Design a discipline code with staff that reflects board policy and provides a framework for the change of a school from K-5 to K-4

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DESIGN A DISCIPLINE CODE WITH STAFF THAT REFLECTS BOARD POLICY
AND PROVIDES A FRAMEWORK FOR THE CHANGE OF A SCHOOL
FROM K-5 TO K-4

By
Margaret L. Haynes

A Master’s Thesis
Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the
Master of Arts Degree
of
The Graduate School
at
Rowan University
April 12, 2002

Approved by,
Professor

Date Approved
April 12, 2002
ABSTRACT

Margaret L. Haynes

Design a Discipline Code
With Staff Reflecting Board Policy for the Change of a School From K-5 to K-4
2002
Dr. Ronald Capasso
Educational Leadership

The purpose of this study was to develop an acceptable set of discipline guidelines developed by the teachers for the new K-4 structure to begin the next school year. The intern wanted to determine whether a discipline code created by the teachers as stakeholders was more acceptable to the staff because it helps to improve the learning environment. The committee was comprised of one teacher from each of the K-4 levels as well as a resource teacher. The intern served as facilitator. The principal was also invited to attend the meetings. This project took about seven months to complete. The first meeting occurred in September where the purpose was explained, goals set and members assigned tasks of obtaining information. A questionnaire was formulated and distributed to the staff of the building. Over the next few months all information was reviewed and discussed. The information that was chosen for the discipline guidelines had to be in line with the School Board Policy on discipline. Data collected informally through interviews was summarized using charts. The questionnaire results were presented in a report to the committee. The entire staff received the report and findings at a spring meeting. The plan will be implemented in the fall.
The problem in this study was to determine whether a discipline code formulated by teachers as stakeholders that improves the learning environment would be more acceptable to the staff of that building. It was found that the guideline paralleled Board Policy and was more meaningful to the teachers.
Acknowledgements

This study was done as part of the requirements of the Master of Arts Degree of the Graduate School at Rowan University. Two people in particular, Dr. Ronald Capasso, Chair of the Educational Leadership Program and Dr. Theodore Johnson, my university mentor, were instrumental in serving as role models for this challenging process of becoming an educational leader, and also assured me that this was a goal that I was quite capable of attaining.

Dr. Anne Morris, my principal, served as my field mentor. She gave me the opportunities to experience being an educational leader of an elementary building. Thanks to her I was able to gain the background, skill and knowledge of how to handle most situations that are common to elementary principals.

One of my primary projects this year was creating a committee to do a study on our building discipline and to construct a new discipline code for the next school year when our building changes from being a K-5 to a K-4. The group of teachers who volunteered to serve on the committee proved to be invaluable. They gave me the ability to work with staff and use many of the skills needed to be an effective school leader. Thank you to those who served on the discipline committee: Andy Champion, Maggie Cipollone, Megan Horn, Karen Phillips, Robin Pomeroy, Matt Sax, Kim Trace and Angela Wheeler.

Finally, I want to thank my children, Jeff and Julie Haynes. You understood through all of this and have continually supported me as I worked toward this goal.
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Focus of the Study

It is important that both teachers and students know the discipline code of the school. It gives a sense of structure that is important for the learning environment. This was a point of concern for the staff. The intern planned to form a committee of interested staff volunteers in the fall of 2001 to work on this project during the year. Initially it was important for the staff to know the Board Policy and law on discipline issues. Then we discussed goals we hoped to accomplish through this project. Once that was established, the committee obtained samples of current classroom policies. They also investigated the detention practices of other elementary schools within the district and outside the district with a similar elementary structure. From there we established further guidelines and formulated a discipline framework that accomplished our goals.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this project was to develop an acceptable discipline framework developed by teachers. The project resulted in the development of a building discipline code for the new K-4 system that will begin in the fall of 2002. Its foundation was the current School Board discipline policy. This project enabled the teachers as stakeholders to formulate a discipline framework that was acceptable to administration and staff.

During this project, the intern enhanced her leadership skills through consensus building. Under Knowledge of Standard 1 of the ISLLC Standards it states “Effective Consensus-building and negotiation skills.” This process required both. The teachers
had many opinions about disciplining children. In order for the committee to decide which was the most appropriate means of disciplining there was much discussion, comparison and debate. As a leader it was my job to lead the group to consensus.

This project ultimately brings change to the organization. As stated earlier the district is a K-4 beginning in the fall of 2002. Many of the upper elementary teachers in our building will be moving to the new fifth/sixth grade school. Most of our students will be primary levels. The new discipline framework needed to reflect that particular student population. The committee discussed the change to the school culture with the absence of the fifth grades and its effect on the types of discipline the committee needed to develop. As stated under Dispositions of the ISLLC Standard 2 it is the job of a school administrator to provide a safe and supportive learning environment. Through this project the intern accomplished that goal.

The intern wanted to determine whether a discipline code created by the teachers as stakeholders was more acceptable to the staff. Interested teachers were part of the discipline code committee who initially familiarized themselves with the Board Policy on discipline issues and set goals based on that Board Policy foundation. The committee informally gathered the discipline practices of the other district elementary schools before the committee formulated the framework. Discipline code information from other elementary schools outside the district with a K-4 system was also collected. All of this data was studied and discussed before the new school discipline framework was completed.
Definitions

**DFG-** District Factor Grouping is a system that provides a means of ranking schools by their socioeconomic status (SES). The grouping designation is based on information available from the census and includes the following: percent in community with no high school diploma; percent with some college; occupation; population density; income; unemployment and poverty. There are eight groupings starting with A which designates the lowest socio-economic level and includes B, CD, DE, FG, GH, I and J. These groupings allow comparison of districts with similar profiles for purposes of state aid and assessment information.

**Classified Student**—a student who has been tested by the child study team and was determined to require special support services within the school/classroom setting.

**ESL**—a program in K-12 education that requires a daily developmental second language program of up to two periods of instruction based on student needs that teaches listening comprehension, speaking, reading and writing in English using second language teaching techniques. The programs also incorporate the cultural aspects of the students’ experiences into their ESL instruction.

**504 Student**—a student who is considered 504 falls into a similar category as a student who is classified under IDEA. A 504 student, however, does not have to meet the criteria for a specific eligibility category as a student who is considered special education. A 504 student can qualify for certain services, but not quite as many as a student who qualifies under IDEA. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act are two different federal statutes. They both require
individualized educational programs for students with disabilities. Section 504 is not as specific as IDEA.

*Head Teacher*- a certificated teacher who works closely with the principal assisting with administrative duties. The head teacher in this district does not observe or evaluate staff. There is a head teacher in each of the elementary schools in the district. All but two are in the classroom. The two largest elementary schools have head teachers who are not in the classroom, but are assigned an office.

*Heterogeneous Grouping*- refers to classes of students that contain varying intellectual abilities. This grouping practice is associated with efforts to allow all students the benefits of access to high-level instructional practices.

*ISLLC Standards*- are educational standards for school leaders created by the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium. The Consortium was founded in 1994 under the auspices of the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO). ISLLC is comprised of thirty-two education agencies and thirteen education administration associations that worked cooperatively to formulate an education policy framework for school leadership.

*New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards* – the CCCS are standards for the seven academic and five workplace readiness areas adopted by the State Board of Education on May 1, 1996 and as, in the future, may be revised by the State Board. These standards communicate the common expectations for student achievement throughout the thirteen years of public education. The standards are articulated in the following subject areas: visual and performing arts, comprehensive health/physical education, language arts literacy, mathematics, science, social studies and world
languages. The five cross content areas for workplace readiness are: career planning, use of technology information and other tools, critical thinking/decision making/problem solving, self-management and safety principles.

**QAAR**- is the Quality Assurance Annual Report provided by the chief school administrator to the public which includes the following: implementation of school-level plans, achievement of performance objectives, school report cards, professional development activities, condition of school facilities, status of mandated program reviews and community support data.

**Resource Room Teacher**- a teacher who provides special education services for a classified student either within the regular classroom setting or within a small group setting outside the regular education classroom. This specialist works with children with disabilities and acts as a consultant to other teachers by providing materials and methods to help children who are having difficulty within the regular classroom. The resource teacher may also work from a centralized resource room within a school where appropriate materials may be housed.

**Limitations**

The staff volunteers were from Haynes School, one of the largest elementary schools in the district. The discipline framework was based on those concerns unique to that building. Once the information was gathered from the other sources it became apparent to the committee which ideas would work in our school and which ones did not. The building principal was invited to attend the meetings. She received a summary of those meetings she was unable to attend. All decisions reflected input from the committee and principal. The decisions were in accordance with Board Policy.
The intern had committee meetings at least twice a month from September 2001 through March of 2002. It was understood, however, that this might not always be feasible. When that happened it was then a matter of certain committee members sharing their research/findings with the intern informally and the intern would then pass it in to the other members either verbally or through a memo or summary.

Setting

The community that this school district is located in is a South Jersey township located approximately 10 miles from Philadelphia. It is located in Camden County. The population of this town is approximately 35,000 and covers about 11 square miles. At one time it would have been strictly considered a bedroom community, but over the past 25-30 years it has changed into a blue-collar industrialized community. The population has become more diverse. Currently the population is 7,935 Black, 4,444 Hispanic, 1000 Asian, 250 other and the remaining population is Caucasian. The politics has changed from being Republican for many years to primarily Democratic. The form of government is one of a township committee of five members who in turn selects a mayor and deputy mayor from the committee. The township government has close ties with the Board of Education. Several Board of Education employees who reside in the township hold high political offices. A former Board of Education member also sits on the township committee. There is one minority on the committee who is currently the mayor. He is an administrator in the district. There are no females on the committee.

The median household income in this township is $45,311. It is up somewhat from the 1997 median income of $41,685. The median value of homes is $113,673 and the average asking price for a home is $87,735. Currently there are 7.4% of the homes
that are valued at less than $50,000 and .5% valued in the $200,000-$300,000 range. The majority of the homes, 56.1%, are valued in the $50,000-$100,000 range.

The community generally supports school budget elections. In the past 32 years that the intern has worked in the district she can only remember the budget being defeated three times. Recently the district had a bond referendum for building additions and new schools that was passed by a close margin. In addition to repairs and additions to several of the elementary schools, high school and middle school it also called for the building of a new elementary school to replace one that needed to be replaced due to its unacceptable condition and the building of a new fifth/sixth grade school adjacent to its current middle school which was a sixth through eighth configuration. These changes to the buildings enabled the district to change from a k-5 to k-4 elementary configuration. It will change the middle school configuration because of the new fifth/sixth grade school. Next school year the middle school will be a seventh/eighth configuration. The high school will remain nine through twelve.

There are 9 elementary schools in this town. One of the elementary schools is an early learning center for pre-k and pre-k handicapped students. There are about 165 students at that facility. Another one of its elementary schools is also specialized. It is a magnet school that draws from students all over the district. It offers specialized programs for motivated students. It is not a gifted program and it doesn’t offer basic skills since the students must be at or above grade level. It started back in 1983 as part of a state mandated desegregation plan. It has an extended school day and an enriched curriculum. Since its inception it had a full day kindergarten. Eligible children are selected by a lottery. There are currently about 135 students attending that school. The
other 7 elementary schools have a total student population of about 2700. The middle school has about 1500 students and the high school also has about 1500 students. The district has an alternative school that works as an extension to the high school. It is located in a separate building within the district. At times the school houses some middle school students and the rest are high school students. There are approximately 27 students attending that facility. The fifth/sixth grade facility will not be ready to house both levels until the 2002-2003 school year. It should be noted that starting this year the district had a full day kindergarten for the first time.

The district has a nine member Board of Education. This past year there were eight men and one woman on the Board. The Board was a proactive group that was very involved in their community both educationally and politically.

There was a new Superintendent to the district that started in April 2001. He was an experienced Superintendent from another community in South Jersey. His former community was a smaller K-12 district. He had served in that community for approximately ten years as its Superintendent.

The operating budget of the district is approximately $49,500,000. The average cost per pupil is about $9,525. The New Jersey Department of Education has ranked this district within the DFG at a CD level. Approximately 70% hold BA/BS degrees while about 28% hold MA/MS degrees. There are about 2% with PhD/EdD degrees.

The school in which this project took place was the second largest elementary school in population in the district. There were approximately 615 students in the building. This school was unique because it was the only elementary school in the district that housed the elementary ESL students. The population of that ESL program is
spread throughout the K-5 student population. There are about 78 students being serviced by that program. Due to scheduling the ESL students were usually placed in one or two of the classrooms per grade level depending on the number of students at that particular level. It was heterogeneous grouping at each grade level for all students.

