEP by their testimony. Additionally, this will help students learn situational appropriate behavior. Also since parents are included, this will bring the family unit together and involve parents in helping to build their children’s success. Finally, this post-graduate training program offers an opportunity to pilot WhyTry locally in a controlled setting. The main disadvantages of creating a DAEP post-graduate training program are allotting the time and resources needed to adequately implement and run the program, and gaining acceptance and support of newly adopted innovative programs such as WhyTry. Strategies for implementing include creating transition teams to help reintegrate students into their home campuses, implementing a robust counseling and support component of the DAEP, establishing a mechanism by which students receive full rights and privileges to the extent practicable for successful completion of the program, conducting professional

development to implement the WhyTry program and piloting WhyTry in the DAEP, and on one non-DAEP campus if possible, and monitoring the post-graduate program from central office.

3. Require cultural diversity training to address educating and building relationships with children with various ethnic and racial backgrounds. Also, establish strong teacher classroom management and set expectations of such. The advantages of cultural diversity training and improved classroom management are that it is proactive prevention, it helps build relationships between teachers and students, and it's fairly easy to implement because the district has access to diversity training through the Intercultural Development Research Association (IDRA), or III Corps EO. The only disadvantages of this are finding the time to devote to the necessary training, and remuneration. Strategies for implementing this include, creating a professional development training plan for cultural diversity and classroom management and seeking out the highest quality training, establishing annual training and other on-going support, requiring professional development in this area be annotated on teacher evaluations and adapting current teacher evaluations to ensure the inclusion of cultural diversity and classroom management training.