

**BETHLEHEM AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT
BOARD HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING
MINUTES
MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 14, 2009**

Members of the Board Human Resources Committee met on Monday, September 14, 2009, in the Dining Room, at the Education Center. Present were the following school board members: Rosario Amato, Judith Dexter, Irene Follweiler, Dr. Craig Haytmanek, Charlene Koch, Loretta Leeson, Eugene McKeon, Benjamin Tenaglia. Also in attendance were Assistant Principal Kimberly Harper, BEA President Jolene Vitalos, Director of Special Education Richard Agretto, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction Mary Katona, Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources Thomas K. Washington, and Superintendent of Schools Dr. Joseph A. Lewis.

The meeting of the Board Human Resources Committee was called to order by Mrs. Irene Follweiler at 7:41 p.m.

COURTESY OF THE FLOOR – Karen Dolan wanted to speak about students that took the Illicks Mill course and were not credited for the course. She was interceded by the board due to confidentiality reasons. Mrs. Vitalos, BEA President, stated she would not continue due to Ms. Dolan's best interest.

CLASS SIZES UPDATE – Mr. Washington provided an update on class sizes under 14. He stated many classes were removed at the request of the board, such as Special Education and ESOL.

Mrs. Follweiler saw some classes primarily in the detailed list of the pack and was surprised to see classes with 14 and under. Is it something we looked at in consolidating more? Is there no interest or is it not to fill 14 or more? Mrs. Harper explained that AP is an extension piece that is taken in conjunction with courses because they take AP Physics then AP. Mrs. Follweiler stated there is only 5 and 8 in Marketing in Practice. Mr. Washington explained that those counts are for running the school store and getting their credits that way. Mrs. Harper also added that those were added later as students change their classes and not until the 2nd semester that changes happen. As we are in a tight budget, I believe we no longer carry a class with 14 and under. Dr. Lewis directed personally that there are not to be any classes under 14 and those that are need to be examined. Mrs. Harper stated there is a window that students can drop and pick up classes. Mrs. Follweiler asked if the 14 and under was only for electives. Mrs. Harper also stated there are no study halls this year at Freedom High School. Schedules change because of the jigsaw.

Mrs. Leeson asked about how many classes under 15. Mrs. Harper said Mrs. Leeson had the current list. Mrs. Leeson stated that Honors Biology only had 10th graders. Mrs. Harper said we did this year because of the situation in the science sequence for this year. Mrs. Leeson said it is wonderful and asked if there were any 9th grade put in biology. Mrs. Harper replied no because they do not fit into the team structure. Mrs. Leeson asked if we have below 15 in the SAT. Mrs. Harper answered no.

Mrs. Follweiler stated the need to continue to watch elective class sizes of 14 and up in order to maintain the course.

Mrs. Dexter stated she does not have the same priorities. She said I think we should be willing to make exceptions. Grants that come in from the state allow us to have smaller classes. I would ask that we use it as a guideline.

Mrs. Koch said I understand, but I weigh my priorities with the little ones by having extra help, and it is more important to spend the money on the younger kids. Mrs. Dexter said that taking level 5 German away does not translate into extra money for elementary or the entire school district. Each time we review this, we must see the balance and impact of decisions that are made. That does not yield into savings.

Mr. Amato said I do not believe what I just heard. We give the administration guidelines. Who is playing God now? Not enough students, who is staying, who is going, get rid of it, and put it somewhere else. He agreed with Mrs. Koch in putting the money back into programs like Reading Recovery. Mrs. Follweiler asked for a consensus from the board that we agree that this is something that the administration needs to continue to watch and our guidelines would remain the same at 14. She asked if everyone agreed with that statement?

Mrs. Leeson agreed with Mrs. Follweiler and believes in watching some of these numbers sometimes the district needs to be creative too. Mrs. Leeson said if the district is able to offer Mandarin Chinese now because we are doing distance learning, perhaps as we look at some of the lower subscribed courses, we might be able to find other ways of providing those students with the opportunities and not tie up our teachers. She said I think your suggestion is a good one that the administration continue watching the classes, and we continue with the same guidelines and possibly look at creative ways to provide an enriched learning experience for all of our students at an affordable price.