This year was the first year for all day kindergarten in all of the elementary schools. There were three kindergarten classes in the building. The overflow of kindergarten students was in another building this year. Next year when the fifth grades are sent to the new school all kindergarten classes will be able to fit within the building. There were four first grades, five-second grades, four third grades, four fourth grades and five fifth grades. There were 25 regular classroom teachers. There were two resource teachers and four basic skills teachers. There were also special area teachers on this staff. There were teachers for art, vocal music, computer lab and physical education. There were two instrumental music teachers. One of the teachers was for band and the other for the strings program. Other certificated staff members were the nurse, guidance counselor and head teacher. There is one principal in this building. The head teacher assisted the principal with her duties other than observations and teacher supervision.

There were staff members who were support staff. There was a school secretary, two-day custodians and three night custodians who worked in this school. There were also eight assistants who worked a variety of assignments. Some worked in the office and others in the classroom. They all helped during lunch both in the cafeteria and out on the playground.

There were about forty classified students in the building that were serviced by the resource teachers. Also, there were twelve students who were 504 students that
received special accommodations from their classroom teacher. The gifted program is housed at another school in the district. All recommended students were tested in the spring and then attend the designated school in the fall for that program.

There was a strong curriculum in the district. It was developed jointly by administration and staff over the years and is in line with the New Jersey Core Content Curriculum Standards. The elementary students received instruction in the basic subjects of language arts, mathematics, science and social studies. They also received specialized instruction in art, music, health, safety, computer, remedial reading and remedial mathematics. During the 1993-1994 school year, science labs were introduced into three of the larger elementary schools. The students from the smaller elementary schools are bused in for instruction several times a week. This elementary school houses one of the labs. The third, fourth and fifth grade students are serviced by the lab.

Our school has diversity of languages because of the ESL program. The student population in this school had 11% of LEP (Limited English Proficient) students. According to recent statistics in the QAAR about 84% speak English, 9% Vietnamese, 6% Spanish and 1% others. Chinese and Punjabi were the other languages spoken here by several students. The mobility of our student population in the school was 15.8%, which was slightly higher than the state average of 14.3%. The average number of students assigned to a classroom was 24. Again, this number was slightly higher than the state average of 21.4. The percent of administrators and faculty in this school with Bachelors, Masters or Doctoral degree was as follows: 67% with BA/BS, 32% with MA/MS and 1% with a PhD/EdD.
The school has an active PTA. They raise close to $20,000 a year to provide extras for the children. These monies are used for assembly programs, Spirit Day, book fair as well as a number of supplies such as homework books and school folders.

**Significance**

This study improves the teacher’s role in the implementation of discipline practices. Through their committee involvement the teachers provided a structured framework that makes it easier for their colleagues to determine how best to handle student problems when they will occur. It also delineated in a logical way which infractions the teacher should handle and which infractions the principal or head teacher should handle. The implementation of this framework is beneficial to both students and staff. It helps to improve the classroom-learning environment that leads to a successful school experience for students.

It was important to involve the teachers as stakeholders in the development of a building discipline code because they are the people who deal with disciplining children the most during a typical school day. There were times of frustration when teachers would question the principal or head teacher regarding discipline procedures. It was decided by the intern that by familiarizing the staff with Board discipline policy at the elementary level as well as the procedures that needed to be followed within the special education laws regarding discipline, it would serve as a strong foundation in assisting them formulate a discipline framework that would serve our K-4 students for the 2002-2003 school year.

The teachers, through this committee process, were able to better understand which infractions needed to be handled by the classroom teacher and which would need
to be addressed by the principal or head teacher. Probably the most important outcome of this project was that the staff could see the importance of an acceptable discipline framework and its role in the enhancement and improvement of the learning environment.

**Organization of the Study**

This project took about seven months to complete. It started in August 2001 with the intern sending out letters to all staff indicating the project would take place and an explanation of the reason why it was needed. At that time the intern asked for staff members to consider serving on the committee that would start their work later in September.

The remaining chapters of this thesis reflects the process of what went into making this a successful committee that formulated a discipline framework for this building as it will be in 2002-2003, namely a K-4 school. The preliminary work done by the intern and committee played an important role in reaching the outcome.

The intern will explain in this section of the paper how each of the following chapters reflects the project. In Chapter 2 of this paper the intern will review the literature that was researched. The information that the intern was looking for during this process needed to explain the importance of staff members (stakeholders) playing a role in the formulation of policies (i.e. building discipline codes) and whether it would make a difference in attitudes toward the proposed policy. Often a top down decision in this area is one that may not relate to the culture of a school. The intern was looking for research that provided studies that proved those who are closest to the source know best and
therefore since they often know best would be more accepting of policy written by them as the experts.

The intern also reviewed literature that focused on group dynamics within committees. It was important for the intern to involve all of the volunteer members of this group. The committee members were new to this process and the intern wanted each member to feel they had made equal and important contributions to the success of the outcome.

Another type of literature that the intern reviewed were studies that indicated the improvement of the school culture and learning environment were due to improved school discipline. This aspect was very important to the project. In this day and age of accountability and test scores it was necessary that these readings project this as one of the most important outcomes of this study.

The third chapter of the thesis discusses the various areas related to the research design used for this project. The first area discussed describes the selection of the site and population. The staff that served on this committee were volunteers from the K-4 teachers at this elementary school site. It was decided by the intern to limit the committee to the K-4 teachers because they will be the likely staff working under this discipline framework. They are the stakeholders who will have to live with it.

The next area discussed in chapter 3 reviews the data gathering procedures. It addresses the qualitative data collection techniques that were used to obtain information for this study. This section tells how the committee and intern informally interviewed teachers in the building to collect ideas on discipline concerns. This part also explains how the committee and intern expanded their inquiries to include other elementary
schools in the district as well as other local districts. Other data addressed in this chapter will be written discipline codes from other districts, observations of classroom discipline procedures and discipline procedures used by the principal and head teacher.

Another area that will be described in the third chapter will explain how the committee members used their data collection when gathering information. The committee members gathered much of the data informally. A questionnaire was given to the K-4 staff after our first committee meeting to obtain their input regarding the need for a more formalized discipline code and ideas on what they perceive as problem areas that need to be addressed.

Finally, this chapter will address the procedures used in data analysis. This section emphasizes the importance of organizing the gathered data in an organized form. The informal data that was verbally presented was listed in the minutes as well as on flipcharts. The group also summarized the results on a chart for easy accessibility. It explains how the important brainstorming ideas will be extracted from the discussions and placed under key concepts of the board policy that it parallels. Results of informal interviews and other data will also be summarized so that all of the members can review it easily. Important ideas from the discipline codes of other districts as well as common practices used by other in district elementary schools will also be compiled for easy evaluation.

The findings of the research are found in the fourth chapter. As mentioned earlier in this paper the School Board Policy served as the foundation of this project. Surprisingly many teachers were unfamiliar with the specifics of the elementary discipline policy as it applied to regular education students. Some of the committee did
not realize that special education students also had certain regulations that applied to them based on law. This chapter will address how this knowledge changed the views and opinions of some staff when it came time to actually formulate the code.

The information regarding discipline codes and detention practices of other buildings in district as well as schools out of district brought some interesting perspectives to this study.

The committee reviewed and discussed the written discipline codes from five surrounding districts. All of the codes that were reviewed were from similar K-4 districts. The committee also reviewed the code from two schools that were a fifth/sixth grade level. It was found that the basic rules that each school/district expected their students to follow were similar. The committee discovered that some schools within the same district had more structured levels of consequences, but even those schools did allow some areas for discretionary decisions by the teacher or principal. It was also noted and agreed upon by the majority of the committee that the middle school guidelines that were reviewed though appropriate for that level were too harsh and too detailed to carry out in our school setting. The committee appeared to agree with some structure within reason when it came to writing our guidelines. They also agreed that at the elementary level it was necessary to make decisions with consideration as to which child committed the infraction. All agreed that objectivity was important when it came to consequences, but realize that very young children often bring unique problems when it came to the severity of punishment. In the beginning of this project some of the committee felt the same consequences should be given to each child no matter what the situation; however, after much discussion of experiences that some teachers had as well as the review of
other discipline codes the views were changed. Another aspect that was debated was which offenses should be handled by the classroom teacher and which ones the principal or head teacher should handle. Many thought that the principal should establish a detention room for unruly students. Some of the group thought that the principal or head teacher should then oversee the detention room on a daily basis. Others did not like the idea. They felt it would cause some teachers to send all of their problems, minor or severe, out of the room for others to handle rather than the classroom teacher addressing them. However, the principal is not in favor of this method of detention where all students are housed in one room. The principal feels that this is not the best choice of staff usage. The school needs as many staff members outside as possible during the lunch period to supervise the students and to maintain a safe playground environment. The idea of either the principal or head teacher staying in for the both lunch periods with only teaching assistants outside supervising students is not the best choice in her mind. She also does not agree with the idea of young children being inside all day and not having the opportunity to go outside for some playtime and socialization. It was due to the preceding issues that further options needed to be studied.

One of the options was for a group of interested teachers to group together and rotate having detention in their classroom once or twice a week. Many thought this would be a viable solution. It would mean, depending on how many decide to participate, a teacher would only have to do this maybe once every few weeks.

The information that was gathered by the committee revealed to the group that some changes were needed for our building as we make the transition from a K-5 to K-4 school for the 2002-2003 school year. It was also obvious to the committee that it would
be most important for the staff to be informed of these new guidelines before the end of the 2001-2002 school year. The committee also felt it was most important that the teachers become familiar with the Board Policy for elementary students and also become knowledgeable about special education students and how discipline applies to them. They also agreed that the new discipline guidelines would be reviewed again in the fall for new staff.

It was important to the committee that the rest of the teachers knew the reasoning of the decisions that went into the formulation of this code. They became aware that just as their views on certain discipline issues changed as they discussed and reviewed much of the gathered information; the committee wanted the rest of the staff to be given the reasons behind some of the more controversial changes to the current discipline practices. It was significant to the committee that the rest of the staff know that these changes came about based on policies, law and common practices found in district and out of district.

The fifth chapter of the thesis focuses on several matters. The first matter that will be discussed will be the conclusions that were reached by the committee and intern. One of the most visible conclusions was that a new set of discipline guidelines was needed for the new school changes for the next school year. The need for a more structured framework that has flexibility and will be easy for the teachers to utilize was something on which all of the committee members agreed. Also, the levels of consequences were something that the school did not have prior to this. All committee members agreed that introducing this new set of guidelines to the staff and students was of utmost importance in order for it to be successful. The current staff would be introduced to the new guidelines in the spring of 2002. The students and parents would
be introduced to it in the fall of 2002 and at Back-to-School Night for further clarification. Sometime during the late winter or early spring of 2003, the committee and intern will assess the implementation of the new discipline guidelines to see if it is working and what changes or additions may be needed to ensure its continued success. This will be done primarily through staff input.

It is important for the intern to reflect on the process of the goal of establishing a new set of discipline guidelines for the newly structured K-4 school. The ability to lead a set of teachers to formulate this framework was an interesting and exciting project. Common sense prevailed and many of the participants who seemed adamant about issues in the beginning were gradually persuaded to soften their feelings or change their minds entirely when information was presented in a rational way. Consensus building was needed in certain areas, but all were in agreement that if this would lead to a better learning environment, then they were willing to agree with the majority.
Discipline has always been a concern for teachers. This project improves the teacher’s role in the implementation of discipline practices. Through their committee involvement, the teachers provided a structured framework that made it easier for their colleagues to determine how best to handle student problems when they occur. It also delineates in a logical way which infractions the classroom teacher should handle and which infractions the principal or head teacher should handle. This delineation is important since any good policy needs to distinguish between categories of offenses. By establishing the difference between these categories, it will clarify that minor incidents may be treated flexibly while the more serious will require consequences that are set and known to those within the school (Gaustad, 1992).

The involvement of teachers in the formulation of a discipline code was important because they are the stakeholders when it comes to implementing the code. Often top down policies do not have the exact fit of a particular school culture. Public schools in our state must follow the policies of their Board of Education. However, it has been my experience that many employees in general are not familiar with those policies. Therefore, conflict and frustration arise when teachers perceive discipline one way, but Board Policy states something different. Review of our Board Policy on elementary school discipline proved to be beneficial. The review of discipline practices for special education students according to federal law was also necessary for teachers before the
task of the committee could start. Unless the teachers understood those two important pieces of information, the goal could not have been reached.

