



BOARD CURRICULUM COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES MONDAY, MARCH 10, 2008

Members of the Board Curriculum Committee met on Monday, March 10, 2008, at 6:00 p.m. in the Education Center's Dining Room. Present were Curriculum Committee Members Mary M. Katona, assistant to the superintendent for curriculum and instruction, and Richard Agretto, director of special education; and Board Members: Michele Cann, Judith Dexter, Irene Follweiler, Dr. Craig Haytmanek, Charlene Koch, Loretta Leeson, and Eugene McKeon. Also in attendance were: Dr. Joseph A. Lewis, superintendent of schools; Robert Gross, associate superintendent; Thomas Washington, director of student services; Frank Arbushites, coordinator of academic computing; Kathleen Bast, coordinator of Literacy 6-12; Dr. Dean M. Donaher, director of special programs and athletics; Dr. Joanne LoFaso, coordinator of Literacy/ELA, K-8; Eric Smith, supervisor of science; Julie Victory, supervisor of mathematics; and representatives of the press.

Mrs. Dexter called the meeting to order at 6:10 p.m.

Mrs. Dexter asked for a moment of silence for the students who lost their lives in a fire this past weekend, for other family members who were injured, and for those who lost their homes due to the fire.

COURTESY OF THE FLOOR

Mrs. Dexter asked if anyone would like to speak at the beginning of the meeting on any of the agenda items being reviewed at the meeting. No one asked to speak.

READ 180 UPDATE

Mrs. Katona noted that Scholastic conducted a mid-year analysis of the district's Read 180 data, based on 82% of records, which was up from 66% at the end of last year. Scholastic's findings were:

- All ten schools demonstrated Lexile gains ranging from 2 to 154.
- 42% to 88% of students at each of ten schools demonstrated positive Lexile gains.
- The district's average Lexile gain for students making two plus years gain was 115.
- The average elementary school Lexile, halfway through the year, was 81.
- The average middle school Lexile gain was 26.
- The average high school Lexile gain was 52.

Please note: a Lexile is a measurement of growth in reading ability

Based on this data, the following projections can be made:

- An average of 14% of elementary school students will make two plus years gains.
- An average of 12% of middle school students will make two plus years gains.
- An average of 33% of high school students will make two plus years gains.

Mrs. Katona explained that, at this mid-year point, Scholastic is making some tremendous projections for students in three of our schools. Marvine Elementary School students are projected to make 4.3 years worth of growth this year. Freedom High School students are projected to make 3.6 years worth of growth this year. Career Academy students are projected to make 3.6 years worth of growth this year. The remaining schools are on-track to make at least one year's growth.

Mrs. Katona noted that, considering the populations with whom Read 180 is being implemented, the administration is clearly seeing evidence that Read 180, as an intervention for the neediest students, is working. She also thanked Mrs. Kathleen Bast for compiling this information.

Mrs. Leeson stated that this extraordinary growth is a good thing, but inquired as to why are we seeing such good growth. Mrs. Bast explained that it is due to the rollover to the enterprise edition, better data being received, and better implementation by teachers.

Mrs. Bast noted that, regarding the teacher at Marvine Elementary School, his teaching is exclusively Read 180. Mrs. Leeson stated that maybe exclusive teaching of Read 180 is something the administration should look into for achieving better results. It was also noted that at Freedom High School Read 180 is used for the special education population, and at Liberty High School it is used for the ESOL population.

Mrs. Leeson asked if 42% to 88% of the students at each of the ten schools have demonstrated positive Lexile gains, what happened to the other students. Mrs. Bast explained that student results will not be reflected in the report until students pass the 100 Lexile level; however, students who have not yet met that level are still making progress.

Mrs. Dexter asked how the cost of Read 180 compares to Reading Recovery in small groups. Mrs. Bast responded that Read 180 is for students in grades four through twelve, and Reading Recovery is for small groups in grade one. Mr. Gross noted that a Reading Recovery teacher receives a .5 salary, while a Read 180 teacher receives a 1.0 salary.

