**2014-2015 Annual Review Summary**

**Anti-Harassment/Bullying**

**August 15, 2015**

**Prepared by: Tony Burchett, District Nondiscrimination Coordinator**

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 2014-15 the Equity Center provided professional learning experiences and ongoing consultative meetings to develop proactive, district-wide strategic planning to integrate Decatur’s school safety, climate, and culture initiatives, and build a collaborative, team-based approach to conducting those initiatives a site visit. (Exhibit A)

**Policies and Procedures**

In 2013-14, 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

In 2014-15, the District nondiscrimination coordinator met with every school’s PTO organization to review the policies and procedures, including the reporting and investigation procedures. Parents were shown how to find the policies online and were given the opportunity to ask questions and offer suggestions for improvement.

(Exhibit B)

**Tracking and Monitoring Bullying and Harassment Incidents and Complaints**

The District has implemented an online reporting system on the District website, [www.decaturproud.org](http://www.decaturproud.org). The link to the reporting form can be found on the District webpage and also on each individual school 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 is recorded and investigated. (Exhibit C, D & E)

**Training and Professional Development**

During the 2014-15 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.

The focus of this year’s training was identification and intervention strategies. After reviewing the interventions and follow-up activities of the building level

nondiscrimination coordinators from 2013-14, it was obvious that they were struggling with identifying appropriate non-punitive interventions. The focus of this year’s training was identifying the behavior as bullying or harassment and then providing appropriate non-punitive, educational interventions to change behaviors. The goal of this initiative is not punishment but rather to change behavior through education and support.

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 F, G, & H)

The student training for Decatur Central High School was conducted during STAR class. The training consisted of four lessons covering the policies and procedures for reporting harassment and bullying to school officials, including the investigation process. Students were shown how to report online on the school website, anonymously if the student chooses. The training covered the types of conduct that constitutes harassment including conduct that may also be considered bullying. Video clips showing examples of harassment and bullying were shown and the consequences of the behaviors were discussed. (Exhibit I)

The students at the Gold Academy received age-appropriate training on harassment, including: the types of bullying that constitute harassment; the diversity of the student body with respect to race, color, national origin, sex, religion, and disability; and the processes for notifying school employees of incidents of harassment and bullying. (Exhibit J & K)

**School Climate Assessments**

A climate assessment was administered to all staff and students at DCHS and the Gold Academy. The instrument we used was 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 was 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 December 23, 2014. We schedule phone conferences monthly and also meet face to face when additional support is needed. The MOU will be reviewed and revised annually as needed.

**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 and the School Nondiscrimination Coordinators continually work to educate parents on our new policies and procedures. The policies and procedures were presented to parents on site at each PTO (Parent/Teacher Organization) meeting this fall.

Each school published 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.decaturproud.org](http://www.msddecatur.k12.in.us). We work diligently to keep the initiative at the forefront of all correspondence with parents.

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 met with the District nondiscrimination coordinator on a regular basis during the 2014-15, school -year. These meeting were used to educate the coordinators on such things as documenting reports, recognizing the standard of proof, investigation procedures and communicating with parents. The meetings were also used to get feedback on training and continue professional development activities focused on non-punitive interventions and educating students in order to change behaviors. (Exhibit M)

The school nondiscrimination coordinators submitted quarterly reports to the District nondiscrimination coordinator. A summary of those reports appears below. (Exhibit N)

**District Nondiscrimination Coordinator Report**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **School** | **Number of Students** | **# of Incidents** | **Harassment** | **Bullying** | **Other** |
| High School | 1731 | 46 | 6 | 21 | 20 |
| Middle School | 952 | 58 | 27 | 28 | 3 |
| Gold Academy | 592 | 14 | 0 | 1 | 13 |
| Blue Academy | 590 | 10 | 2 | 5 | 3 |
| Stephen Decatur | 516 | 5 | 4 | 0 | 1 |
| West Newton | 600 | 13 | 8 | 3 | 2 |
| Valley Mills | 532 | 8 | 1 | 1 | 6 |
| Liberty Kdg Center | 558 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 |