In this chapter, the intern reviews the literature that was researched. The information that the intern was looking for during this process needed to explain the importance of school discipline in the improvement of the school culture and learning environment. This aspect was very important to the project. In this day and age of accountability and test scores, it was necessary that these readings project this as one of the most important outcomes of this study.

The definition of what good discipline is, is a nebulous one and difficult to universally define by educators. However, most educators and students will agree that without good discipline, effective teaching and learning cannot thrive (Haroun & O’Hanlon, 1997). The Federal Government further reinforced the importance of this philosophy by the passage of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Amendments of 1997 (P.L. 105-17; hereafter IDEA ’97) that became law on June 4, 1997. It was through the passage of this law that Congress made it clear the major goal of this legislation was to make schools safe and orderly so they are conducive to learning. It provided school districts the vehicle needed to discipline students with disabilities (Drasgow & Yell, 2001).

The information that the intern was looking for during this process also needed to explain the importance of staff members (stakeholders) playing a role in the formulation of policies (i.e. building discipline codes) and whether it would make a difference in attitudes toward the proposed policy. Often a top down decision in this area is one that may not relate to the culture of a school. The intern was looking for research that
provided studies which proved those who are closest to the source know best; and, therefore, since they often know best, would be more accepting of policy written by them as the experts.

The intern also reviewed literature that focused on group dynamics within committees. It was important for the intern to involve all of the volunteer members of this group. The committee members were new to this process and the intern wanted each member to feel they had made equal and important contributions to the success of the outcome.

One of the primary concerns of this study was to formulate an acceptable building discipline framework that will enhance the learning environment. Teachers know that teaching and learning are difficult to accomplish without a disciplined environment. Students find it difficult to stay focused when the teacher’s efforts are diverted to the continuous disciplining of one or more students in a classroom setting. Likewise, other school personnel such as the building administrator, head teacher, special area teachers, resource teacher and support staff find it similarly disconcerting when certain students routinely draw negative attention to themselves and keep staff members and administrators focused on their behavior rather than the task at hand.

Initially the committee needed to address our school climate and decide whether it had a positive or negative impact on the learning environment. The group defined the school climate and culture as the feelings and perceptions of the student body and staff toward the school. Many things influence the climate such as teacher interactions with students: assembly programs, routine activities such as morning announcements, breakfast and lunch programs, awards ceremonies, Jump-a-Thon, holiday programs,
value of the month awards, and feelings of safety. It was necessary to assess the school climate since the school environment can influence student-learning outcomes positively or negatively. School climate mirrors the positive or negative feelings of a school environment and directly or indirectly has an impact on learning (Peterson & Skiba, 2001).

Safe and orderly schools are important to a school’s culture. Research has found that positive school culture not only increases student achievement and incentive to learn, but promotes teacher satisfaction and growth (Stolp, 1994).

Our school is known for its caring teachers and views this characteristic as important to the foundation of a positive school climate. The teachers in the building work collaboratively in many areas with students, parents, support staff and the principal. By doing this, they help to further promote a healthy culture for our school (Stolp, 1994). The principal of the school shares this philosophy and is visible daily within the school, cafeteria and out on the playground during recess. One of the key elements to an effective school is for the district to invest in the prevention of disruptive behavior (Horner, Sugai & Horner, 2000). The committee identified those steps that our school system has done to respond to this intervention tactic.

The two largest elementary schools have a head teacher. This was instituted about ten years ago by the district because they recognized the need for a principal of a large elementary building to have an extra pair of eyes and hands. It is important for the principal to be a strong educational leader and not spend large amounts of time disciplining students. The head teacher position has proved beneficial in assisting the principal. In our school, the head teacher is visible and proactive when it comes to
discipline. The same philosophy is shared with both the head teacher and principal. The committee discussed the importance of being proactive when it comes to student misbehavior. The general feeling was that punitive methods such as suspension harm those students who need to stay in school the most. Research points to the use of preventative measures as the best route to follow when it comes to discipline; however most committee members agreed that flexibility was the key. Each student and situation needed its own unique solution (Gushee, 1984).

In addition to having full and part-time head teachers in the district at the elementary level to assist in the buildings, the district has instituted other prevention programs to help with discipline-related concerns. There is a peer-mediation program introduced at the fourth and fifth grade levels. The purpose of that program is to train selected students to use strategies that help to avoid violence and confrontation. The use of these strategies by the trained peer mediators help to solve many playground and classroom disputes in a way that is more acceptable to the students who are trying to resolve their differences (Bodine & Crawford, 1998).

For those students considered at risk, the district has established SRC. These are School Resource Committees that involve the parent, principal, teacher, guidance counselor and a representative from the Child Study Team. There is a SRC at each of the building sites. The purpose is to review the concerns and begin levels of assistance to the child. They meet every few weeks to discuss the progress as well as mutual concerns. Over a period of time if it is felt that there continues to be concerns, the Child Study becomes more involved in the process. Further testing is sometimes involved. This SRC is beneficial as an efficient at-risk program for most children.
The kindergarten program dealing with values is an important program in the district. The guidance counselor in each school visits those classes over a period of several weeks utilizing puppets and role-playing to teach the concepts of right and wrong choices. At the first grade level, there is currently a program called Forest Friends. This is taught by an outside mental health agency that visits the classrooms to explain about feelings. The agency also uses puppets and role-playing. There is also a program targeted at the second grade level that helps them become more aware of drug and alcohol abuse and negative peer pressures in everyday living. The drug education coordinator in our district teaches this over a six-week period. At the end of the program, a ceremony is held where the participants receive a certificate and pin to honor the completion of the program. The nationwide DARE program is taught at the fifth grade level by the local police department. It is a drug awareness program that spans about three months. The policeman visits weekly. At the end of the unit, the students have a graduation where they receive shirts and are individually recognized for participating in the program. It was felt by the committee that all of these prevention systems were important to the school climate and praised the district for implementing these programs over the years.

Parental involvement is important to the learning environment. The link between home and school provides a strong foundation for children. The children see that both entities value learning and expect them to strive toward the goals that this partnership develops for them to reach.

The parents of our school community support their children through a variety of ways. They are active in the PTA and help in the many fundraisers that the group holds
throughout the year. The money benefits the children by providing programs and activities throughout the year. Some parents volunteer in the classroom throughout the year by helping with class projects, holiday activities, class trips and Spirit Day. It is also evident to many committee members that the parents support their children by helping them with homework as well as reading to them frequently.

Important to the success of this project was participation by the staff as stakeholders. There were several important steps that the intern needed to address before the volunteer committee could proceed. One of the first steps was to make sure the committee clearly understood the Board Policy regarding discipline at the elementary level. It has been my experience that often teachers are unaware of the specifics of district policies on discipline. The School District's Philosophy strongly parallels most research. It clearly states that it is fundamental to have an orderly school environment in order to have an effective instructional program. The District's Philosophy also feels that an effective system is reflected in student behavior. It is also important, according to the Philosophy, that students need to assume responsibility for their actions as well as the consequences of these actions.

This review of the recently updated district elementary discipline code proved to be beneficial. In addition to the expanded format that covers the rights and responsibilities of students and teachers, it also provided general school rules and classroom discipline plans. The handbook gave detailed infractions and possible corrective actions that clarified some discipline scenarios that have been experienced by some of the committee members.
The federal laws regarding discipline and the special education child are also often unfamiliar to the regular classroom teacher. Several committee members were under the impression that educationally handicapped pupils were not subject to the same discipline procedures as non-handicapped students. Therefore, a thorough review of both of these important policies and rules was necessary before the committee could proceed. Through this review exercise, it became clearer that for the most part, the educationally handicapped are subject to the same discipline procedures as the regular education students. The group also discussed under which circumstances educationally handicapped could not be disciplined. It was beneficial to review some of the highlights of IDEA 1997.

In a recent article about the Constructive Discipline Program, a proven discipline approach for school personnel, Mayer (1999) clearly points out the importance of having the stakeholders represented when working on something as important as a discipline framework. He stated that, “Rules tend to be better accepted, understood, supported, and enforced when all concerned parties have been included in drawing up a conduct code” (Mayer, 1999, p.36).

This type of committee project requires the use of the collaborative process when it comes to decision-making. Collaborative processes are beneficial in this type of group effort in that it provides stakeholders the opportunity to have ownership and a sense of commitment when they actually use the end product, which in this case is the discipline framework (Johnston & Hedemann, 1994).

The use of the teachers from this school who would remain in the building next year when the school becomes a K-4 building was important to the process. These are
the stakeholders that would be most affected. In general, the commonly accepted view is that decisions made by those who are closest to the situation and ultimately must implement the decision as in this case a discipline framework, are the best group to formulate it. One of the obvious reasons why this is true is that they will ultimately have to endure the outcome if there are problems with the new policy. They have great interest in seeing that the outcomes prove to be successful.

The group dynamics in a decision-making processes is something that one always needs to be concerned about. It was important that all members were involved in this collaborative process since it was formulating a building policy that they would have to live with on a daily basis. The committee members needed to share equally the responsibility of participating so that the finished product reflected group consensus and not that of one or two individuals. Though many of the committee members had worked together for many years and were congenial, they had distinct ideas about discipline. Reaching consensus, due to the differing ideas on this issue of discipline, was not always an easy task. Using the collaborative process to make decisions about this framework is not always automatic (Johnston & Hedemann, 1994).

The importance of laying the groundwork before the committee began its goal setting was of utmost importance. As mentioned earlier, the review of the Board Policy and Elementary Discipline Code as well as the federal regulations about educationally handicapped students proved to be invaluable. This process assisted the group in clarifying what the district and federal expectations were. In some cases, it helped to provide solutions to some questions the committee came to the table with. One of the
most obvious goals the group discussed was just how to determine which actions require consequences and how do we determine the severity of the consequence.

A common thread through much research about schools with effective discipline practices is that you cannot expect to achieve appropriate student behavior with a blanket discipline framework and expect it to work for all students. Rather it now seems that an acceptable strategy for an effective discipline code needs to have levels. Most studies focus on three levels of intervention. Those levels that are used depend on the severity of the student’s infraction (Sugai, Sprague, Horner & Walker, 2000).

The concept of using different levels of discipline was an idea that the committee universally embraced. They agreed that a common concern was that it seemed that children received different consequences for the same infraction. Through the use of levels, it would be clearer to both the student and teacher. Fairness was an important outcome for the group. They felt that if the student perceived the consequence as fair, it would be beneficial to all of those involved. As mentioned earlier, the committee thought that using proactive methods in addressing minor discipline concerns would be the primary way to discipline; however they felt that the idea of levels of strategies for other misbehaviors would best suit the more serious behaviors.

The most common way to break down these three different levels of interventions are as follows: (a) use universal interventions to improve the student behavior of most students; (b) selected interventions that are a little more intense for students considered at risk; and (c) individualized, targeted interventions for those students with chronic behavior problems. These three levels of interventions are referred to as universal, selected, and targeted (Sugai et. al, 2000).
Another goal was for the committee to decide which discipline concerns should be handled by the classroom teacher and which the principal or head teacher should address. It seems that is often a gray area, especially if the infraction occurred in the classroom. The group decided to gather information from within and outside the district before they made a decision on formulating that goal. The information gathered from other schools within district was done informally. They discussed the common discipline practices of the other elementary schools with other teachers to better understand how it was determined if it was something handled by the classroom teacher or by the principal or head teacher. It seemed that in most cases if the infraction happened during class time then the teacher addressed it. However, if something occurred in class that was considered out of the ordinary or very serious then it was not only addressed by the teacher but the teacher would write a referral for further attention by the principal or head teacher. There are also some instances in which the principal or head teacher needed to be called to the class immediately if the child is acting overly aggressive toward other students and staff. It was important to the committee to find out what others within the district were doing to address these concerns. They felt that using similar ideas within the community’s schools made more sense since there was a similar culture.

Several members, however, agreed that it was also beneficial to gather discipline codes from a few surrounding districts to compare. The committee thought by doing this it would give insight to common practices as well as give more credibility to their finished product. All agreed that different perspectives of codes would be helpful.

After reviewing the elementary codes of three districts it was determined that our district’s general philosophy was adequate and set the tone that the committee felt
important to communicate to the rest of the school. Most of the other discipline codes were similar to our current code. It was noted that some of the other district's codes specify bullying in several sections of their codes. The committee indicated they thought it was important to stress this issue more specifically as we went through the process. The district, staff and students, went through a bully-proofing program last year. Though this is just one of the key components necessary for a good prevention program, the committee thought that with some of the other previously mentioned programs in place such as peer mediation and the program the guidance counselor does with the kindergarten, it would support the necessity of adding this to the discipline code. The other key components of bully-proofing a school besides staff training are levels of conflict resolution by grades, interventions used in the classroom and with the bullies as well as helping victims (Garrity & Jens, 1997). The group agreed that our school was equipped with these solutions and felt justified to add this to the code.

