



**BOARD CURRICULUM COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
MONDAY, JUNE 15, 2009**

Members of the Board Curriculum Committee met on Monday, June 15, 2009, at 6:30 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, 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; Eric Smith, supervisor of science; Julie Victory, supervisor of mathematics; and representatives of the press.

Following a 6:00 p.m. executive session, Mrs. Dexter called the meeting to order at 6:50 p.m.

COURTESY OF THE FLOOR

1. President of the 2009-2010 senior class at Liberty High School, spoke regarding Senior Lunch Privilege. He asked that seniors not be punished because of the actions of others.
2. Anita Shive, president of the Liberty High School Block Watch, spoke regarding the Senior Lunch Privilege proposal. She asked that the board take into consideration their request that all students remain on-campus during senior lunch privileges when they review the proposal.
3. Ellie Destasio and Ted Ruhf, Freedom High School booster club members, spoke regarding the proposed Bethlehem Area School District (BASD) stadium concession stand changes. They asked that the board consider approving the proposal.
4. William Reynolds, Elizabeth Avenue, Bethlehem, spoke regarding the Senior Lunch Privilege proposal. He asked that the board take into consideration letters from the Bethlehem City Council and neighborhood concerns when they review the proposal.

BOOSTER CLUB – BASD CONCESSION PROPOSAL

Dr. Donaher, Mr. Harris, and Mr. Senneca discussed a proposal for a joint venture between the Freedom and Liberty High School booster clubs to run the concession stands, located at the Bethlehem Area School District stadium, for all events held in the stadium during the fall sports season. Mrs. Dexter asked what the changes would be from last season and why they are being proposed. Dr. Donaher replied that basically, last year the profit split was 60 percent to be divided evenly between the two booster clubs, and 40 percent to the district to defray the costs of utilities, facility rental, and replacement costs of existing equipment. He explained that the average given to the district over the past ten years was \$9,000 annually. The new proposal would have the district receiving \$6,000 annually, and the remaining \$3,000 would go towards the purchase of summer sports insurance. Dr. Donaher explained that the booster clubs have more expenses each year and would like the opportunity to generate more incoming funds. Mrs. Follweiler asked that Dr. Donaher provide a chart showing last years expenses and income and the proposed changes for next season.

Mr. McKeon asked how Freedom High School's booster club has typically handled requests for money. Mrs. Destasio explained that, when a team requested funds, the coach would bring the proposal to a booster club meeting, and then the booster club's executive committee would review it and approve or disapprove the request. Mr. McKeon asked why two signatures would be required on the concession stand checking accounts, asking if the audit would cover this situation. Dr. Lewis replied that it is just a method of checks and balances. Mrs. Leeson asked if the profits from both booster clubs would be combined and split 50/50 between the two clubs. Dr. Donaher replied that the profit would be split this way.

Mr. Tenaglia asked why the concession stand account would not be run through the district and have the profits split at the end of the season. Dr. Lewis replied that such a process is not done with any other groups.

The board agreed that they would like to see the chart Mrs. Follweiler requested before approving the submittal of the proposal to the solicitor. Dr. Lewis replied that Dr. Donaher will have the information for next Friday's board mailing, and it would be discussed at the July 20, 2009, Board Finance Committee Meeting.

CHEERLEADING PROPOSAL

Dr. Donaher explained that, in an effort to promote more school spirit and to provide more students with the opportunity to participate in the sport of cheerleading, while at the same time limiting the costs, it is recommended that the district approve the implementation of both spirit squads and competition squads at both high schools. The proposal would allow each high school to have the option of having three spirit squads, freshman, junior varsity, and varsity; or two spirit squads, junior varsity and varsity. Freshman spirit squads would be comprised solely of students in ninth grade. Junior varsity spirit squads would be open to students in the ninth, tenth, and eleventh grades. Varsity spirit squads would be open to students in the ninth, tenth, eleventh, and twelfth grades. The district would fund any uniform and equipment costs associated with the freshman, junior varsity, and varsity spirit squads, as allotted for in the athletic budget. Each high

school would have the option of having a varsity competition squad, which would be open to cheerleaders in ninth through twelfth grades. The district would only be responsible for their transportation and entry fees for the District XI competition. All other competition expenses would be paid for by the cheerleading booster clubs. Dr. Donaher explained that the proposal would not add any additional costs to the budget; it is only formalizing the recognition of competitive cheering.