**These numbers reflect the reports from July 29, 2014-June 2, 2015.**

**Incidents of Harassment**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Race/Color** | **Sex/Gender** | **Disability** | **Religion** | **Language** | **National Origin** |
| High School | 1 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Gold Acad. | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

The School Nondiscrimination Coordinators submitted their quarterly report to the District Nondiscrimination Coordinator each quarter. 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? What are those reasons? That is a question we will try to answer this coming year.

**Training and Professional Development**

**Professional Staff Training**

The District Nondiscrimination Coordinator and the Director of Exceptional Learners for Decatur Township will provide training and offer opportunities for district level administrators, building level administrators, counselors and teachers for the 2015-2016 school year in Decatur Township.

Based upon site visit recommendations with Equity Center and professional conversations with all stakeholders the Metropolitan School District of Decatur Township will now engage and require all schools in the Metropolitan School District of Decatur Township to implement Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports or more commonly referred to by the acronym PBIS. This requirement of all schools with PBIS practices will aide in the transformation of practices for the entire school district, not just a few schools. The implementation of PBIS, not in isolation, but throughout the district will once again be a vital component in the Metropolitan School District of Decatur Township’s efforts to eradicate bullying and harassment in the district. The Metropolitan School District of Decatur Township will work in conjunction with the Indiana Institute on Disability and Community of Indiana University and Dr. Sandra Washburn and Mrs. Michelle Brentano in order to achieve this objective. (Exhibit O)

**Student Training**

As the Metropolitan School District of Decatur Township continues to sharpen its focus on the educational environment and its deliberate approach in dealing with bullying and harassment, Decatur Central High School will, in particular, through its College and Career Readiness Course (formally STAR) will now offer a curriculum designed and geared toward the interests and the social, emotional, academic and behavioral developmental needs of the students in that specific grade level.

Bullying and harassment is a component of the content and is a common thread throughout all grade levels. One of the resources used in the lessons on bullying and harassment is a power point that contains the following three (3) sessions:

* SESSION 1: Bullying and Harassment – What’s the difference?
* SESSION 2: Consequences of harassment and bullying
* SESSION 3: Types of Bullying

As part of the lesson delivery, teachers are encouraged to discuss the content of each session with their students.

In addition to this power point presentation, there is a lesson on digital citizenship that focuses on Cyberbullying in the CCR course curriculum. The lesson is titled: “Turn down the dial on cyberbullying and online cruelty.” It discusses factors which intensity cyberbullying and online cruelty and what can be done to lessen them. In the lesson on Cyberbullying students learn what to do if they are involved in a cyberbullying situation. They explore the roles people play and how individual actions — both negative and positive — can impact their friends and broader communities. Students are encouraged to take the active role of an upstander and build positive, supportive online communities.

**School Climate Assessments**

As a continued practice, the Superintendent of Schools for the Metropolitan School District of Decatur Township will continue to meet monthly with a group of Decatur Central High School students. The group is called Student Voice and consists of approximately 30 students from the five distinctive small learning communities at Decatur Central High School. During these gatherings, the Superintendent will assess climate issues as well as discusses new policies, procedures and courses such as College Career Readiness.

In fostering an atmosphere of open dialogue with a strong emphasis on policy and procedure, the Metropolitan School District of Decatur Township will continue to sharpen its focus on Decatur Central High School and the Gold Academy. “See it; Say it; Report it” will now become the coin of the realm in Decatur Central High School and in the Gold Academy and also throughout the district regarding not only safety issues but issues of bullying and harassment.

The Gold Academy and Decatur Central High School in addition to adhering to district polices will involve students in decision making and work to develop a culture of mutual respect.