Mrs. Dexter asked how many students are seen by the Read 180 teacher at Marvine Elementary School in a day. Mrs. Bast responded that the teacher sees approximately 40 students in grades three, four, and five in a single day.

Dr. Lewis and Mrs. Leeson explained that Read 180 is distinctly different from Reading Recovery in that Reading Recovery was designed specifically for first grade students, while Read 180 is designed for grades four through twelve and is primarily a computer component.

ACTION PLAN UPDATE

Mrs. Katona presented an updated Action Plan. She noted that only the items in red were updates. Mrs. Follweiler noted that putting the new updates in red is a great format.

Mrs. Leeson questioned the second bullet which read that, due to the efforts of our math supervisor, Mrs. Victory, the district will be able to offer literacy initiative strategies in the Math GAP course in the spring. Freedom High School has begun the Math GAP course with one class. Mrs. Victory explained that the Math GAP class is for students who get a C- or less in Algebra 1 Concepts or Geometry Concepts. It focuses on literacy skills, vocabulary, algebra, geometry, and PSSA preparation. Mrs. Victory noted that Liberty High School was not able to fit Math GAP into their schedule yet. Mr. McKeon asked if Math GAP is mandatory. Mrs. Victory responded that it is mandatory for students in Algebra 1 Concepts or Geometry Concepts who received a C- or lower.

Mrs. Dexter noted that, on page three, it was noted that Mr. Agretto has held an initial meeting for those interested in joining the gifted/talented task force. He continues to develop committees to work on identified areas of need, and has scheduled three more meetings to be held this year. She inquired as to why he has only held one meeting so far. Mr. Agretto responded that a second meeting had been scheduled for today, but had to be cancelled due to the recent tragedy. He also noted that only one parent has volunteered for his task force committee and that it is still open to anyone else who wishes to be a part of the committee.

PSSA PARENT LETTER NOTIFICATION

Dr. Lewis explained that, following last year's testing, the board raised several questions about the loss of instructional time, particularly with periods one and two, as freshmen, sophomores, and seniors only met for periods three and four on the three days of testing. As such, the administration directed the high school principals to create a more instructional time for grades nine, ten, and twelve, while preserving the testing blocks for grade eleven. Dr. Lewis explained that, for testing this year, the administration has maintained a testing environment that will be beneficial to the juniors; however, the administration has also found a way to conduct freshmen classes at both schools for the entire testing cycle, while bringing sophomores and seniors in the afternoon. He noted that another change from last year's schedule is that we are alternating which class periods students will miss over the course of the testing days. Note that on two of the days, students will miss periods three and four, and they will miss periods one and two on only one of the days. Dr. Lewis stated that he hoped this information has adequately addressed the board's concerns. He noted that letters and schedules will be sent to parents in a timely manner in an effort to avoid confusion during testing week. He noted that the schedules will also be published on the Web.

SENIOR LUNCH PRIVILEGE UPDATE

Dr. Donaher noted that, at the last Board Curriculum Committee Meeting, the board recommended revisions to the Senior Lunch Privilege Report that was presented to them. Dr. Donaher met with his task force and they are recommending the following:

1. Any senior found in violation of the Student Code of Conduct at a Level III infraction will lose his/her Senior Lunch Privilege for the remainder of the school year. This loss of privilege may be reviewed by the principal at the end of the first semester, if applicable. Such violations include, but are not limited to, disrespect, drugs/alcohol violation, extortion, insubordination, physical assault, profanity/obscenity, truancy, and unauthorized areas.
2. Any senior found in violation of the Student Code of Conduct at a Level II infraction will lose his/her Senior Lunch Privilege for the remainder of the semester. If an infraction occurs near the end of the first semester, the punishment may be extended into the second semester as determined by the principal. Such violations include, but are not limited to, continued classroom misconduct, defiance, dress code violation, loitering, unauthorized items, and unexcused class absence.
3. Any senior found in violation of the attendance policy (late to class, late to school, or Identification Badge (ID) infractions) will forfeit his/her Senior Lunch Privilege for the remainder of the marking period, or as determined by the principal.
4. An annual review of the Senior Lunch Privilege will be conducted by the administration, including the principal, student, and central office administrator.
5. The Student Code of Conduct will be enforced on any underclassmen found leaving school grounds for lunch. The most applicable category of offense would be a Level II defiance, or a Level III unauthorized area. In addition, any underclassmen found leaving school grounds for lunch will lose Senior Lunch Privilege in his/her senior year for one quarter for each offense so noted.
6. The principal retains the authority to make exceptions based upon extenuating circumstances.