Dr. Haytmanek stated what is going through my mind is you have to put your money where you are going to get the most bang for your buck. When you have higher-levels of German or French courses, these are the achieving students who are going to make it any way. Those kids are going to do well without level 5 German or some advanced computer class or advanced science course. I have to echo some of the other board members' thoughts when they say it makes so much more sense – and we have been hearing through the past 1-1½ years that we are in dier financial stress – but to take that money and move it whether it is an indirect or direct transfer, you have to be a little creative with it into an area where we can get Reading Recovery for the little kids or fund the transportation for SPARK. That makes so much more sense during this time of great financial woe. You need to put your money where it will do the most good. It may be in a situation where you will change a child's entire life.

Mrs. Leeson said as far as I am concerned I am interested in the academics of every single child in our district and that goes from the struggling reader all the way to a student who has the opportunity to excel and if we are going to sit here and try and make these fine line cuts between one course in German, we need to start looking else where. She said quite frankly, we have a lot of other areas we can look at in our district besides academics. That is where we need to start looking because I am not really interested in cutting the top-end student or the student who is struggling either one of them. We need to fund the programs as best we can for all the students.

Mrs. Koch thinks the district has cut more of the bottom-end students then the top-end students. One of the things, as far as being creative, I recall back many years there were courses for Latin where it would double up and have many level 4 and 5 Latin students in the same class with the same instructor. I do not see why this cannot be done. Mrs. Follweiler said some of those courses are listed here in this data. Mrs. Koch thinks there might be something that they can do, and it needs to be looked at a little closer. Mrs. Follweiler looked for the same thing, and said there is an Advance 3-D design where all four sections are combined because each one has a low enrollment. She said it maybe deceiving the way it is listed at the number of subscribers as it pictures a class with two people in it and perhaps it is a class with twenty people in it because it is multiple courses. Dr. Lewis asked for input from the assistant principal. Mrs. Harper commented on the combination of levels. German is combined with level 4 and 5, so it does put it over the cap limit it and it ends up being like 36 or 38 students, so in that instance you are pushing overload German 4 so that the teacher can focus on German 5. Mrs. Follweiler said this is something we need to monitor and keep the guidelines in check. Dr. Lewis said there are some nuances, so the board knows we do ask these questions, because sometimes courses are doubled up, sometimes it is the student store, sometimes it is a student getting a credit but that teacher has a full load and that responsibility. There are a lot of different nuances, and we are paying closer attention to the numbers. We do have some situations we wish had not developed but they have. We had some kids drop courses, and we do not want

to punish other kids because certain kids decided that chemistry is too difficult.

Mrs. Dexter stated that many of the courses on the list that we received are not designed for the top student. She said I would even say maybe most of them are not. They are designed for any student, for example, courses like Parenting, Cisco Networking, Technology, Marketing in Practice, and Business of Sports and many other courses. I am asking that we do keep the 14 as a guideline and make decisions as we go. Keeping also in mind that although we did cut this year, we still have a situation in our district where very often the high-end students are not in the low numbered classes. For example in our middle schools, the top-end students are often in more populated classrooms. There were no complaints because the students are well behaved, and the teacher was willing to accept it. We have many, many classes in our district where the situation is that we have over 30 in our classes in the honors program and in the gifted program. I am not aware of any big movement to change that, and conversely we have in the lower sections of some of our middle schools classes with 12, 13, 14, 15 students, and I am not hearing anyone complaining about this because we all realize that there are some students who need more attention or a different kind of an instructional style. I will take issue with the suggestion of looking at the gifted students and cutting their programs. Gifted students do need our support. They do need us to address their needs just as lower functioning or average functioning students just as students who come to us struggling with language. We as a district have to abide by that slogan it is *one child at a time*. It is not just the lowest functioning student, it is not just the highest functioning student, but it is every student. I take offense if this board starts throwing barbs at each other suggesting elitist or racist attitudes. As long as I have sat on this board, I have not heard that as a pattern from anyone, and I think we ought not to engage in that behavior.

Mr. McKeon stated we have two different discussions regarding class sizes. One of them is, we should not be carrying forward with scheduling students in courses with less than 14 when they registered in the spring for next year because after September when you get 16 kids a classroom then three of them decide to drop out and now the number of students has gone below the threshold that existed in the spring. These courses then should not exist in the fall.

