

## Superintendent's Education Opportunities Advisory Committee (SEOAC)

Summary by principle to question asking "What beliefs should SEOAC consider as a philosophical guide for this work?"

### Mission

**A sound solution shall commit to the "Ready by Exit" mission.**

- Every student must be ready upon exit. (1)
- We must be willing to leave no stone unturned for our children. (1)
- This is doable with much prayer, patience, and commitment. (1)
- We must begin from the understanding that says every second not spent in an instructional setting is wasted time and decreases a student's chances of being ready upon exit. (1)
- Instilling Responsibility (5)
- All children have the right to a great education and we as leaders in our community have a responsibility to guarantee their education. (7)
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- It is possible to move up from #50, and this community needs to believe in that goal. (8)
- CCSD and other Nevada districts have a legal as well as moral obligation to provide every child an equal opportunity to a quality education. One's life chances of success in the educational pipeline should not depend on whether a child's parents live at Eastern and Bonanza vs. Anthem Hill, or whether their parents are poor or affluent, or color of their skin. (8)
- All children should feel that they have an equal opportunity of being successful. (9)
- CCSD should be focused on fully responding to children's specific needs and providing equal opportunities for youth. (9)
- Identifying problem/troubled students early and providing support (for example, counseling opportunities and wrap around services) will improve students' opportunity to graduate. (12)
- "He who opens a school door, closes a prison." Victor Hugo (13)
- Education is the great equalizer and if Nevada is to recover and move forward we must ensure that every child in Nevada has access to education, resources and tools to succeed and the opportunity to relay that education into a good job. (13)
- Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world." Nelson Mandela (13)
- "The function of education is to teach one to think intensively and to think critically... Intelligence plus character - that is the goal of true education...Life's most persistent and urgent question is, 'What are you doing for others?... The function of education, therefore, is to teach one to think intensively and to think critically. But education which stops with efficiency may prove the greatest menace to society." Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. (13)
- All children have the ability to learn. (14) All children can overcome obstacles to learning and performing academically. (14)
- As a public institution, CCSD is responsible to educate its school aged youth. (14)
- There are consistent messages from committee members that all students will succeed, based upon genuine respect for students and believe in student capability. (17)
- All students, regardless of ethnicity, gender, disability, and behavioral history should have access to high-quality comprehensive education. Graduation should be the goal for every student. (21)

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### Accountability

**A sound solution shall spell out who is responsible to whom and for what.**

- Every parent must bear some accountability for their child's behavior and performance. (1)
- Every child must be held accountable for his/her behavior and performance. (1)
- What can parents do? (2)
- Enforcing or changing the standards. (2)
- Establish clear and specific standards that include strong corrective actions. (2)
- Accountability is central to success. Logically, accountability means that after a principal or teacher has shown, after support and counseling and guidance, that they cannot adequately perform in demanding environments like majority ELL impoverished classrooms such teachers and principals should be subject to appropriate consequences. (4)
- "Every time you stop a school, you will have to build a jail. What you gain at one end you lose at the other. It's like feeding a dog on his own tail. It won't fatten the dog." Mark Twain (7)  
Student behavior is malleable- students can and will change behavior when schools provide consistent and appropriate support. (11)
- Student behavior is malleable – students can and will change behavior when schools provide consistent and appropriate support. (11)
- Kids are kids. They can and will make mistakes. They should not automatically be removed from school for their errors. (12)
- Experiences in elementary and middle school set the tone for high school. (12)
- Students need be at grade level by exit of 5<sup>th</sup> grade. (12)

### Sustainable Change

**A sound solution shall create sustainable change with actions that match words.**

- Student's behavior serves a function for the student. Educators, to the best of their ability, should look for the root cause of the student behavior through the lens of student history, culture, and the context of the behavior. Steps should be taken to help address the root cause for long-term, sustainable behavioral change. (11)
- If we do not create the change that is needed and sustain that change, we will lose an entire generation of children. (9)
- Be proactive rather than reactive. (10)

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### Equity

**A sound solution shall provide students with equity and fairness.**

- **There must be equity in the process of referring students for alternative education. (1)**
- **Review enforcement practices to ensure that penalties are uniformly and fairly applied. (2)**
- **Legal questions on suspension and expulsion. (2)**
- **Equity in education is not the result of a list of protocols and procedures that address discipline and special ed placement; rather, it is the result of intended action from early childhood to graduation. (5)**
- **There should be more uniform rules and criteria outlined so that individual schools don't widely vary in their approaches to discipline and special education placement. The CCSD is a large system that could benefit from consistency in its approach to discipline and special education placement; having the standards and regulations uniformly followed is the best way to address over representation by a certain group in disciplinary actions and special education placement. (9)**
- **I believe that the core value in the US justice system resonates in this important work. Are students pre-judged (based on the above) in disciplinary actions, or are they "innocent until proven guilty"? Can the school culture change to allow for a fair system of discipline so that students and parents feel that they've been given a fair shot? (13)**
- **Age/ability must be a factor considered when issuing constructive discipline. (14)**
- **Students have differing learning styles and it is our responsibility to assess and provide appropriate opportunities for students. (14)**
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### Bias

**A sound solution shall mitigate the impact of bias.**

- **Humans are not free from bias. However, we have a capacity to understand our biases and make enlightened decisions that mitigate the negative impact that bias could have. (5)**
- **Committee members are aware/cognitive of their own stereotypes/bias of various cultural/ethnic groups, and will refrain from working in this mode during the meetings.(8)**
- **Racial Literacy: Ability to understand what race is, why it is, and how it is used to reproduce inequality and oppression. (3)**
- **Racial Realism: Drawn from critical race theory's focus on acknowledging the history, pervasiveness, and salience of race and racism in U.S. society, including its schools, and the pitfalls associated with liberal education ideology, policy, and practices. (3)**
- **Racial Reconstruction: The process of ascribing new meaning to race in order to transform the ways we think about and subsequently, act on, our racial assumptions, attitudes, and biases. (3)**
- **Racial Reconciliation: Process that seeks to heal the soul wounds and damage that has been done in schools and society as it relates to race and racism. (3)**
- **Racial Segregation is not per se a negative, contra Gary Orfield. However high density racial segregation is an indicator of low access to resources, low wealth in the community, and perhaps even low human capital. Policies and the organizational structure within CCSD should reflect that "on the ground reality, and not just "wish" it away. (4)**
- **School cultures should reflect and respect the beliefs and values of students from diverse backgrounds. (11)**
- **A student's academic and community record should be taken into consideration when discipline is determined. A student's gender, race, ethnicity, disabilities, or special education status should not. (12)**
- **Students (and people) of color grow up (in most cases) being treated differently in school (and in society). Staff and administrators need to come to terms with that FACT. This fact should direct our approach in how we administer discipline and understand that the student and parent is often coming from that place of feeling discriminated against and we need to be mindful of their perspective. (13)**
- **We need to recognize that people of color are aware of the overrepresentation of their population in public systems (DFS, penal system, behavioral schools, etc.) and they often EXPECT their outcome to feed into these same broken systems that studies support continue to suppress this population. Systems need to offer access to equal opportunities, and our focus in achieving our goal should provide for pathways to attaining positive outcomes for this high-risk population. (13)**

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### Human Capital

**A sound solution shall address personnel recruitment and training.**

- **Every child deserves competent instructions. (1)**
- **Professional development that is focused and is followed up with monitoring that ensures fidelity in the classroom can help and support underperforming teachers who are desirous of improving. We should support and applaud teachers who are motivated to get better (4)**
- **Teachers and staff act in good faith, but science has shown that implicit biases impact the assessments of a most people, including teachers and staff. It is important for leaders to train all teachers and staff as to how to understand implicit bias and how to counter it. (4)**
- **Culturally responsive teaching is central to student learning. (10)**
- **While I understand that, in some cases, medications are necessary for some**
- **students, I do not support using drugs as a way of controlling behavior in**
- **the classroom. Teachers need to have the resources and time to use non-**
- **chemical techniques to help these students on task and on track. (12)**

