



BOARD CURRICULUM COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES MONDAY, NOVEMBER 2, 2009

Members of the Board Curriculum Committee met on Monday, November 2, 2009, at 6:03 p.m. in the Superintendent's Conference Room at the Education Center. The following Curriculum Committee Members were present: Mary M. Katona, assistant superintendent for curriculum and instruction, and Richard Agretto, director of special education. The following Board Members were in attendance: Rosario Amato, Michele Cann, Judith Dexter, Irene Follweiler, Loretta Leeson, Eugene McKeon, and Benjamin Tenaglia. Also in attendance were: Dr. Thomas Persing, substitute superintendent of schools; Thomas Washington, assistant superintendent for human resources; Kathleen Bast, coordinator of literacy/ELS K-12; Julie Victory, supervisor of mathematics; building principals, and representatives of the press.

Mrs. Dexter called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m.

COURTESY OF THE FLOOR

1. Mr. Stephen Antalics, of 737 Ridge Street, Bethlehem, reflected on a previous NPR Radio discussion regarding the results of a study proving that pre-kindergarten education was critical in student performance. He also referred to a Department of Education study called Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts, which revealed impressive results. It was his understanding that Pre-K funding was available but pointed out that busing had been eliminated. He inquired about the number of students who were no longer attending the program because of lack of transportation. He brought attention to the district's motto of "No Child Left Behind," and said by eliminating transportation; they were violating the code of the district. He also noted the number of parents who firmly expressed at previous meetings that they would have a problem with transportation. He asked if busing could be replaced with the monies reallocated by the swap deals.

Director Dexter replied that they planned to address administration about their response during open forum.

GETTING RESULTS ACTION PLAN – Agenda Item for November 16, 2009

Mrs. Katona introduced the Getting Results Action Plans for Freedom and Liberty High Schools, Broughal and East Hills Middle Schools, and Donegan and Fountain Hill Elementary Schools. She noted that the Broughal Middle and Donegan Elementary Schools were required to present their plans to the Colonial Intermediate Unit 20.

Mr. Santoro completed his presentation for Broughal Middle School and the presentation for Donegan Elementary is scheduled for next week. Mrs. Katona explained that the cover sheets on the reports provided strategies focused on literacy, co-teaching, and differentiated instruction. She added that the district supplements were in part built off of last year's district plan and based on the planned goals of each school.

Director Dexter requested a brief overview of each principal's action plan, including the most significant changes they planned and to inform the board about any support they would need.

Freedom High School – Mr. Laporta stated there were 34 members in their student achievement task force consisting of a broad range of individuals, including professionals and parents who participated in discussion of the essential elements contained in the document.

Mr. Laporta commented about the identification of the reading root causes associated with the student achievement gaps but pointed out they did well in English and math. He added that he was not comfortable with the 6 percent decline in the graduation rate. He thought they needed to improve on connecting all academic content. Mr. Laporta discussed continued and newly implemented strategies to address areas of concern within a budget neutral framework.

President Leeson asked what could be done to retain grade 12 students for graduation.

Mr. Laporta noted they were looking at relevancy within curriculums, equal access to high levels of rigor in programs of study, and by putting it in the forefront, they would see relationships established with counselors and teachers, with a result of an increased graduation rate. The newly implemented small learning communities in grade 9, along with relevant programs of study for all students would ensure the matriculation of students.

President Leeson addressed the data and asked if transiency was associated with minority students who were academically challenged and had behavior issues.

Mr. Laporta explained that grades 8 and 9 were identified as the years that generated the greatest number of disciplinary referrals, which was why they created a smoother transition by embedding the small learning communities this year in grade 9.

President Leeson commended Mr. Laporta for the excellent student performance on Advanced Placement Testing.

Director Dexter inquired about the monitoring of the effectiveness of improvement strategies such as Study Island.

Principal Laporta discussed the effectiveness of both Study Island and the Scantron system with regard to student growth.

Director McKeon addressed the assessment of incoming students in order to ensure success.

Mr. LaPorta replied the students often arrived with nothing but an effort was made by the Student Services Department to obtain data. The 4Sight Test was also used as a benchmark for student placement.