Mrs. Follweiler asked if this meant that the district would only be responsible for the competition costs associated with the District XI competition. Dr. Donaher replied that this was correct. Mrs. Follweiler then stated that rifle was put back in athletics. She then asked how the district can add competitive cheering when lacrosse is always asking to be recognized as an official sport and is always being told no. Dr. Lewis replied that cheering has been an official sport for years. Dr. Donaher replied that competitive cheering is not being added as a new sport; the district is just redefining the original sport.

Mrs. Leeson asked that if there be fewer students on the squads if a school chooses competitive cheering and eliminates freshman cheering. Mr. Harris replied that the freshman could then become part of the junior varsity squad. Mrs. Leeson asked if competitive cheering would require additional coaching. Mr. Harris replied that the district would be providing the same number of coaches as in previous years. Any additional coaching, such as for tumbling, gymnastics, etc., would be paid for by the cheerleading booster clubs.

Mrs. Dexter noted that the district provides transportation for the cheerleaders to fall and winter away events. She noted that, due to possible budget cuts, transportation for away winter sporting events might have to be cut back. Mr. Harris and Mr. Senneca replied that cheerleaders are transported to away winter sporting events on the same bus as the team whenever possible. Mrs. Leeson stated that she hoped away games did not mean away events held at the BASD stadium. Dr. Lewis replied that transportation to the BASD stadium would only occur if it was a matter of safety.

Mrs. Dexter polled the board and they agreed to place this item on the agenda for the June 22, 2009, Regular Board Meeting.

SENIOR LUNCH PRIVILEGE UPDATE

Dr. Donaher explained the proposed changes to the Senior Lunch Privilege, which would begin after the first nine weeks of school. He explained that at Liberty High School, a senior lunch area would be established within the campus area, with Friday being the only day seniors would be allowed to leave the campus for lunch. Any senior wishing to leave the campus for lunch on a Friday must sign up prior to Friday at their student service center. At Freedom High School the proposal would also include the establishment of a senior lunch area on-campus, with seniors being allowed to leave the campus November through February on Tuesdays and Thursdays and March through June on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays.

Dr. Lewis explained that Mrs. Durante met with the block watch committee and explained the proposal. He noted that the block watch committee did not agree with the proposal; they did not

want students leaving the campus any day of the week. Dr. Lewis noted that the administration knows that the students present at this evening's meeting did not cause the issues, but agreed that there is still a problem. He also noted that both high schools do not have the same problems and would agree that both schools do not have to have the same proposal.

Mr. Tenaglia asked why students at Liberty High School cannot enter and exit through the front doors. Mrs. Durante replied that, with all the buildings at Liberty High School, it would be an impossible task to have all students entering and exiting through only the front doors.

Mrs. Cann stated that she liked the idea of having designated senior lunch sites on-campus. She agreed with the block watch committee that, if you live near Liberty High School, you cannot be consoled by the fact that you will only be harassed one day a week. She stated that if no one is allowed off-campus, and you are off-campus without a valid excuse, you are in trouble.

Mrs. Leeson stated that she agreed with Mrs. Cann; seniors should have designated senior lunch areas on-campus. She also stated that she has a problem with the two high schools having different proposals. She feels both schools have the same issue of having unauthorized students out of school. She would like to see both schools have senior lunch privileges with on-campus locations only, no off-campus privileges at either high school.

Mrs. Follweiler stated that she would like to see good students rewarded, but feels that students at both schools need to stay on-campus. She noted that one of the problems at Freedom High School is the distance students have to travel at lunchtime to fast food restaurants, with this being a major safety issue. She felt that if students are not permitted to leave the campus, it might eliminate some of the problems. She stated that the district needs to respect the neighbors. She stated that we also need to respect the privileges of the students by providing on-campus senior areas.

Mr. LaPorta stated that he felt that Liberty High School has experienced an unfortunate situation, but he did not feel that Senior Lunch Privilege was the problem. He stated that, unfortunately, Freedom High School would feel the negative effect of this problem, and they will suffer the consequences.

