

NOTES
OF THE WALTON CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
SHARED DECISION MAKING COMMITTEE
OCTOBER 22, 2015

PRESENT: Roger B. Clough, Mitchell Reed, T. Gregory Dale, Robert Knuschke, Mike Snider, Mark Lamoreaux, Katelyn Minde, Christina Hewitt, Jennifer Wright, Thomas Maxwell, Jodie Day, Lori Cetta, Chad Hall,

GUESTS: Frank Ward, Ed Snow, Joyce Bishop, Marilyn Lewis, Kathleen Meyers, Lori Connolly, Justin Preston, Nina Pfeffer, Deborah Liddle, Beth Howland, Richard Algie

ABSENT: Kelly Gates, Eric Scofield, Mary Phraner, Maureen Babcock

The meeting was called to order at 6:01 pm by Roger B. Clough, Superintendent of Schools.

Mr. Clough noted that the committee was meeting to hear a presentation about discipline, as was requested at the last meeting

Mr. Clough noted that 12 persons who had voiced concerns about discipline were invited as guests, and 5 of them were in the audience.

Mr. Clough first shared 26 programs that were in place to help students, including in-school programs such as anti-bullying and anti-violence programs; academic programs such as CTE programs, life skills programs, and summer school; school resources such as school psychologists and counselors; and external providers such as the County Department of Social Service and the County PINS (Persons in Need of Supervision) program.

Next, Mr. Snider, Townsend Elementary School Principal, discussed the discipline program at Townsend Elementary.

He first mentioned that they were dealing with elementary school students, which required a different approach than older students. Staff needed to be patient, consistent, and fair; and concentrate on educating children to help them build better relationships, improve their social and emotional development, increase their self-control; and help children to develop an ability to manage conflicts.

Mr. Snider then outlined the forms of discipline at Townsend. They included interventions in the classroom, such as conversations with students and timeouts; and interventions by the principal, such as phone calls to parents, working with counselors, detention, and suspension.

A written description of the Middle and High School Progressive Discipline Plan (attached) was presented to the committee at this point in time.

Mark Lamoreaux, the Assistant Principal at the Middle School and High School, then outlined the discipline system at the Middle School. He first indicated that new approaches had resulted in fewer incidents of discipline at the Middle School. He then walked through the progressive discipline system at the Middle School, which begins with warnings and then moves up to lunch detentions, after school detention, in school suspension, and out of school suspension.

Mr. Knuschke, the principal at the Middle School and High School, then outlined the discipline system at the High School. Mr. Knuschke noted that the total number of incidents of discipline had been reduced by new approaches. Mr. Knuschke attributed this reduction to better communication with staff about their discipline duties, staff having a stronger presence in the halls, and more consistency in upholding district rules and policies. He also mentioned that a new curriculum coordinator had allowed the principals to shift some of their focus from curriculum issues to discipline issues. He also mentioned a new emphasis on dealing with county social service agencies. He also spoke about the more concentrated efforts to use PBIS (Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports), a system of using data and feedback to continuously improve discipline in the building, as a contributing factor in improving discipline. He also spoke about the positive impact of the AVP (Alternatives to Violence Project), an educational program that had been implemented throughout the school district over the last few years.

The committee next heard from the school counselors about their role in the schools. Mrs. Howland at the Elementary School, Ms. Liddle at the Middle School, Mrs. Pfeffer and Mr. Preston at the High School all presented about their roles.

They first mentioned that school counselors are no longer simply “guidance counselors”. They provide assistance in the personal and social development of students, academic success, career awareness, and goal setting for the students. They support the entire community, and provide consulting, counseling, curriculum, and coordination to assist in the development of students. They also act as “catch-alls” to help with other issues that may not be addressed by other persons or services within the district.

PowerPoint presentations accompanied these presentations, and copies of them will be attached to the minutes.

Mr. Clough then opened the discussion up to members of the committee. Mrs. Howland elaborated on the AVP program.

Mr. Clough then commented that the presentation perhaps had not adequately discussed the important role of the teachers in their classrooms as a resource to deal with discipline issues. Their abilities and efforts can have more of a positive effect on the students and student discipline than all of the other efforts combined.

Questions were then taken from the guests.

Mrs. Lewis asked how children got involved in the AVP program. The answer was that all children are involved at the lower grade levels, and students sign up to participate at the higher grade levels.

Mrs. Bishop asked if students go to college fairs. The answer was that students attend college fairs in Oneonta and Delhi, and that many colleges visit the school, as well.

Mrs. Connolly then asked how she could get on to the Building Leadership Team. She was asked to contact Mr. Knuschke about this.

The meeting adjourned at 6:57 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

T. Gregory Dale