

All-BRIC Team Meeting, January 27, 2012 4:00pm

School Climate subcommittee- co-chair, Janna Salmon

School Mission and Vision subcommittee- co-chair, Diana McMasters

School Organization and Bylaws subcommittee- co-chair, Migdalia Salas

School Climate Progress Report:

- The School Climate subcommittee was established prior to the I-BRIC process, in response to the September Bullying Conference.
- The committee handed out teacher and student surveys regarding ISAAC school climate. Teacher surveys are starting to be analyzed and student surveys will be analyzed soon. The committee never received a copy of the parent survey, so they may adapt one for their own purposes.
- The committee is in the middle of many school visits. They visited Amistad/Achievement First on Jan. 13th and will visit Jumoke and Integrated Day next.

The results of the Amistad visit are as follows:

- Amistad's school day is from 7:30am-5:00pm. Teachers teach from 7:30am-4:00pm. Encore (taught by outside staff) begins at 4:00pm and ends at 5:00pm.
- School was obviously very proud of who they are. Similar to ISAAC's CREW system, they had an acronym, REACH.
- School offers tutoring by outside staff on Saturdays and after-school.
- Prior to the start of the school year, new teachers receive three weeks of PD.
- Students are released two hours early every Friday so that staff meetings and learning time can take place.
- Each teacher works closely with a coach for support.
- The school is set up in a way so that every personnel's role is clearly delineated. For example, an organization director takes care of the every day minutiae while the two academic deans and principals focus on academics. It is not clear whether this organizational leadership extends throughout the school or is separated by elementary and middle school. Janna will follow up.
- Amistad is very dedicated to their school climate. They have "shout-outs" where kids recognize other kids and achievements are posted and praised.
- Amistad has a school uniform, although there is flexibility on Fridays. The more you earn the more choices you get. For example, t-shirts are earned based on specific achievements (perfect attendance, straight A's etc.)
- Amistad's policies and implementation are clearly defined. The staff are demanding but warm, strict but fun. Students and staff all share an understanding of the procedures and goals. Furthermore, there was a common language that was shared.
- The overall feel of the school climate was "in-control." There was no talking at lockers and hallways and kids filed through neatly during passing times. However, the school is not without discipline problems. 10-12% of the student population is challenging (Kids We Love Most.) Nine kids were in ISS on the day

of the visit. Amistad just happens to have enough in place so that kids knew of the rules and consequences ahead of time.

Recommendations:

1. Like Amistad, ISAAC should invest in extensive PD training for new teachers
2. The consensus of the School Climate Committee is to implement school uniforms at ISAAC. They believe it will be beneficial for the following reasons:
 - Uniforms show school pride and spirit
 - Uniforms levels the playing field for all students
 - Uniforms will alleviate discipline problems related to dress code

It may be helpful to start building momentum now by issuing a reward system similar to Amistad's t-shirts.

Dr. Michael Sharpe's input:

- You can anticipate pushback from students and parents initially regarding school uniforms. However, uniforms are cost-effective, a source of pride and evens the playing field for students of different socio-economic statuses.
- If the school does decide to implement a school uniform policy, it is better to stock in-house rather than use a vendor. You can buy the shirts for \$7, sell them for \$12 and use the difference to help kids who can't afford it.

Next Steps:

- Look for the bigger picture and ask questions such as "Who are we now" "What does an excellent ISAAC school climate look like?"
- Clarify the current school culture and expectations
- When comparing extended day versus regular day schools, make sure you do the research on test scores. Past a certain point, there are diminishing returns.

School Mission and Vision Progress Report:

- As a starting point, the committee reviewed the various ISAAC Mission statements and drafted their own revised versions. They asked questions like:
 - What does the current mission mean?
 - Was this the original intent of the school?
 - What language do we like and dislike?
 - How has the school evolved with the different mission statements?
 - What is the present integration?
- Although they are still working on the language of the mission statement, there was consensus that the current mission was too long and wordy. They also believed that the term "multilingual" was no longer relevant but "multicultural" should stay in the mission.
- There was also extensive discussion about the different school models: Expeditionary Learning (EL), Higher Order Thinking (HOT), Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) schools. Should ISAAC adopt an established model or should they take the best of each and create their own?

- There is no consensus yet, although the team had a very nice teleconference with the principal of Lincoln School (a HOT school.) After that discussion, the team realized that ISAAC is already following many of the main principles of the HOT programs (in some ways more so than Lincoln.) There will be a February 6th visit to Lincoln and a visit to an EL school soon (in Springfield, MA.)

Next Steps:

- The team will continue to revise the mission statement to reflect how strong ISAAC's arts program is
- At the end of the I-BRIC process, the committee hopes that the decisions the school makes will be aligned with the school's mission

School Organization and Bylaws Progress Report:

The Bylaws subcommittee deals exclusively with two documents: the school bylaws and policies and procedures.

- The committee began by looking at sample bylaws from other charter schools.
- They then started analyzing ISAAC's bylaws (currently on page 2.) The goal is to review, revise and make sure the document is up to date and reflects the needs of the ISAAC community. Lee is currently cleaning up the details with input from the lawyers of Shipman-Goodman.
- Although it is a tedious and slow process, much progress has been made. For example, the committee learned that the Article of Incorporation should be attached to the bylaws.
- When looking through ISAAC bylaws, the issue about categories of membership for the Board came up. Which categories are required by law and which ones do we want? There is no clear consensus yet.

Next steps:

- The ultimate goal of the Bylaws subcommittee is to clean up the original document and have operable bylaws that are clear, concise and to the point. In the past, bylaw changes occurred at almost every Board meeting and although the changes made sense, it led to the document being disorganized and disjointed.
- ISAAC appears to be using the bylaws inappropriately in place of policies and procedures. This needs to be clarified. The board policy should be active and separate from the bylaws.

Recommendations:

- Provide board members with professional training and education
- Index current ISAAC school policies and procedures and make it transparent and accessible to all staff.

Dr. Michael Sharpe's input:

- Buy the CABE disk which has all the policies indexed and categorized. Have someone go through each page and delete and personalize the policies for ISAAC.

- Keep in mind that policies and procedures may need to be adapted based on the other subcommittees' recommendations. However, most of the work does not need to wait.

*****Next Meeting: The next meeting will be the Family Meeting where all subcommittees give their reports to the school/staff/board. This is the time where subcommittees get feedback and make changes to their game plans, if needed. *****