Dr. Donaher also noted that Mr. Craig had previously asked that the administration investigate the possibility of not allowing students to drive to classes at the Bethlehem Vocational-Technical School from Liberty High School, thus eliminating those who are not seniors driving to fast-food restaurants for lunch. Dr. Donaher explained that this would be a problem to enforce and also, some students leave directly after classes for jobs, etc.

Mr. McKeon agreed that it is a good idea to watch underclassmen who may also be leaving the building at lunchtime.

It was also noted by Diane Seip that seniors must be on track with their community service hours in order to be eligible for Senior Lunch Privilege.

Mrs. Leeson noted that it is still an additional burden for the administration to have to enforce the Senior Lunch Privilege and asked if it is worth the effort.

Mrs. Durante responded that it is fair and manageable; the hardest part is allowing the right students to go out the doors.

Mrs. Leeson expressed that seniors are not the problem; it is mainly the underclassmen. She also questioned if enough time is allowed for students to safely go out to eat and return to class. The principals noted that Freedom High School students have 37 minutes and Liberty High School students have 30 minutes for lunch.

Mrs. Cann asked how students felt about possibly having a designated senior lunch area at each school as an alternative for seniors who did not wish to leave the property at lunchtime. Dr. Donaher replied that many students expressed that they would like to see an eating area designated for seniors which would possibly contain televisions, etc.

Mrs. Dexter then asked the board to go to agenda item B regarding Senior Lunch Privilege Revisions and asked if any board member objected to placing this item on the agenda for the March 17, 2008, Regular Board Meeting. No one objected.

COMMUNITY SERVICE UPDATE

Dr. Lewis thanked Mrs. Koch and all members of the Community Service Task Force under the direction of Dr. Donaher, assigned administrator, and Mr. William Scheirer, chairperson, for all the hard work they put into this project.

Diane Seip and Deborah Campanella then presented a PowerPoint presentation on the history of the Community Service Program. Ms. Seip noted that the district's Community Service Program has entered its seventeenth year since its inception in 1990-1991, when it became a requirement for graduation. It stipulates that each student must complete 60 hours of approved community service during high school. Completion of 60 hours provides .5 credit towards graduation. Ms. Seip noted that, in 1992, the board approved 118 agencies for which students could fulfill their community service obligation. Today, there are 195 nonprofit organizations ready to accept student volunteers, and the approved list continues to grow. She noted that many students choose to serve in Bethlehem Area School District schools across all grade levels. Students are encouraged to select an organization that reflects their own interests, skills, and future career choices. Ms. Seip also noted that many students volunteer well over the 60-hour requirement. An additional .5 credit may be earned for a second 60 hours served.

Ms. Campanella noted that this year the district is approaching 1,000,000 hours served. Since the inception of this graduation requirement, there have been various means of student recognition for exceptional volunteer service. Some tributes are in-house, some awards are local, but the community service office has always sought out recognition for students, be it local, regional, or national. The ways students are acknowledged vary from receptions to certificates, and from picture displays to scholarships. The "Outstanding Community Service Award," the silver cord, is given to students for graduation who have performed at least 135 hours of community service during their high school years. Graduating students who have volunteered at least 100 hours in a one-year period are recognized with the "President's Volunteer Service Award." Both Freedom and Liberty High Schools recognize students' community service efforts at the annual "Academic Achievement Dinner/Reception."

Ms. Campanella noted that "The Presidential Freedom Scholarship," which has awarded \$1,000 to eleven Freedom and Liberty High School students from 2003 through 2006, has ended. In order to continue with the tradition of this scholarship, the administration will be seeking a new sponsor(s) for the current school year.