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### Partnership

**A sound solution shall demonstrate partnership. "Power with" is more effective than "power over."**

- **Students live in multiple systems (e.g. home, school, work, etc.). Educational engagement is most likely when students feel supported across contexts. Sustainable behavioral change is most likely to occur when interventions or services are coordinated in multiple aspects of students' lives. (11)**
- **Parent/family and community partnerships are crucial to student success.**
- **What can the community do? (2)**
- **SEOAC represents the community. Accordingly, whatever work the SEOAC undertakes, continued and continuous outreach to the community. This is key for SEOAC's legitimacy and long-term success and political viability of its findings and recommendations. SEOAC should be transparent. It should also communicate its work and findings through media, radio talk shows, etc. Consider posting minutes on CCSD website. (4)**
- **Positive Perspectives on Parents and Families of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students – There is an ongoing participation in dialog between committee members that students and parents are valuable. (8)**
- **What happens in the classroom matters to students: student behavior is affected by and affects (reciprocal process) teacher and peer actions. (11)**
- **Many times the principal at the school has too much power. They can make students who have a hard time in class have a difficult time at school all together. They make the teachers feel inadequate. There needs to be a team effort- parents, students, community, teacher, and principal. There need to be consequences to the parent/guardian of the failing kid. School is NOT a drop-off facility for 6 hours. The commitment to education continues at home and in the community. (6)**
- **Discipline is necessary, but it must be administered with "common sense." Zero tolerance rules take initiative and experience out of the hands of school administrators. Each school needs to decide who will administer discipline (whether deans, assistant principals or principal) and parents must always be involved with the discipline process. (12)**

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### **Safety and Respect**

**A sound solution shall create safety for students and a climate of respect among stakeholders.**

- **This is a tough, emotionally charged topic and needs to be handled with respect for all parties that will be impacted by these policies. (5)**
- **All children should feel safe and secure in their place of learning. (5)**
- **We are sensitive to one another and respect all multiple opinions of the committee members. (8)**
- **Often students are bullied or harassed at school but afraid to ask for help due to repercussions being labeled a snitch. When they defend themselves they are also disciplined in the same manner as the perpetrator. This becomes a difficult dilemma for those students that have asked for help but, receiving none, continues to be a victim. Every child deserves a safe and productive learning environment, and it should be the schools responsibility to deliver. (13)**

### **Research**

**A sound solution shall develop actions rooted in research.**

- **Massage the demographic profiles and identify over-representation. (2)**
- **Develop a plan for action. (2)**
- **Identify the problem. (2)**
- **Decisions related to student behavior should be made light of what is best for the student after considering all. (11)**

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### Additional Thoughts

- Investments in early grades K-3 are the most efficient when addressing the needs of vulnerable children. (4)
- We need to look forward and break away from the past. The Prime 6 situation is not fully resolved, and that history is relevant to explain community relations and expectations. However, the challenges that are facing the District are so large that we should together reframe the challenges at a more global level and we should be willing to address the equal opportunities of all children who struggle on their very first day of school, or who somehow have fallen by the wayside in their educational progress. (4)
- What if instead of letting all kids under age 18 (yes, I know education is a federally mandated program) go to high school and having to raise graduation rates, what if CCSD were to be more selective about high school entrance and offer on the job training/vocational schools and alternative programs for those who really don't want to be in HS? Offer additional school options. Yes, we have magnet schools, but now magnet programs have become a place for higher achieving students, rather than vocational training sites. That lottery number should give CCSD an indication of how many kids WANT to succeed and hindered by their lower achieving peers? (6)
- Are there "life success" courses offered at HS? Courses would be a look at someone who had an HS diploma and the amount of money they would make over the course of a lifetime vs. someone who dropped out. This course would be like the Driver's Ed course Red Asphalt. This course could also include job shadowing from various community organizers. (6)
- "Once social change begins, it cannot be reversed. You cannot uneducated the person who has learned to read. You cannot humiliate the person who feels pride. You cannot oppress the people who are not afraid anymore. We have seen the future, and the future is ours..We cannot seek achievement for ourselves and forget about progress and prosperity for our community... Our ambitions must be broad enough to include the aspirations and needs of others, for their sakes and for our own." Cesar Chavez (7)