Mrs. Katona commented that they were in the process of considering the Scantron Test for future assessment because they would be able to immediately determine reading and math levels.

President Leeson asked if administration determined the placement for an incoming student. She asked if the student was placed according to their record or if testing was used for placement.

Mr. LaPorta stated that transcripts, testing, telephone contact, and student/family interviews were all considered to make the best decision for the child.

President Leeson addressed the assessment of a student's reading and math levels before placement and the affect on their grade level success.

Mr. LaPorta responded that prior to Scantron, the 4Sight Testing was used for placement and would provide information in order to incorporate differentiated instruction or interventions.

President Leeson questioned if a student could attain success in programs if they read well below high school level even with interventions.

Mr. LaPorta noted that the students had success based upon their curriculum-based assessments, which generated report cards, but when they attempted to reference it to the PSSA assessment, the achievement levels were not commensurate. He thought there was a need to tailor their instruction to the standards in all content areas within the school.

Director Amato asked why they did not place a student in a lower grade level if they tested below grade level upon entering the school. He did not understand why a student would be placed in an environment where they would have difficulty with achievement.

Mr. LaPorta replied that student demotion could create other complex issues.

Mrs. Katona said the Scantron Test would be a more accessible source to test the students on their own level.

Director Dexter asked how the board could support the efforts of Mr. LaPorta.

Mr. LaPorta requested the board support the recommendations that came before them such as professional development activities.

Director Follweiler asked for clarification via email with regard to the figures and percentages previously stated in the discussion.

Liberty High School – Mrs. Durante stated that 26 initiatives were accomplished in a two-year period. She reviewed their overall strengths and concerns. She noted the graduation proficiency requirement contributed a great deal to the PSSA results. They learned that the reading, writing, and math review sessions were extremely helpful to the students, including PSSA warm-ups. She thought the steering team set the tone for the school year in addition to professional learning communities.

Mrs. Durante noted that the professional learning community time was too limited. The idea was to have the opportunity to pull the departments together at both high schools and articulate with the middle schools in order to achieve success. She noted the success of professional learning communities with regard to common assessments.

Mrs. Durante provided a basic review of the PSSA test results, pointing out the various weak areas. She felt there was a continued need for differentiated instruction and excellent staff development programs. There was a need for the special education teachers to align their subject matter to the regular education core courses and a strong need for improved student support in Academic English 11, which was a college preparatory course.

Mrs. Durante commented about the need for a curriculum specialist, a reading specialist, in addition to a college/career counselor for the grade 12 counseling office. She noted the school had the benefit of a behavioral specialist shared by both high schools and hoped a grant would enable them to extend the position for another year. She concluded that she was aware of the need for budget neutrality, but felt the positions were needed based upon studies and reviews.

President Leeson inquired about the monitoring of common assessments in the classrooms.

Mrs. Durante noted the department chairpersons were responsible.

President Leeson recalled the board's request for a career counselor at the high school level in the past but thought they were reassigned.

Mrs. Durante felt the need for career counseling beginning in grade 9.

President Leeson reviewed the state math test results and inquired about deficiencies in the math program.

Mrs. Victory commented that the test results in question were not PSSA but were the ADP Algebra II End-of-Course Exam. She pointed out that the test was being reviewed because of questionable results across multiple states.

President Leeson addressed the Mock Trial Program which was no longer available. It was noted that a law firm supported it last year because there was not an available school advisor.

Director Dexter inquired about attendance monitoring.

Mrs. Durante explained that it was monitored by grade level offices, reports, and the attendance monitor. She added the counselors called home if a student was absent for 3 days.

Director Cann mentioned the automated system utilized at the Vo-Tech school notified the student's home on the same day of the absence.

Mrs. Durante noted the system was previously used but it became problematic. She said there was a need for a proactive stance regarding attendance.

President Leeson inquired about PSSA results and transient students.

Mrs. Durante responded that transient students scored lower. The ESOL students usually did not have educational records. She pointed to the challenge associated with the entering out of state student and late registrations at the beginning of the school year.

Director Dexter questioned who reviewed the PSSA reports as they came in to identify students who missed proficiency.

