



**BOARD CURRICULUM COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
TUESDAY, APRIL 14, 2009**

Members of the Board Curriculum Committee met on Tuesday, April 14, 2009, at 6:15 p.m. in the Education Center's Dining Room. Present were Curriculum Committee Members Mary M. Katona, assistant superintendent for curriculum and instruction, and Richard Agretto, director of special education; and Board Members: Michele Cann, Judith Dexter, Irene Follweiler, Charlene Koch, Loretta Leeson, Eugene McKeon, and Benjamin Tenaglia. Also in attendance were: Dr. Joseph A. Lewis, superintendent of schools; Thomas Washington, assistant superintendent for human resources; Dr. Dean Donaher, director of student services; Frank Arbushites, acting director of technology; Jennifer Hilton, acting coordinator of literacy/ELA K-12; Eric Smith, supervisor of science; Julie Victory, supervisor of mathematics; and representatives of the press.

Mrs. Dexter called the meeting to order at 6:54 p.m.

COURTESY OF THE FLOOR

Nothing to report.

FIRST IN MATH

Mrs. Katona asked that this item be discussed first due to the number of parents and students involved. The board agreed to this item being moved to the beginning of the meeting.

Mrs. Victory explained that all students in grades three through eighth are given licenses to participate in *First In Math*. She explained that participation included in the classroom, at home, and new this year is "Family Link" which enables a family member to also participate from home. She explained that *First In Math* is used for practice, enrichment, and remediation. Mrs. Victory then introduced Mr. Sun, of *First In Math*, who presented the following awards for national rankings. Mr. Sun commented that there were more than 400,000 students using *First In Math* this year.

East Hills Middle School – Mr. Crawford, principal

Team Awards –

8th Grade Team, Tim Dando, team leader, placed 25th in the United States

Jamie Homick, student, 1st place on this 8th grade team

7th Grade Team, Bryan Kohl, team leader, placed 17th in the United States
Nick Mazzella, student, 1st place on this 7th grade team

7th Grade Team, Christine Kruk, team leader, placed 24th in the United States
Priyanka Koti, student, 1st place on this 7th grade team

Player Awards –

8th Grade -

Rebecca Cimera, placed 3rd in the United States among 8th graders

7th Grade -

Xavier Walker, placed 13th in the United States among 7th graders

Nick Mazzella, placed 16th in the United States among 7th graders

Family Link Awards –

8th Grade –

Rebecca Cimera/Parent, placed 5th in the United States

7th Grade –

Xavier Walker/Brenda Freeman (grandmother), placed 3rd in the United States

James Buchanan Elementary School - Mary Catherine Tachovsky, principal

Team Awards -

3rd Grade Team, Shelly Millheim, team leader, placed 16th in the United States

Kyle Pitch, student, 1st place on this 3rd grade team

Asa Packer Elementary School - Carol Jacoby, principal; Carrie Beleno, team leader

Player Awards -

3rd Grade –

Valentine Perevalov, placed 1st in the United States among 3rd graders

Family Link Awards –

3rd Grade

Valentine Perevalov/Dr. Eugene Perevalov(father), placed 1st in the United States
among 3 rd graders; placed 6th in the United States among all grades

SUMMER ACADEMY – “GETTING RESULTS FOR ALL”

Mrs. Katona explained that she, Mr. Agretto, and their staffs are preparing for the third year of providing an opportunity for in-service in the areas of literacy and inclusion. They have been working on schedules of sessions that will provide professional development for teachers, administrators, paraprofessionals, parents, and board members. So far, the planning committee has identified sessions that cover topics that include literacy across the curriculum, differentiated instruction, managing behavior, technology, community, using data, and parent partnerships. Mrs. Katona noted that they are pleased to say that the sessions and participation have grown since they first began running the academy in 2007. Specifically, they have seen growth through

the number of participants, the number of scope of sessions offered, the number of BASD staff who have offered to present sessions, and the positive impact on the numbers of special education students being included in our general education curriculum in the regular education classroom setting as we attempt to close the achievement gap for all students.

Mr. Agretto then proceeded to explain the Special Education Data Reports for the 2006-2007, 2007-2008, and 2008-2009 school years. He stated that special needs students have increased their time in regular education, greater than 80 percent of their day, from 43 percent in December of 2006 to 56 percent in December of 2008.