Dr. Lewis commented that while we get a bulk of our subscription in the spring, we do not get it all and therein lies the issue. We get tremendous transfers, and unfortunately we get August transfers because some folks just decide they are not going to show up until then, which creates havoc with the schedulers. They get inundated with people that want these courses, so they did do a run early and reviewed it. They literally removed some courses that were very low, but some may be anticipated. You can see this with the 12s, 13s, and 14s, and that is where students would go. So that the board is aware, there is always a late surge and unfortunately it hits in August, and you do not have a choice.

Mr. McKeon said I do not have a problem with that. My issue is that if we have 9 or 10 sitting out there after you have gone through the spring for the following school year at that point those students should be told that the elective is closed, and we are not going to offer it. I am not going to debate a class of 14 that goes to 17 and then drops down to 12 after the school year starts. Mr. Amato agreed with Mr. McKewon. He also said a class size of 14 that is above the guideline is fine, but we have class sizes of 3, 5, 7, 8, and 9 that did not start at the guideline of 15 that was there. You were not at 17 and got down to 3 just like that.

Mrs. Follweiler relayed to Dr. Lewis that this is a concern of the board.

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING · SPARK– Mr. Washington stated this memorandum is pretty standard. When the SPARK teachers came into the teacher contract, teachers are guaranteed their

prep time because they do not have specialist teachers at SPARK. This MOU guarantees they get their allotted prep time throughout the week. Mr. McKeon asked if item number two could be explained. Mr. Washington read the paragraph, and he explained to Mr. McKeon that the teachers can have one period as 40 minutes, two 20-minute periods, so it was agreed that they can break it up in different ways. Mr. McKeon understood and was just trying to figure out where the 20/40 come from. Mr. Washington clarified that they are just combing different ways the 40 minutes could be taken to meet the schedule. Dr. Lewis also stated what it concludes is four 10 minutes, or a principal crafting some unusual schedule.

Mrs. Leeson asked how long is the day for the SPARK teachers. Mr. Washington answered that they now have a typical regular day.

Mrs. Follweiler asked if this MOU is signed every year. Mr. Washington replied this is the second year we are doing this because it is the second year they are in the contract until the next renewal of the contract.

Mrs. Follweiler asked the board if it was acceptable to put the Memorandum of Understanding for SPARK on the agenda on September 21, 2009, at the Regular Board Meeting. The board agreed to put the Memorandum of Understanding for SPARK on the agenda on September 21, 2009

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING · SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGIST – Dr. Lewis stated it was an agreement with the association relative to our problem in securing school psychologists and what the association has agreed is to permit us to use unique ways to acquire or rather to complete this work provided the work is first offered to association members. It is a reasonable approach. Mr. Agretto, Ms. Vitalos, and myself have worked on this agreement. The essence of it is, as I have explained, BEA staff would be offered the first opportunity to do the additional work because we have a short fall and if no one signs up to do that then Mr. Agretto can go to an option outside the bargaining unit to complete that work whether it would be contracted, IU, or other. Dr. Lewis thanked Ms. Vitalos and BEA for working on this with the district because it is a major problem. We have to be in compliance, and we do not have enough psychologists to do it.

Mrs. Follweiler asked if there were any questions and if there were any objections in putting it on the agenda on September 21, 2009, Regular Board Meeting. The board agreed to put the Memorandum of Understanding for School Psychologist on the agenda on September 21, 2009.

AGENDA ITEMS FOR SEPTEMBER 21, 2009, REGULAR BOARD MEETING –

The Memorandum of Understandings for SPARK and School Psychologist will be presented for approval at the Regular Board Meeting on September 21, 2009.

Memorandum of Understanding for Teacher Aides – Mr. Washington stated that now there are two we had a discussion about in executive session. There are two MOUs here one is for inclement weather. This is the health assistant that showed up for work because she did not get a phone call, and the second one is for the teacher aide who had a nursing degree and there was a differential in pay. We agreed to pay her the differential up to a certain date. It will then be written into the contract that any other employees holding degrees must work within the appropriate job classification in order to receive a pay differential.

Mrs. Follweiler asked the board if they had any questions or comments. Mrs. Leeson asked if neither one of these are precedence setting. Mr. Washington answered no.

Mrs. Follweiler asked if there were any questions and if there were any objections in putting it on the agenda on September 21, 2009, Regular Board Meeting. The board agreed to put the Memorandum of Understanding for Teacher Aides on the agenda on September 21, 2009.

