

Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction

Pupil Nondiscrimination Self-Evaluation

West Bend School District

November, 2011



The suburban West Bend School District serves the residents of the city and town of West Bend, the villages of Jackson and Newburg, and portions of the town of Polk, Trenton, and Addison Wisconsin. The school district is the 20th largest district in the State of Wisconsin. The district as a whole serves approximately 54,000 residents with 7000 students between the ages of 3 to 21 with a pre-kindergarten for 3 and 4 year olds with special education needs; Head Start; and regular and special education for grade 5 year old kindergarten through grade 12. The male/female representation across our ten school sites averages 51% male and 49% female. The special education population average is 12% of the student enrollment. Our free and reduced lunch rates vary from 27% at the high school to 47% at one of our elementary schools. The students representing our English Language Learners are near 3% at nine of our schools and 13% at one elementary site where ELL students have been clustered. The district has created a process to have those students return to their neighborhood schools within the next two years. The student population that represents the ethnic makeup is typically 90% white non-Hispanic.

Members of the Pupil Non-Discrimination Self-Evaluation Focus Group were selected to accurately represent the district in relation to gender, race, disability and national origin. An invitation was sent to each building administrator, athletic directors and community agencies asking for volunteers. The membership was selected from the positive responses. The team of seventeen members included three high school students including a student with a disability, an African-American student, and a student of Hispanic origin. In addition, three School Counselors representing the elementary, middle and high school levels took part in the process. A community agency representative from the Washington County Health and Human Services Agency assisted with the process along with two West Bend community members. One of our high school athletic directors and two Principals were members of our team. In addition, an ELL teacher, Director of Pupil Services, a School Psychologist and a special education teacher represented the school district's student population. Lastly, our High School's Career Center paraprofessional who serves as the scholarship liaison to our families was included in the team.

The methods used in the self-evaluation were to create three evaluation teams focusing on counseling, athletics and scholarships. Each team was provided baseline data identifying the district's student population percentages for gender, race, disability and national origin from the last three years in the areas of athletic team rosters, student activities participation, scholarship application and awards in addition to our school counseling curriculum. The data, other than the counseling curriculum content, was derived and disaggregated from our student data base. The data was organized into summary charts and shared with members of the focus group. Using the DPI guidelines for self-evaluation questions, each team was provided with clusters of prompts to use when evaluating district practices.

Each of the three focus groups met on November 3, 2011. Using the data and questions, each of the three focus groups determined current practices that meet non-discrimination expectations, areas of concern and suggestions for improvements. The findings from each group were shared with the whole group.

School Counseling

The West Bend School District has adopted the Wisconsin Comprehensive School Counseling Model to align our Curriculum K-12 to Wisconsin Counseling standards. The design of this curriculum has eliminated the bias and stereotyping in materials and techniques that may have been present. Our School Counseling team provided documents to support the curriculum. Each staff that is hired as a School Counselor has completed required coursework to earn their degree and to ensure that they do not possess attitudes of bias and stereotyping.

Although every student who attends our public schools takes part in our counseling curriculum, the self-evaluation of our practices took into account the access to our services by families who are non-English speaking because the ethnicity of our families has expanded in number and variety over the last five years. The team identified the need to expand the district's ability to effectively communicate in multiple languages.

Practices that were identified as positive and should be continued include professional development for our staff. Our School Counselors schedule monthly meetings to review practices and schedule level specific staff development experiences based on department and district needs. An example is inviting the Washington County Mental Health Center to share the resources available for students and families. The entire K-12 School Counseling team, in addition to School Psychologists, meets monthly to ensure that we build district wide systems.