Mrs. Koch asked that, since the state is pushing for special education students to be placed in regular classrooms, if they provide compensation for teachers. Mr. Agretto replied that the state does not provide any extra money for new teachers. Mrs. Koch also asked how many instructors work just with gifted students. Mr. Agretto replied that there are approximately eight instructors. He also indicated that we no longer have an active parent group for gifted.

Mrs. Dexter asked if BASD is meeting the timelines for initial evaluations. Mr. Agretto replied that BASD has not met the timeline this year, and with timelines getting tighter next year, BASD will not be able to meet them again. Mr. Agretto noted that part of the solution may be to add additional psychologists.

BROUGHAL MIDDLE SCHOOL CURRICULUM

Mrs. Katona noted that the information presented to the board is the result of Mrs. Dexter's request at the March 9, 2009, Board Curriculum Committee Meeting, for research that connects the curriculum proposal with outcomes. Also presented to the board was the original position paper on the new Broughal Middle School, which was presented to the 2005 Board of School Directors. Additional information included typical student schedules, as they are currently run, and as the Broughal administration expects them to run in the new program. The final document contained responses to questions Mrs. Dexter e-mailed during the previous week.

Board members agreed that the information presented brought everything together for a better understanding. It was agreed that this information was exactly what was needed.

Mrs. Dexter asked for clarification on the inquiry-based approach, specifically, what it would mean to have 80 percent of instruction in the laboratory setting. Mr. Smith explained that it is another tool for teachers to get an understanding of what is there, content and process goals are involved. Mr. Smith noted that the goals are reached through various instructional methods, but it does not mean that, in terms of minutes, 80 percent of the time would be inquiry. Mr. Santoro elaborated, explaining that all the curriculum follows themes that the state asks for, and each unit is to have lab projects. He noted that the inquiry would not be superfluous, but would be embedded within each unit.

Mrs. Leeson stated that the inquiry-based seems to need to be balanced. She said that it reminds her of integrated mathematics. She asked Mr. Santoro to clarify if he believes the inquiry-based is balanced. Mr. Santoro replied that it follows what the district does across the board. He also

stated that it would be guided inquiry where the teacher leads instruction and creates the right atmosphere. There is a progression of learning the science and doing the science.

Mrs. Follweiler said she was glad to hear the approach toward inquiry-based learning, as some students need more direct instruction. Then, after reviewing the information on Broughal Middle School schedules, Mrs. Follweiler asked Mr. Smith to go through a typical school day and then explain the changes.

Mrs. Koch noted that teachers are going to be asked to teach in a different way. She asked the administration if they have plans to teach the teachers how to teach in a different style. Ms. Cirucci replied that they are also currently working with the DaVinci Center and Lehigh University has been assisting with the writing of curriculum. Mrs. Katona replied that this is not just something they need to accomplish at Broughal, but across the board at all schools. She noted that this is part of the purpose of the academy this summer. Mr. Santoro also replied that Broughal's teachers are also helping to write curriculum.

Mrs. Leeson asked if our high schools will be ready for these students when they advance to high school. Mr. Smith replied that most AP/honors courses are low in minorities. He hopes this new program will give these students a comfort level to feel competent to take AP/honors courses in high school.

Mrs. Leeson also noted that there are very few science electives in our high schools. Mr. Smith replied that enrollment is the biggest problem; when enrollment decreases in electives, they are dropped. Mrs. Leeson replied that sometimes all it takes is a little bit of encouragement to get students into these electives.

Mrs. Leeson stated that, in the Signature School Supporting Research Information, it states that the data suggests that by the year 2019, about 50 percent of high school courses will be delivered online, and she asked if we will be ready. Mrs. Katona replied that she and Mr. Arbushites are already looking at the possibility of starting to bring in some of these courses. Dr. Lewis replied that he is looking at grant funding to bring some courses into our schools, through the Internet, that are currently not available to our students, such as Mandarin.

Mrs. Dexter asked if we are planning to change boundaries and bring some students back to Broughal who are currently attending East Hills Middle School. She also asked if we are planning to have an open enrollment policy for Broughal. Dr. Lewis replied that the administration is currently not planning on changing the boundaries between areas for Broughal and East Hills Middle School attendance. The administration is looking at possible options for open enrollment for Broughal Middle School. Mrs. Dexter replied that this should be a board decision. Dr. Lewis replied that Mr. Santoro is looking at a proposal to bring to the board with possible open enrollment options for Broughal Middle School. Mrs. Leeson then asked, if Broughal has an open enrollment policy, would we need to have an open enrollment policy at all of our middle schools. She suggested that this subject be discussed in more detail at a future meeting. She stated that she thought Broughal was being built for more than just the current enrollment and thought this subject should have been discussed and decided by now. Dr. Lewis replied that the administration is looking at the possibility of open enrollment for the 2009-2010

school year, but he was not ready to discuss the details at this meeting. He did note, however, that open enrollment would only be allowed with no additional staffing. Also with open enrollment, parents are responsible for transporting their children, busing is not provided.

