Race & Discipline Task Force  
Meeting - July 29, 2002  
6:30 - 9:45 p.m.  
District Board Room

Attending:  Task Force Members: Susan Adelman, Irma Carranza, Moises Castillo, Oscar de la Torre, Marolyn Freedman, Dolores Gonzalez, Darryl Goode, Father Mike Gutierrez, Shana Habel, Hank Harris, Tessa Hicks, Louise Jaffe, Ana Jara, Robbie Jones, Suzie Kim, Maria Loya, Kim Nishita, Cheri Orgel, Jody Priselac, Belinda Ramos, Paco Retana, Julie Rusk, Laurel Schmidt, Jeanne Wells, A. Dee Williams, Rev. Ronald Williams

Observers: Bill Nishita, Sgt. David Thomas, Margarite Zepeda, Maxwell Brooks, Aurora Zepeda, Monica Simon, Janice Onami

1. A district-wide suspension report was presented. It was requested that a representative from SMMUSD come to explain how the data is collected and reported.

   Is discipline handled equally across the board?  
   Is there a pattern, tracking? Are certain kids being targeted?  
   What is the comparison, District to National figures?

2. Recommendations for action were:

   Policy  
   Practice  
   school  
   community

3. Recommendations for immediate action were:

   Parental Involvement  
   With respect to cases presented to the Board, parents were not called. Teachers need to know the procedures.

   Welcome parents on campus. Community Liaison program needs additional support, not less. More cultural sensitivity training is needed.

   Documentation of Incidents  
   A system needs to be in place that is known by and followed by all. 
   The initial interview of student should be between principal and teacher. 
   Parents should be involved in the process and brought in right away.

   When data is requested from the Board, it is often difficult to obtain.

   The police use a paging system to receive and send reports of incidents with no
documentation readily available upon request. It is requested that when the police respond to a call on campus, they sign in with the name of officer responding to call, name of student, the ethnicity of the student involved, the action taken.

**Review of Cases** - A detailed review of the cases in question is requested. All the children involved now have criminal records. Were District policies and procedures followed? What could have been handled differently? Sgt. Dave Thomas of SMPD said the cases can be reviewed; but, if full disclosure is requested, parent must give the okay for that to happen. Anti Defamation League will be called in to assist in reviewing cases. Since the students involved are getting ready to go to court, it was requested that the District send letters to the judges informing them that some of the cases will be reviewed and re-evaluated.

It was stated that more than just cases of children of color be reviewed. Are the cases of white children treated differently? If there is a racial problem, let’s meet it head on. If not, let’s not make one.

**Teacher and Administrator Training**

4. While reviewing individual cases and dealing with all of the issues, the Task Force must, (1) be clear about its limitations; (2) Review current policies; (3) identify where reform needs to happen.

5. Review the suspension policy.

6. The School Board meets on August 8 and 22. Items for the August 8th meeting must be agendized by July 30. Items for consideration for the meeting of August 22 are due in the Superintendent’s Office by August 12.

7. Look closely at students who receive multiple disciplinary actions. Discipline issues should be a flag for academic and other problems. Consider addressing issues through the IEP process.

8. Copies of the District's discipline policies were requested. The Co-Chairs already have it and it will be provided to Sub-Committee Chairs.

9. Administrators need to be trained on discipline procedures and then train teachers.

10. The role of the community needs to be worked on.

11. A former student explained his experiences with discipline and stated that conflicts occurring outside of school will carry over into school.
12. Certain priorities mentioned do not need to come before the Board. Can we clarify what needs to happen immediately? When does the school bring in the police? A copy of AB 2501 - Pupils: questioning by peace officer, was distributed. It is not law as it was vetoed by the governor, but could be used by the Task Force as a guideline so as not to reinvent the wheel.

13. It was suggested that a letter should go home to each parent, explaining what the Race and Discipline Task Force is, what we wish to accomplish, long- and short-term goals, and what actions have been taken.

14. It was noticed that no Community Liaisons were present at this meeting and felt that they all should be part of the Task Force.

15. As a requirement for learning, children must feel emotionally safe. It was felt that if a child is being disciplined by a principal and the parent cannot be there, a community liaison or other staff person must be there to document what is said. It is felt that principals can give their own bias and not the entire picture of what occurred. It is felt the principal’s word is law, even if they are wrong.

16. Are rules being selectively administered?

17. It was requested that the Board and Superintendent examine discipline policies and see if they are “tight” or open to interpretation which leaves room for error.

18. Everyone should become familiar with Education Code 48900, 48902 describing when the administrators on a campus must call in the police.

19. It is felt that better communication is needed between schools and parents. Minors should not be treated as adults.

20. Problems for students may start small, then school is missed, self-esteem is lowered, problems escalate. Intervention, not always discipline, needs to happen when students are in elementary school.

   Insensitive and inappropriate statements have been witnessed during core and IEP meetings. Education of administrators and teachers is necessary.

21. From former student - Suspension is like a reward for misbehavior.

22. Q: Handcuffing is a powerful symbol. Is it always necessary?

   A: It depends on the offense, protection of the child, officer, necessity, dependent on circumstances, officer judgement.

23. Intervention, prevention. Look at the problem, not the child. Don’t blame one another.
24. It was suggested that time be set aside to address these issues at the staff development days at the start of school. Due to time constraints, this may or may not be able to happen.

25. The Anti Defamation League will look into allegations and testimony. A lot of anger and passion exists. We need to build partnerships between District, parents, police, clergy and community.

26. When good teaching happens, problems cease.

27. Issues need to be presented to and worked through the Board and the Superintendent. Determine what is realistic.

28. The space/time of the Race and Discipline Task Force meetings and its use must be defined in order to work productively. Is this space to talk about actions or would that be done in smaller groups? The group was asked what next steps should be? What issues should be tackled first?

29. Items proposed today should be identified as short or long range goals? – by Co-Chairs? The co-chairs will flush out ideas and look at how to structure the group to stay on task.

Co-chairs will list recommendations to bring to next Task Force meeting and the Board.

It is recommended that the Superintendent take leadership and define what is doable and what is given to administrators and teachers.

30. The following requests were made for material to be provided:

Racial/ethnic breakdown in Honors and AP classes
Request for expulsion reports by ethnicity
Copies of Discipline Policy for Sub-Committee Chairs

31. Agreed upon Task Force meeting norms should be followed and will be posted at every meeting. (i.e., Talk about issues, not individuals. Be respectful.)

NEXT MEETING: MONDAY, AUGUST 12
6:30 - 8:00 P.M.
DISTRICT BOARD ROOM