Mrs. Durante replied that the test results were reviewed every year during the summer. She also recommended teacher-to-teacher communication from middle school to high school before the first semester and again at the end of the year. She promoted the new performance series Scantron Test for student evaluation.

Director Dexter inquired about a contact person if a parent wanted information on their child's performance.

Mrs. Durante stated they would inquire with the guidance counselor.

Broughal Middle School – Mr. Santoro reported that nearly 90 percent of the student population was in socioeconomic need. Their minority population was 75 plus percent with the additional challenge of parents having the inability to read English in order to assist their child. He said they did not allow transient students to affect their attempt at progress.

Mr. Santoro reviewed data including strengths and concerns. The IEP and ELL subgroups did not meet target in reading or math. He noted that at times subject matter affected results. He pointed out that one goal was to look at each child according to ability. He said they also needed to encourage the higher-level student in addition to the struggling student. Another goal was to address academic rigor and the wise use of time in the classroom.

Mr. Santoro addressed the continued and newly implemented strategies to address areas of concern. He noted they were focusing on the tone of the classroom. He stated that the Family Center/Community School partnership would help increase student achievement by providing family involved activities. He reviewed the plan to deliver professional development in all content areas and pointed out the engagement of Lehigh University IPDS staff to provide teacher workshops on classroom implementation and follow-up of differentiated instruction along with increased academic rigor.

Director Dexter inquired about the expectations regarding the impact of the Family Center to student achievement at the school.

Mr. Santoro explained their goal was to attract parents to the building in order to feel comfortable with the staff. He also mentioned the adult ESOL program that was offered and their focus on parent-student support with some emphasis on parenting skills, including health and wellness.

Director Follweiler inquired about student attendance and behavior goals with the new school.

He replied that they had hoped to have a one percent increase in attendance. He added that the students participated in a weekly positive intervention program in each homeroom built around the code of conduct. He explained the committee members met twice monthly to observe the trends and if there were improvements in student referrals. He believed the atmosphere and design of the new building would help them to get off to the right start for the year.

President Leeson inquired about the ASPIRE Program to support curriculum.

Mr. Santoro noted the funding was recently released for the after-school program. The school's goal was to facilitate enrichment through the program with the addition of a recreational piece four days a week. He also noted the addition of bringing in families on a weekly basis.

President Leeson asked about science fair participation and Junior Great Books.

Mr. Santoro replied that they did not use Junior Great Books but they modeled the teaching strategies of the program. He commented they were participating in the Pennsylvania Junior Academy of Science and had continuous involvement in the Lehigh/Delaware Valley Science Fair with the ongoing support from a former graduate who was a successful business leader.

President Leeson reviewed that the school's math curriculum was realigned to incorporate additional time.

Mr. Santoro replied that Mrs. Victory realigned the math curriculum yearly with the goal to get the essential content into the curriculum prior to testing. He pointed out the school offered at least 9 periods of math for each student in 6 days and if they were below level, the student received no less than 12 periods of math.

East Hills Middle School – Mr. Horvath presented an overview of his action plan noting that in the 2008-2009 school year, East Hills made AYP meeting 29 out of 29 targets. He explained that the school would be removed from the list if AYP is attained in the 2009-2010 school year. The goals of the improvement plan were to achieve AYP by reaching the state targets of 63 percent in reading and 56 percent in mathematics for all subgroups with the exception of IEP. For IEP, the intent was to increase the 2008-2009 results by 10 percent in both reading and mathematics and therefore meet AYP status by special provision.

Mr. Horvath noted that his staff was energized and supported continued and newly implemented strategies to address areas of concern. He explained that one of the newly implemented strategies was the utilization of Study Island during activity period to help with PSSA preparation. He spoke of the Charger Pride Expectations positive reinforcement program that encouraged students to do their best in the classroom.

Mr. Horvath brought attention to the accelerated mathematics classes in Grades 6, 7, and 8 and pointed out that he was not aware of any student not performing well in advanced classes.

Some of the newly implemented strategies at East Hills Middle School include the restructuring of team meetings to incorporate content area, cross curricular, and student improvement meetings. An additional administrative goal was a five by five daily walk through which allowed for teacher dialogue. Another newly implemented strategy was the incorporation of Scantron testing and monitoring.