In addition, Ms. Campanella noted that, while the Bethlehem Area School District has established many successful partnerships with the service agencies involved in the Community Service Program, it has done little to acknowledge these relationships. It is further recommended

that the district sponsor a reception in honor of these agencies and some of our outstanding student volunteers. April is Volunteer Recognition Month and would be an appropriate time to hold such a function. Invitations will be extended to agency coordinators, district representatives, and students, both past and present, with outstanding service records. A tentative date of April 18, 2008, has been set.

Mrs. Cann agreed that it is a good idea to recognize these agencies as a way of saying “Thank You.”

Mrs. Koch stated that she needed to mention that this program got off to a rocky start and she did not totally agree with it in the beginning, but she has learned a lot recently working with the task force.

Mrs. Leeson stated that she feels that students who do extraordinary service do not receive enough recognition. She feels that any student who reaches 1,000 hours should have board recognition. Ms. Campanella stated that these students and some from the past will be invited to the reception. Mrs. Follweiler inquired as to the cost of the reception and asked who would be paying for it. Dr. Lewis responded that it would be paid by sponsorship funding, non-taxpayer money.

Dr. Donaher then explained that the administration formed a Community Service Task Force Committee with Mr. William Scheirer chairing the committee. Over fifty participating agencies in the Bethlehem Area School District’s Community Service Program were invited to join the committee, as well as the general public, representative faculty members, and both high school principals. The task force was charged with three tasks from the administration, which included defining Community Service, developing criteria for agency participation, and developing a process for handling transgressions. The task force presented the following recommendations:

1. That the rubric be adopted as a means of gathering essential information on all agencies interested in participating as partners in the Bethlehem Area School District’s Community Service Program.
2. A date of April 15 of the student’s senior year be established as the last date completed community service hours can be submitted for approval for the purpose of meeting the community service requirement of 60 hours for graduation.
3. A date of April 15 of the student’s senior year be established as the last date completed community service hours can be submitted for approval for the purpose of meeting the requirement of 135 hours for the attainment of the “Silver Cord”.
4. Students who do not meet the April 15 deadline in their senior year for the submission of completed community service hours must submit a written request for an extension to the superintendent. The request must explain the reason for the non-completion as well as a plan for the completion of the hours, if approved by the superintendent.
5. The original definition of community service is retained as an answer to the first charge directed to the task force. The original definition contained in the School Board Policy is as follows: ***The Community Service Program provides the opportunity for high school students to provide service to the community. Each student is required to perform sixty (60) hours of unpaid service to organizations or experiential situations approved by the district. These experiences will help students acquire life skills and learn about the significance of rendering services to their communities. Students will gain a sense of***

worth and pride as they understand and appreciate the functions of community organizations.

6. Students are to be strongly encouraged to attain a minimum of 15 community service hours per year to keep pace with the required 60 hours. Specific actions should be adopted to inform and document notification of the requirement to students and their parents/guardians. High schools are encouraged to use a percentage of community service hours completed as a benchmark for acceptance into or ability to participate in extra-curricular activities, organizations, clubs, and Senior Lunch Privilege.
7. Establish a Community Service Advisory Board for the purpose of providing feedback and general oversight to the district on the Community Service Program.
8. Adoption of the Community Service Activities Guidelines as amended.
9. Adoption of the Independent Projects: Overview and Application Process.

Mrs. Cann asked what will happen if a student does not complete 15 hours during his/her freshman year. Dr. Donaher responded that it is only suggested that a student complete 15 hours during his/her freshman year, but the deadline for 60 hours in their senior year will be April 15. He stated that it is important that the high school administration keep track of students' hours prior to the deadline. Mrs. Dexter inquired as to what happens if a student does not complete his/her 60 hours by the April 15 deadline. Dr. Donaher responded that the student does not graduate with the class. If a student completes his/her 60 hours after the deadline, it is the principal's and/or the superintendent's discretion as to whether the student walks with the class at graduation. Mrs. Dexter stated that she felt there should be an exact ruling in place regarding graduation. Dr. Lewis stated that sometimes there are extenuating circumstances that have to also be considered. Mrs. Dexter asked how many students do not graduate each year because they have not completed their community service hours. Ms. Seip replied that two to five students per year do not graduate with their class based solely on not meeting community service requirements. Mrs. Dexter asked if there are any students who choose not to do community service. Ms. Seip replied that last year they had one student at Liberty who did not graduate with his class because he chose not to do community service. A distinction was made between "not walking" and not receiving a diploma.