The following is in response to the results of the California Healthy Kids survey which was given to staff and students at Gold Academy and Decatur Central High School during the 2014-15 school year (Exhibit P):

**Gold Academy**

*Specifically, the Gold Academy will:*

* Broaden student involvement in student representative groups like the PGA group
* Deeply root PBIS
* Share lessons regarding bullying/ harassment with students/ staff
* Engage School Resource Officers to role model and demonstrate values of respect and safety.

**Decatur Central High School**

*Key Findings/Data Highlights from “Summary of Key Indicators”:*

* Less than half (44%) of DCHS Seniors took the Survey, due to not being assigned a STAR period
* Only 28% of Freshman surveyed felt adults at the High School were “caring”
* All (but one) School Safety and Substance Abuse categories trended downward (positive) as students progressed through DCHS
* Consistent responses across all grade levels (26-29%) of “chronic sadness/hopelessness”
* One third of Freshman identify as having “experienced and harassment or bullying”

*General reflections from DCHS of Survey Findings:*

There is a consistent theme of 9th graders identifying as having more serious or concerning responses than 12th graders . This leads the administration to believe that more supports need to be put in place to integrate new/incoming students into the academic culture and that stronger efforts should be made towards making students aware of these programs/support systems. There is also evidence that programs offering guidance and support to students/families with substance abuse issues may be needed, as well as ongoing mental health and social work systems for the students of DCHS.

*2015-16 Program Responses/Changes:*

* Development of Student Opportunity Center (SOC) to offer support in areas of discipline, academics, attendance, and conflict resolution
* Hire/train staff member to act as Student Intervention Specialist, to man the SOC and to provide Administration with support in target student service areas
* Move to school-wide PBIS strategies to increase positive reinforcement and proactive approaches to student issues
* Change STAR curriculum to CCR; increase rigor and student ownership of course; move to beginning of school day for “homeroom” feel and to better hold students accountable for daily attendance

As in the past, it is our goal to create a school climate that promotes a proactive approach in communication and process regarding bullying and harassment. Lastly, we will assess our entire district via student surveys, California Healthy Kids, during the 2015-2016 school year. We will use the data to pinpoint areas for improvement for our schools.

**CONCLUSION**

The Metropolitan School District of Decatur Township in conjunction with the leadership of the Board of Education and the Superintendent of Schools has continued to sharpen focus and perspective on revising policies, training staff and students, and advancing attention to detail regarding bullying and harassment.

Decatur Township now has multiple lanes to both disseminate information and receive reports regarding bullying and harassment issues.

For the 2015-2016 school year all schools will reach deeper into the systematic approach regarding Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports. Additionally, all schools will now survey students and staff with the California Healthy Kids Survey. During the 2015-2016 school year, collaboration will again be in place with the Equity Center and the Non discrimination Coordinator will also work in tandem with the Director of Exceptional Learners for Decatur Township regarding training and polices. The Metropolitan School District of Decatur Township is deeply committed to thoroughly eradicating through education all bullying and harassment in the district.

**2014-2015 ANNUAL REVIEW SUMMARY OF EXHIBITS**

Exhibit A Equity Center MOU

Exhibit B Parent Training Power Point

Exhibit C Bullying/Harassment Investigation Form

Exhibit D Copies of All Complaints

Exhibit E Copies of Example Complaint and Investigation Forms

Exhibit F Administrator and Teacher Power Point Training

Exhibit G Sign in Sheets

Exhibit H Training Calendar

Exhibit I DCHS Student Training

Exhibit J Gold Academy Training Materials for Grades 1-2

Exhibit K Gold Academy Training Power Point for Grades 3-6

Exhibit L Student Surveys for DCHS and Gold Academy

Exhibit M Nondiscrimination Meeting Agendas and Notes

Exhibit N School Nondiscrimination Coordinator Quarterly Reports

Exhibit O PBIS Training Schedule

Exhibit P California Healthy Kids Survey Results