Mrs. Durante stated that Senior Lunch Privilege was established in 1991. She noted that last year the district put more restrictions in place. She again noted that some students involved are not even Liberty High School students. She felt that truant students who are apprehended by the police should be brought back to their parents, not back to Liberty High School.

Dr. Donaher stated that, when Dr. Lewis asked him to investigate this situation, Mr. LaPorta put together a committee at Freedom High School that included teachers, parents, and administrators. They came back with a proposal to cut the days off-campus in half. Mr. LaPorta asked the board to consider Freedom High School's proposal, since it was designed by the community. Mrs. Follweiler asked Mr. LaPorta if he included any people on his committee who live on Santee Road where most of the traffic occurs. Mr. LaPorta replied that he did not include anyone from that area.

Mr. McKeon stated that he is against students speeding out of the Freedom High School parking lot after school and also during lunchtime.

Mrs. Leeson asked Dr. Lewis to check with the Allentown School District to see what they do regarding Senior Lunch Privileges. Dr. Lewis replied that when Mrs. Katona worked at Dieruff High School, students were not allowed off-campus. Mrs. Katona replied that Dieruff High School's Student Council had been looking into purchasing tables for a courtyard for seniors, but she is not sure if they ever purchased them. Mrs. Leeson noted that whenever she passes one of our two high schools, no matter what time of day, students are walking around the campus instead of being in classes. She noted that both schools have issues, not only Liberty High School. She also noted that Our Lady of Perpetual Help put in speed bumps because of student drivers. Mrs. Leeson asked Dr. Lewis to also check to see what Allentown's policy is regarding truancy.

Mrs. Cann thanked everyone involved for all the work the put into the proposals. She stated that she respects the program, but only sees the downside of the proposals. She is in favor of a proposal that would provide on-campus sites only.

The board agreed that the administration should come back with a new proposal that would be similar, but not exact, for both high schools. It should include on-campus privileges only, no off-campus privileges for either high school.

STATE REIMBURSEMENT DOLLARS FOR DUAL ENROLLMENT

Mrs. Katona discussed information that Mrs. Cintron provided regarding the Dual Enrollment reimbursement program for the 2008-2009 school year. Mrs. Katona noted that there were 147 Bethlehem Area School District students who participated in the Dual Enrollment program for the 2008-2009 school year; of these 147 students, 13 were low-income. Families will be reimbursed at the rate of 86.39 percent of the tuition, fees, and textbook costs. Reimbursement for low-income students will be at 100 percent. Parents should receive their checks sometime in July.

Mrs. Dexter asked why more students are not taking advantage of Dual Enrollment. Mrs. Katona replied that a survey was taken of all students. She stated that transportation was not a major problem; it was mostly that students just were not interested in the program. Mrs. Dexter requested a copy of the results of the survey.

Mr. Tenaglia stated that home-schooled students are eligible for Dual Enrollment, but asked why they are not allowed to attend Vo-Tech. Dr. Lewis replied that there has been a long standing debate regarding this subject. Dual Enrollment laws allow all high school students to participate in Dual Enrollment. He noted that the state has left the decision up to local control. The three school districts that participate in the Bethlehem Area Vocational-Technical School are unanimously opposed to home-schooled students attending; but he noted that this can change in the future. Dr. Lewis also replied that we have to be careful that home-schooled students are not allowed to pick and choose classes they would like to attend within our schools.

Mrs. Leeson stated that Dual Enrollment is a great opportunity for students to get a taste of rigor at college. The only negative is that not all credits transfer to colleges outside the Lehigh Valley.

Mrs. Katona stated that she would get information to the board regarding a summary of grades for Dual Enrollment students. She also noted that while it is not a part of our dual enrollment program, Penn State Lehigh Valley offers one course per semester to our students, and they even provide transportation.

Mrs. Leeson noted that Vo-Tech has Dual Enrollment with Lafayette College, but asked why it is not part of the Dual Enrollment reimbursement program. Dr. Lewis replied that he would look into it.

