

The CCSC Behavior Working Group (BWG) was charged by the school administration to study the Code of Conduct and propose a new path forward for our school culture system. Over a period of four months, fourteen CCSC staff and family members participated in a collaborative process during which we took the following steps:

- Reflected on the history of the Code of Conduct
- Investigated the mission, vision, and core values of CCSC
- Conducted an equity audit of the Code of Conduct, in collaboration with the Equity Team
- Reviewed similar structures from other schools
- Researched and discussed alternative school discipline systems

The Behavior Working Group, by consensus, delivers the following **Call to Action** in restoring and continuing to build trust among ALL members of our community

The current Code of Conduct at CCSC is outdated and the process by which it has been implemented, tracked, and managed does not align with our stated mission and values as a school. The system itself is rooted in a foundation of white supremacy culture, ableism, and broken windows theory and uses behaviorist methods of rewards and punishments to assert control over students.

It would be a mistake not to put our behavior system in conversation with the current national reckoning of American policing. Activists are calling to shift the focus away from piecemeal, incremental reform initiatives to defunding, dismantling, and replacing oppressive systems. Indeed, the words of writer and activist [Audre Lorde](#) ring true, that “the master's tools will never dismantle the master's house” because “they will never allow us to bring about genuine change.” This same critique can also be made of schools. As CCSC has made a commitment to racial justice, we have a responsibility to seek an appropriate discipline system that does not replicate other systems that oppress Black and brown communities. As made clear by the family representatives in the working group, CCSC should be a safe space where racism and other barriers are removed to clear the path for their success.

Over the past several years, CCSC has moved away from some of the most problematic aspects of our school culture. However, rather than tinkering with a flawed system, we declare the need for CCSC to discard its current Code of Conduct and institute a new system of Community Guidelines supported by restorative justice (RJ) practices and other well-researched systems. Restorative justice practices are rooted in the philosophies and practices of indigenous communities around the world, which more closely resemble the values of the cultures represented by our student body and stand in radical contrast to the values of individualism and perfectionism from white supremacy culture.

## **A New Approach**

CCSC has been and will continue to be a model of high expectations that lead to high levels of learning and achievement. We pair those expectations with close student and teacher relationships that facilitate personalized support for individual students. A new structure of Community Guidelines built on restorative justice principles aligns with our current values of high expectations and high support.

These Community Guidelines must be based on mutual accountability, shared power, and partnerships between and with families, students, teachers, staff, and administrators at CCSC. The guidelines must prioritize collaboration to create a community that nurtures both individual and collective needs. Relationships built on a foundation of trust and accountability will allow our community to develop and thrive.

There are times where the needs and skills of individuals and the needs and skills of the community will be in conflict and people will cause and experience harm. Our conventional discipline system responds to conflict or rule-breaking with blame, control, and punishment. Conflict is an essential part of the educational process. When our students develop skills to manage conflict they will leave us prepared for postsecondary success.

Restorative justice practices support authentic relationship building while simultaneously addressing the needs of the community. The process is proactive with practices like building a strong classroom culture right from the start of our school year as faculty and staff, circles during advisory, community meetings, roundtables, and other efforts that build relationships. Restorative justice is also responsive when harm is experienced and relationships strained.

## **Our Path Forward**

Changing a mindset is difficult. Each member of our community must commit to the challenge of embracing new ideas, developing new skills, and implementing a new system. Changing a system is messy. We should challenge ourselves to focus on excellence, rather than impossible perfection. Staff, students, and families will feel most successful when we provide training, education, opportunities to give and receive feedback, and long-term support. Therefore, within our **first year** we will add the restorative components within our structures. Doing this will support teachers with the transition and create measurable benchmarks for the team to analyze the impact of the new approach to our community.

### **Vision:**

Restorative practices at CCSC will prioritize connection in every aspect of schooling. By applying a restorative approach, CCSC will cultivate a positive and purposeful school culture that will promote safety and cultural responsiveness. Cultural responsiveness means as

educators, we come to school with our own sense of identity. In our responsiveness it is important to be reflective in how our sense of self affects our classrooms. Not being aware of this individual lens of the world, has and will continue to dishonor the identities of the students and faculty we serve.

### **Year one goals:**

Within year one, we will reduce suspension rates, reduce behavior reflections, demerits and referrals, and build teacher skills and techniques to support classroom culture. We anticipate utilizing the support of the Suffolk University Center for Restorative Justice to build capacity for our staff in the following ways:

- Establish and train Leadership Team and staff members (Restorative Team) that will be working with the Leadership team with coaching and training of staff.
  - Team receives the highest level of training and collaborates with Suffolk staff.
  - This team guides our school in the long-term planning and implementation of the new system by organizing training, support, and communication.
- All staff complete Tier 1 Restorative Justice Practices\* training during August PD.
  - Understanding community building through restorative circles
  - Embodying the Restorative Mindset & language
- The Restorative Team will complete Tier 2 Restorative Justice Practices training, with an emphasis on those who support teachers and those who support students who experience the most challenges with behavior.
  - Curriculum/teacher plans
  - Students with disabilities
- The Dean of Students and specified personnel will complete Tier 3 Restorative Justice Practices training, with an emphasis on those who may be called to deal with situations of crisis as a result of their role.

*\*See figure at the end for RJ tiered interventions*

The process by which we implement a new restorative justice model is equally as important as the new system itself. We need to include the voices of students and families in this process and share leadership and power in order to avoid the trap of paternalism. Collaboration and communication with all stakeholders are essential to this process. We anticipate building shared leadership with students and families in the following ways:

### **Student:**

Once the leadership team has established a presence within the community and instituted training, circles, and communal buy in there will be a student board to assist the leadership team in facilitating circles. This group of students will provide support to staff by addressing matters within the community as well as building a positive atmosphere within the community.

Family:

Our parent involvement is key to the school's progression. Parents, guardians and other parental figures will be invited in to learn about the restorative mindset, language and process we will be employing to build culture and community, address conflict and resolve conflict. We will also seek feedback and support from the Family Counsel as needed.

We look forward to the work of making our expressed school values align more closely with our cultural system. Our commitment to this process will bring us closer to achieving racial justice and equity at CCSC.

Sincerely,

CCSC Behavior Working Group

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*Jennifer Bryant, CCSC Parent*

*Jake Friedman, Athletic Director*

*Noelani Gabriel, Director of Student and Family Engagement*

*Michael Gammariello, Learning Specialist*

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*Fabienne Mondesir, CCSC Parent*

*Leonard Russ, Dean of Students*

*Marie Ripa, Learning Specialist*

Questions, comments, concerns

## RESPONSE TO INTERVENTION MODEL

