



KATHY PLONKA / THE COURIER-NEWS

Kylee Smith (from left), Indra Morgan, Sherry Boachie and Delicia Thomas all are students at Dundee-Crown High School in Carpentersville who have boyfriends

from other districts. Under an old policy, their dates wouldn't have been allowed into Saturday night's homecoming dance.

D-C policy now in step with dating realities

Homecoming rule changed after black students say it reduced chances of finding a date to nearly nil

By Wendy Victoria
STAFF WRITER

Carpentersville — An announcement Tuesday afternoon eased the tension at Dundee-Crown High School.

But some students still want to know why their homecoming plans nearly were trashed by a policy prohibiting anyone outside of Community Unit School District 300 from attending the dance.

For a group of black females, the restriction was particularly frustrating. Junior Kylee Smith found out when she tried to buy her homecoming tickets Friday and spread the word quickly among her friends.

All had planned to bring dates from Elgin high schools because they estimate the number of black male upperclassmen in the school at less than 20. The number of black females is considerably higher, they say.

"I'm not kickin' it with no little eighth-graders," said freshman Sherry Boachie, explaining that she and her friends prefer to date older blacks.

They also point out that the other two district schools are predominantly white, so their chances of finding a guy there are almost nil.

Boachie and Smith were among the first students to take their concerns to Principal Robert Whitehouse when they heard about

the policy.

"I told him they didn't address the issue that there is no one for us to go with," said Smith.

When students first started hearing about the policy, they went to Whitehouse to complain. He sent them to student council members, who plan homecoming each year.

According to Whitehouse, the student council made the policy several years ago. And this year's problems apparently were fueled by miscommunication rather than poor intentions.

But the current council members didn't know of the policy, which hadn't been en-

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subject Dundee Crown Highschool

date of material 1996

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forced last year. And Whitehouse didn't realize it hadn't been enforced. So students such as Smith were bounced between the two, each explaining the other had made the decision.

Tuesday, he spoke to student council members, who decided to change the policy to one requiring students to register their dates' names, schools, and school phone numbers. They also had to sign an agreement requiring them to observe school rules and present photo IDs at the dance.

"It's an example of where something doesn't make sense and it can be looked at in two ways," Whitehouse said. "You either hide behind it because it's a rule, or you do what makes sense and what's right."

He also pointed out students designed the new policy, not administrators.

For Smith and her friends, the most important thing is their dates can join them at the dance. They feel empowered because their words might have helped spur change.

Smith's boyfriend wasn't happy about being excluded. She planned

to give him the good news Tuesday evening.

"I'm just hoping he didn't take his outfit back," she said, looking worried.

Freshman Delicia Thomas and her date had planned to have their own "homecoming dance" and boycott Dundee-Crown's. Sophomore Indra Morgan hadn't worked up enough courage yet to tell her beau.

"I didn't say nothing," she said, peeking shyly through her braids.

Other area high schools, including Larkin High School in Elgin and Hampshire High School, have no restrictions on whom students bring to homecoming. At St. Edward Central Catholic High School, Jacobs High School in Algonquin and, possibly, at Streamwood High School, students are required to register their dates.

Jacobs Principal Linda Robinson said there are occasions when a student's date is denied entry to the event. Students who have been expelled from the district are not allowed to attend any school functions, even as dates, she said.

Elgin High School Principal Ron O'Neal echoed those comments, saying the only restrictions on homecoming attendance would be tied to disciplinary problems with a given student.