The input from the twenty teachers within our building who would still be at the school next year was essential. It was an informal two-part survey that asked the staff about concerns they had about discipline as well as suggestions on how they thought it could be improved. The first part of the survey was a Likert Scale. In the second part they were asked to give their ideas on how they perceived their role as well as the role of the principal and head teacher in classroom and school wide discipline.

The information from the other affected staff was valuable to the committee. It helped to focus on the discipline issues that were important to the broader school community. Interestingly, the less experienced teachers tended to view the roles of the principal and head teacher as ones that should be more involved in classroom issues. The
more experienced teachers thought that the autonomy that most have in handling their own particular class discipline issues was satisfactory. Both groups expressed frustration when it came to getting parents more involved for cooperative solutions for more serious discipline concerns.

Once all of the above data was gathered, the committee went through it very carefully to analyze and interpret it. The easiest way to begin this tremendous undertaking was to break it down into similar viewpoints. The first data we tackled was the input we received from those staff members we targeted because they would be in the building next year. The common ideas were clipped together and synthesized and the scores of the survey were tabulated. The informal information gathered from other schools within the district was summarized on charts by similarities of procedures. There were only a few ideas that were considered from codes outside the district. These, too, were listed by similarity on large chart paper. After this process was complete the committee went back to refine the goals and levels of interventions that were mentioned earlier in this paper.

The committee had agreed earlier that using proactive methods in addressing minor discipline concerns would be the primary way of handling most classroom incidents. They also agreed that a blanket discipline framework could not be expected to work for all students. The use of levels of strategies to address discipline was a more suitable approach and fairer to the diverse student population in our school. The levels of strategies for other misbehaviors best suit more serious behaviors.

There would be three levels of strategies. The first level would be the universal intervention. This type of intervention would be used to improve the behavior of most
students. This would require that a written referral be used. The referral would be forwarded to the head teacher who in turn would address the student about the incident. Choices and decision-making would initially be discussed with the student. Consequences would ultimately be discussed if there was another occurrence. The next level would be a selected intervention. This type of intervention would be a little more intense for a student considered at-risk. Depending on the incident and age of the child the above procedures would be carried out, but in this case the principal would also be included. A consequence would be given. The third level would be a more high intensity intervention. This type of targeted intervention would be used for children with chronic behavior problems. Again all of the above procedures would take place; however, at this level the parent and guidance counselor as well as the classroom teacher would be involved. It would be expected that once a child is at this level the problems should be resolved. The last step would be the PAC to meet about the student. At this level members of the Child Study Team are present and testing is often recommended. This step is not part of the three levels that the plan will utilize. However, it needs to be mentioned as an alternative when solutions cannot be agreed upon and the learning opportunities for the student and others are continually being disrupted.

It was obvious to the group that since there would be levels of interventions, there would also be flexibility built into the code. At the elementary level, in this case a K-4 school, the children are still developing. Each case must be considered separately and unique. The educationally handicapped child and 504 students must also be carefully considered when using this plan. They, too, have unique needs. Flexibility is a necessity at this level when it comes to discipline.
The staff will be informed about the new discipline framework at a special meeting in late spring of 2002. The students and parents will be informed about the school discipline code over the summer. There is usually a late summer mailing regarding classroom assignments. The information will be summarized. In the fall of 2002, the teachers will review it with their students in class and in-depth with parents at Back-to-School Night.

Assessment of the new discipline framework is essential. The committee will reconvene during the winter of 2003 to develop a tool to assess it. Once the data has been completed, they will refine or make any necessary changes to ensure its continued success.
Chapter 3
Design of the Study

The discipline committee met in early fall to review the district’s elementary discipline code as well as the dress code. The group needed to discuss and decide those points from the current codes that were necessary to include in the future discipline framework as well as those points from the current discipline code that needed to be modified or deleted. They had been given this information about two weeks prior to the meeting. It was important that they were knowledgeable about this code before they proceeded. There was also discussion about discipline for children with disabilities that were incorporated into the district discipline handbook.

Current practices of school wide discipline was an important issue that the committee tackled. It was noted that many teachers at certain grade levels worked cooperatively with the students within that level not just for discipline issues, but also to improve certain academic areas. They agreed that they should focus on school wide and large group discipline practices and that each classroom teacher maintains their individual classroom rules. There was some discussion of grade level discipline practices that a few grade levels do with their students. There was one grade level where the teachers shared the responsibility of taking some students out and the other teacher kept students in for extra help. Other teachers mentioned that they took students during lunch to help them make up work or redo homework. This was considered a large group practice, but not necessarily discipline. It was also pointed out that as we worked on this framework we must be careful to follow not only the district discipline guidelines, but
also be careful that we stayed within the parameters of the language of the teacher’s contract. It was agreed that if there was a statement either in the discipline guide or teacher’s contract that proved detrimental to students it needed to be reviewed by the committee and changed to reflect the best situation for students.

There was much discussion during the meeting as to when classroom teachers should resort to sending a student to the main office for disciplinary reasons. The committee agreed that a student is sent only when the classroom teacher had exhausted all other resources with the student. The classroom teacher should not send a student to the office for minor infractions.

There were several school wide consequence practices in current use that the committee discussed at great length. Though most viewed them as effective there were a few members who felt they needed to be improved. The concern revolved around the lack of consistency with the consequences. Some teachers expressed that there was a need for some more definitive way to give children a consequence based on the severity of their actions. This needed to be spelled out in a more concrete manner so that all involved knew the expectations as well as the consequences of violating the rules and regulations.

Noting that there were many varying opinions within the nine members of the committee, it became apparent to the group that it was necessary to survey the staff about their views on the building discipline as well as suggestions on how to improve it for the next school year. It was decided by the committee to have two parts to the survey. The first part would consist of a scale. They did not want five choices, but chose to have three choices for each of the ten questions. They felt that by using three choices on the scale
rather than the usual five, teachers would be more willing to take the time to answer the questionnaire. Once the questionnaire was tabulated the group used these results to help set the goals. They thought that this information gave them a clearer picture of how the staff perceived the current practices. The committee agreed that the survey should go to those staff members who would be part of the staff next year. The questionnaire would go to the classroom teachers in kindergarten, first, second, third and fourth grades. It would also go those special area teachers who teach art, music, physical education and computer as well as the resource teacher. There were twenty-five people given the questionnaire. This was a good sampling of those who have had experience with the current school wide discipline practices. The great majority of the group that received the survey had been in the building over five years. The discipline committee thought that by using this core group who were familiar with the district as well as the culture of the school gave us a good idea of the overall direction we should head.

As mentioned earlier, the committee wanted the questionnaire to have two parts. The first part was quantitative in nature using a form of the Likert Scale. The committee wanted to use a three-point scale. The scale choices were Effective=3, Somewhat Effective=2, and Ineffective =1. The reasoning for the shortened scale was that the committee thought teachers were more inclined to fill it out if it did not seem too cumbersome. There were 10 questions in the first part of the survey. The group through discussions at the committee meeting chose the questions. They were interested in seeing how the staff valued some of the current school wide discipline practices and whether it was different from the committee’s perceptions of those practices.
The second part gave the affected staff the opportunity to express themselves in a narrative form. Again the staff wanted to address those issues about which they had concerns. It was hoped that from these responses the committee could get ideas as to how to begin formulating the building discipline code that reflected the school culture and provided a learning environment that ensured student success.

The group indicated that the main type of data collection was through the use of the two-part questionnaire that was distributed to selected staff members. They decided that the questionnaire would be the formalized way of gathering information. The other data collection techniques used would be informal. The other techniques used to investigate the issue of school wide discipline were informal interviews with targeted staff members and observations on the committee’s part to gather further information.

The committee felt it was important to have informal interviews with staff members about school wide discipline issues and bring those findings back to the committee meeting to be used as further building blocks for our discipline framework. It was felt that many may not take the time to fill out the written questionnaire and these informal interviews would broaden the base of staff input. They planned these informal discussions with just their grade partners and brought the responses back for further discussion with the group.

All committee members planned to observe closely over the months those discipline practices that were successful or unsuccessful and share the observations with the group. The observations were primarily focused on school wide discipline practices that were viewed positively in situations and worked as well as those practices that were
viewed negatively by students and staff and focus on the reasons why these practices did not seem to work.

The committee was given a copy of the results of the data that was gathered from the two-part questionnaire prior to one of our fall meetings. They were asked to study the results carefully so that we would have a better interpretation of the staff’s perceptions of the school wide discipline practices in current use. The committee planned to use those results along with the informal interviews with certain staff members as well as their own observations to help formulate the goals. The group did not feel comfortable formulating goals for the building until all of the data was gathered.

There was much time devoted to discussing the results of the staff questionnaire. Many committee members were surprised at the opinions expressed by their colleagues on certain issues. The results also indicated to the committee that many shared the same viewpoints and concerns about school wide discipline and the need for consistency throughout the school.

The next type of collection technique, informal interviews with grade partners, proved to be just as fruitful. The committee discovered that most staff members who responded through the questionnaire reiterated those same concerns when individually interviewed. It was difficult to determine who had responded and who did not since names were optional. Some did put their names on the questionnaire, but not everyone. This method gathered data that was similar to the information gathered through the survey. There was not much varying information gathered that differed with the current data that the group subsequently obtained.
The committee also used personal observations of types of discipline used throughout the school to see which proved to be more successful than others. The members were primarily interested in observing events that were school wide in nature rather than activities within the classroom to see how student behavior and discipline were handled. These observations gathered information from events such as assemblies, lunchroom, class movement through halls and recess activities. From these observations and discussions with both the teachers and students involved during these activities it was determined that the need for a discipline framework proved to be a beneficial addition to the school. This data as well as the data gathered from the questionnaire and informal interviews indicated a need for some direction and clarification when it came to discipline and consequences.

It was decided that from the data that the committee collected the goals needed to be broad-based and general in nature. The general consensus of the committee was that flexibility was a key element when formulating goals. Goals that were not flexible were difficult to achieve. Young children are unique and therefore the goals of the discipline plan needed to reflect that. The committee decided that the discipline strategies used needed to have levels depending on the severity of the offense and how many times the student had been sent to the office. The important thread that runs through this plan is the need for consistency and not rigidity.
Chapter 4

Presentation of the Research Findings

The discipline committee was formed early in the school year. Before school started teachers were sent an introductory letter that explained the purpose of the committee. Eight faculty members indicated an interest to serve on this unique committee. The committee was comprised of two first grade teachers, three-second grade teachers, two third grade teachers and one-fourth grade teacher. Six of the members were female and two were male. One of the resource teachers acted as a consultant on a few occasions. He is not included in the numbers stated above as an official committee member. The teacher group reflected the grade levels of the student population that will be in the building for the following school year except kindergarten. The kindergarten level generates very few discipline concerns.

This stakeholder committee was an integral part of the success of the project. They help to author the discipline framework and will implement it next year. Part of this process requires the committee to introduce the new discipline framework to the staff, students and parents. They have a vested interest to ensure that this project had universal acceptance. Input from affected staff members was solicited and incorporated into the finished product.

There were six official meetings of the committee from October through April. There were times in between the meetings that information was either solicited or shared on an informal basis. The meetings were held immediately after the school day. The agendas were passed out a few days prior to the meetings and the minutes a few days
after the meetings (see Appendix A). It was necessary to complete the meetings by 4:00 PM because of contractual issues.

The focus of the first meeting was to review the district discipline code as well as the discipline code and how it related to students with disabilities. There was some general overall discussion of the current discipline environment in the building. The thought was that there were some areas that need improvement. A common concern was that often the classroom teacher does not know if one of their students had a problem during lunch or on the playground during recess. One suggestion was that for next year the committee could develop a short referral form that would inform the teacher of the problem. Many teachers have daily communication with the parents and this would be a piece of information that needed to be passed on to the family.

There was much discussion on the best way to gather information regarding discipline techniques from within our building and how the staff felt about how discipline was handled within the school. Through the discussion, it was determined that the best ways to gather information would be both formally and informally. The group decided the best instrument to use for a formal way of gathering this information was to formulate a questionnaire. It was felt that dialogue with grade partners and other teaching staff was the best way of gathering information informally. During this meeting committee members helped to prepare questions for the proposed questionnaire.

