



Excellence In Education

MEMORANDUM

Date: 01 March 2011
To: Board of Trustees
From: Tim Monds, Superintendent
Originator: Kelly Wilkins, Deputy Superintendent
Subject: **Discipline Hearing Report**

Recommendation

That the Board of Trustees receives as information the Discipline Hearing Report as presented at its Regular meeting 01 March 2011.

Background

In fall 2007, Parkland School Division Board of Trustees expressed the desire to have Senior Administration explore alternatives to the Expulsion process. It was felt that the traditional Expulsion process was a somewhat negative experience for everyone involved. Certainly the Board felt that they were left with few options once a student arrived at a hearing. There was an interest in being responsive to the needs of schools and students in a manner that continued to ensure high standards for student behavior and conduct. While taking action necessary to support a safe and caring learning environment, Trustees are obligated to provide programming for a student who is expelled. The Trustees questioned whether there might be a better way to respond to these very serious situations.

At times, it was felt that arriving at an Expulsion Hearing was a “wake-up” call for some families who came to realize the seriousness of their circumstances. Senior Administration wondered if an additional step, prior to an Expulsion Hearing, might be successful in reducing the number of Expulsion Hearings while effectively dealing with some severe student conduct.

Senior Administration researched and developed a Discipline Hearing process that was piloted in 2008. Since the implementation there have been no requests for Expulsion Hearings. Parkland School Division has conducted 13 Discipline Hearings.

The Discipline Hearing process has been very successful in addressing the serious issues that have been heard. The solution-focused process has served the needs of schools, students and their families and to date has eliminated the need for Expulsion Hearings.

Following is a report of the process regarding Discipline Hearings.

Administration would be pleased to respond to questions.

KW/ds
KW



DISCIPLINE HEARING REPORT

MARCH 2011

*Presented to Board of Trustees, 01 March 2011
Kelly Wilkins, Deputy Superintendent*

There is an expectation that Parkland School Division No. 70 school staff will work collaboratively to do everything possible to support students in developing acceptable behavior and in making good decisions. This continues to be the focus of one of our Divisional priorities: Citizenship & Social Responsibility. School wide pro-active discipline provides universal structures and strategies to all students. More intensive supports are provided to students requiring greater attention. And finally for those students experiencing significant difficulties, selected and more specialized supports are necessary. This pyramid of intervention is the model underlying Effective Behaviour Support (EBS) and the way that our schools apply pro-active strategies to promote effective teaching and learning in a safe and caring environment.

Specific strategies currently being used by schools may include but are not limited to the following:

- Goal setting
- Positive reinforcement
- Peer Support
- Development of a behavior plan, learning plan, behavioural contract
- Modify schedule/day/breaks/expectations/tasks
- Focus on and/or adjust core programming (LA/Math/SS/SC)
- Work Experience component (student may earn credits)
- Community Service – develop a compulsory plan with student
- Work closely with parents/home (i.e. bring parent in to observe, problem-solving together)
- Pursue assessment to determine learning needs
- Pursue assessment to clarify medical/psychological condition that may be impacting learning and/or behaviour
- Referral Council (in-school team support)
- Call on school supports: Community Support Worker, Native Liaison Worker, R.C.M.P. School Resource Officer
- Collaborate with Learning Services
- Case Conference with all involved supports (i.e. medical, parents, counselor)
- Develop restitution plan with student
- Gradual (supported) reintegration and introduction of privileges
- Educational Assistant support
- Personal and/or Family Counseling
- Alternative placement/programming (i.e. Connections for Learning, Outreach)
- Sunrise Support
- Community-based Conferencing with Alberta Conflict Transformation Society
- Referral to outside agencies (i.e. AADAC, Services for Children, FCSS)
- Meeting with D.A.R.E. officer

- Attendance Board referral
- Student Transfer to another school

Despite the involvement of a range of interventions there may be a situation that requires one further significant and very serious step prior to considering a recommendation to the Board of Trustees for a student expulsion.

It may be that a formal Disciplinary Hearing may be a positive turning point for a student. There are circumstances where the mandatory involvement in a formal process and the development of an action plan causes the desired positive change in attitude and behavior.

What is a disciplinary hearing?

- It is a behavioural intervention process with the Superintendent or designate
- Its goal is to foster student responsibility and accountability
- It is based on the principles of restorative justice
- It is solution focused where all involved parties agree to an intervention plan
- It is most effective when community partners are involved in the process
- It may be an alternative to expulsion
- It may be a last step prior to expulsion

How might we implement this process?

- Receive feedback from schools on the draft proposal
- Implement a pilot for the 2008-2009 school year

When is the process appropriate?

- If the school has exhausted all other possible avenues and interventions at the school level and there has not been a significant improvement in the student's behaviour.
 - Behaviour plan and/or IPP in place
 - Involvement with the contact from Learning Services
 - Case conferences at the school level
 - Involvement of community agencies where appropriate
- There has been a very serious incident at the school for which a referral for expulsion is not desirable/appropriate (given the nature of the incident and the history of the student involved) but a formal disciplinary process is in order
- It is most appropriate for middle and high school students as the emphasis is on personal accountability

Who should attend?

- It is mandatory that the student and his/her parents or guardians attend
- It is mandatory that the Superintendent or designate, the Principal and a recording secretary attend
- A representative from Student Services may attend if appropriate
- Other community partners (Mental Health, FSLW, the RCMP school liaison, Youth Justice, Children's Service, etc)
 - It is the school's responsibility to invite community agencies who are involved with the student and family to the disciplinary hearing