Presenters

- Christina Haddad Gonzalez, Director of Student Support Services
- Crystal Brakke, Former School Board Member
- Dr. Latanya Daniels, Assistant Superintendent
- Steve Unowsky, Superintendent
- Richfield High School Student Representatives

Purpose

The RPS school board's vision for the District (as related to policy):

- Elevate student voice in changes to policy
- Partner with families and the community to better identify and eliminate barriers
- Analyze all of our work through a racial and cultural equity lens
- Ensure that our policies align with our practices

Timeline

- School board commitment to student voice
- Reimagine Richfield 2017-18: Revisiting Video
- Launched Safe & Supportive Schools Committees in 2018
- Richfield Realized: Strategic Plan 2021-26 (includes continued commitment to student voice)
- Added a middle school Safe & Supportive Schools Committee in fall 2023

Safe & Supportive Schools Committee: Parents

- Meets quarterly on a weekday evening
- Recruit diverse families who represent the RPS community to participate
- Offered both in person and virtual sessions to support engagement

Example agenda
- Welcome
- Brain Smart Start
- Review Norms
- Outline SY 23-24 work
- Policy Activity: Parent/Guardian feedback - Attendance Policy
- Closure

Safe & Supportive Schools Committee: Students

- Meets quarterly during the school day
- Students invited who have a diverse range of perspectives and experiences - particularly sought out students who have been affected by enforcement of policies
- Partnership with building administration has been critical to success

Example agenda:

- Welcome
- Brain Smart Start
- Review Norms
- Grounding: Purpose, role, past & future work
- Activity: Student feedback - Attendance Policy
- Closure

Process

- ## Students first learn:
  - What are board policies and what do they do?
  - The board reviews policies on a 5-year cycle.
  - What is the student role as a stakeholder?
- ## Student give input on:
  - Policies under board review
  - New policies being written
  - Districtwide surveys
  - District initiatives
  - The strategic plan

Outcomes: Major Policy Changes

Existing policies have been updated to be student-centered and equity-focused:

- **Policy 545: Attendance** (just completed 2nd review with student input)
  - Changes from 2018:
    - More inclusive of cultural reasons for excused absences
    - Improved processes for family communication around absences
  - Changes from 2023:
    - Clarifies teacher responsibilities for taking accurate attendance and partnering with students and families
    - Provides clear expectations for staff actions after specific numbers of absences
- **Policy 541: Student Behavior** (soon to begin 2nd review with student input)
  - Shared responsibility rather than punitive focus
  - Prevention and intervention measures rather than solely reactive
  - Clear guidance for students, staff, and parents/guardians on behavior responses
- **Policy 547: Student Dress and Appearance**
  - No longer has expectations based on gender
  - Hoods, hats, and other forms of personal expression and comfort are allowed

Outcomes: Major Policy Changes

Existing policies have been updated to be student-centered and equity-focused:

- **Policy 601: Academic Standards and Instructional Curriculum**
  - Phases out class rank and weighted grades
  - Grades based on learning, not subjective measures (such as participation, behavior, homework completion, etc.)
- **Policy 110: Chemical Use/Abuse**
  - Adds partnership with families on preventing chemical use
  - Factors in mental health needs of students when responding to incidents of chemical use/possession

Outcomes: New Policies Established

New policies have been written with student input:

- **Policy 586: Gender Inclusion** (just completed 1st 5-year cycle review with student input)
  - Initial creation provided guidance in how to support all students regardless of gender identity or expression
  - 5-year review updated language and expanded protection for students transitioning without family support and students who are victims of bullying or harassment
- **Policy 548: COVID-19 Face Covering**
  - Necessary to implement for safety during the pandemic
  - Students provided input into how to enforce policy and support students
  - References both the Student Dress Policy and the Behavior Policy
- **Policy 116: Equity**
  - States the District's commitment to anti-racism and equitable outcomes for all students
  - Details procedures for working toward equity in academics, climate & culture, activities, and operations & communications

Outcomes: Additional

District administration has gotten feedback on:

- Districtwide school climate survey
- Distance learning during the pandemic
- New strategic plan
- Reducing credit requirements for graduation to accommodate disruption during pandemic

Students have gained:

- Confidence in sharing their perspectives
- Learning about educational policy and creating change

RICHFIELD
PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Questions?