Mrs. Follweiler inquired if there are any students who are exempt from doing community service. Ms. Seip replied that severely challenged students, life skill students, and partially hospitalized students with doctor's excuses do not have to do community service hours.

Mrs. Leeson asked how many hours a student can complete during the summer prior to his/her freshman year. Dr. Donaher responded that they can complete up to 30 hours. This is an increase from 15 hours previously.

Mrs. Koch noted that the district has come to a compromise with organizations that serve alcohol during an event, such as during a dinner, etc. Parents must now sign a waiver stating that they give their child permission to work with that organization.

Mrs. Leeson noted that it is the district's policy that students not be allowed to support agencies whose volunteer activities may support partisan political organizations. She felt that being involved in a campaign would be a good civic lesson for students. It would be a great way for students to give back to their community and the country. Mr. Scheirer responded that he disagreed with her and felt that students should not cross the line into political parties. Dr. Lewis

noted that he had given permission for high school students to register voters as long as they did not back a certain political group or candidate.

Mrs. Cann asked if students who complete 60 hours during their first year need to do more hours each year. Dr. Donaher responded that once they complete their 60 hours, they are finished, and it is the student's option to do more hours.

Mr. Scheirer also noted that the board has final approval on all community service agencies.

Mrs. Dexter asked the board if anyone would like any further revisions to the community service agenda. The board agreed that the agenda item should be placed on the agenda for the March 17, 2008, Regular Board Meeting.

SOCIAL STUDIES PILOT

Mrs. Katona presented information to the board regarding the two companies (Pearson Prentice Hall and McDougal Littell) who were chosen for a middle school social studies pilot to be conducted during the 2008-2009 school year. Mr. Docalovich presented a timeline which included how the pilot would be sent up amongst the four middle schools. Mrs. Katona noted that sample books are available to any board member who wished to review them. Mrs. Katona also noted that two teachers, per grade level, per school, would pilot the books, and then switch books after half the school year, with the same class having the opportunity to use both sets of books. Then, at the end of the school year, a recommendation would be brought to the board for final approval.

Mrs. Koch noted that she used to teach history and these new books were very interesting and wonderful to review. They encouraged students to do research and referenced other books. Mr. Docalovich agreed that they challenge teachers and give them a new way of thinking about teaching. He also noted that these two companies were the only companies that aligned with the Pennsylvania standards. Mrs. Katona mentioned that the district will work on the curriculum over the summer so it will be completed before the pilot begins. Mr. Docalovich also noted that sixth, seventh, and eighth grade teachers were involved in the selection of the books.

Mrs. Dexter asked if any board member objected to placing the Social Studies Pilot agenda item on the agenda for the March 17, 2008, Regular Board Meeting. No one objected.

DUAL ENROLLMENT AND GET ACTIVE! MINI-GRANT PROGRAM

Dr. Lewis reviewed two items to be placed on the agenda for the March 17, 2008, Regular Board Meeting regarding Dual Enrollment and Get Active! Mini-Grant Program, which will be funded through grants. Mrs. Cintron noted that this is only the amount the district is requesting, the state does not tell the district exactly how much we will receive until after the grants are approved. She also noted that parents are informed that they must pay upfront and will possibly be reimbursed later, if money becomes available through the grant.

Mrs. Dexter asked if any board member objected to placing both these agenda item on the agenda for the March 17, 2008, Regular Board Meeting. No one objected.