Approximately a week later the committee had the proposed questionnaire. It was reviewed by them to approve, disapprove or change. They approved the questionnaire and it was passed out to all of the staff members who would be in the building next year when the school changes to a K-4 building.
The questionnaire consisted of two parts. The first part was a set of ten questions. The responses required the teacher to circle a choice on a scale. The second part of the questionnaire required the participant to write a brief narrative. The group wanted the questionnaire to have two parts. They felt it would give them a clearer picture as to the staff views on building discipline and give the committee ideas that would reflect the school culture.

The use of the questionnaire proved to be an effective tool. It enabled the committee to obtain a clearer idea of how the staff, the primary stakeholders for the next school year, viewed the current discipline practices.

The results of the questionnaire were passed out to the committee about a week prior to the second meeting. Copies of the questionnaire results were also given to the principal and union representative as a courtesy (see Appendix B).

The principal was invited to participate in this project and was welcomed to attend meetings. However, she felt it best that she not attend because she thought the committee would be more comfortable with their responses if she were not there. Agendas and minutes of each meeting were provided to her so that she was informed of the committee’s actions. The committee had been informed of this practice prior to our first meeting.

Both the principal and union representative was appreciative when they received the results. The principal thought that some recommendations were good ideas. The union representative suggested the results of this questionnaire not go beyond the building because some of the stated opinions of the participants went against certain issues that had been negotiated over the years. She felt that if the central administration
or school board saw that some teachers were willing to work through their lunch or prep times, it may not bode well with the union or other staff members who did not share those thoughts. It was made clear to her that it would not happen. However, we both agreed that it did not mean teachers could not do it if it was beneficial for the child. The issue was rather it did not need to be written down as an official practice for our building, but rather be a voluntary practice at the discretion of the teacher.

During the second meeting there was much discussion of the questionnaire results. It was optional whether the participant wrote the name on it. Some did while some did not. There were 21 questionnaires given to staff members. Twelve staff members responded. The questionnaires were given to those 17 classroom teachers and four special area teachers who would remain in the building next year.

The committee selected some common concerns from the results to use as building blocks for goals. One of the primary issues discovered from the results was that there was a need for consistency when giving consequences. The overall feelings of the staff and committee members were there was no consistency currently when a student was sent to the office for an infraction. It seemed to those polled that some students had little or no consequences while others had more serious consequences for the same infraction. According to the questionnaire results there was a need for a consistent use of consequences, especially for repeat offenders. It was suggested that clear strategies of consequences needed to be developed. There needs to be levels of consequences dependent on the severity of the offense as well as how many times a student has been sent to the office. This progressive plan needs to be clear and concise. One viable suggestion was that the first offense requires a conference with the principal or head
teacher. Here the student would be reminded of appropriate behavior and would be warned of the following consequences should it happen again. The second offense would require time out at recess. The third offense would require a parent phone call. There would be a conference with the parent, child and principal for the fourth offense. There would be an internal suspension for the fifth offense and an external suspension would occur if there were any further offenses.

Other ways of being more consistent with the students is to do daily reminders of behavioral expectations. Some suggestions were to remind them of the expectations on the morning announcements or at the end of the day when the bus and walker announcements are given. There need to be rules and reminders posted around the school in areas such as the lunchroom, water fountains and near the lavatories. Some committee members suggested dedicating a few of the common bulletin boards in the halls for the purpose of highlighting specific behaviors or values each month.

During the discussion of the questionnaire results several group members pointed out that in many cases the child has already been reprimanded in the classroom several times before sent to the office. They questioned whether the consequence needed to reflect the seriousness of the behavior even though it may be the first time the child was sent to the office. The committee decided that the written referral needed to clarify a situation such as that, so the consequence would be handled fairly and consistently.

Another matter that the committee had strong feelings about was how serious discipline was handled. They realized that the School Board determined if there was zero tolerance in a district, however, they felt strongly that certain misbehaviors needed to be dealt with swiftly even though it may the first offense. The type of offenses that were of
primary concern was weapons, severe disrespect to adults, threats of violence, and fighting and deliberate destruction of school property.

There was concern of the effectiveness of the common practice of having a student who has misbehaved to stand or sit by the building for a short time frame as a consequence during recess. No one provided a viable alternative to that practice, but all agreed there was a need to improve its effectiveness. Some suggested that a note be sent home to indicate that the student had a problem in school to warrant this type of consequence. Currently a letter from the office goes home only for an internal or external suspension. The principal liked the idea of continued use of the practice for a student to sit or stand by the building for a short time with the addition of a note to inform the parents.

During some of the informal discussions the committee had with a few of their grade partners it was noted that there were a few suggestions as possible alternatives to the common practice of children standing by the building for a few minutes as a consequence for behavior. Some thought that teachers could take turns watching students in a classroom during preps or possibly alternate with another teacher once a week during lunch. Others suggested hiring an NTA (non-teaching assistant). These were suggestions that the committee thought were personnel issues that they could not specifically address. However, all agreed that if a few teachers voluntarily rotated watching students for such purposes then that practice would reflect their own initiative and not one forced upon them.

The staff and committee agreed that there was a need for more parental involvement in discipline issues. It was up to the school to keep the parents informed.
when there were concerns, but also a need for parents to support the school when these issues occurred. Communication between home and school was an integral part of this framework in order to ensure success. The committee agreed that for this framework to succeed the school needed to have open and frequent communication with the home. Those polled informally reiterated this important element of success.

There was a strong opinion from the staff questionnaire that teachers need to do preventative discipline. Some felt that classroom control requires preventative control. It starts there. As teachers, the thought was that they needed to remind students of rules and consequences frequently. The classroom and school-wide rules need to be clearly understood and regularly monitored. The teachers were not only responsible for their own students’ actions, but also there was an obligation to shoulder the responsibility for all students. If there were more of this cooperation among staff members it would translate to students that this is a family and responsible behavior is what we expect from all of our students.

The current practice for repeat problem behaviors is to suspend internally or externally. Suspensions are used as a last resort by the principal. However, internal suspension is favored over the external suspension for a variety of reasons. The primary reason is that it keeps the child in school. The questionnaire indicates that many staff members view internal suspension as a tool that is not very effective. Some thought internal suspension should not be used at all unless a suspension room is established and that the parent is notified by phone not by letter. The committee discussed the practicality of a room for suspensions at the elementary level. Some thought that in theory it would work, but in practice it is difficult to put in place. It would require extra
personnel or the possibility of a teacher losing preparatory time. Since a child usually has a full day internal suspension it would be difficult to have several staff members proctor a suspension room. There is not enough scheduling flexibility at the elementary level to do it. Also, school budgets are tight and the request for a staff member to monitor an elementary suspension room would be difficult to justify to the taxpayer. Again, the committee viewed that suggestion as a personnel issue outside of their domain.

Overall, they viewed external suspension as more effective than internal. The committee discussed the issue with several of their grade partners informally. Some of their peers thought that external suspension was a waste of time because it gave the students exactly what they want, to stay home. It seems that all agreed that when the parent is involved and unfortunately sometimes inconvenienced, would something be done to help guide the child in the right direction.

Currently when a child has an internal suspension, the homeroom teacher prepares the work for the student to take with him or her. Several teachers who were informally polled felt that often when a child is sent with class work that is prepared quickly it is either work that is too hard or too easy. If the work is too hard then the host teacher must take the time to explain it to the internally suspended student. When the work assignment is too easy the host teacher must keep requesting additional work from the homeroom teacher.

It was thought by several committee members that each homeroom teacher should have a general work packet already made up for such instances when they have a student who is internally suspended. The packet should be work appropriate for that grade level, similar to a substitute packet. Other possible items that could be placed in
the packet are an assignment to write a letter of apology, a paragraph on values or possible alternative behaviors. The reasoning behind this suggestion was that all class work accumulated during the day should be sent home as part of the homework assignment. It is often difficult for a classroom teacher to quickly gather all the work or materials that a student needs during the course of the day.

There was much discussion as to when a child should be sent to the principal or head teacher's office. In general most of the staff that was polled, both formally and informally, thought that those offenses that get out of hand such as fighting, weapon involvement or severe disrespect were the type of offenses that are addressed by the office. All staff agreed that for the most part classroom teachers should handle minor problems such as classroom squabbles, incomplete work, talking and cheating. The office should assist and handle the more serious infractions that take more time to settle and impair the teacher's ability to do his or her job.

The committee and the grade partners that were informally polled agreed that it was easier to determine those infractions that warranted an external suspension. Offenses such as assaulting students and staff, behavior that disrupts the classroom over a period of time, disrespectful behavior and cursing a teacher, weapons, defacing property and extreme defiance were identified as those behaviors that needed to be addressed by the external suspension of a student.

It seemed to be a little more difficult to agree on which behaviors warranted an internal suspension. The group thought that for the most part it depended on the number of times the student was reprimanded for a specific behavior. The frequency of a certain behavior was the key to determine whether he or she was internally suspended. All
participants thought that consistency of consequences was the most difficult to determine in these situations. It was important to be objective, but there are some students who tend to act out more than others. Some teachers stated that there are some students who exhibit many inappropriate behaviors during the course of a day and literally could be suspended on a daily basis. The discussion that followed questioned the best way to approach situations like that. The teachers prefer that their students remain in class, but is it fair to the rest of the students when a teacher must spend a great deal of teaching time keeping a single student on task? It was pointed out that there are avenues such as pupil assistance committees and guidance counselors that could assist in such situations. Immediate parental involvement is a must to address such situations. The teacher should not feel alone in circumstances such as this. Another suggestion was to work with a partner teacher who could have the student sent to their room when this type of situation arises.

During the next meeting the group initially reviewed the key points of the questionnaire results. Some of those points that were reiterated were the need for consistency with consequences, more parental involvement through improved communication, preventative discipline in the classroom, utilization of internal suspension and external suspension. The group suggested that perhaps a building mission statement along with the goals should be established. One of the members was going to check one of the other schools to investigate what they based their statement on and whether an individual or group wrote it.

The committee began to review the sample discipline frameworks from K-4 schools outside the district to decide if there were some ideas that would suit our school’s
needs. Several of the sample discipline codes were ruled out because they seemed too wordy and complicated. They were several pages long with a variety of rules that required the reader to flip from one page to another for interpretation. The committee felt that they wanted a framework that would be parent and reader friendly. The group’s primary goal was to author a code that was clear, concise and to the point. Many of the members thought that if you have a discipline code, especially for a K-4 school, that has too many pages it would prove to be confusing and complicated for the parents as well as any other reader of the document.

Some of the sample discipline frameworks had a general parent letter that preceded the actual document. We felt that was an important element to include. A letter giving a brief background of the need for a building discipline code should be attached to the framework when it is sent home. The committee suggested we also include in the letter how we arrived at the new code that will be in effect for the new school year.

During the fourth meeting the committee stressed how they wanted to make the discipline framework user friendly with limited details. They decided they wanted to present it in chart form. All agreed that with the chart the reader could identify the infraction and consequences easily. There would not be the need to flip through pages in order to interpret whether there was an infraction and if so what the consequence would be for the student. The group reiterated the need for an introductory parent letter that explains the discipline framework. Within the context of the parent letter the group states the goals we plan to accomplish by using the code to encourage appropriate behavior. The committee agreed to use both of these formats for the framework. There would be an introductory letter followed by a chart that shows consequences for infractions. A
sample of the citation will also be attached to copies of the parent letter and chart to familiarize them with the new discipline process (see Appendix C).

The committee felt strongly about not overwhelming students and parents with a list of a multitude of infractions. After much discussion they came up with six general infractions that suit our building needs. The infractions are the following:

1. Showing disrespect and use of obscene gestures or hurtful language.
2. Challenging another to fight, threatening to fight or causing bodily harm to another person.
3. Disrupting a class or the lunchroom procedures.
4. Deliberately damaging personal or school property.
5. Throwing stones, snowballs, food, dirt, wood chips or any object.
6. Taking things that belong to others.

There was much discussion regarding the degrees of consequences. Again the group opted for brevity. They settled on utilizing four degrees of consequences. The first degree would be a citation and time out period. The second degree would require a written citation, time out during recess and student conference with principal. The citation is a brief checklist that is filled out by the reporting staff member and must be signed by the parent. The third degree incorporates everything above including an internal suspension. The fourth degree warrants an external suspension and a parent conference with the principal upon the child’s return to school. The internal and external procedures require a more formal letter from the principal than just the citation.
The group realizes that there needs to be flexibility with young children. They also understand that the principal has the right to use discretion when determining if a behavior requires suspension or not. There are often many factors that need to be considered when deciding consequences for a child. That is why this is a framework. At this level it is not cast in stone. It is a set of guidelines that staff and parents can use as a measure of what is considered appropriate behavior. Ideally it is a set of parameters that we would like our students to live within to foster positive learning and teaching experiences.