Mr. McKeon noted that he would not want to see students who should be attending Broughal Middle School bumped out of Broughal because of open enrollment.

Mr. McKeon asked if we will have qualified staff to run the television program. Mr. Santoro replied that yes, we will have qualified and excited teachers, and they are also working with Sergio from Bethlehem Vocational Technical School

Mrs. Dexter asked if we will have sufficient technical help to support the new programs at Broughal. Mr. Santoro replied that he is confident that his staff will be able to handle the technology needs, as he has several quality people in his building.

Mrs. Dexter asked if the greenhouse has been put on hold. Dr. Lewis replied that the greenhouse is framed, but not completed. We are in currently in negotiations with the benefactor, and will hopefully be able to use some of the stimulus money towards this project. Mrs. Leeson replied that the stimulus money can also be used for AP programs and for staff development. Mrs. Katona and Dr. Lewis both agreed and noted that when they asked their staff to take a look at their areas, this was the first thing they looked at. Mrs. Dexter asked what the impact would be if the greenhouse was postponed. Mr. Santoro noted that he would need the planetarium first in order to run the astronomy program. Dr. Lewis noted that he is also currently working on another source of funding.

Dr. Lewis noted that he and his cabinet members went on a tour of the new Broughal facility today. Mrs. Dexter inquired as to when the board would get a tour. It was decided that they would tour the new facility on Monday, May 4, 2009, prior to the committee meetings. It was also agreed that the Board Facility Committee Meeting, Board Finance Committee Meeting, and Public Budget Hearing scheduled for May 4, 2009, be held at Broughal Middle School. Mrs. Leeson requested that the district not move the Education Center's chairs and tables, only the board's name signs.

Dr. Lewis explained that the administration will be bringing a resolution to approve the curriculum and a list of items to be purchased for the new Broughal Middle School to the April 27, 2009, Regular Board Meeting.

AGENDA ITEMS FOR APRIL 27, 2009, REGULAR BOARD MEETING

The board reviewed the following agenda items for placement on the agenda for the April 27, 2009, Regular Board Meeting:

1. Tuition Rates for Child Care Program
2. Ticket Prices for Athletic Events –
It was noted that ticket prices for 2009-2010 will be the same as last year's prices.

3. Community Service Agencies –
 - A. Boutique at the Rink, St. Luke’s Hospital, The Wellness Community – the board asked how students can volunteer Monday through Saturday if they are in school Monday through Friday during April and May. Dr. Donaher replied that he believed the Boutique is open Monday through Saturday, but students only volunteer on Saturdays. He noted that he would check on this information and make any corrections before the April 27, 2009, Regular Board Meeting.
 - B. Delaware & Lehigh National Heritage Corridor – Mrs. Dexter asked if this is a safe environment for our students. It was agreed that this item would be pulled until further information was provided.
 - C. Legacy Ministries
 - D. Upward Basketball - Dr. Donaher noted that the e-mail for Upward Basketball should read “upwardathletics.org”. Mrs. Leeson questioned students refereeing other students who may be the same age. Dr. Donaher replied that he believed the students playing basketball were younger than those doing the refereeing, but he would verify this fact before the April 27, 2009, Regular Board Meeting.

4. Safe Schools/Healthy Students Grant

COURTESY OF THE FLOOR

Nothing to report.

OPEN FORUM

1. Mrs. Leeson asked the status of the Gifted and Talented Task Force. Mr. Agretto replied that there is nothing to report, but he will have information by the end of the school year.
2. Mrs. Leeson stated that she is hearing from parents that rigor at the high school level is just not there, and asked what is being done. Mrs. Katona replied that this item is scheduled to be addressed at the May 11, 2009, Board Curriculum Meeting.
3. Mrs. Leeson asked if there will also be a discussion regarding the AP and Honors data that has been received. She asked if what we have in place is working and what additionally can be done. Mrs. Katona replied that she is meeting with the high school administration next week and this item is already on her agenda.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:54 p.m.

Minutes Prepared By:

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