

## **Notes from Cybercivility Task Force Meeting**

April 3, 2014, Richard Montgomery High School Media Center

### **Introductions and Opening Comments:**

Dr. David Steinberg, facilitator:

Former teacher, MCPS parent, principal at the elementary, middle and high school levels

- Dr. Starr gave us a teachable moment. This is the right time for us to have a great conversation and move this agenda forward.
- Task force members introduced themselves. Chief Communications Officer Brian Edwards introduced his staff.

Superintendent of Schools Dr. Joshua Starr addressed the group:

- This is a unique process for us.
- We are learning as we go.
- This is about a starting conversation and strategies, about how to do something that is increasingly important.
- This is not about Twitter or Facebook. It's about all these different ways that kids are interacting with each other online. What does that mean? How do you navigate that?
- I was at Northwest High School this past week, observing in an AP class, and at the end of the class, a couple of students asked if they could take a selfie with me. So, we took a selfie and I tweeted it. It was retweeted something like 450 times. My inbox blew up.
- That reinforces this idea of how huge this thing is. Our kids are living in all different ways, physically and virtually. What are the rules of engagement around that? I tell my kids how to act when they go to people's houses, etc. Is it the same in the virtual world?
- In a million years, some people would never act in public the way they act online. I've received long, vitriolic diatribes online. Yet, when these same people come to my community meetings, when they have the opportunity to ask me a question face-to-face, they will not pick up the microphone and ask me a question.

### **Table Activities**

1. Groups spoke with their table mates on something the superintendent said that struck or resonated with them.
2. Review the charge statement and scope of work. Dr. Steinberg: We want you to help us edit this document. This document is our best effort at taking what the superintendent asked us to do and put it on paper. Are there other goals we want to see that we haven't captured?

### **Questions and comments that came up during table activities:**

- Should our goals be broader than just respectful communications?
- How about cyber well-being?
- Need to add ramifications/impact so students are aware of how this impacts them
- Need more student presence in charge statement and goals
- We don't need strategies; we need interactive programs
- We should focus on how to help guide away from vitriol and lead towards beneficial conversation
- Maybe include a statement about cybersafety as one of the goals
- The message is all about making how we behave online consistent with how we are offline
- There is a need for mindfulness activities to educate kids
- All suggestions/deliverables must be age appropriate
- People aren't going to be challenged or changed by a simple pamphlet
- Goals should include building capacity across sectors in the county
- Adding new MCPS policies under deliverables
- Parents need to be aware of the technology that exists
- The message will not be received if not delivered by the right communicator
- Cybercivility is a code of conduct which governs courteous, rational, safe and respectful conversations that promote accountability

### **Suggested Deliverables:**

- What do we have to produce? What do we want to come out with in August that will be of value? What should stay the same? What pieces should change?
- Read two articles on defining cybercivility, then had an eight-minute discussion to have a discuss creating a consensus definition of cybercivility. No report outs.
- Next big event for the community on Thursday, April 24, author Andrea Weckerle, author of *Civility in the Digital Age*
- Subcommittees: Each member of the Task Force will receive an email inviting them to choose a subcommittee. Please provide 1st, 2nd and 3rd choices.
- Spoke about email and encouraged members to think about using an existing address or choosing/creating a separate one for the purposes of the committee.