CAREER ACADEMY DISCUSSION

Mr. Washington explained to the board that, in cooperation with the Bethlehem Area Vocational-Technical School (BAVTS), the Bethlehem Area School District is considering relocating the Career Academy program to the BAVTS site. This design would continue the successful work of the Career Academy and combine the strength of the BAVTS career/occupation components. The new location would accommodate 100 students. This model transfers our independent alternative system to the space available at BAVTS. Instruction will continue to be centered on academic and career standards, and will increase the opportunity to enhance these students. Students will continue to acquire their core subjects through the already successful method implemented by the Career Academy, as well as service-learning and other career related opportunities. To further strengthen the link between academic and career standards, BAVTS will offer four to five dedicated program areas for students in the a.m. or p.m. sessions. These program areas will be representative of the various career clusters and will be taught by certified career and technical educators. Other delivery systems and career options will be available including: work study, trade apprenticeships, dual enrollment, trade school, art apprenticeships, CareerLink opportunities, and various others. All existing vocational technical students will continue in their current career and vocational program areas. He also noted that he has discussed this project with Mr. Williams at BAVTS and Mr. Williams will designate an area where the entire program would be housed. The move would allow for the principal, a counselor, seven core teachers, and two paraprofessionals to be relocated. He also noted that they are looking into varying the start time so the buses for the two schools would not interfere with each other. Mrs. Leeson stated that since "The Zone" area worked so well at the other location, she would like the same area allotted at the new location.

Dr. Lewis informed the board that he will be bringing them a formal presentation soon concerning the Rosemont building and its future usage.

COURTESY OF THE FLOOR

Mr. Stephen Antalics, 737 Ridge Street, Bethlehem, spoke regarding the start time of the meeting. The administration checked the Web site and it was correctly listed as 6:00 p.m.

Mrs. Mary Pongracz, West Fourth Street, Bethlehem, spoke regarding the following:

1. She wanted to commend everyone on the Community Service Task Force for the hours and work they put in.
2. She admires the wonderful job the board members are doing, and noted that they do a thankless job.
3. She also noted that she expects all board members to volunteer for MusicFest and work under her supervision.

Jordan Roman, a sophomore at Liberty High School, spoke regarding the wonderful job Dr. Lewis is doing running the district and felt the board should let Dr. Lewis and the administration do their jobs and stop looking over their shoulders.

Gayle Nolf, a teacher at the Career Academy, thanked the board for finding a way to keep the Career Academy.

Suzanne Nelson, 1923 Montgomery Street, Bethlehem, a retired BASD teacher, spoke regarding the following:

1. The district's accountability system. She stated that computers are not the only things missing from buildings. She noted that lost textbooks could cost the district and the taxpayers a lot of money each year. She also questioned the bid process, stating that items ordered are delivered to the district but not all items arrive in the specified classrooms. She stated that the district needs a better tracking system on overall items, not only computers.
2. Regarding textbooks, she stated that the board should establish a curriculum first, and then look at books.
3. Regarding the Career Academy, the district should make sure the BAVTS classrooms are not disrupted by students who do not follow rules. She asked that the district not spoil the BAVTS students who want to be there with these additional students.

Francine Citak, a teacher at the Career Academy, explained that the Career Academy already has students who also attend BAVTS. She also noted that she feels the Career Academy is absolutely necessary, since it gives students the feeling that someone cares.

OPEN FORUM

Mrs. Dexter noted that two people spoke regarding how much the board should or should not get involved in issues. She stated that every day someone says thank you to her for the work the board does.

Mrs. Leeson noted that Jordan Roman is one of the outstanding community service students and should be recognized.

Regarding the social studies program, Mrs. Leeson asked if the student composition will be similar to the composition we currently have. Mrs. Katona responded that principals will be looking at each student and grouping them for achievement. Mr. LaPorta added that data will be based on assessments brought from the middle schools, including grades and teacher recommendations. Students will be grouped by standards based courses with additional support, standards based courses, and honors classes.

Mrs. Koch asked the administration to check out a past practice of giving the president of the teachers' union a one-half day off in return for him meeting with the board to discuss various topics. Dr. Lewis stated that he would check this out with Mr. Zeiger.

Mrs. Cann stated that she agreed with Mrs. Leeson that the district should be careful not to dilute honors classes. She stated that honors teachers like having students who are ready for what honors teachers dish out.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

Minutes Prepared By:

Charlotte L. Zimmerman

Administrative Assistant to the Assistant to the Superintendent for Curriculum and Instructio