AGENDA ITEMS FOR THE JUNE 22, 2009, REGULAR BOARD MEETING

1. Act 48 Professional Development Plan

Mrs. Katona explained that the Act 48 Committee has developed an updated Act 48 Professional Development Plan that needs to be submitted to the Pennsylvania Department of Education for academic years 2009-2012. She noted that there were not many changes since the district already follows the PDE Act 48 guidelines. She noted that Act 48 goals are set by the Pennsylvania Value-Added Assessment System (PVAAS) and the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA) results. Examination of the data has identified educational needs for all grade levels as well as separately for elementary, middle, and high school levels. Mrs. Katona explained that the Act 48 Professional Development Plan for 2009-2012 was largely based upon the Bethlehem Area School District's Strategic Plan, which was approved in the fall of 2008. Mrs. Follweiler asked if the plan would be reviewed during the three-year time frame. Mrs. Katona noted that the Act 48 Committee meets once a month, and there would be at least a mid-point and end-of-year check to review progress.

2. Social Studies Courses and Textbooks

Mrs. Katona explained that, in order to demonstrate alignment with the Pennsylvania State Standards in Social Studies, the district will offer an AP World History course at both high schools during the 2010-2011 school year. Based on a high degree of student interest to enroll in AP World History during the 2009-2010 school year, Freedom High School is seeking approval to offer the course during the upcoming school year. Additionally, with our district's focus on building our AP offerings, Freedom High School also anticipates offering AP Psychology as a social studies elective beginning in 2009-2010. Costs for teacher training have been built into the Project 720 budget. Textbook costs would come from the instructional materials budget.

Mrs. Dexter noted that a student informed her that there would not be an AP English course at Liberty High School next year. Mrs. Katona replied that she recently learned of this issue, and would discuss the matter with Mrs. Durante. Mrs. Durante commented that initially, eight students showed interest, but then only two actually signed up for the course. Mrs. Harper replied that 15 students signed up for AP Writing at Freedom High School next year. Mrs. Dexter asked if the administration has considered combining the two classes, or possibly doing a virtual classroom. Mrs. Katona replied that she will be meeting with the

principals to discuss options. Mrs. Dexter asked if the district is equipped for virtual classrooms. Mrs. Katona replied that she is planning to bring information to the next Board Curriculum Committee Meeting regarding virtual learning, which would require additional space for technology classrooms. Dr. Lewis indicated that we could transport students from Liberty to take the course at Freedom, if necessary. This could possibly be done through the Vo-Tech busing schedule.

3. Community Service Agencies

Dr. Donaher discussed two agencies that are requesting approval for our Community Service program: Notre Dame Parish and Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church.

Mrs. Cann noted that Notre Dame Parish already has a Confirmation program that requires students to do a ten-hour community service project. She stated that she was surprised that the church was opening their program up to more competition for their already limited projects, even though the ages of the two groups are different.

The board agreed to place all three agenda items on the agenda for the June 22, 2009, Regular Board Meeting.

COURTESY OF THE FLOOR

1. Mr. Stephen Antalics, 737 Ridge Street, Bethlehem, spoke regarding Senior Lunch Privilege. He stated that it was, "Much to do about nothing" and "A no-brainer". He stated that the program is not working, and is a misuse of highly paid officials riding around the streets looking for truant students.

OPEN FORUM

1. Mrs. Follweiler noted that she had received an inquiry from a taxpayer who would like to know, if a discount was not given for the Per Capita Tax, or if it was sent out earlier, would the district avoid a TRAN. She asked if Mr. Majewski could bring this information to another meeting.
2. Mr. Tenaglia asked if Dr. Lewis has it on his agenda to deal with software program requirements for not allowing grades to be accessed after a period of time. Dr. Lewis replied that Mr. Arbushites is working on locking down the system after a full semester and only the principal would be the gatekeeper for any additional changes.
3. Mrs. Leeson expressed a concern over the low usage of the Parent Portal. She asked if the administration could work on getting more participation. Dr. Lewis replied that currently 20-25 percent of the teachers use the Parent Portal. With the help of the union, the administration is working on getting 100 percent by the end of the first marking period. Dr. Lewis noted that Frank Arbushites is working on training sessions for parents through their principals. Mrs. Leeson noted that Back to School Night might be a good time for a training because parents will already be present. Mr. Arbushites explained that school secretaries have been trained in how to look up codes. He also explained that he is in the process of

developing training tapes for parents. Mrs. Leeson asked if the district could put this new information out in the parent letters.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:55 p.m.

Minutes Prepared By:

Charlotte L. Zimmerman
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