



BOARD CURRICULUM COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES MONDAY, JULY 20, 2009

Members of the Board Curriculum Committee met on Monday, July 20, 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, 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; Stanley J. Majewski, Jr., assistant to the superintendent for finance and administration; Thomas Washington, assistant superintendent for human resources; Dr. Dean Donaher, director of student services; Jennifer Hilton, acting coordinator of literacy/ELA K-12; and representatives of the press.

Following a 6:00 p.m. executive session, Mrs. Dexter called the meeting to order at 6:40 p.m.

Dr. Lewis stated that he is pleased to announce that PSSA scores and AYP status were released today and the Bethlehem Area School District made AYP. He wanted to acknowledge the hard work of everybody involved, including the students, teachers, secretaries, bus drivers, administrators, Mary Katona, and her staff.

OPEN FORUM

Mrs. Dexter asked the board if anyone would object if she moved Open Forum up to the beginning of the meeting for the Broughal Middle School update. Everyone agreed.

Dr. Lewis gave an update on the Broughal Middle School project. He distributed a memo, which explained the potential cost impact for canceling Phase 2 of the project. He noted that, contrary to public comments, the contracts are very well written in favor of the Bethlehem Area School District and do permit cancellation, however, the timing of the cancellation is at a point where Phase 2 work is imminent. He thanked the mayor's office and the City of Bethlehem for working on the requirements if the building were left in place. He stated that, should the building be torn down, the main contractor would be Skepton Contractors, who would be hiring many individual contractors. He noted that the building is staged and ready to be demolished, but the contractor has agreed to give the district a delay of ten days without paying damages. He noted that the total estimated losses of contracted work would be between \$1,425,000 - \$1,795,000. Dr. Lewis explained that, should the building be demolished, three athletic fields would be constructed: a

Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic Association (PIAA) regulation size football field, overlaid with a regulation softball field and a regulation size soccer field.

Dr. Lewis stated that the district had received one bid on the building, but noted that it was definitely inadequate with many additional specifications. He also read a letter from the president of Lehigh University who stated that Lehigh University has no interest in purchasing the building. He reminded the board that the administration looked at eleven sites before deciding to build the new school on the current site. He also reminded the board that the administration's original recommendation was to see the project through to completion.

The solicitor noted that the offer that came in for the old Broughal Middle School building expires on July 21, 2009, and noted that the board could not vote at tonight's meeting.

COURTESY OF THE FLOOR

1. Mr. Joseph Petraglia, 2404 Lafayette Avenue, Bethlehem, and the former principal of Broughal Middle School, spoke regarding the Broughal Middle School project. He stated that it is in the best interest of the community and the students to demolish the old building and establish athletic fields.
2. Ismael Arcelay, 1750 East Hills Drive, Bethlehem, spoke asking the board to stay committed and on target at Broughal Middle School and to provide athletic fields.
3. Charlene Hilliard, Dakota Street, Bethlehem, spoke regarding the Broughal Middle School project. She stated that academics and athletics are both an important part of schooling.
4. Mark McKenna, 417 Cherokee Street, Bethlehem, spoke regarding the educational and athletic values at Broughal Middle School. He noted that the fields would benefit not only the athletic teams, but also the marching band.
5. Andrew Rodriguez, Bethlehem, and a student at Broughal Middle School, spoke in favor of building the athletic fields at Broughal Middle School.
6. Raymond Pacheco, Bethlehem, and a student at Broughal Middle School, spoke in favor of building the athletic fields at Broughal Middle School.
7. Carol Rufe, 627 S. New Street, Bethlehem, stated that she is a former student from Broughal Middle School and would like to speak representing all students who will be attending that school. She stated that she would like to see all future students have the same opportunities she was given when she attended the school and would like to see the athletic fields built.
8. Esther Lee, 627 Cherokee Street, Bethlehem, spoke regarding what is needed on the south side of Bethlehem. She stated that she could not believe that the citizens of Bethlehem would want to maintain a building that needs to be torn down. She stated that the NAACP came forward to support the project from the very beginning. She stated that the district needs to recognize the need to move forward for the benefit of the students.