COURTESY OF THE FLOOR – None

OPEN FORUM – Mrs. Follweiler said last week in open forum, I had addressed the board that we had received a letter from a citizens' group. I made some very brief notes on it, and I had asked for the opinion from our solicitor on the process if we wanted to answer it. He said it would be okay if I distributed my information to the rest of the board, which I will do now and if any of the board members have questions we would need to discuss it in the appropriate manner either in public or if there are questions for Dr. Lewis to move forward, so I am just distributing my answers.

Mr. Tenaglia said the superintendent gave us some memorandums on the 11th regarding the business manager vacancy. There are some significant discrepancies between the second page and the supporting documentation behind it. Do you want to discuss that now or in executive session? Dr. Lewis replied it could be discussed in executive session because Dr. Persing and I have some additional information for you. Mrs. Dexter stated that if it is a general issue it has to be discussed now. Dr. Lewis then asked Mr. Tanaglia what were the issues. Mr. Tenaglia stated there were several, for example, on the second page it states preferred qualifications is a master's degree, but behind it references a bachelor's degree. Dr. Lewis clarified that the first one is a preference and the second is a requirement. They agreed to talk about the language in executive session.

Mr. Tenaglia also brought up that there was an incident at the North Penn game and asked if there is anything that the administration wishes to share at this time. Dr. Lewis stated as it is student discipline, I prefer not to deal with that in public. We have, as you received, a copy of Mrs. Durante's notes relative to that situation. Those students I believe have been dealt with according to the Student Code of Conduct. We are right now deliberating on further action, and I rather not discuss that publicly.

Mr. Tenaglia reflected on last week's lengthy presentation from Scott Shear PFM regarding the swaps but also the refunding of the 2005 issue, which needs to be done by January. My understanding was they were going to come back to us next week with board action, but we have had no opportunities to discuss that. Do you anticipate having additional discussion prior to the board taking action next week? Dr. Lewis replied if my memory serves me right, they were going to be prepared to have additional discussions prior to taking action, and we would incorporate it as we have done in the past at the front end of the meeting. I will verify this with Mr. Shear and Mr. Majewski if that would be suitable and advise you before the agenda how that will operate.

Mr. Tenaglia stated that we heard tonight for the first time regarding the grades for an entire class not being posted or entered at Liberty last semester in reference to the Illick's Mill Project. Did that occur? Dr. Lewis answered that is news to me, and I would need an opportunity to talk to Mrs. Durante. Mrs. Durante stated that she can answer that but prefers not to do it publicly because it impacts people who do their job.

Mrs. Follweiler asked Mrs. Leeson, we have been spearheading the finding of firms to interview for this superintendent search. I was wondering if we can get a feel from the board if they think we have interviewed enough firms to perhaps make a spreadsheet of all of the criteria from each firm, so that we can soon make a selection or do we feel we need to look for more people to interview. Mrs. Leeson commented that information was received and passed along to all of the board members and was wondering if anyone had any questions on the material they had received from this particular firm. We had a short conversation with the gentleman that was there. Dr. Haytmanek asked how many firms have been looked at. Mrs. Follweiler answered five. Mrs. Leeson confirmed that only four have been dealt with in the public. This last one we just really accepted the information. This one as I read through it and my understanding is it is very similar to the gentlemen Mr. Leary that we have heard before. Although I understand that he is available to work with us but he does have a partner.

Mrs. Follweiler said what I am asking is if we can give Mrs. Leeson direction, should we continue to look for more firms to set up more meetings, or do we think we can take the five sets of data that we have and correlate it and make a selection. Mrs. Dexter asked if they think they ought to have an additional meeting scheduled. Mrs. Leeson stated again we only had a brief conversation, but he said he does custom design and they indicated that in the material given to the board. She said my recommendation is if this is someone that we are seriously considering the second time around, you might bring them back, you might want to have a brief description, and if you continue to be interested then move right into the design phase in one night. In other words, we take a break, decide, and continue.

Mrs. Follweiler said I think all five firms had certain things that were the same. In my opinion, we have interviewed five firms or 4½ because we only have the data from this one. I would talk to this gentleman again with the full board, and I would say out of the five I feel we could make a decision. I was just looking to get a consensus of how anyone else felt so we can give Mrs. Leeson direction. Mrs. Dexter prefers to have a date set that we can meet with this gentleman, and I like the idea of possibly, if we know that we want to make a decision, maybe being able to stay for the evening and continue with the meeting.

