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EAD 513

August 14, 2019

Discipline Management Investigation

Leading a school is hard. I think that principals are amazing. They genuinely do the Lord’s work because they empower some of the most significant people to ever have walked the planet. I can be quoted saying that while school may not be for everyone, education is. However, that education comes at a price. That education can only be nurtured through the coordinated efforts of a variety of stakeholders.

Each of the goals set forth by the administration for the 2019-2020 school year is clear precise. The ultimate goal of the school and any discipline plan should be to graduate all students within four years of officially enrolling in the school. This goal is in line with the mission of the school. As of the end of the 2018-2019 school year at Digital Harbor High School, there was not a comprehensive discipline management plan in place or even in the works. This is due to a severe lack of oversight and overwhelming neglect on the part of the administration.

Teachers reach out for assistance with unruly students and are met with hostility and condescension instead of being provided with the support and assistance they need to be successful in the classroom. Teachers are often encouraged to follow the District’s Code of Conduct, which is restrictive and not helpful in times of crisis. Teachers and students deserve better from their discipline plan. They deserve to be heard and to have their opinions taken seriously when requesting help in times of crisis.

Because of the lack of a disciplinary plan, students run amuck while at school. This chaos also affects student achievement. For example, in speaking with Danielle Schell Lee, one of the Assistant Principals, she revealed the following information, “… because of the abhorrent behaviors displayed by students regularly, more than 770 students of 1100 enrolled failed one or more classes during the 2017-18 school year (Lee, D. (2018, November 3). Student Achievement [Personal interview].)”. Greater than 70% of students enrolled at Digital Harbor failed one or more classes during that school year. This alarming statistic shows that when chaos is allowed to flourish unchecked, the consequences can be dire. I interpret this to mean that because students are allowed to create their own rules in the school community, they are not focused on academics. This lack of focus can be seen in the reported-out grades for the 2017-18 school year, one of the worst years for academic achievement in the history of Digital Harbor High School.

Our school is inundated with new teachers who have minimal classroom management experience. They often struggle to maintain control over their classroom during times of high stress. Despite being mandated by state law to provide mentorship to teachers in a functional capacity, our district allows them to hang in the wind until they cannot exist anymore. This leads to a higher than normal turnover rate for classroom educators at my school in particular, a fact which is unacceptable to anyone who truly cares about student learning.