Director Leeson addressed parent-teacher telephone communication regarding student progress and complimented the current system in place at the school.

Donegan Elementary School – Ms. Vasquez presented an overview of Donegan Elementary School’s action plan for the status of Corrective Action I. She noted some of their strengths included meeting or exceeding a year’s worth of growth in reading. The school also exceeded the math target without the need for special provision and met all AYP targets for attendance. Some of the concerns were that the school was below the reading target by 13.4 percent and the advanced group for math did not exceed a year’s worth of growth in grade 4.

Ms. Vasquez pointed out that student transiency influenced performance. She added that lack of funding had an adverse affect to their reading program.

She reviewed continued strategies to address areas of concern including student access to the general curriculum via the inclusion model. The school would continue to maintain the RTI model. The math coach would continue to follow the co-teaching model and work with individual students who needed additional support.

Ms. Vasquez introduced the newly implemented strategies such an ongoing school-wide professional development in curriculum planning, co-teaching, using assessments to inform instruction, and guided reading. Professional development initiatives would be focused upon to strengthen teacher effectiveness in the areas of using data to plan curriculum, co-teaching, differentiated instruction, and guided reading.

Ms. Vasquez brought attention to her concern about transportation for the students from the SPARK Program and explained that the lack of pre-school exposure would have a long-term effect on the incoming elementary school students. She also pointed out the need for an increase in Latino teachers.

She emphasized parental support for the students to the extent of meeting one on one with families. She stated that approximately 200 students receive additional support after-school.

Director Follweiler inquired about Lehigh University student involvement with the students from the school.

Ms. Vasquez responded that they were involved in a mentoring program with attention to reading. There was also social interaction with the college students in the after school program.

President Leeson inquired about homework assignments.

Ms. Vasquez explained that the tone of the building has changed and the students know it is their job to get it done or they will not be rewarded through the PBIS System.

President Leeson commented that she thought the school's reading program was not affected by the staff cuts.

Ms. Vasquez replied that they did not lose reading teachers in overall numbers, but the structure of the program was interrupted and that had an overall negative affect on progress. She added that the loss of the instructional support teacher had made an impact.

Director Dexter asked for a brief description of the position and how it influenced the student.

Ms. Vasquez responded that the Instructional Support Teacher met with the primary teacher for intervention and placement using documentation and actions to rectify problems and devise a plan with the goal being student success.

Fountain Hill Elementary School – Mr. Stannard summarized the action plan for Fountain Hill Elementary School, which was currently under School Improvement II status. He noted the school had exceeded a year's worth of growth in reading and math according to PVAAS (Pennsylvania Value Added Assessment System). The school also met 95 percent participation and attendance in reading and math for all subgroups with the ELL students improving by 11.3 percent in reading. He stated that 57.2 percent of students were advanced or proficient in Math but 54.3 percent were still below the state proficiency levels in reading. Mr. Stannard commented that IEP, economically disadvantaged, and Latino students continued to not meet proficiency levels in reading.

Mr. Stannard brought attention to the incorporation of reading specialists and ESL teachers in all grade levels, with classrooms in K-5 receiving daily reading support. He added that the teaching staff would continue to work with the Department of Education and PaTTAN to access professional development. Mr. Stannard also noted that implemented strategies would be monitored by informal walkthroughs and ongoing concerns would continue to be addressed. He reviewed the continued practice of utilizing the PBIS (Positive Behavior and Supports) System in addition to after-school and in-school tutoring (TIPS).

Mr. Stannard reviewed some of the newly implemented strategies such as the use of the Performance Series Scantron data, which would assist in differentiated student instruction and the FASST Math Program in Grade 4 to help build student basic math skills.

President Leeson inquired about the assignment of homework to students.

Mr. Stannard replied that homework was assigned to the students in his building.

COMMUNITY SERVICES AGENCIES – Agenda Item for November 16, 2009

The board reviewed the addition of Holy Cross Evangelical Lutheran Church, Bethlehem, as a sponsor in the Bethlehem Area School District Community Service Program. The item would be placed on the agenda for the November 16, 2009 Regular Board Meeting.