During the fifth meeting the committee wanted to revisit the informal goals it had set for itself. The goals were those things that they hoped the discipline framework would accomplish for the school. These goals were gleaned from the results of the staff questionnaire. It was important that the group’s goals reflected the staff goals. The staff is those teachers who would be part of the K-4 building next school year. The goals for the school wide discipline framework are:

1. To enhance the learning environment.
2. To improve the general behavior of students that will ensure classroom success.
3. To foster and improve parent and school communications regarding behavior concerns.
4. To develop consistent consequences.
5. To include the whole school community in maintaining an environment that is conducive to successful teaching and learning and promotes accountability.
The committee wanted to revisit the goals not only to review them, but also to
decide whether the framework reflects what the group wanted to accomplish. All agreed
that the most important outcome of this plan is to improve the learning environment,
which ultimately helps a child to succeed in the class. This plan provides a safe and
orderly building for children to attend.

Within this plan there will be increased communication to the parents. The staff
indicated during this study that there was a need for more parents to become involved.
The best way to ensure this is to keep the lines of communication open between school
and home. Also, this new discipline framework will be introduced to the parents early in
the fall at the back to school night. A written copy will be sent home within the first few
days of school for them to review.

This plan addresses one of the primary concerns of the staff, more consistency of
consequences. The idea of levels of consequences provides a more definitive idea to
students, parents and teachers what the steps are if the student persists with inappropriate
behavior. It is understood that the principal has the discretion of choosing the
consequence based on the particular circumstance. Flexibility is something that this plan
encourages because of the ages of the children in this school.

Involvement of the school community was important during this process. The
teachers played a large role in the development of this plan. Through the questionnaire
and informal grade partner discussions they indicated to the committee their concerns and
ideas that were used to address those concerns. The group included many of those
suggestions within the context of the discipline framework. As the stakeholders who
work closest to the situation they are the best people to provide the solutions. The
students and parents will be introduced to the building framework. During the late spring
the students were informed and again in the fall. The parents will receive a copy of the
plan in the fall and will be formally introduced at the back to school night.

The concept of service at school as an alternative to detention was brought up
during the meeting. Some suggestions were to help the custodians in the lunchroom or
play organized games with the kindergarten or first grades outside during recess. Several
group members thought this type of activity helped to promote responsibility. However,
both of these types of activities do require adult supervision to some extent. The
custodians would have to be willing to assign the students a job and make sure that it is
carried through. The assistants out on the playground during recess, likewise, need to
supervise the organized games to ensure it runs safely and smoothly. The question was
whether the committee has the right to impose these responsibilities on our non-teaching
staff. It was agreed that this idea was an interesting concept that needed further study,
however it was something that has personnel issues which are outside the domain of the
committee. The utilization of staff for duties outside of the normal assignments was
something that the committee did not want to broach within this committee.

The last meeting was focused on reviewing the finished product and planning for
the future. It was determined that the completed instrument satisfied the goals the
committee needed to accomplish. However, it was decided that after using this new
procedure after several months the committee needed to reconvene to assess its success
next school year. All agreed that like any tool used for a process like discipline there is
always room to tweak and improve the process.
Another avenue that the committee wants to study is more parental involvement during the assessment of the new discipline procedures. The committee learned from the questionnaire that many teachers felt there needed to be more parental involvement when it came to discipline within school. The ideal way to involve parents is through stronger lines of communication. Two suggestions that came from the committee to enhance parent involvement were the possibility of forming a parent focus group and also formulating a questionnaire for parents to respond to the new discipline process. Both of these ideas were viewed favorably, but the group agreed it needed to study these concepts to ensure they focused on positive ways to solve problems and give suggestions.

The new school year brings exciting new changes to our district. There will be major redistricting so that some schools will lose students while other schools will gain new students. The new fifth and sixth grade intermediate school opens in a brand new building. This unique concept of having a school for that part of our student population creates changes at our elementary buildings. Now all of the elementary schools will be K-4 buildings. The committee agrees that it is the perfect time to introduce this new change to the way we handle discipline within our building. With the proper introduction of the new plan to staff, students and parents the committee concurs that the implementation is guaranteed success.
Chapter 5

Conclusions, Implications and Further Study

This chapter focuses on several matters. The first matter that is discussed is the conclusions that were reached by the committee. One of the most visible conclusions was that a new set of discipline guidelines was needed for the new school changes next year. The need for a more structured framework that has flexibility and is easy for the teachers to utilize was something on which all of the committee members agreed. In the past student infractions were handled independently of each other. The staff was often unsure which infractions were considered serious enough to warrant certain consequences. It became apparent through committee discussions that there was a need to develop a discipline framework that could be easily understood by the staff, students and parents. The study indicated a strong need for a unifying element that ties the school family into one philosophy about student behavior and possible consequences if the student chooses not to follow the school rules. There would be many changes for the next year and this framework provides a constant that the staff can rely on when dealing with student behavior and potential consequences. Through the use of a written discipline code it makes it easier for the student and parent to understand the ramifications of inappropriate student behavior. The behaviors and consequences are more objective in nature and easy for new families to the school to understand exactly what behaviors warrant consequences and what the specific consequences are.

The committee concluded that there was a need for consistency when giving consequences to a student and decided it was important to develop levels of consequences for infractions. In the past many teachers seemed to be confused about
why certain students received a certain type of consequence for an action while others who committed the same action would receive a more serious consequence. Through the use of levels in that area the students, staff and parents know that if certain infractions occur they can expect specific consequences.

There was discussion as to when a child should be sent to the principal. The staff concluded that those offenses that got out of hand such as fighting, weapon involvement or severe disrespect were the type of offenses that are addressed by the office. Most of the staff agreed that classroom teachers should handle minor problems such as classroom squabbles, incomplete work, talking during class and cheating. It should be the principal who assists and handles the more serious infractions that take more time to settle and impair the teacher's ability to do his or her job.

In addition the questionnaire pointed out the need to clarify the common practice of having time out for students outside during recess. It has been a common practice at the school to use this type of consequence, but the staff questioned its effectiveness. The use of it as a tool to deter inappropriate behavior appeared to be used indiscriminately. Again it seemed that certain students served longer periods of time out while others seemed to have shorter periods. Often there was no apparent logical reason or explanation why these discrepancies occurred and proved frustrating to both the teacher and student. Teachers wanted a concrete tool to use when discussing appropriate behaviors in their classrooms. The teachers and students knew the classroom rules and what happens if those rules are not followed. However, once the student stepped outside of the classroom there was uncertainty on both the part of the staff and student as to what was appropriate and inappropriate and what would happen if a child did something inappropriate outside of
the classroom setting. The discipline code framework helps to clarify when, why and for how long the student will have time out during recess as well as the other consequences to expect for more serious offenses.

With the change of our building from a K-5 school to a K-4 student population it was necessary to make it clear to our younger population what was right and what was wrong and what happens if you choose to do the wrong thing. In the past there had been reliance on our older students to act as role models for our younger students. Now with fewer older students the committee concluded it was important and necessary for each teacher to play a more active role in fostering positive behavior within the classroom setting as well as outside the classroom. A preventative discipline plan was important to the staff and there were several suggestions as to how this new preventative plan would be properly implemented. The daily review of classroom rules was stressed as well as the use of positive behavior posters in key locations throughout the school was suggested.

Other ways of being more consistent with the students is to do daily reminders of behavioral expectations during the opening and closing announcements of the day. The school rules and reminders to follow them need to be posted around the school near the fountains, lavatories and in the lunchroom. The group felt strongly that each teacher needed to take on the responsibility of not only being concerned about the behavior of their students, but expand that responsibility to play an active role in monitoring the behavior of all students. When a staff member encounters a problem they need to take action to correct it by speaking to that child instead of ignoring it because the student is not in their class. The philosophy behind this was that students need to know that we are a family of teachers and learners who are all concerned and all play a role in ensuring
their success. The students need to realize that just because their teacher is not there at a moment when they do something inappropriate it is okay to do it. There needs to be some structure in the learning environment and it is the staff who are entrusted to provide that for our students. Children need to feel they are in a safe place for effective learning to take place. The use of a clear and concise plan for discipline helps to foster this positive environment for learning.

Another concern was that it was important for the principal to know when a child had been reprimanded many times before being sent to the office. It was concluded that the best way to assure this was through some type of written referral. Therefore, a citation was developed that paralleled the discipline framework. It indicates the nature of the infraction as well as the number of times it happened in the past. The parents also receive a copy, which helps with the communication process between school and home. The committee decided that the written citation or referral was needed to clarify a situation so the consequences would be handled fairly and consistently.

Communication would play an important role to ensure the success of this new discipline framework. The committee concluded that a plan to educate the staff, students and parents about the new plan was important. All agreed there was a need for more parental involvement in discipline issues and the best way to encourage involvement is to keep the families informed and updated.

It would be necessary to develop a plan and timeline in introducing the code to our school community so that all involved would understand how it would be implemented. It was thought that the plan should be discussed at a faculty meeting toward the end of the current school year in late spring. The group thought that since some staff members
would be leaving it may be best to do a cursory review of what the committee did and a brief summary of the plan. Often staff members don’t know where their next year assignment is until the last few weeks of the school year. The committee decided that it might be best to invite those staff members who know they will remain in the building to an informational meeting where we can go into more detail about the new discipline framework during the last week or two of school after most class assignments are given. There would also be a question and answer period to follow. All agreed that it is very crucial for the teachers to thoroughly understand the plan so that they in turn can explain it to their students and parents in the fall. Once this key group of staff are educated about the plan they in turn become the key communicators who will be most involved in the education process of the staff, support staff, students and parents the following school year.

Over the summer the copies of the new discipline framework are mailed to the new staff and support staff. In the fall of the new school year the principal has a meeting with the staff and support staff to review the general concept of the new plan and have a question and answer period that includes the committee that developed the plan. The staff is asked to review the plan with their students and hang it in a prominent place in the classroom. Copies of the new plan are sent home within the first few days of school with an introductory letter. The discipline plan is then further reviewed and discussed at the back to school night that is held during the first month of school. During the opening comments of the meeting a member of the key communicator group and a member of the committee discuss the history of the plan’s development. Once the parents are in their
child’s classroom the teachers are dedicating part of their comments to the new plan and fielding any questions.

As part of this plan to educate the school community, the committee thought that the PTA president and executive board should be introduced to the plan at their first meeting that is traditionally held in late August or early September. This active group of parents also can assist in the communication process of the plan to the rest of the families in an informal way. They host an informal tea during the first week of school and invite the kindergarten parents as well as any new parent to our school for an informative session about programs and activities that the school offers. The group felt this was an ideal forum to use to introduce this new discipline plan to new families and it gives these families the opportunity for a more informal way to ask questions about both school programs and the new discipline plan.

This study focused on the use of the stakeholders within a building, namely the teachers, to develop an acceptable discipline framework that would be utilized by the school the following school year when it became a K-4 building. The intern wanted to determine whether a discipline code created by the teachers as stakeholders was more acceptable to the staff. It was important to involve these teachers in the development of the code because they are the people who deal with disciplining children the most during a typical school day. The intern discovered that through their committee involvement the teachers provided a structured framework that made it easier for their colleagues to determine how best to handle student problems.

The intern was looking to see if by the staff playing a role in the formulation of a policy, in this case a discipline code, whether it made a difference in attitudes toward the
proposed policy. Interestingly, the committee was most enthusiastic during the process and was eager not only to offer their input, but was eager to solicit data from their colleagues. Though it will not be in full use till next school year, the principal has referred to it on several occasions for guidelines to use as certain difficult discipline concerns arose.

The collection of data from their peers proved to be invaluable. The information proved to be enlightening and helpful as they went through the process of developing the discipline framework. Soliciting informal data from their grade partners as well as the review of discipline practices used both in district schools and out of district schools helped them gain a broader perspective of common discipline methods. The study improved the teacher’s role in the implementation of discipline practices. Its implementation is beneficial to both students and staff. It helps to improve the classroom-learning environment that leads to a successful school experience for students.

This type of committee work required use of the collaborative process when it came to decision-making. This process was beneficial in this type of group work. The intern was concerned through this study that the group dynamics maintain a balance. It was important that all of the members shared equally the responsibility of participation and not be carried by one or two people. It gave the stakeholders more of a sense of commitment and ownership to the common goal, in this case the discipline code, when all contributed to the process.

