

Report
on
Community Developed
Transylvania County
School System
Improvement Plan
July 12, 1993

PREFACE

This document is a report on **PART 1 of The Community Developed Transylvania County School System Improvement Plan** that was presented to the Board of Education on May 3, 1993. It represents the results of discussions between the Community Task Force (which included three teachers) and the Superintendent of Schools and members of the Board of Education.

This document is being presented to the Transylvania County Board of Education for its approval and implementation.

It is noteworthy that an atmosphere of openness and honesty developed during these discussions, such that everyone listened and learned to appreciate the other persons' views and concerns. The Task Force learned of the many actions and plans the school system intended to implement. Representatives of the school system learned of the many concerns that exists in the current system. Some of these concerns would have been addressed in the school system planning process.

Overall it is the consensus of the group that this dialogue and open channel needs to be maintained. The community and school system working together can be an effective partnership, and an appreciation of all cultures is an integral part of the education process.

REPORT ON COMMUNITY DEVELOPED TCSS IMPROVEMENT PLAN

CONCERN #1:

Employ more male and female African-American teachers and an African-American Home School Coordinator

AIMS:

1. Adopt a philosophy to employ minority teachers, support, and auxiliary personnel in the Transylvania County School System (TCSS) that reflect the ratio of minority to non-minority students enrolled by FY 96-97.
2. Consider diversity when hiring new teachers and employees.
3. Employ teachers qualified to teach African-American history. An African-American teacher is preferred but not mandatory. The primary concern is to provide a quality course and a qualified teacher.
4. Study ways to make salaries more competitive. For example, encourage businesses to fund and promote the school system and convince the community to support increased salaries for teachers.
5. Employ a qualified Home School Coordinator. *Cliaison for students having trouble)*
6. Pursue a community - school recruitment program as outlined in the implementation plan.

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN:

1. Develop a recruiting package with assistance from the community that emphasizes the positive aspects of the community, and the region with information that may appeal to singles, couples, and families.
2. Review the whole recruitment process to determine where it could be improved
3. Give prospective employees the option to meet with members of the community so that they can get a better appreciation of the area.
4. Research successful minority recruiting techniques in similar communities.
5. Advertise for teachers in magazines, associations, and other media minorities support.

BENEFIT:

This will establish an exemplary program to promote hiring of a diverse teaching staff, strengthen recruiting and hiring procedures, provide role models and mentors for students, and increase the collaboration between the community and the school system.

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CONCERN #2:

Provide a quality African-American History class that is available to all students and taught by a qualified teacher.

AIMS:

1. Offer a curriculum that is responsive to the needs of all students beginning with the current student population.
2. Develop a curriculum that promotes racial and ethnic harmony from kindergarten through 12th grade.

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN:

1. Revise the current curriculum to integrate the contributions made by African-Americans in American history, Art, Music, Language, Literature, Science, Math, etc. into the course of study. Include an African-American History course in the high school in the FY 93-94 school year.
2. Offer in- service workshops and training to current teachers on African-Americans in history, Art, Music, Language, Literature, Science, Mathematics etc.
3. Search for schools which have cultural programs and request information from colleges, universities and other sources that may be useful to the TCSS.

BENEFIT:

This establishes an exemplary program that teaches an appreciation of different cultures. This will enable our students to function better in the mainstream, develop respect for others and help build self-esteem among Afro-American students.

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CONCERN #3

Implement strict policies that will not permit racial slurs and demeaning behavior by the staff and students.

AIMS:

1. Create policies that address racial slurs and demeaning behavior throughout the school system.
2. Establish a process that addresses any complaints by staff and students.
3. Ensure a satisfactory process for adjudicating the complaint.

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN:

1. Direct the TCSS policy committee to write a policy on racial slurs using the existing policy on sexual harassment as the model.
2. Include the racial slurs policy in the same section as the sexual harassment policy.
3. The task force would like to review the racial slurs policy before the policy committee submits it for final approval.
4. Provide a separate handbook on TCSS policies relating to treatment of individuals and staff within the school community, the complaint process, and the adjudication process.
5. Provide training for all the school staff and Board of Education members on multicultural diversity and sensitize them to the types of behavior that is considered inappropriate.

BENEFIT:

These policies will help ensure that racial slurs and demeaning behavior are not tolerated in this school system.

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CONCERN #4

Establish and publish standards in athletic programs that will ensure equal treatment of students regardless of race, gender or sport played.

AIMS:

1. Implement equal standards for both male and female athletes.
2. Stress and uphold academic standards.
3. Ensure that students receive athletic scholarship information in a timely manner.

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN:

1. Coaches will provide parents and students with copies of inquires from colleges as soon as they are received.
2. Academic standards should be made known to all students, athletes and parents at the beginning of the sports season. The minimum grade should be a C and the student will be allowed a period of probation if the grade drops lower than required. A system should be established to periodically review all grades to ensure athletes are treated justly, and to protect the credibility of the staff.
3. Coaches will provide general athletic scholarship information to all student athletes.
4. Provide selection and evaluation criteria for all students who participate in sports including cheer leading. The cheer leading squad should be reflective of the diversity in the student body.

BENEFIT:

This program will raise academic requirements for sports participation, create a single standard in the sports selection process thereby increasing self-esteem and assign accountability for encouraging student college selection.

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CONCERN #5

Implement a mediation program that fosters conflict resolution and an appreciation of other cultures.

AIMS:

1. Implement mediation programs in all schools.
2. Institute peer mediation and professional mediation programs throughout the school system.
3. Include as part of the mediation program workshops on prejudice reduction and an appreciation of diversity.
4. Refrain from the use of law enforcement as a means of resolving conflict.

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN:

1. Direct the policy committee to write a policy to include mediation as part of any conflict resolution or grievance process for the school system.
2. Define guidelines for school employees and parents as to when it is appropriate to use law enforcement as part of conflict resolution. Include these guidelines in the appropriate school policy.
3. Provide in-service training on conflict resolution, prejudice reduction, and appreciating diversity for all school employees.
4. Implement a mediation program throughout the school system.

BENEFIT:

This program will reduce the probability of student-student, student-staff, staff-staff conflict. It will also enhance the learning environment.

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CONCERN #6

Emphasize communications as a means of improving the school and community atmosphere.

AIMS:

1. Create an atmosphere of openness, honesty, integrity and frank communication between the community and the school system.
2. Encourage parents and the community to become more involved with school system policy and its operation
3. Develop a rapport with the students so they feel comfortable about expressing their concerns and opinions.

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN:

1. Implement an PTO in all schools that do not presently have one.
2. Provide feedback to parents, students and the community on all surveys.
3. Ensure that all strata of students and parents are represented in school improvement programs.
4. Empower student councils to serve as another legitimate channel for student concerns.
5. Meetings of the Board of Education, their functions and Committees are considered open to the public. Everyone is encouraged to attend.
6. Provide in-service workshops to sensitize the staff for creating more effective communication channels with the students.

BENEFIT:

This will create an atmosphere of open communication and expand the comfort zone of the community, students and the school staff.

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CONCERN #7

Develop an on-going dialogue and working relationship between the school system and the community.

AIMS:

1. Encourage community, and parent participation in the education and educational lives of their children.
2. Maintain the dialog and communication established between the school system and Community Task Force. Extend this relationship to other groups in the community.

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN:

1. Encourage committee groups to provide feedback and evaluations of the efforts to improve the overall Transylvania County School System. Findings should be made public.
2. Community leaders should encourage full participation in the school process by parents, students, business, and community. Parents especially should be encouraged to be more active in their children's academic education, PTO, conferences, and extracurricular activities