9. Vivian Robledo-Shorey, 1408 Broadway, Fountain Hill, spoke as a parent and community member. She stated that the time has come to tear down the building and build the athletic fields.
10. Michelle Renner, 1340 Stanley Avenue, Fountain Hill, spoke as a sports and band parent. She stated that the district needs to tear down the building and build athletic fields.
11. Paulina Collazo read a statement from Odesco Sisobid Torres-Cordero, 612 Prospect Avenue, Bethlehem, who could not be present at the meeting. His statement was in favor of the old Broughal Middle School being demolished and asked the board to consider building the athletic fields, which the three other middle school already have.
12. Emma Marrero, 3658 Old Philadelphia Pike, Bethlehem, stated that she had attended Broughal Middle School and noted that building athletic fields can make a big difference in a student's life.
13. Naomy Rosario, 2109 Livingston Street, Bethlehem, read a statement from the Latino Coalition which noted that they are opposed to anything that would delay the demolition of the old Broughal Middle School.
14. Mr. Stephen Antalics, 737 Ridge Street, Bethlehem, spoke regarding Broughal Middle School being an historic site. He stated that the old Broughal Middle School needs to be saved to reflect the history of the south side of Bethlehem.
15. Nyla Vazquez, 806 Carlton Avenue, Bethlehem, and a student at Broughal Middle School, stated that she enjoys playing sports and would like to have athletic fields to play on.
16. Fransheska Rosa, 510 Hoch Street, Bethlehem, and a student at Broughal Middle School, stated that she is an honor student at Broughal Middle School and would also like the opportunity to play sports on athletic fields located at her school.
17. Maralyn Pichett, 639 S. Bishopthorpe Street, Bethlehem, stated that she has a daughter in the band at Broughal Middle School and would like to see the athletic fields built so the band would have a place to practice instead of on the sidewalks.

OPEN FORUM

Mrs. Follweiler stated that she would like to clarify some of the items discussed:

1. The district received a letter from the Historical Society and City Council stating that they will be reviewing the project at their meeting on July 21, 2009.
2. As far as the three other middle schools all having athletic fields, she reminded everyone that Northeast Middle School has not had athletic fields for the past five years, but will soon have them.

3. Regarding field hockey, she asked if there are any plans for a field hockey field at Broughal Middle School. Dr. Lewis replied that they can practice there, but there will not be a regulation size field hockey field at that location. He noted that the old fields did not include a field hockey field, and it was never an option to have one on the new site.
4. Mrs. Follweiler asked Dr. Lewis to explain about a portion of the old building's facade possibly being used as a gateway in the new building. Dr. Lewis explained that it was originally suggested to use part of the outside of the old building and build an arch on the new building. But it was decided that this could not be done because when they tested the old artifacts, they crumbled. Mrs. Koch noted that the facade was not actually the original facade, it was replaced ten years ago.

Mrs. Dexter asked, since the board cannot vote tonight, what direction Dr. Lewis would be looking for. Dr. Lewis replied that he would be looking for a consensus of what the board is considering. The board would still have the July 27, 2009, Regular Board Meeting to vote on any matter related to the demolition.

Mrs. Dexter noted that since she has been on the board, she has not heard of any board member who was not in favor of having athletic fields built at Broughal Middle School.

Dr. Lewis stated that he has spoken with the mayor and the city planning director, and there are no alternative spaces on the south side of Bethlehem where the athletic fields could be built.

Mrs. Dexter ask if there was any interest from the board members to have the developer resubmit his offer. Dr. Haytmanek stated that he would like to see further discussion regarding the offer. The other board members stated that they felt it was not in the Bethlehem Area School District's favor to seek a resubmission.

