



APPROVED BY THE BOARD OCTOBER 13, 2016

BURLINGTON BOARD OF SCHOOL COMMISSIONERS
DIVERSITY & EQUITY COMMITTEE MINUTES

October 4, 2016

Ira Allen Board Room

Committee Attendance: Chair Stephanie Seguino, Lauren Berrizbietia, Miriam Stoll, Brian Cina, Kat Kleman

Board Attendance: Kathy Olwell, Liz Curry

Admin/District Staff: Superintendent Yaw Obeng, Nikki Fuller, Hal Colston, Rebecca Haslam, Henri Sparks, Karyn Vogel

Public: Jason Lawson (Burlington Police Department SRO Liaison), Lisa Bedinger, Lance Smith

1. The meeting was called to order at 7:30 p.m.
2. Approval of Agenda
 - A. Cina/Kleman moved the agenda
Approved unanimously
3. Public Comments/Questions
 - A. Comments/Questions from the Public

None
4. Review of Report from BPD as per MOU that requires a report twice a year on SRO activities in our Schools

Lt. Lawson updated the committee on SRO activities in the schools.

- A) Calls for service: 296 calls in one year. Calls for Service are any call that's recorded by the officer at the physical address of the school – BPD uses school as a geographic identifier for stops that may not have anything to do with the District/a student/etc. This means the data are not strictly a record of SRO activities in the school, and more work will need to be done to extract more precise data from the BPD's data system.

- B) Time of Day Heat Map – identifies day/time for most activity. Lawson indicated that based on his experience, lunch time is when more incidents happen; Tuesdays may tend to capture spill over tensions from weekend after kids hold it together on Monday. Heat maps can be to assign police officers. Data can also be shared with school for planning purposes.
- C) Disorderly conduct: The Superintendent asked for examples of disorderly conduct. Disorderly conduct is broad criminal charge – any behavior that is violent, loud, boisterous, profane language, causes public disruption/nuisance; e.g. student acting up and not responding to teacher/instructor's attempts to calm them down.

Sparks clarified that 99% of disorderly conduct in District is for students that will not respond to instructors' attempts to reduce what they perceive to be physically threatening behavior.

- D) Community outreach – SROs or officers making non-criminally related, non-disciplinary engagement for civics, bike safety, etc. Relationship building activities in schools
- E) Weapon offenses – anything being used as a weapon; mainly this refers to pocket knives & air soft guns.

Committee members asked if these were in pockets or being used? SROs are seeing them used but in many cases a student might come in from the Tech Center and has knife in holder in belt and forgot to take off. Education about weapons has been consistent enough that there is close to zero tolerance, but officers evaluate every incident individually about intent.

Committee question about unlawful restraint – any situation where someone is held against their will.

Committee reflected that the arrest data was of deep concern based on anecdotal reports from students reporting that once they have been arrested, there tends to be a pattern of them being targeted.

Committee requested that the BPD provide a glossary with meanings for categories so Committee can interpret data.

Committee asked for the students involved in the 29 recorded arrests, how many are now in the criminal justice system data base? Lawson explained once a child was arrested, there is a name jacket created for the child.

Additional committee and staff comments:

District needs to do training with administrators about handling these situations rather than involving SRO and establish terms and conditions under which administrators or school personnel can call police and request trespass notice. Lawson clarified that the police cannot issue trespass notice without school directive to issue this.

Selecting SROs – school personnel are involved in selection.

Lance Smith – public

Researcher at UVM in implicit bias commented that data does not correctly reflect racial disparities and cleaner data is needed.

Question about whether/how SROs know about hidden disabilities, e.g. language barriers, developmental disabilities, etc. SROs try to get to know the kids as much as possible so that they can use the best resources before getting involved in a situation/incident.

Committee asked about de-escalation training – BPD was one of 6 nationally that did training recently and are actively highlighting this on-going effort and eager to bring more training to Burlington for the force.

Superintendent Obeng commented that this new partnership is encouraging – drilling down into data is challenge for District as well as BPD. District staff training is critical so that District isn't calling police unnecessarily.

Reorganizing Equity Team around Safe & Inclusive Schools to strengthen training in order to support students and prevent SRO involvement through keeping them in instructional time; preventing out of classroom time. Strategic, equity and restorative practices plans will all reflect this effort.

Wrap up – Committee still has thinking to do about additional data, Committee's reflection on how Board and public can be helpful. Lt. Lawson requested that any specific data requests be sent to Henri Sparks.

5. Research & Data Team for Equity and Restorative Practices

Karyn Vogel introduced the team and team members presented their team goals and objectives. UVM counseling & sociology departments are partners on the project to research best practices for data collection, tracking and reporting.

Meeting adjourned at 9:35 p.m. (Cina/Stoll)