AP/SAT INFORMATION

Mrs. Katona presented an integrated district summary of the College Board's data from the 2009 SAT and AP testing for graduating seniors. The Lehigh Valley Charter School was also included in the compilation. She explained there would be a future addendum of a full "highlights report" for 2009. She pointed out an overall decline of participants and performance for the district. She explained that historically, the district had traditionally fared well in comparison with the top 10 percent nationally and statewide. She added there was also a decline in student participation in both the state and nation. Mrs. Katona emphasized that early testing such as the Grade 10 level, provided greater success in future testing sessions. She reviewed that it could be a future consideration to schedule the PSAT test during the week to encourage participation. She also brought attention to economic circumstances as a reason for the decline in participants. The increase of students attending community college could have contributed to the decline in participation, which may have influenced motivation to take the SAT examination.

Mrs. Katona reviewed the AP course data, which showed an increase in both the number of participants and in the number of students scoring 3 or higher. She expressed concern over the disproportionate number of students enrolled in the courses with the number of students actually taking the AP test. She explained that students participating in Dual Enrollment courses were given college credit but the AP courses were not consistently given credit but were considered for placement. She noted the concern about time frame involved with the course offerings and the schedule of the examination. She stated there would be a continued offering of the current AP courses with additions in order to provide greater rigor in the high schools, but cost would also be an issue. Mrs. Katona suggested exploring a pre-AP program in the middle schools.

Director Dexter stated that she fully supported one-half of an instructional day to PSAT assessment with the goal to improve school achievement, pointing out the decrease in the SAT testing scores. She thought there was a need to go into the AP classrooms and ask the students why they were not taking the test. She said there were benefits and detriments to students taking on the challenge. She brought attention to the varied degree of credit received at higher learning institutions for AP courses. She felt the students needed to be informed about the financial benefit of successfully passing the test with regard to their future college courses.

Mrs. Katona agreed that a student survey would be worthwhile, and could be accomplished.

President Leeson commented that at times colleges were not accepting Dual Enrollment credits. She thought the students were in need of guidance in the decision to choose Dual Enrollment and AP courses. She mentioned that students were often choosing to take a lighter load in their senior year and then ultimately struggle upon entering college. She recommended that guidance counselors advise incoming seniors that a lighter load would not translate into future success.

President Leeson inquired if there was a discounted Kaplan SAT course offering for the students at both high schools.

Mrs. Durante replied there would be a course offered at both schools at staggered dates.

Director Dexter suggested the possibility for students from both schools to attend either session.

President Leeson and Director Dexter reviewed AP course development with Mrs. Katona.

Director Dexter suggested greater communication and exposure of the courses with students.

Director McKeon commented that he supported moving the PSAT testing during the academic week.

President Leeson noted that a student could make-up the examination at a neighboring school district.

Director Follweiler thought it should be a consideration for the future, pointing out there were pros and cons involved.

Mr. LaPorta pointed out that it might be premature to make a decision that would affect the master schedule for an entire instructional day.

Director Dexter recommended further investigation of the matter.

CAREER PATHWAYS

Mrs. Katona reviewed Career Pathways through the program of study to provide guidance for student course choices with regard to career planning. Through the support of a Wall Street West grant, the Workforce Investment Board (WIB) provided means for local Intermediate Units to work with districts in order to adopt a model. She reviewed that the district and the Vo-Tech determined the Elizabethtown School District model was a good fit for our students. Mrs. Katona explained the format would identify some of the electives which students would be interested in with regard to specific career paths. She also explained some of the other components of the program, which would be beneficial to the students including a greater awareness of the span of offerings through the Vo-Tech school. She said a meeting would be held on November 20 at the Colonial Intermediate Unit 20 involving curriculum department staff, building administrators, and guidance counselors regarding the implementation of the program. She noted the IU is composing an informational brochure for student distribution.

ACCELERATED MATH PROGRAM

Mrs. Katona stated the board received follow-up information from Mrs. Victory with regard to the accelerated math program. After receiving additional questions about placement and instruction, Mrs. Victory compiled an overview relative to the inquiries.