REVISIONS TO STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT

Dr. Donaher presented and discussed the latest corrections and changes to the Student Code of Conduct. He noted that he had conducted meetings with administrators, the Bethlehem Education Association, and Mrs. Cann. He stated that all changes have been reviewed by the district's solicitor. Dr. Donaher stated that he would like to bring the revised Student Code of Conduct to the July 27, 2009, Regular Board Meeting, and asked board members to contact him if they would like any additional changes.

Mrs. Leeson stated that there are a couple of items that need to be rewritten, but there is not enough time prior to the beginning of the 2009-2010 school year. She stated that she would like to see the current document with the suggested changes approved for 2009, but suggested a task force be assembled to rewrite the document for the following year.

Board members discussed other possible changes to the current document. Mr. McKeon also stated that he hopes the document will eventually include threats and bullying through texting.

Mrs. Leeson asked to change the name CA/MP to In-school Suspension. All board members agreed.

Mrs. Leeson stated that if anyone is interested in serving on the task force committee, they should contact Dr. Donaher. Mrs. Leeson said that perhaps a few board members could make the changes and then give the document to others for review. Dr. Donaher said he would like to bring in a couple of BEA members and administrators to be a part of the task force, which would be comprised of about five or six people. When all changes are completed, the final copy will be submitted to the solicitor for review.

SENIOR LUNCH PRIVILEGE UPDATE

Dr. Donaher reported to the board that both schools are working on developing new plans and have agreed that their revised plans will not include any students leaving campus.

Mr. Tenaglia stated that there is a big difference between the campus at Freedom High School and the campus at Liberty High School, and asked how they plan to keep the students on campus. Dr. Donaher clarified by indicating the students would not have access to wandering around the entire campus for lunch. Dr. Lewis added that both schools will designate areas for seniors which will be monitored at all times.

DRA/READ 180 UPDATE

Mrs. Katona explained that the Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA) results and the Read 180 update were prepared by Jennifer Hilton and Mary Beth Rucker. She explained that the purpose of the data analysis was to examine the performance of grade one students who received reading intervention during the 2008-2009 school year and to review the effectiveness of the Reading Redesign Plan that was implemented in 2008-2009. She explained that the Reading Redesign Plan allowed principals to restructure the use of their reading recovery teachers and specialists in order to maximize the number of students receiving reading intervention. Students were either placed in a reading recovery (1:1) program or into a small group intervention program. Reading performance was based on the DRA. As noted in the report, this year's results showed a slight increase in the overall proficient and advanced categories, in comparison to last year's results. Mrs. Katona asserted that students' needs and progress would continue to be monitored in order to ensure that they all receive the most appropriate interventions. She also noted that Mrs. Rucker will once again offer a course for classroom teachers so they are aware of the types of reading strategies they should be using with their students.

Regarding Read 180, Mrs. Katona presented data on the 2008-2009 Read 180 results, which again showed progress being made by students across all grade spans. She also explained that Scholastic will be assembling a data team in the coming months, with support from the supervisor of literacy/ELA and the information technology office. The purpose of this data team will be to more closely examine the academic performance of Read 180 and System 44 students. The team will begin by examining the PSSA results of students who received Read 180 and System 44 during the 2008-2009 school year. This will be the first step in what is intended to be a longitudinal study of Read 180 and System 44 students.

UPDATE ON VIRTUAL LEARNING

Mrs. Katona explained that for several months the administration has been investigating virtual learning opportunities, particularly in an effort to bring our students expanded world language offerings in areas such as Mandarin Chinese. Between collaborative meetings at the CIU 20 and site visits, the administration has examined several possibilities for virtual learning. It has been determined that the Blended Schools Network, which offers the language through Seton Hill University, would be the most cost-effective for the district at this time. To put this into place, certain guidelines would have to be followed:

1. The schedule for the course would follow the schedule set by Seton Hill University.
2. The classes would be taught by an adjunct professor of Seton Hill, and the rigor in the curriculum would be for a college course.
3. The district would need to provide a teacher or a teacher assistant to oversee the students while the lesson is in session.
4. Costs for the course would be as follows:
 - a. The cost to the district is a \$300 flat, yearly fee for a Language Institute Membership.
 - b. The cost to the student is \$630 until July 31. After this date, a late fee is assessed for an additional \$25. Unlike other concurrent enrollment partners, Seton Hill directly invoices the student. As a result, students would need to pay the cost up front, and be reimbursed at the determined percentage through dual enrollment at the end of the school year.
 - c. Students could take the Mandarin Chinese course for a cost of \$400 if they do not wish to receive college credit. None of this amount would be reimbursable through dual enrollment.
5. Suggested implementation would be as follows:
 - a. For fall 2009, administrators at each high school would work to identify two to three students to enroll in the course.
 - b. For spring 2010, the district would work on having a full class enrolled.

It was noted that Lehigh University and Lafayette College both offer Mandarin Chinese courses that would be available to our students, and while they are not currently part of our dual enrollment program, they could partner with us. It was also noted that dual enrollment is not part of the current state budget.

Mrs. Leeson stated that she is delighted to see this possibility but has concerns. She noted that a few years ago the district had Latin set up between our two high schools with distance learning, and we had a lot of difficulties. She stated that she would rather wait until everything is in place and possibly start classes in January. Mrs. Katona replied that this would be different than what was offered in the past. Dr. Lewis replied that this would be a Web-based design, which is already up and running on-line.

The question was asked if the district will pay for the textbooks. Mrs. Katona replied that she would look into who would pay for the textbooks.

Mrs. Koch stated that she thought it was a wonderful idea, but asked if we do not get the funding, will our budget cover the costs. Dr. Lewis replied that we are in a waiting mode. Mrs. Koch

asked what would happen if parents wish to pay the entire cost. Dr. Lewis replied that we would have to develop a policy.

Mrs. Dexter asked who would cover the costs of the teacher or teacher assistant who would have to monitor the classroom. Mrs. Katona replied that there would be no additional costs involved; this is something that would have to be worked out with the schedules.

Dr. Lewis reminded the board that the current state budget does not include funding for dual enrollment, PA-Pact, and Tutoring.

Mrs. Dexter asked if there is a financial aid program. Mrs. Katona replied that she would look into it.

Mrs. Follweiler inquired if any students have shown an interest in taking the course in the fall. Mrs. Katona replied that the administration has not even put the question out there yet, but she has parents who are showing interest in the program. The board agreed that the question should be put out there to students to see if there is any interest in the program.

The board agreed that the administration should draft a proposal for the July 27, 2009, Regular Board Meeting, requesting permission to move forward with the original proposal.

CAREER PATHWAYS UPDATE

Mrs. Katona explained that, at the February 2009, Board Curriculum Committee Meeting, an overview was provided regarding a Career Pathways model and the Wall Street West Grant money, with which the CIU 20 is working to promote the implementation of the model. She explained that Career Pathways is a comprehensive K-12 career education initiative designed to increase career awareness and preparation of students, through the guidance of parents, educators, and community partners. She noted that the \$65,000, which the CIU 20 has received, must be spent by the end of 2009. Mrs. Katona noted that she will continue to apprise the board of the progress with Career Pathways, including the work on the course selection books.

Mrs. Dexter asked if Career Pathways would be mandatory for all students. Mrs. Katona replied that all students would receive information regarding Career Pathways, and which courses might best suit their interests; however, some might choose to follow a traditional schedule. She noted that Mr. LaPorta is considering teaming for the students' first two years, with Career Pathways starting in 11th and 12th grades.

Mrs. Leeson asked if the program was designed for every student. Mrs. Katona replied that it is something that can reach every student at every level, but traditional schedules could be an option. Mrs. Katona also noted that, unlike in college, students would not "lose" anything if they began with one pathway and then decided upon another, as they would all be receiving their core instruction.

Mrs. Cann asked if colleges would look at some of the Vo-tech choices negatively if a student chose those courses over those that appear more rigorous. It was noted that the Vo-tech courses

would be electives, and students could choose from among them as they could choose from among any elective. They would not replace core courses.

Board members agreed that this is an excellent start to the program.

SUMMER SCHOOL

Mr. McKeon noted that, if a high school student fails one core subject, they are not required to attend summer school, but if they fail two core subjects, they are required to attend. He then asked if a student fails two core subjects but only takes one class during summer school, what is his academic progress? Dr. Donaher replied that, in order to graduate, a student must make up failed core subject in either summer school or night school. Mr. McKeon asked if an athlete does not make up a failed core subject in summer school, how is he athletically eligible? Dr. Lewis responded in the high school his status is determined by his number of credits he has successfully completed and his eligibility for passing the courses within the season.

AGENDA ITEMS FOR THE JULY 27, 2009, REGULAR BOARD MEETING

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

1. Broughal Middle School Open Enrollment Policy
This item was approved by the board to be placed on the agenda for the July 27, 2009, Regular Board Meeting.
2. Dual Enrollment
3. Marvine Family Center
4. The Pennsylvania Pact (PA-Pact)
5. Project 720
These four items were approved by the board to be placed on the agenda for the July 27, 2009, Regular Board Meeting. Dr. Lewis stated that these four are only recommendations to submit applications, but noted that all are up in the air with the state's budget.

COURTESY OF THE FLOOR

1. Mr. Stephen Antalics, 737 Ridge Street, Bethlehem, asked for clarification on comments from the superintendent and the solicitor. He inquired as to the date the bid was received for the Broughal Middle School. He also asked if the potential buyer was aware that no action could be taken before his bid would expire. Regarding Virtual Learning, he also asked when does public education become costly for students.
2. Suzanne Nelson, 1923 Montgomery Street, Bethlehem, PA, spoke about the following subjects:
 - a. Regarding Reading Recovery analyses, she asked if anyone looks at the games used in first and second grades, and asked how they progress into the third and fourth grades.

- b. Regarding Blended Schools, she would like to know if there is anyone in the Bethlehem Area School District's area who is fluent in Mandarin Chinese and would be willing to tutor our students.
- c. Regarding open enrollment at Broughal Middle School, she would like to know if open enrollment will be available at the other three middle schools. Dr. Lewis replied that it would not be available at this time. Ms. Nelson also asked if a parent can look at copies of a school's Code of Conduct reports and how they were handled, before they decide which school to send their child to.
- d. Regarding Career Pathways, she asked if it is possible to give a trade test to help students narrow down their career possibilities.

OPEN FORUM

Mrs. Follweiler wanted to discuss the following:

- a. Regarding Broughal Middle School open enrollment, she stated that right now it is just a pilot, which may eventually open up the other middle schools for open enrollment.
- b. Regarding dual enrollment, it is over and above K-12 classes. She noted that it is not a typical high school or college level course; that is why there is a cost involved. Mrs. Follweiler asked if the administration could provide the board with information on funding for dual enrollment and how it is handled. Mrs. Katona replied that she will outline this information and bring it to the board.

Dr. Haytmanek stated that, in years to come Mandarin Chinese will be valuable, and he hopes that no one looks back and says that the Bethlehem Area School District held back their students because of costs.

Mrs. Leeson asked if there is a new thematic program starting at East Hills Middle School regarding "Getting a Voice in the Community". Mrs. Katona replied that she had not heard of any new program, but she will look into it.

Mrs. Leeson asked for information for the board regarding the Teacher Convocation.

Mrs. Leeson stated that the report regarding costs for department chairpersons does not line up. She also asked if the district is reinstating department heads. Dr. Lewis replied that the budget calls for department chairpersons to still be reduced by one period. He also noted the board could raise a resolution from the floor to reinstate some or all of the department chairpersons.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:15 p.m.

Minutes prepared by:

Charlotte L. Zimmerman
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