The efforts of our School Counselors in academic planning support the district goal of closing the achievement gap. Our School Counselors schedule parent information nights, individual student meetings and planning conferences. The Career Cruising Curriculum provides the opportunity and requirement for parents to participate in the course planning and career interest for students during 4th, 8th and 10th grade conferences. There is a Hispanic version of the computer-based curriculum that is offered to our students. Additional current practices that have a positive impact on student achievement is the integrated support of our ELL teachers. The district provides Hispanic and Hmong interpreters for these conferences but need to expand the language offerings for the language of Chinese and Albanian. The district also works in alignment with the local office of Casa Guadalupe to encourage a safe/neutral environment for our Hispanic families during school events including parent-teacher conferences.

The focus group identified areas of concern including providing sufficient support services for our community. The West Bend School District no longer provides School Social Workers due to budget reductions. The focus group determined that it is imperative to research and build professional connections to existing county resources so that we can continue to meet the needs of our families. The process that was identified is to create an inventory of support services that are available using district resources, the additional work that is provided by community agencies and what gaps exist. The K-12 School Counseling team will complete this process. To start, the team is planning and scheduling an opportunity for our community agencies to meet with the district support services team in order to describe their services and identify how families access their services through the "Meet the Community

Agency Day” scheduled for November, 2011. Given the current economic status of our community, we will continue to review and revise our efforts as the needs of families change.

Another area of need is that the teaching staff needs to continue to monitor student academic progress. The focus group could not identify any process that was in place to measure the effectiveness of the Comprehensive Curriculum Model. The team determined that the district should determine what data should be gathered so that a review of the curriculum can take place. As the School Counselors move to Level III training, they will focus on the data collection around the Comprehensive Model of Curriculum.

Furthermore, the focus group concluded that the district should review the linguistically accessible support services. The basic question is, “What are we doing for families who are not English speaking?” Again, a baseline of our services needs to be solidified. Working with our community agencies will be imperative in order to ensure that we identify the needs of families due to our heavy concentration of White Non-Hispanic families in our community. A suggestion of working with the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee was made in order to guarantee we follow acceptable processes and procedures for evaluating our ethnic needs.

Scholarships and Awards

The focus group that discussed the scholarship process, applicants and awards included one of the high school students. Her participation in the process was valuable due to her ability to provide insight about the communication to families. In West Bend there is a community group, The Columns, which oversees the application process and the awarding of all of the local scholarships. This group is comprised of local business leaders. They process the applications, host the student interviews and award approximately 65 local scholarships. In addition, there are scholarships that are available from other sources. The Career Center staff currently uses multiple avenues to inform families of the opportunities. This includes the high school announcements, sending each family a post card notifying them of the financial information date/time, information on the local radio station, posting the information on the school website and individual invitations are mailed to students from the Columns Foundation. The group did discuss sending a blast e-mail to families of high school seniors, which was thought to be a better option for feasibility rather than phone calls.

The data that is kept has been recorded by the paraprofessional who staffs the High School Career Center. While we were able to put together the data in a meaningful manner, the group did determine that a database could be designed to be more efficient with that process. The preferred method would be to include the information in our student data base.

The data over the last three years consistently recognized that more females than males applied and were then awarded scholarships at the high school level. When speaking with two high school students, a male and female, they stated that the best way to get them the scholarship information related to their specific school/career choice is through the individual senior conference that is led by the school counselors. Between our two high schools, one invites the parents and the other does not. The focus group determined that it is imperative that the parents be invited in order to ensure that they receive the timely information about scholarships so they can plan forward for the district financial planning nights, application process and be able to follow up with their child's application process. In addition, it was noted that the high school counselors should create a template for that discussion that includes specific items to address along with sharing the list of potential scholarships.

The students' input also led to the development of the concept of the Career Center modifying the process it uses to provide assistance through the application process. Typically, the Center is open for students who need assistance with filling out the application or reviewing the interview process. While this was determined to be a positive aspect of our scholarship process, the group offered suggestions for improvement. With the input from the group, it was determined that hosting after school sessions for subject specific topics such as formatting the application, practicing the student interview and writing the essays would better serve the students. In addition, the group suggested a sample timeline be included in the application packet that identifies the sessions beginning at the December date when the information is disseminated to the application due date in late January.