President Leeson expressed her concern about the hyperaccelerated program at East Hills Middle School where students from grade 6 would be enrolled in geometry in grade 8. She asked if 100 students would be prepared for the course. She inquired about the students missing core concepts. She inquired if they would receive the necessary repetition in order to obtain the concepts.

Mrs. Victory replied that she could only speak to how the students tested as well as their class performance. She stated the components of regular grade 6 math curriculum were integrated into pre-algebra and the students who entered grade 7, but not enrolled in Algebra I, were actually receiving a similar continued background. She pointed out that the algebra students actually received more basic facts but were using them in a new application.

CLUBS AND ACTIVITIES

Mrs. Katona presented the listing of high school extracurricular activities, which were approved at the September Board Meeting. She noted that it was updated with a listing of activities that were discontinued.

President Leeson commented that there was a need to review the listing and pointed out that the district was dependent on some of the programs with regard to the “Getting Results” Action Plan. She thought the cut was deeper than only the undersubscribed activities.

Director Amato stated if they began to put a few back, they would then need to reinstate all of the activities.

President Leeson questioned if the band and choir were classes rather than clubs. She also addressed the vocal group and newspaper at Liberty High School.

Dr. Donaher explained that the Hand Bell and Les Chanteurs Choirs were separate from the choral program that was part of the block schedule.

Mrs. Durante commented that the communication/mass media class fed into the Yearbook Club, but the entire project was not done in the classroom.

President Leeson expressed concern that the Mock Trial Group had grown from 8 to 18 participants this year. She thought it was an opportunity for students to try new and different things and they were being cut.

Director Tenaglia emphasized that the board was only informed about advisor cuts and not specific cuts in activities or clubs.

Dr. Donaher pointed out that previously there was not a ceiling established. The schools made independent decisions as to the approval process.

Mr. LaPorta stated they were given an allotment of \$30,000 but in consideration of salary increases amounting to \$9,000, they had to prioritize the clubs to stay within budget.

Director Dexter noted that some of the clubs had costs in addition to the advisor such as production costs such as Liberty Life.

Mrs. Katona corrected that it was a different budget area and further explained that they were only discussing stipends. She stated that certain activities had more than one advisor.

Director Follweiler noted that detailed cost information was needed on the document for all listed programs.

Director McKeon commented that it was a budgetary decision made by administration and the building principals were requested to do their best to make adjustments. He did not think it was his job to tell them they were making the wrong decision.

Director Dexter said if the schools felt they needed to develop an academic atmosphere and they felt there were necessary clubs and extracurricular activities, then it needed to be rethought.

Director Amato said that more reading specialists should be reinstated over extra-curricular activities. He thought it was more important to teach the students how to read and comprehend.

President Leeson commented about disproportion between athletics and co-curricular activities and called for a greater balance. She commended Dr. Persing's generous offer to support the Latino Club and the Teen Summit.

Director Dexter polled the board as to a decision regarding the current club and activity listing.

Director McKeon replied to allow it to remain status quo.

Director Follweiler agreed with Director McKeon about budget neutrality. She questioned certain groups that were approved at one school but not at the other. She agreed about the educational benefit of the groups which led to more student interest in school. She recalled the decision was given to administration. She added that she would be pleased if they found funding from another program in order to remain budget neutral.

Director Cann asked to hear from both high school principals about other programs they thought were critical to the students and then determine if it would be a manageable amount.

Director Amato commented that if they replaced a few activities then they needed to reinstate all of them.

President Leeson inquired if administration would reevaluate the activity/club list and return to the board with their recommendations.

Director Tenaglia asked about the origin of the funding and noted the original student activities budget was \$244,000, which was cut to \$127,000.

Dr. Persing agreed to discussion with the high school principals. He pointed out that the Boy Scouts had agreed to support some program funding.

Director Dexter questioned external support from community professionals and if it would be a violation of the teachers' contract.

Mr. Washington replied that there was discussion with the BEA and that one of the concerns dealt with liability. He noted that they would be covered under the district volunteer policy. He commented that the association would have concern about taking away their contract rights; however, if no one took the position, they could then offer it to a volunteer.