Consensus building within groups is an important tool for an educational leader to develop in order to move ahead with group decisions. Some ideas during discussion weren’t always readily accepted and when it came to deciding which things were to be
included and carried forward to the next meeting there was often differing opinions. Again, the intern stressed the use of collaboration and tried to highlight the strong points of suggestions and ideas given by the committee members. In most cases the committee decided to accept the strengths of comments made by the different group members that could be further discussed at the next meeting. Often the ideas were kept as originally suggested or minor changes were made and placed back on the table for further use when we reached the end of the process. There were times when ideas were revisited and sometimes changed or scrapped altogether because the committee came up with a better idea or decided to move in another direction. An example of this occurred early in the process when the group thought they would prefer five levels of consequences, but later decided four would be more manageable. It was thought they wanted to keep the final discipline code succinct and reader friendly. They did not want a plan with many pages that required the reader to keep going back in the document for further explanations. It was important the document was short and to the point.

The intern learned the importance of laying the groundwork before the committee began its project. It was necessary to review the Board Policy and Elementary Discipline Code as well as the federal regulations about educationally handicapped students in order to act as a resource for the group. It proved beneficial to make sure there was an agenda for each meeting. The intern found this an invaluable tool that helped the committee to stay on task when the conversations would go off on a tangent. It was helpful for the group because it provided a record for them to remind them of the topics that were discussed and also gave them something to take notes or jot ideas on that could be used later. The members kept all of their agendas and minutes in a folder. The intern also
found that by distributing the minutes as soon as possible after the meeting proved to be helpful in making sure that we were all on the same wavelength and if there were any discrepancies the committee was reminded to inform the intern and it would be corrected.

It was important that the records of the ideas and suggestions were kept correctly.

Our school has already begun using a modified version of the citation. The principal liked the idea of using it as soon as she had seen the minutes of one of our meetings and it has been used effectively for the past month and a half. The reason why she decided to start that part of the plan a little sooner was because of some responses from the questionnaire that was given to the staff last fall. She agrees that the parents need to play a more active role in the discipline process and communication is the key to ensure parental involvement. Through the use of the citation the parent becomes aware on a first hand basis when there is a problem and can act on it immediately before it becomes more serious. The teachers and support staff are pleased with its use. The committee views this as a positive sign that the whole plan will improve the culture of our school and in turn improve the teaching and learning atmosphere.

It was important to the committee to have a way to monitor the new discipline plan during its first year in use. They decided the best way to do this was to have several meetings throughout the year to accumulate input from the staff. Since this was a new concept in the building the group realized that it takes several weeks to adjust to its use. However, it was anticipated that the first meeting, scheduled for late November, could give the committee a good idea how the adjustment is going and if there were any outstanding concerns or suggestions. The committee feels that this plan is considered an on going work in progress and realizes that changes to the plan are necessary to ensure its
acceptance by the staff. The committee decided to meet again in late March to see if the teachers saw improvement in the building discipline and for further suggestions. Close monitoring of this plan during its first year of implementation is critical. The goal of improved and consistent discipline practices within the school was most important to the committee. The only way to ensure its success was to include the stakeholders in its assessment. Those that work closest to the situation, the teachers, are the best source to utilize for input because they have used it on a daily basis. They know, first hand, whether it has proved to be beneficial and if there has been improvement in student behavior and the learning environment.

During the final meeting at the end of the year a questionnaire was used to assist the committee in determining the strengths and weaknesses of the plan and make the necessary changes for the following school year. The group was committed to the plan and realizes that it is necessary to monitor and assess it yearly in order for it to be successful.

As a consequence of this study as well as the input from the staff at the end of the year, the committee will make a few minor modifications over the summer based on the teacher feedback. The committee will meet in early September to plan strategies for more parent involvement in the discipline process. They plan to invite the parents to become more involved at the first back to school night in the fall. The staff felt that by encouraging more parent involvement in this on going process it would strengthen and improve the discipline within the building by showing the students we are partners working together to create a positive learning environment.
References


Appendix A

Agendas and Meeting Minutes
AGENDA
Discipline Committee
October 16, 2001
Teacher’s Room
3:30 PM

- The focus of our first meeting will be to quickly review the Pennsauken Discipline Code that pertains to our building (given to you about 2 weeks ago)
- Review the student dress code (attached to this agenda)
- If time permits, review discipline for children with disabilities
- Informal interviews with Central building staff regarding discipline techniques that work for them (discussion item)
- Also formulate a questionnaire for the staff about discipline i.e., situations that classroom teacher should handle, situations that the “office” needs to handle, what works, how to improve, what should be focus for K-4 building, etc. (discussion item)
- Other
- Remarks for the good of the order
The first meeting was basically to review district discipline policy and brainstorm. The goal will be to have a building discipline code that serves as a guideline for students and staff to follow. The guideline will help to maintain and improve our learning environment at our school for the next school year. Below are the thoughts and ideas of the committee:

- Discussed current practice of time out on wall
- Practices of other schools in district for school wide/large group discipline
- Several members would find out from other teachers at other schools what they do for similar situations
- Some comm. members shared what they do with partner teachers in our building, i.e. once a week one takes classes out and other stays in to do work with rest of students from both classes
- Some take students at lunch to help them/redo work/homework
- Teachers should only send students down to main office/head teacher “when all else fails”
- Suspensions should be consistent
- Discussed survey to be given to our staff about building discipline suggestions, etc.
- Will use results of survey, comm. discussions, etc. to help set goals
- Discipline framework will be compliant with district guidelines
- Will use a scale for some questions, i.e. “very efficient, efficient, ineffective”
- Gave several sample questions
- Suggested a short form of discipline referral to inform teachers of problem when happens out of classroom(playground, lunchroom)
- Does SASI have a program that follow discipline in buildings?
- Discussed importance of “preventative discipline”
- All teachers should assume responsibility for discipline for all students, not just their class, i.e. if you see students playing in bathroom take the time to address it, not walk by and do nothing since they may not be your students
- Team approach to school wide discipline, “It Takes a Village” mentality
- Carry classroom discipline/schoolwide discipline both in the classroom and outside the classroom
- Review class rules every day
- Discussed pros and cons of internal and external suspensions
- Suggestion that teachers(classroom/special area) make more of an effort to have students go to the lavatory before lunch, reason being that many children then need to go the bathroom during lunch/recess where there isn’t the necessary supervision and discipline/safety issues become a problem

Cc:
AGENDA
Discipline Committee
November 15, 2001

- Review/discuss/analyze results of questionnaire
- Select common concerns from questionnaire as building blocks for goal setting
- Goal setting for committee
Present:

During the second meeting we reviewed and discussed the results of the questionnaire and selected common concerns that were mentioned. These common concerns will help us to form our committee goals. Below are highlights of our meeting:

♦ The questionnaire pointed out that some question the effectiveness of the wall as a means of discipline
♦ All agreed that since no one provided viable alternatives to wall there is a need to somehow improve its effectiveness, i.e. send parental note home to indicate that student has had a problem in school to warrant this type of detention
♦ The questionnaire indicated that consistency was important when giving consequences, especially with repeat offenders
♦ There is a need for more parent involvement in discipline issues
♦ When wording our final document, language is important. Must be within the parameters of school policy and contractual language of teacher's contract
♦ All agreed that when framework is complete it must be communicated to students and parents in a clear and concise manner
♦ Committee felt that that strategies used should have levels depending on severity of offense and how many times student has been sent to office
♦ Pointed out that in many cases child has already been reprimanded in classroom several times before finally sent to office and therefore consequence needs to reflect it (seriousness of behavior), even though it may be the first time child has been sent to office
♦ Committee realizes that school board determines if there is zero tolerance in a district, however they felt strongly that certain misbehaviors needed to be dealt with more strongly, even though it may be the first time offense, i.e. weapons, severe disrespect to adults, threats of violence, violence, fighting, deliberate destruction of school property
♦ Questioned whether a child's “behavior slate” should follow him/her through the years at this school to determine consequences or whether it is a new “slate” each year even though he/she is a repeat offender
♦ Will focus more at next meeting in January to set goals of committee
♦ Several members will bring examples of the discipline code from their respective school districts
♦ Meeting adjourned at 4:05 PM

CC:
AGENDA
Discipline Committee
January 29, 2002

- Comments/Summarize/Analyze/ Questionnaire

- Review Building Discipline Frameworks From Other Districts

- Begin Process of Formulating Goals For Our Building Framework Based on Information Gathered

- Additional Comments
Discipline Comm. Minutes
Jan. 29, 2002

- General feeling from questionnaire was that there was a need for consistent consequences depending on infraction
- Group suggested that perhaps a building mission statement regarding behavior be posted such as in Franklin School (Mrs. P. would check to see how that statement was established)
- Another suggestion was to possibly use some if not all hall bulletin boards to display those behaviors we wish to positively emphasize and that theme should be carried through the year in various displays (ex: respect and show various ways of showing respect dependent on that time of year)
- Some committee members felt that if a student has an internal suspension, he/she should have to do the daily classwork as homework in addition to the regular homework so it seems more like a consequence
- In lieu of the classwork during internal suspension, a student should do things such as a letter of apology, a paragraph on values, possible alternative behaviors, etc.
- It was suggested that each teacher have a standard packet available with assignments for a student who has an internal suspension
- Several teachers felt that often a child is sent with work to their room that is either too hard, too easy and gets done quickly and then must keep requesting additional work from the homeroom teacher, etc.
- Most felt that a packet about values, behavior mod paragraphs may be more appropriate than classwork
- Several members have volunteered to find out if some of the other elementary buildings have their own building discipline framework
- Committee will review sample discipline frameworks from K-4 schools outside Pennsauken to decide if there are some ideas we could use or adapt to our building for the next meeting
- Next meeting will be in February, will begin process of writing framework based on information gathered and discussed
AGENDA
DISCIPLINE COMMITTEE
FEBRUARY 14, 2002

♦ Review Building Discipline Frameworks From Other Districts

♦ Reports of Detention/Discipline Practices From Other In-District Buildings

♦ Begin Process of Formulating Framework Based on Gathered Information
Minutes
Discipline Committee Meeting
February 14, 2002

Present:

- Committee wants to make discipline framework user friendly, not too many details
- Liked the way the one school had it laid out in chart form
- Liked the introductory parental letter from another elementary school
- Comm. thinks it may be a good idea to use both of these formats—introductory letter followed by chart that shows consequences for infractions
- Infractions on chart would be the following: 1. Showing disrespect and use of obscene gestures and or hurtful language 2. Bodily harm to another person/fighting/challenging another to fight/threatening 3. Disrupting a class or the lunchroom procedures 4. Damaging school or personal property deliberately 5. Throwing stones, snowballs, food, dirt, wood chips or any object 6. Taking things that belong to others
- Would be four degrees of consequences, the third would be internal suspension and the fourth would be external suspension
- Regardless of the infraction the fourth would be external and require a parent conference (ex: child fights one day, next time disrupts class next time throws stones and hurts someone and next time steals something, the child would fit into the category for external suspension and a parent conference upon fourth infraction)
- If a weapon is involved would go automatically to district policy/external suspension/parent conference, etc.
- Principal has discretionary ability to decide level of consequences
- Will continue to fine tune framework at our next meeting on Feb. 25, 2002
AGENDA
DISCIPLINE COMMITTEE
FEBRUARY 25, 2002

♦ Review Discussions From Last Meeting

♦ Continue Process of Formulating Framework

♦ Further Discussion Items
Minutes
Discipline Committee
Meeting of February 25, 2002

- Review of format for discipline framework
- Introductory statement/letter for parents
- Restate goals for school wide discipline code
  - To improve general behavior of building
  - To improve the learning environment
  - To improve school/parent communications regarding discipline concerns
  - To improve consistency of consequences
  - To improve overall accountability and include the whole school community in maintaining an environment that is conducive to successful teaching and learning
- Informal discussion of possible activities for community service that students can do around the school/perhaps use in lieu of consequences in some situations
AGENDA
Discipline Committee
April 9, 2002

- Review of Finished Documents

- Discuss Dissemination of New Discipline Framework
  1. Staff
  2. Students
  3. Parents

- Assessment of Plan During First Year of Implementation

- Discuss How to Involve Parents During Assessment of Plan
MINUTES
Discipline Committee
April 9, 2002

- Committee reviewed three pieces of document
- Group felt that letter, discipline framework and citation reflected goals
- Some questioned need to state within documents that the principal had right to use discretion when making decisions about consequences
- Pointed out that we wanted document to have flexibility
- It will be a K-4 building and smaller student population which means fewer discipline concerns
- Dissemination is important to success of new plan
- Will discuss with principal having a special staff meeting to introduce to staff at end of year and again in the fall
- Group agreed that best time to introduce plan to students and parents would be fall because of all of the district changes
- Since this is new process there would be a need to assess the plan about mid year
- Staff would be asked to participate in assessment either through a questionnaire or a checklist of some type
- Parents need to be involved
- Two suggestions most favored for parental involvement in assessment were questionnaire or focus group
- Both plans for parental involvement would be studied further next school year before implementing
Appendix B

Questionnaire Results
November 15, 2001

Dear Committee,

The analysis information from the questionnaire that was sent to those teachers who would remain in the building next year is below. The first part was a set of ten questions that used a scale for their responses. The second part consisted of twelve questions that also emanated from our first meeting. It gave the staff an opportunity to openly respond to the questions.

Please answer each to the best of your ability. The scale for the first part will be:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>QUESTION</th>
<th>AVERAGE RESPONSE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. How would you rate time out on the wall for out of classroom consequences?</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Do you think we should use the discipline referral sheet for everyday problems that occur in the classroom?</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Do you think we should use the discipline referral sheet for only serious classroom problems and out of the classroom problems?</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Do you think children should be sent to the office just when all else fails?</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Do you think teachers should do preventative discipline?</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Would the daily review of your classroom rules be beneficial in fostering a more structured school environment?</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Would you stop to reprimand students other than your own?</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. How do you view internal suspensions?</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. How do you view external suspensions?</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Would you work with other teachers to set up a detention group for either lunch or recess time?</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The following are the comments for each question:

1. How would you improve the school wide discipline?
   - Be consistent with real consequences. Getting to go outside and sit at the wall to talk and play is not a consequence
   - Consistency
   - Chronic offenders should be monitored daily to see if they are getting any better
   - Consistency/reminders on morning announcements or end of day/bus and walker announcements/posting rules and reminders around school, bathrooms, water fountains
   - Not very effective. Parents should be involved
   - Get rid of the wall/make them write about what they did/definitely no playing at recess
   - Detention room with teachers working on their prep/demand parents be held accountable for their child’s behavior/make the parents involved from beginning to end/do not allow them to escape responsibility
   - Hire an NTA/give awards for positives/bathrooms and bathroom times are always a problem/establish some supervision at regular times
   - Consistency with consequences/three referrals and then the child is externally suspended/out for a day
   - Smaller classes

2. What type of consequences would you like to see in place?
   - I would like to see some sort of progressive plan, like the ones used in the classroom. For example, first offense—conference with principal or head teacher, second offense—time out, third offense—call parent—fourth offense—conference with parent and child—fifth offense—internal suspension...
   - Saturday morning detention/parents must be told that school is a place to learn/after school detention, I’ll do it
   - Loss of privileges/recess
   - More parent contact and more than just standing on the wall
   - Chart/list with the discipline listed next to the infraction
   - Detent
   - Lunch/recess detention
   - Consequences matching severity of offense by a scale or frequency
   - Clean up the playground area/have children pick up rocks and stones to improve playground safety/ion room where the students must do work of some sort whether it be writing or math or reading with questions
   - In school detention for any referral
   - Removal from class or special activity/parents contacted
3. What kinds of discipline problems should the office address?
   - Serious offenses that get out of hand that a teacher is not equipped to handle such as fighting, weapons, severe disrespect
   - Severe continuous infractions
   - Violent aggressive behavior problems/foul language and violent hitting needs to be addressed at the office or with head teacher
   - Severe physical fights, threats of violence, defiance, disrespect to adults, cursing aloud, weapons and any repetition of previous actions
   - Fights, physical threats, foul language
   - Serious ones, hitting, cursing, etc. and ones from lunch and recess
   - Only serious problems
   - Serious disruptions, physical abuse, destruction of property, theft, threats of physical harm, foul language
   - Teachers and staff must work together/an office problem is my problem/can’t allow student behavior be divided among us/against them
   - Disrespect including refusal to comply/fighting/stealing/hitting
   - Severe problems like fighting, threats/problem students that continually disrupt classroom and do not follow class rules
   - Continuous disruptions and fighting

4. What kinds of discipline issues should be handled by the classroom/special area teacher?
   - Talking/inattentiveness
   - I want to be involved in every matter of my students. Communication is the name of the game
   - Issues that can be handled/if even minor infractions are not being controlled, the teacher should have other options
   - Pretty much everything
   - In class and hallway issues/when class teachers are involved
   - Calling out/not staying in seat/note passing
   - Verbal squabbles/disrespect between peers/cheating, lying/incomplete work/no homework/pushing
   - Minor problems that can be settled between two students and the teacher(special area)/fighting must be reported to the office
   - Classroom control/completed assignments
   - I would say that most issues should be handled by the teacher/talking too much, general disrespect, talking back, etc./disrespect amongst students
   - Talking/minor quarrels

5. What do you think about internal/external suspensions?
   - I think that they are fine if done properly. I am not sure external works without internal consequences as well. External suspension should include assignments to be completed at home
• Internal suspension should not be used at all unless a suspension room is established/parents should be notified by phone when a student is suspended not by letter sent home
• Both serve the purpose
• Both used for consequences on progressive scale
• External is a holiday for students/internal is better/they still get up and dressed in the morning and comes to school to work
• If a student needs to be suspended then it should be external where parents are involved
• Internal is more effective than external
• Waste of time/gives the students exactly what they want---out
• Effective
• Yes because parents must become involved
• It would depend on the infraction

6. What type of student infractions do you think warrant an external suspension?
• Physical attacks/hitting/stealing/disrespect
• None, this is not a good choice/parents aren’t home/what are these kids doing at home/watching television all day
• Harm to students or teachers/extreme insubordination/threat of violence/weapon use
• Fighting/doesn’t matter who initiates/second offense
• Hitting or touching a student in an improper way/cursing/destroying property/disrupting classroom climate at least three times
• Violence/weapons should be immediate/all others after first internal for the offense
• Fighting where both students are throwing punches
• Fighting/disrespectful behavior/cursing at teacher
• Fighting/weapons/assault of student or staff member
• Fighting/extreme defiance/third time should be external
• Physical harm to other students/defacing property

7. What type of student infractions do you think warrant an internal suspension?
• Severe disrespect to staff member/repeated smaller infractions
• Several minor offenses within a short period of time
• Being disrespectful/constant misbehavior in class
• Defiance/disrespect to adults/theft/cursing aloud/one time only for those infractions
• First offense/minor misbehavior
• Anyone who breaks any rules
• Continual disrespect

8. If we continue using the wall as a time out consequence how would you judge how much time a child should spend there? Can you give an example?
• Waste of time
• Get rid of it
• Child should be seated and separated from others/half the play period and then full time
• Everyone on the wall for five minutes no matter what
• First offense at least half the time/second offense within a short time full time for a week
• First offense would be one day the whole period/second offense two days the whole period/if you make the consequences undesirable then perhaps the offenses will not be repeated
• All of recess time
• By age/five to ten minutes for younger children and twenty minutes for older children

9. Can you think what else could be used as a consequence instead of the wall?
• Detention room as described earlier
• Internal lunch detention/minimum time would be one recess period not part of the recess period
• No
• Written explanation of offense and why it deserved a consequence/to be signed by the parent
• Kept inside writing or sitting without moving
• Use the picnic tables for writing assignments
• Lunch detention
• Informing parents/let's start annoying the parents/guess what-the behavior will change
• Lunch detention
• A room or place for detention

10. How or who would supervise the alternative to the wall that you have suggested?
• Teachers will work watching students during their preps
• Teachers would take turns, for example, every other Monday in your classroom
• Assistants/two safeties
• It depends where it happened/if during lunch then a professional during lunch/if in class then the teacher
• Safeties/peer mediators/aides/head teacher
• Teacher rotation
• Teachers who wish to participate can be responsible once every two or three weeks/get an extra assistant
• Hire an NTA
• Teachers alternate weeks/each teacher takes a week or five day period
11. Do you think that preventative discipline is beneficial? Explain.
- Absolutely/if we prevent problems from occurring in the first place then we will not have to worry about the other things
- Classroom control requires preventative discipline
- Yes, teachers need to constantly remind students of rules and consequences
- Any plan to improve discipline is good/everyone must be willing to cooperate in this plan
- Yes because it might stop further issues
- Yes, rules need to be clearly understood/teacher and self-monitored frequently
- Cut the problem off now and it will not happen again
- Yes, but it doesn’t always work

12. How can overall building discipline be made more consistent?
- Rules are laws/break them and you pay/no way out/it is what it is
- Have same punishments for specific infractions
- Just stay on the child’s case/call parents/have them come in to school and pick up student or deal with student
- Teachers set the example, for example no talking to co-workers during assemblies or in the morning auditorium period/be on time
- Specific consequences for specific infractions or misbehaviors/same punishment for every student/make no exceptions to the rule/be firm
- More positives/rewards for the best line or cleanest lunch table/once a month possible rewards like ice cream treat, movie, extra play time/during morning announcements recognize good behavior/allow them to go to the office and get a ticket from principal
- If we are all consistent with all students there will be a general sense of order throughout the school/teachers need to take responsibility for all students, not just their own
- Don’t back down from parents/if kids are being written up then hopefully the classroom teacher has already exhausted his/her little bag of tricks like calling the parent, in at recess, child writes letter to parent/it is now time to take a more serious step/kids should not want to be written up because after the consequences from the principal or head teacher (their consequences should set the tone) then if they do it again then it is internal suspension and next external suspension/teachers have to make sure they have tried before sending them to the principal or head teacher/if they are tougher, too, hopefully there will be less internal and external suspensions/It Takes a Village
- Same rules and consequences
Appendix C

Parent Letter, Discipline Framework and Citation
CENTRAL SCHOOL

MISSION STATEMENT

We believe that all students have the right to learn. We believe that all students have the responsibility to behave in a manner that allows teaching and learning.

Dear Parents:
The staff of Central School works cooperatively to establish an atmosphere in our building to ensure that our children will feel safe, secure and happy. We want them to have the maximum opportunity to learn.

In an effort to accomplish this goal, we have developed a Discipline Plan Framework. The plan contains rules that cover the behaviors we expect from our students.

School Rules

- Follow directions the first time given
- Stay in your assigned area/seat
- Use equipment properly
- Keep hands, feet and objects to yourself
- Show respect for each other
- Walk, don’t run in the school
- Raise your hand and wait to be called

Guidelines

If a student chooses to break a rule in the lunchroom, auditorium, hallway, lavatory or playground, there will be procedures that we will follow. A committee of staff members has developed a Framework of Discipline which you will find on the following pages. This Framework explains the procedures that we will follow and the possible consequences.

Please note: The principal has the discretion to modify this Framework as needed.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INFRACTION</th>
<th>FIRST</th>
<th>SECOND</th>
<th>THIRD</th>
<th>FOURTH</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>Citation</td>
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<td>External suspension with letter that goes home</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Time out during whole recess</td>
<td>Student conference with principal</td>
<td>Student conference with principal</td>
<td>Conference with principal and parent upon return to school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Time out during whole recess for two days</td>
<td>Time out during whole recess for three days</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Challenging another to fight, threatening to fight or causing bodily harm to another person</td>
<td>Citation</td>
<td>Internal suspension with letter that goes home</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Time for two days during recess</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Deliberately damaging personal or school property</td>
<td>Citation</td>
<td>Citation</td>
<td>Internal suspension with letter that goes home</td>
<td>External suspension with letter that goes home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
CENTRAL SCHOOL CITATION / VERBAL WARNING

STUDENT: ___________________ DATE: __________ TIME: __________

Your child has been given a verbal warning for the follow infraction(s):

  ___ Showing disrespect
  ___ Fighting
  ___ Disrupting a class or lunchroom
  ___ Damaging property
  ___ Throwing objects
  ___ Taking things belonging to others

SUMMARY:

Parent Signature: ____________________________________________

Teacher: ___________________________________________________

Staff Member Reporting: _____________________________________
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Biographical Data</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Name</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **High School**       | St. Joseph High School  
                         | Camden, NJ |
| **Undergraduate**     | Bachelor of Arts  
                         | Elementary Education  
                         | College of New Jersey  
                         | Ewing, NJ |
| **Graduate**          | Master of Arts  
                         | School Administration  
                         | Rowan University  
                         | Glassboro, NJ |
| **Present Occupation**| Head Teacher  
                         | Central Elementary School  
                         | Pennsauken, NJ |