When the student's attend the Financial Aid/Scholarship evening, they receive a packet that lists all of the scholarships, the information about the concept of the scholarships, any requirements of the

applicants for specific awards and the name of the awarding body. The review of the data identified that there is a large number of students who pick up the scholarship information, but do not return it in order to actually apply. Along with the subject specific Career Center session, another suggestion was to include an application checklist in the packet that the students can use to track their progress and provide a progress monitoring check for parents/guardians. Along with that, the generic application and all applications other than the Dale L. Westby Memorial Scholarship application are required to be hand written. The intent of that requirement is to differentiate well written essays from each other and provide another layer of quality to each student's submitted work. The focus group discussed how both high school and post-secondary schools rarely require anything to be hand written, which may impact the student's application return rate. While the focus group identified that requirement as a potential barrier to student success, it was shared that the schools had previously suggested an on-line typed application. The Columns group did not change their requirements. In lieu of being able to type the application, the focus group added the subject specific support session of writing essays.

The student who participated in the focus group, and represented children with disabilities, was unaware of the accommodation of being able to type her application and essays given a formal letter from her IEP coordinator that states the accommodations and modifications that are part of her IEP. As a result of that conversation, it was determined that the High School Special Education Teachers would be given an overview of the scholarship application process by the Career Center in order to improve the percentage of students with disabilities who apply for scholarships. The current data indicates that approximately 10% of our student population has been identified as children with disabilities, yet only 4% apply and 1% is awarded scholarships. In addition, the district needs to investigate the scholarship process for students of Hispanic origin. While our student body is represented by a 3% Hispanic rate (14 students) only one student applied and was awarded a scholarship. The ELL teacher will be better informed of the scholarship process so that he can better inform families who do not use English as their first language and improve their participation in the scholarship process.

The award process at the elementary level is not as well documented. Each of our elementary schools uses an award system, The Bug Slips, which represent appropriate school behaviors. Beginning this year, the expected student behaviors were taught to all K-5 students during the first three days of school through the PBIS system. The focus group identified this practice as important to ensuring that all students have the knowledge that will make them a potential candidate for the awards. The BUG slips are awarded by classroom teachers, special area teachers and other school personnel. There is a concentrated effort to award all students and classes, but there is no documentation supporting that information. The awarding of prizes is through a random selection process. Within individual classrooms, elementary teachers schedule Student of the Week opportunities. Throughout the school year, every student will have the opportunity to participate in the recognition process. The special area elementary teachers in art, music and PE also have content specific awards. The awards presented by the PE teacher are awarded based on specific data such as time to complete the run or number of pull ups. This is similar to the Presidential Physical Fitness Award. The art and music awards are determined by the content teacher and are based on subjective perception of student skill in their area. There is no district wide documented information related to the criteria or award winners. Through the PBIS

system, the district will create a documentation process to track individual student progress with recognition. In addition, there will be the creation of consistent practices with recognition practices across elementary schools to ensure that all students have access to similar experiences.

Our middle schools offer recognition through citizenship awards and volunteer activities. The student participation is documented using informal processes. At the middle school level, there are group recognition activities based on student academic progress. The criteria for participation in monthly outings or events are objectively determined by grades or rate of returned work. Every student has equal access to the events since student with disabilities are offered on going modification/accommodations to work and ESL students receive ELL services to support their learning.

Athletics and Activities

The data that was gathered through our student data base included the name of the athletic group or activity along with the number of students per gender, race, disability and national origin. While incorporating the data for this process it was challenging to gather unduplicated counts due to the large amount of data. While gathering the data, it became apparent that a needed review of the data codes that represent all of the high school offerings is needed.

The creation of the codes that represent all athletics and activities is not currently cross referenced with the Athletic Director's knowledge of all offerings. The district needs to assess who determines which codes are included in the data base, create a master list of all offerings and update the system. There are current offerings that were listed in past years but have been deleted without the knowledge or consent of the Athletic Directors.

There are currently 52 athletic divisions identified for our two high schools, which has been consistent over the last three years. The number of offerings for clubs/activities has increased from 8 to 24 over the last three years. The additional offerings represent academic, cultural and career opportunities and were created based on student interest and adult support, which was identified as a positive outcome by the focus group.

There is inconsistent documentation of athletic award winners. The district currently documents State Qualifiers for the four seasons. There is a need to expand the definitions of awards, include them in the data base and track student awards and recognitions through athletics.

Other positive outcomes from this process were that the district offers comparable male and female opportunities that are consistent with WIAA expectations. The training for coaches and clinics is also consistent across gender. Twice a year there are meetings that cover hazing and harassment, which the athletic directors offer for all coaches. The process includes going through the coaching handbooks and reviewing appropriate practices and policies.

Overall, the male/female participation in athletics is consistent with the student population. However, there are a higher percentage of females who take part in school clubs/activities. Over the three years, the participation of males in school clubs/activities has increased from 22% to 33%. This increase is linked to the additional offerings that were added due to student interest. The participation of students

from ethnic groups is consistent with the student population; however, students with disabilities are under-represented.

The district offers surveys to identify areas of interest for students and families. In addition, students who participate in a sport are surveyed at the end of their season. That feedback is summarized by the Athletic Directors.

Areas of concern that were identified are the involvement in athletics and activities by students of lower socio-economic status and students with disabilities. The focus group identified potential barriers to participation by students of lower socio-economic status. Initially, students are expected to pay a participation fee for any sport/activity. While the district will adjust that fee based on a family's, the other aspects of participation include finding transportation to and from practices for children from families who do not have personal transportation beyond getting to and from their place of employment. The group suggested investigating the use of school transportation to assist all children but is also aware of diminishing public funds for such budget items. Another idea is to offer a community based activity that would gather gently used athletic equipment in order to provide materials for students who cannot afford it. The district currently works with the community for a "Stuff the Bus" school supplies week. An extension of that activity would be to include sports equipment.

The team identified the need to advertise the athletic options to a greater extent for students who are identified as having a disability. The group decided that it would be helpful to have data that is more specific in relation to the disability areas that are currently represented. Participation in school activities should be discussed as part of each student's IEP, including the present level of performance or transition process. The IEP coordinator can provide information related to the student's required modifications/accommodations so each coach could better meet the communication needs of the student.

While the percentage of students from homes where English is not the primary language is consistent with the participation rate, the number of students from those homes is 55. There are sixteen students who choose to participate in high school athletics. The focus group identified the need to provide the district athletic information in Spanish for our ELL level 1-3 student population. The district website offers the option to translate any information into multiple languages, but many of our ELL families do not have access to home computers and the Internet. In addition, the group identified the need for personal contacts with students to increase the participation rate of children who are identified as ELL. This can be accomplished informally by having the coaches or Athletic Directors stop by the students' lunch tables.

At the middle school level, the district offers athletic opportunities for 7th and 8th graders. The intent of these activities is to encourage participation and development. There are five offerings for females and three for males. Females are offered the additional offerings of dance and intramural gymnastics. There are approximately 15 other activities/clubs that are offered to the 7th and 8th graders. Offerings include academic, career, fine arts and environmental groups. Student participation is tracked informally. Students are made aware of the activities through announcements, flyers and handouts.

Over the course of the last two years, our district has developed a formal process for any proposed activity or athletic proposal. There was much controversy related to a specific student activity that resulted in potential legal ramifications. The outcome of that process was to approve the student group and review/revise our process for creating new opportunities for all students.

The West Bend School District is committed to providing a quality education to all of our students. Through the support of our School Board and community, we will continue to reflect on our practices, develop new opportunities and implement systematic procedures so that all of our students have an equal opportunity to develop to their full potential.