The BEA President, Jolene Vitalos, expressed that if the advisor position was previously performed by a teacher and was voluntarily filled by a community member who was not in the bargaining unit, they would look at it as an attempt by the board to subcontract. She said it was different than her previous discussion with Dr. Persing to look for outside funding in support of clubs and activities where the teachers would receive their stipend as advisors.

Dr. Persing brought attention to the recent decision to use an electronic payment system, which would be a benefit to the district.

Director Dexter addressed if the anticipated revenue could be considered for the extracurricular programs.

Director Tenaglia inquired about the deficit and anticipated expenses without a fund balance.

Mr. Washington commented that if there was a club that did not have an available advisor, he thought they had the right to seek a volunteer. He thought the BEA and the administration would have to negotiate if they did not have an individual in the bargaining unit to perform the job.

Director Amato stated that the budget cuts hurt the school district and community but it had to be done. He said they could not weaken because in a few months they would need to make decisions about next year's budget without balancing the present budget.

Director Dexter concluded that Dr. Persing would approach the high school principals about the essential clubs that would support the school's academic atmosphere and return to the board.

Director Tenaglia questioned if the budget category was student activities.

Mrs. Katona replied that it did not come from the building allocation budget.

COURTESY OF THE FLOOR

No one wished to address the Board of School Directors.

OPEN FORUM

1. Mr. Washington reviewed the question posed by Mr. Antalics earlier in the meeting regarding the difference in attendance at the SPARK Program with the change in transportation. He explained that last year 99 students were transported from the Southside and present enrollment from that area totaled 52 students. There was not a problem with students in SPARK II because they were all walkers. He pointed out there were 60 students enrolled with a waiting list for that program.
2. Director Follweiler reviewed that the board received a letter of request for information from the Concerned Citizens of the Bethlehem Area School District (CC-BASD) previously addressed during open forum. She requested the solicitor's opinion at the September 8 meeting with the request that all board replies be publicly discussed. She noted that discussion was made at the September 8 Finance Committee Meeting of which the minutes were not yet published. Director Follweiler stated that she would address the completion of the minutes with Mr. Washington, in the absence of Mr. Majewski, in order to access the information related to the questions. In addition, it was expressed that any statement made by the board must be made by a board vote at a regular meeting. She said that the group asked for statements that were made by the board which were not effective in policy; therefore, as a board, they could not respond in that regard. She addressed the following questions:
 - The first inquiry referred to the budget process. She recalled the internal memorandum provided to the board from administration, which addressed the planning budget guideline procedures for 2010 and 2011. She stated she would provide a copy of the document to the group which outlined the deadline dates for the budget. Mrs. Follweiler reviewed that the first public inspection of the proposed budget would be held on January 4, 2010, with a series of public hearings involving the board to follow.
 - The second question addressed the adoption of principles outlined in a memorandum. Director Follweiler noted a discussion at the September 8 Finance Committee Meeting and agreed to expand on it once the minutes were received.
 - The CC-BASD inquired about past practices. Director Follweiler expressed that a new superintendent would follow the interim superintendent. She noted there would also be a new business manager.
 - The fourth question addressed portfolio management techniques, which also was discussed during the September 8 Finance Committee Meeting.
 - The CC-BASD inquired about written controls requiring avoidance potential. Director Follweiler expressed that a new board policy would need to be considered and was uncertain about the process. She explained that further discussion could be arranged.
 - The next question addressed financial derivatives which were addressed at the October Regular Board Meeting. She pointed out that the committee action brought in approximately \$3,000,000 for the district.
 - The group inquired about an independent audit. She noted there was a pending report.
 - The last question discussed the audit documentation from Gorman and Associates. Director Follweiler noted the quarterly reports received from administration and explained she still had to review the Finance Committee Meeting minutes.

Director Follweiler also noted that she would provide a statement to the CC-BASD, previously read by Director Leeson, regarding the efforts of the board to change the financial situation of the district.

Director Follweiler reviewed the process involving the superintendent search. She noted that she, along with Directors McKeon and Dexter, contacted references on some of the firms, but the details were a personnel issue.

Director Dexter announced an executive session would immediately follow adjournment.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:34 p.m.

Minutes prepared by:

Donna L. Wenz

Confidential Secretary to the Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction