**Reflection Journal Template EDLS 695: Principal Internship**

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**Date: March 9, 2012**

**Journal Entry #: 1**

**Issue addressed:** Student Discipline

**Colorado Principal Standard addressed:**

Standard V: Principals Demonstrate Managerial Leadership

b. Conflict Management and Resolution:Principals effectively and efficiently manage the complexity of human interactions and relationships, including those among and between parents/guardians, students and staff.

**What I Observed/Learned:**

On March 6th, I attended the District 11 Student Discipline Committee meeting. On the agenda was discussion of the D11 discipline matrix, which is meant to standardize all disciplinary actions taken by administrators. During this discussion I discovered that not all discipline issues are handled the same at different schools. What might be a Level 1 infraction may be a Level 2 at another school, and so on. It seemed as though it was necessary to tighten up these issues to avoid legal repercussions. A standardized matrix is desired by the board to avoid deviation and personal bias at a school level.

Additionally, the dress code was addressed and voted on. At issue appeared to be the matter of female dress, particularly whether girls should be allowed to wear sleeveless shirts, which one of the committee (a parent of a Doherty student) thought was of grave importance. The decision was to ban sleeveless garb and send it to the board and let them decide. It was deemed that the spaghetti straps and tank tops that many of the girls wear to school are too provocative to be conducive to learning. While setting a dress code is important, it is ultimately a tough issue to enforce at the high school level. At Palmer, we would be sending home most of the female population if sleeveless attire is banned, particularly during the summer months as we are not a fully air conditioned school. I was surprised to see how much clout one member wields over a committee, particularly since it was a parent, and not a school employee.

Finally, the tobacco-free school policy was discussed and amended to include “simulated tobacco products.” I had no idea there even was such a thing until a week ago when some student brought “spice” to school. Spice is a simulated type of marijuana, or something of that nature – I’m not really too up on the drug use of students at high school yet, but I’m learning.

**How This Will Impact My Leadership Practice:**

Obviously, being aware of current district policy and legal code is of vital importance to an administrator. As I gain more mentoring hours in the school office, I’m sure I will encounter many more opportunities to see this in action. It is important for an administrator to stay on top of the newest trends in drug use, as they seem to change frequently.

***Critical Issues* to remember as I make decisions regarding students, employees, and/or parents and the law:**

I need to be mindful of the legal ramifications when dealing with drugs and alcohol issues. Due process rights and current legal precedence need to be carefully followed. Having been in the classroom for so long, I am very green when it comes to knowledge in this area, and am interested to learning more about it. I will be interested to see how the dress code policy will be voted on by the board, and the reaction of parents and students if it tightened up as recommended by the committee.