Mrs. Koch said I am getting the feeling that some people have already thought this is the guy we are going with so we are going to have a meeting so that we can have him work with us later. What would we do if we decide, the majority of us, we do not like him then what are we going to do the rest of that meeting that you are planning to have. Mrs. Leeson replied you get to go home.

Mrs. Follweiler took a consensus of the board and asked do we feel we need to solicit more firms to come and speak to the board.

Dr. Haytmanek: Five is more than enough.

Mr. Tenaglia: I think this gentleman deserves the opportunity to come before the full board, and after that we need to decide if we are going to select from this group or move on and go in a different direction.

Mrs. Dexter: I only liked one of the four that I have already seen, and this could be a second one. The one that I like is not available, so I would like to interview this firm. Then if we still to an need additional firm afterwards, we get another one. I personally might need another one if this is not the one.

Mrs. Koch: I agree with Mrs. Dexter on the one that I think you like who was not available. There was one other firm, and I think we both asked the same question. This person was claiming he was going to be able to get us like 30 applicants, but he was not going to screen them in anyway. He was just going to give us anybody that came off the street and apply for the job and count that as being 30 applicants., so that is where my discomfort came in. There were others I liked, however, and I would like very much to hear from this person.

Mrs. Leeson: Yes

Mr. Amato: Oh my God, yes. At this rate, we are going to run out of firms.

Mr. McKeon: Yes

Mrs. Follweiler: I do like that Mr. Tenaglia brought a new light to my question. After we listen to this firm, of those five we either pick or realize we have to start from scratch.

Mr. Tenaglia said now we have to pick a date. Mr. McKeon suggested that Mrs. Leeson contact that individual and give him the date and that way if we have open calendars then we can make the announcement at the board meeting on Monday. Mrs. Leeson stated I know they said they would be available at the end of the month. I believe just about everybody is available the 28th except for Mrs. Dexter. Mrs. Dexter said school is closed that day for Yom Kippur, so I do not know if that is going to impact our scheduling the meeting. I could be out of town that day, but do not want to hold up the meeting. Mrs. Leeson asked the board to bring with them their calendars at the next Regular Board Meeting as they move forward with the superintendent search the board will be meeting a minimum of two additional meetings a month to keep moving forward. Mrs. Dexter mentioned that one of those dates

that Mrs. Leeson is referencing to is October 5th and it is already reserved. Mrs. Leeson said yes that is the board retreat date. Mrs. Leeson asked if the board wanted to do the 28th or the 29th?

Mrs. Follweiler stated to conclude this meeting she polled the board on dates available for the next superintendent search meeting. She asked the board if they were available on the 28th or the 29th.

Dr. Haytmanek: Either day

Mr. Tenaglia: The 28th

Mrs. Dexter: Maybe on the 28th; yes on the 29th

Mrs. Koch: Either one

Mr. Amato: Either one

Mrs. Follweiler: Either one

Mr. McKeon: Question if we open on the 28th what is it costing us? Dr. Lewis said a janitor. Mrs. Leeson said the same as it does any other night that the board is here.

Mrs. Follweiler confirmed that it seems like the 29th had more availability. Dr. Lewis said I think we are in that day, and I believe that we have a janitor on site.

Mrs. Dexter said I sent the board members a summary of the last public meeting that we had on the search of the superintendent. I would like to know if anyone objects to the posting of that document on the website.

Mrs. Follweiler asked if anyone objects to the posting of those minutes on the website. The board did not object. Mrs. Dexter asked should I do a similar summary for all the other meetings. Will the board like me to do that in the same format? Mrs. Follweiler asked if anyone objected to that. Mrs. Koch asked Mrs. Dexter where is she getting the information from. Did you take notes during the meeting? Mrs. Dexter answered yes and I have the brochures too. Mrs. Follweiler asked if there were any objections to posting them on the website. The board did not object. Dr. Lewis asked that the minutes be sent to Mrs. Barbara Clymer to get them posted on the web.

Irene Follweiler adjourned the meeting at 8:31p.m.

Minutes prepared by: _____
Nitza S. Yerger, Confidential Secretary to the Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources