

BOARD CURRICULUM COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

TUESDAY, JANUARY 19, 2010

Members of the Board Curriculum Committee met on Tuesday, January 19, 2010, in the Dining Room at the Education Center. The following Board Members were in attendance: Rosario Amato, William Burkhardt, Michele Cann, Judith Dexter, Michael Faccineto, Irene Follweiler, Loretta Leeson (arrived at 6:25 p.m.), and Aurea Ortiz. Also in attendance were Dr. Thomas Persing, interim superintendent of schools; Dr. Margaret K. Barilla, educational consultant-assistant superintendent for curriculum and instruction; Thomas Washington, assistant superintendent for human resources; Dr. Dean Donaher, director of student services; distinguished educators, district principals, and representatives of the press.

Mrs. Dexter called the meeting to order at 6:07 p.m.

COURTESY OF THE FLOOR

1. Mr. Stephen Antalics, of 737 Ridge Street, Bethlehem, commented on information he provided to the board and the superintendent regarding a “hot” issue. He recommended the review of the information giving special attention to recommendations 1, 2, 3, and 4. He noted that pre-college math taught at the high school level was not successfully taught and students were being forced into remedial courses at the college level. He also stated that students interested in engineering were changing their course of study, which in turn deprived the country of future engineers and physicists with regard to technology. He commented that the United States Secretary of Education, Mr. Duncan looked into the problem and concluded that the teachers were not being properly prepared at the college level, stating that “they taught, but did not interact.” Mr. Antalics gave the example of an anatomy course for a medical student using a cadaver versus a textbook to obtain knowledge about the body. Mr. Antalics also said that many teachers went into elementary education because they were not comfortable with math. He was unsure of the impact on the district, but strongly suggested that the superintendent look at the information very carefully. He stated that the University of Michigan looked at the classes where the students were not doing well and found that the teachers with poor student math scores were qualified but came from a common teaching college. He suggested a review of the district math teachers to find out if they understood the principles taught to the students. He said the teachers in the research article were teaching a concept which they themselves did not understand but were trained to teach it with the result of the students not learning. Mr. Antalics recommended that the district look into an in-depth remedial program to relieve the problem.

Director Dexter replied that a Johns Hopkins University Staff Professor, with whom she had previous communication about math issues through an email group, also recently forwarded the article to her.

She noted the debate about math being best taught by math educators versus mathematicians. She commented about an attention catching line in the document, which stated the attempt of difficult problems by students who did not have the proper foundation was actually an impediment to developing rigor. She said they were attempting to teach the BASD students in a sequential step-by-step manner so when they get to the difficult math, they would have the rigor. She concluded that she hoped they were accomplishing it but they could always do better. Director Dexter stated that the Praxis examination was administered by the state to qualify teachers but added there were critics of the test as to whether it accomplished the goals.

CO-CURRICULAR UPDATE – DR. PERSING Agenda Item for January 25, 2010

Dr. Persing addressed the revised extra-curricular activity/club offerings at both high schools. He explained that the PA-Pact Grant would be providing the funding for some of the advisor salaries. The current chart was updated after principal recommendations.

Director Burkhardt inquired about the Best Buddies Program, which was previously a very popular club at Liberty High School. He commented that it paired regular education students with special education students.

Principal Durante replied that they did not have a staff member come forth to advise the program.

Dr. Persing reviewed that it was the third year with no available staff member. He mentioned he would attempt to recruit someone.

Principal Durante thought it would be helpful for their school improvement plan.

Director Follweiler questioned if a volunteer from the community could run the program gratis. She asked if it would be allowable in consideration that there was no interested member of the bargaining unit.

Mr. Washington replied affirmatively, stating that they would first offer it to the bargaining unit and if they did not take the position, it could be offered to a volunteer.

Director Dexter asked if they needed to offer it in a formalized manner to all members of the bargaining unit or could Mrs. Durante or Mr. LaPorta offer it at a faculty meeting.

Mr. Washington commented that he would not go about it any differently than what was done for any other club.

Director McKeon reviewed that the position was renewed annually so if an interested party from the bargaining unit could apply for the position next year and then the volunteer would no longer be needed.

Director Dexter inquired about the yellow highlighted items for Liberty High School. She noted that it did not explain whether the club was going forward.

Dr. Persing explained they were new clubs with new sponsors, which were also being paid for this year. The clubs noted with an asterisk had a sponsor to operate.

Director Dexter suggested an organized manner to thank the sponsors of the programs for their donations.

Dr. Persing agreed and stated that it was being done.

Director Burkhardt questioned DECA and FBLA at Freedom High School, which were noted as “to be determined next year.”

Principal LaPorta said it was too late in the school year to start the clubs considering the registration deadlines for competition.

Dr. Persing commented that it was possible the clubs would be reinstated for the next year.

Principal LaPorta said there was a definite interest in running the programs next year.

It was decided by general consensus to place the advisor positions on the next regular board meeting agenda.

DISTINGUISHED EDUCATOR UPDATE – DR. BARILLA

Dr. Barilla introduced Carolyn Paige, John Stoudt, and Thomas Paternostro, her three colleagues who were the current distinguished educators assigned to schools of which she would continue to work with although she was currently on leave from the distinguished educator program at the present time.

Mr. Stoudt provided an update for the program noting the Colonial Intermediate Unit 20 and PaTTAN (Pennsylvania Technical Assistance and Training Organization) were being brought into school improvement or corrective action. By doing so, it brought them into the conversation regarding the actions needed in order to provide school improvement and staff development resources. He explained that in the past it was difficult to engage those resources because they were not always in the conversation. He noted that he was working with Freedom and Liberty High Schools; Thomas Paternostro worked with Liberty High School; Carolyn Paige worked with Fountain Hill and Clearview Elementary Schools; and Midge Barilla was supporting Donegan Elementary along with Broughal and East Hills Middle Schools. Their goal was to look at ways to provide specific things to the buildings that could help students grow academically. Mr. Stoudt explained that the building principals were present to provide a brief explanation about the evolved plan for their schools.

FREEDOM HIGH SCHOOL

Mr. LaPorta reviewed the Targeted Assistance Plan for Freedom High School. He explained that they operated under the goal of improving all student achievement across the board. He explained that the “Getting Results” document was their school improvement plan which had recently been submitted to the state. He noted how they had identified a number of areas within the document and formalizing them in the Targeted Assistance Plan which they believed needed to be the main focus in order to make rapid levels of achievement within a narrow period of time. He added that professional development was the main focus across the board. Mr. LaPorta reviewed the various strategies and areas of focus in order to meet their goals, which included classroom observations. He also noted an upcoming resiliency training session with a professional who would provide strategies to be shared with a number of teachers from both schools.

Director Ortiz inquired about a specific program that addressed special needs students and their parents to provide them with a better understanding of the educational process.

Mr. LaPorta deferred to the Child Study and IEP process and commented that he believed there were conversations at that level occurred. He also reviewed that during conferences the teachers advised parents about what could be done at home in order to assist the students’ learning opportunity.

Director Ortiz commented that she thought the parents did not understand the IEP process. She suggested putting a piece in the plan where parents would be assisted to understand the process.

Director McKeon suggested a seminar for the parents of newly identified special needs children to explain the special education process.

Director Ortiz said the parent should be considered a partner in the process. She thought the parent was the most important piece in all of it.

Director Dexter commented that she thought something should be done about it after hearing the comments from both school directors.

Director Leeson asked how they were determining that the classroom teaching was aligned with the central curriculum and that all classes were being taught the same content.

Principal LaPorta replied that it was accomplished through administrative observation and having conversations with the teachers. He also noted that his assistant principal, Kim Harper, met with the department chairpersons to have conversation regarding curriculum so comparisons could be made to ensure they were on the same course timeline.

Director Leeson questioned the frequency of the drop-in observations.

Principal LaPorta explained there was one formal observation during the year as well as frequent “drop-ins.” He also touched base on the differentiated supervision model was related to a project which was planned by the teacher which focused on instruction and student achievement. He said there was a minimum of three meetings that took place with an accompanying evaluation. Principal LaPorta added that he drops into hundreds of classes during the course of the year. He said his assistant principal for curriculum and instruction also went into the classrooms.

Director Burkhardt addressed special education observations with consideration of the impact on the PSSA test scores.

Principal LaPorta commented that they had co-teaching in the special education classrooms along with a highly qualified teacher.

Director Burkhardt questioned if both teachers were equally involved in the learning process.

Principal LaPorta replied affirmatively and noted there were meetings held with the co-teaching teams throughout the year. He stated they also had teachers who “push in” as well.

LIBERTY HIGH SCHOOL

Principal Durante explained that at Liberty High School their philosophy was “Success for all students” and she did not think the Targeted Assistance Plan was new but it has grown. She also thought the 40-Day Plan from last year was successful with the extraction of items from that plan carried into the current year. She expressed gratitude for the Act 80 Days, which she explained allowed the departments to accomplish much work. Their plan included alignment of curricular standards, noting there was much work needed in the Science Department. She commented that the English Department has been assessing their curriculum with the tweaking of some of the gaps. She said the distinguished educators were helping the department chairpersons with specific information, which they could utilize within their departments. As part of their plan, they were requesting assistance from the Intermediate Unit and PaTTAN with co-teaching. Mrs. Durante pointed out that it was their third year with co-teaching. She stated they would continue to observe data and noted that the Scantron Test is being utilized for student assessment, which provided direct feedback. For the first half of the literacy coaching was used during “as assigned” time to teach strategies and they were starting to look at special education as a target group. She noted there were planned review sessions for multiple PSSA categories and there would also be a TIPS Program this Saturday at the high school, which was also part of the plan. She said it was their second year of classroom walkthroughs and reviewed that they looked for specific topics when they entered the classrooms with last year’s focus on engagement and PSSA warm-ups. This year warm-ups were imbedded into the curriculum but it was noted that not every class was participating during observations so they were notified of the requirement. She added that the Math and English Departments were embarking on steady warm-ups throughout the second semester that were specifically aligned for PSSA testing. Mrs. Durante thought the fact that teachers were looking at the standards aligned systems to allow them to explore other avenues for students was very valuable.

Director Dexter questioned if the PSSA warm-up activities were only for the academic subjects or across the board.

Mrs. Durante stated it was for English, math, social studies, and science.

Director Burkhardt questioned the grouping of students in college preparatory classes. He asked if the philosophy for the broader range of mixed students was to influence PSSA test scores.

Mrs. Durante replied that the philosophy was to “push up” in order to increase achievement so there were academic classes with a wide range of grade levels. She pointed out that teachers were struggling with it because the band was so grand such as students with a second grade up to a tenth grade reading level all within the same class. She added there was co-teaching present in the classroom.

Director Burkhardt commented that he did not want to see it continue for an extended period of time if it was not achieving the desired results.

Mrs. Durante inquired if he was asking for it across all four core subjects.

Director Burkhardt replied that his main concern was English and math. He expressed that he would be very upset if Grade 11 College Preparatory English had been watered down. He felt that Grade 9 and 10 were transition years, but by Grade 11, the students needed a solid college preparatory course.

Director Dexter commented that they never really signed on to the program as it was implemented. She said the board agreed to “ranging” and according to information provided, it would never have included a second grade reading level mixed with a tenth grade level. They were told the students would be grouped such as numbers one through six and that a one would not be in with a six. She said that she has since learned after speaking with teachers, guidance counselors, and administrators that what was presented was not in place.

Mrs. Durante replied that she thought the intentions were good but the end result did not work out.

Director Leeson inquired about the extended year math and English offered in grades 9 and 10, which was no longer is offered in grade 11. She commented that it was very difficult for those students who needed additional time to be at the same level as a student just below the honors program who needed the rigor of a strong college prep English and Math Program.

Mrs. Durante expressed that at times it was strictly work ethic as the reason why the students weren't doing well but there were students equal to approximately one class size that needed the extra time and sat in an academic English 11 class during the past semester.

Director Burkhardt requested a report from the teachers as to how the program worked.

Director Dexter suggested inviting the teachers to attend a curriculum meeting.

Director Leeson requested that Dr. Barilla review the situation and bring input to a future meeting.

Director Ortiz inquired if paraprofessionals were present in the classroom.

Mrs. Durante replied there were no others beside the co-teachers.

Director Dexter informed Dr. Barilla that she would search previous meeting minutes for the discussion regarding what they had thought was to be put into place. She noted that at the time the change was made, it was not determined how they would evaluate if it was a successful teaching model. She thought they needed to develop how and when they would evaluate the program along with other criteria. She thought it would be a good point to bring in teachers for input without hand selection with regard to opinions.

Director Burkhardt compared the program to a “one-room schoolhouse,” and he thought they had moved away from it. He thought it needed evaluation before it being continued.

Director Dexter reviewed that they never actually adopted what had happened because it was never brought to the board and agreed upon. It was referred to as grouping for ability, grouping for achievement, ranging, and tracking; with at least six different terms.

Director Leeson mentioned also looking into the matter at the middle school level.

Mrs. Durante commented that during Act 80 days, the teachers were looking back to evaluate what had worked such as the full year courses of English 9 Critical Literacy, English 10 Critical Literacy, and math, because they knew that the students were not ready at Grade 11 for the college preparatory course. She added that they did not have applied level classes as they had in the past, of which was a directive.

BROUGHAL MIDDLE SCHOOL

Principal Santoro stated the past history of their practices was solidly imbedded in their student scheduling. For many years they had offered twelve periods of reading and language arts for Grade 6 students. There were nine periods of math for every student in the building within a six-day cycle. They offered twelve periods of math for students below level. In addition, they added small group classes in math and reading for struggling students. Mr. Santoro pointed out the after school programs had increased enrollment during the present year. He further explained that the after school program was based on reading and math with some enrichment activities to follow. He stated they had been doing a form of co-teaching for 15 to 18 years, of which a model again was being used during the current year. It was not only being utilized in the special needs classroom. Mr. Santoro said there was careful decision with regard to their inclusion classes. There was almost constant contact between the special needs teacher and the regular education teacher within the classroom. He brought attention to co-teaching with the reading specialist in the developmental reading classes. He said the goal was for the student to make progress.

He noted that it was disheartening to see some non-included students not making progress last year at a particular grade level, which he felt was unacceptable. He explained that one may not become proficient but they should make progress. One of their particular focus goals was academic rigor which was part of their Getting Results document. The other focus was differentiated instruction to meet the students' needs. Mr. Santoro reviewed that Broughal Middle School utilized PaTTAN and Intermediate Unit 20 specialists as resources.

Director Dexter asked what would be done differently this year to help identified students to make progress.

Mr. Santoro replied that one of his special needs teachers was a master at rigor in their special needs "non-included" classroom. That person was presently assisting and co-teaching with the sixth and seventh grade special needs non-included teachers. He noted that it had made a tremendous impact. He also reviewed that a vocabulary program was being utilized as a tool to teach strategies and assist the students in preparation for the PSSA Test. He explained that because many words have double or triple meanings, many students in his building struggle with the concept. He said they were also addressing how teachers embedded test taking strategies into their teaching. Their focus was also to embed ways to scaffold questions to meet the needs of different students within groups. It was not only what they were teaching the students but also what they were teaching the teachers so they could better meet student needs.

Director Ortiz questioned if the students not making progress were from a contained classroom or learning support.

Mr. Santoro responded that the students he referred to did not make progress from last year to the present year in the PSSA Test. He said the problem was not IEP related but rather to the lack of rigor challenge. He commented that if the student was not making classroom progress, they would change their IEP. He added that the students were considered "non-included" students.

Director Follweiler pointed out that the column stating the Status of Implementation needed an update in December. She asked if Mr. Santoro would be providing a written follow-up.

Mr. Santoro agreed with her request.

DONEGAN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Principal Vázquez stated that the belief was that their students can and will learn. She explained that reading specialists, ESOL teachers, special education teachers in their school, along with Dr. Barilla as their distinguished educator, have taken on the support of the Intermediate Unit 20 and PaTTAN, as well as the school district's curriculum personnel to assist in making their academic training seamless. She noted their focus was on vocabulary, engaging students, building stamina, and making the work very rigorous. They have developed a strong partnership with Lehigh University, connections with the Spanish Council along with the elderly, in addition to connections with many small businesses on Third and Fourth Street. Ms. Vázquez stated that her focus was to change the work ethic to a strong academic work ethic through regular attendance, proper behavior, student preparedness, cultural pride, and an overall academic building atmosphere associated with cleanliness and tone.

They were also bringing in programs throughout the year in partnership with the PTO such as the Three Kings Program and their Fiesta-Fest with the goal to raise student trip funds. Ms. Vázquez reviewed there was a focus on African and Spanish culture with others being put into place. She stated they received support offered by Lehigh University and The Sands Casino. During the second half of the academic year, regular assessment information was being utilized to drive the daily lessons for each individual student and to determine where teachers needed to focus. She concluded that they were all moving in the same direction as a school and leaving no child behind. She shared that a form was used to plan weekly curriculum at each grade level and the information was distributed by email to every teacher and specialist in the building so everyone focused on the same information. She reflected on Mr. Santoro's statement regarding the students' struggle with vocabulary, which she has also found in her students.

Director Burkhardt questioned the school's enrollment with regard to stability.

Principal Vázquez replied that at least 57 students had left the building since the beginning of the year. She said they were attempting to work with the Family Centers in an attempt to keep the students but she found the families were moving because of increased rent due to the casino.

Principal Stannard commented that a recent report at his school revealed approximately 150 students in and out of his building since the beginning of the year. He pointed out that last year they had an approximate 30 percent mobility rate.

Director Burkhardt stated that a school could have the best programs but it was a problem if the students were not present.

Mr. Stannard said they were assisting some families through their family development specialists and the community school model. He added that the family development specialists attempted to find stable jobs for the parents.

Principal Colón commented that since the fall there were approximately 15 families at Clearview Elementary who had come to live with existing families and there was an attempt to find them employment so they could remain.

Director Ortiz congratulated Donegan Elementary School with regard to the program associated with the elderly because they were teaching the students to respectfully interact with the senior citizens.

Director Amato departed from the meeting at 7:23 p.m.

FOUNTAIN HILL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Principal Stannard stated their Targeted Assistance Plan was basically an outline of the Getting Results Plan which was presented a few months ago. The plan focused on specific instructional programs and targeted professional development needs. He commented about their partnership with the distinguished educators, Intermediate Unit 20, and PaTTAN. He brought attention to the RtI (Response to Intervention) Program of which they were proud.

It focused on small group instruction such as Power Hour, which was a 30 to 45 minute block of time where numerous faculty members assist students in areas such as fluency, comprehension, or phonemic awareness. He reviewed that there was school-wide testing three times per year and the numbers were showing significant growth in DIBELS testing and RTI. Mr. Stannard commented that they were in the process of learning the art of teaching reading. He pointed out that a program for an Act 80 Day, titled “Letters,” brought to them through PaTTAN and CIU20, focused on the science of reading and approached the issue of struggling students. He also stated that student engagement was another focus which would be addressed during their last Act 80 Day. This year the System 44 Model was being utilized by 25 students in Grade 4 with bimonthly progress reports being generated as a monitoring tool. He said that some students had success with the program and noted that it was a stepping-stone for Read 180, which was used in Grade 5. He also pointed out success with a new program in Grade 4, titled Fast Math, which ramped up the students’ basic math fact skills that many students lacked. Tutoring was incorporated into the school day as well as after school. They continued to incorporate a reading specialist and ESOL teacher in every classroom for 35 minutes every day. They continued to analyze performance series data through Scantron in order to have the ability to differentiate instruction if needed. Mr. Stannard also noted the implementation of a 40-day PSSA Plan at Fountain Hill Elementary, stressing vocabulary, testing strategies, and eligible content. Their school participated in the Community Schools Program, which tied in with the United Way. They had a successful partnership through the program with Northampton Community College, which provided after-school student mentors including students from Moravian College. He concluded that in consideration of the various strategies in place and the attempt to reduce the mobility rate, they would continue to make headway.

CLEARVIEW ELEMENTARY

Principal Colón commented that the more the students read every day; they knew their reading would improve. She stated the focus this year was on Fountas and Pinnell; the gurus of effective reading strategies. She noted that many teachers had the opportunity to observe them at reading conferences and she had great respect for them. She explained about their school-wide initiative where the K-3 grade level teachers utilizing the text, “When Reader’s Struggle” and Grades 3, 4, and 5 were using “Thinking, Talking, and Writing About Reading.” The program started at the onset of the school year and it was focused on during the November In-service Program along with grade level weekly meetings. They continued to discuss and utilize many strategies that would support the Macmillan Reading Series which would also transfer into math, science and social studies. Another goal of the school was to enhance writing with the teachers taking time to discuss the incorporation of various writing strategies such as “word of the day” or using a word wall. They also looked at Scantron data and saw some significant gains in student progress. Ms. Colón pointed out that she and a few teachers attended two sessions related to co-teaching in all classrooms. She added that she has observed more co-teaching being utilized in the building. She also observed that the reading specialist, the ESOL teachers, and the speech therapist were co-teaching in the classroom. She said they had to look at every student with regard to PSSA proficiency and whether their DRAs (developmental reading assessments) were at grade level and they had to create individual plans. She reflected on a K-1 parent workshop held during the fall and planned a K, 1, and 2 reading workshop for parents, as well as a 3, 4, and 5 workshop at the beginning of March. She noted the weekly newsletter which elaborated on strategies being incorporated in the classroom.

Director Leeson inquired about the elementary level writing program (Kid Writing) and she was informed that it was still being utilized. She also inquired about the development of the science curriculum at the elementary level.

Ms. Colón replied that the fourth grade students took the Science PSSA so they were receiving preparation for the assessment. She pointed out there was also integration of reading, writing and mathematics into that subject area. The FOSS Kits were utilized at the fourth and fifth grade levels and she commented that the students did very well because it was a “hands on” approach.

Mr. Stannard commented that the kits involved obtaining replacement materials every year in addition to teacher preparedness, but once the materials were ready, the program was excellent.

Dr. LoFaso, assistant principal at Donegan Elementary School, commented that the Macmillan series had a large collection of social studies and science in the level readers. She added that when the program was initiated four years ago, the Macmillan consultants along with a team of teachers aligned the social studies and science standards to the core reading series. She concluded that it differed from the FOSS Kits but it was content area in social studies and science.

Director Burkhardt questioned the enrollment impact to Clearview Elementary if the Lehigh Valley Dual Language Charter School if the program received approved.

Ms. Colón replied that she had heard about it and had some earlier discussion with families but she thought they were happy with her school.

Director Dexter expressed gratitude to the distinguished educators, noting their hard work at all levels within the district.

One of the distinguished educators, Mr. Paternostro, expressed that they could have fancy programs and conferences for students and teachers, but if all of them did not count or were not embraced, and if they did not believe that all students could learn and were not prepared daily in alignment with the standards, and if they weren't ready to give 100 percent, then the program would not work. It came down to the individual who was interacting with the students. He brought attention to the emergency airplane landing in the Hudson River a year ago and shared the captain's comments on his lifesaving actions. Mr. Paternostro stated that Captain Sullenberger expressed that the lives were spared because, “when technology failed and all systems failed, competent people did their job.” He said it was the model the distinguished educators had discussed in that they needed to get to the point where they did not have to check on teachers every five minutes because of their commitment and responsibility to the students.

Director Dexter welcomed future communication from the distinguished educators as the year progressed and for them to feel free to suggest how the board could support their work because she knew their goal was to provide a better educational environment.

**APPROVAL OF REVISED GRADE 4 AND 5 HEALTH CURRICULUM
(Agenda Item for January 25, 2010)**

Ms. Vázquez commented that at the time when the monies were removed from the health program at the elementary level, they began to search for support in order to keep the alignment of the information given to the children, particularly Grades 4 and 5. She explained that a grant was received through the Weller Center in which they would receive services at no cost to the district. She also pointed out that they were receiving support from the Center for Humanistic Change, St. Luke's Hospital and the Bethlehem Health Bureau.

Mrs. Halkins, district medical services, stated that a grant received through St. Luke's Hospital and the Bethlehem Health Bureau would be used for educating students about pregnancy prevention and STI (sexually transmitted infections). The current program available to fifth graders was written in the early 1990s and has not been updated since that time. The thought was for the grant to provide the funding to replace materials for the program. There was a request by the district to hold the grant money until next year for implementation of the program. She added that the fourth grade students would also receive some instruction on personal hygiene with the consideration of students reaching pre-pubescence earlier, in addition to having discussion about the consequences associated with choices, which would follow into the fifth grade health curriculum. Mrs. Halkins said there was an option to pay for services provided by the person who wrote the curriculum but she preferred to use the money to purchase the books and videos that would support the program. She pointed out that the district nurses had difficulty leaving the health room to teach the students in the classroom. She stated discussion took place with Dr. Bonnie Coyle from St. Luke's along with Moravian College with a goal to bring in senior nursing students, public health students, and possibly education students from Lehigh University to act as guest speakers after receiving in-depth instruction on the curriculum. She reviewed that nursing students from St. Luke's Nursing students were working in the health rooms throughout the year. She thought it would be an opportunity for them to collaborate with outside agencies to provide services for the district.

Director Leeson inquired about parent involvement regarding the type of information provided to the students.

Mrs. Halkins replied that in the past the parents were given a letter explaining the topic and also offered them the opportunity to preview the educational materials. She said the option remained for the parents to come in to review the curriculum.

Director Dexter commented that she saw the parent "opt-out" option on the district website.

Director Leeson reviewed that the district policy was to teach abstinence.

Mrs. Halkins stated fourth and fifth grade students were not taught about abstinence. The subject matter was related to menstruation along with a Life Begins Program with the Weller Center. She explained that they did not do the piece "in-between."

Director Leeson mentioned that the curriculum included an understanding about protection from infection.

Director Follweiler commented about blood borne pathogens and stressed that it was important for even the younger students to be aware of taking precautions.

Mrs. Halkins believed that the associated knowledge was part of the culture such as the students' automatic response to coughing or sneezing by turning their head into their arm to avoid spreading germs. She reviewed that the class would provide the students with a better understanding as to why precautions were taken.

**IMPACT AID, SECTION 8003
LOWE'S TOOLBOX FOR EDUCATION GRANT
SPRINT CHARACTER EDUCATION GRANT – PROJECT SUCCESS
FEDERAL/STATE PROGRAM BUDGETS**

The above listed agenda items, in addition to the revised Grade 4 and 5 Health Curriculum, were considered together by members of the board and given approval to be listed on the agenda for the January 25, 2010 Regular Board Meeting.

Dr. Persing reviewed the following items with the board of school directors:

- Act 80 In-service package prepared by Dr. Barilla
- Martin Luther King student education information
- Revision of lunch program guidelines effective February 1, 2010
(Dr. Persing stated that any questions could be referred directly to him.)

COURTESY OF THE FLOOR

No one addressed the board of school directors.

OPEN FORUM

Director McKeon provided an update on the “Race To The Top” and noted that President Obama was seeking to expand the funding above the current projected amount.

Dr. Persing said there were presently approximately 150 to 160 districts under consideration and it could possibly provide an additional few hundred thousand or a million dollars.

Director Burkhardt addressed the purchase of caps and gowns by the high school students. He was concerned about it turning into a last minute crisis. He understood about budget constraints but wanted someone to check on the situation to see if it was a serious issue.

Director Dexter thought it might be different at the two high schools.

Director Leeson commented that she thought it was an issue last year during mid-year and there was not an opportunity to include the cost in the class dues. She believed it should be included so it would not become a separate issue with regard to fee collection. She also noted that many students did not hear the daily announcements. She said that many students were not applying for scholarships because they were not aware of the opportunities. She recommended a “ticker-tape” message board in the lunchroom so the students could see the information while standing in line.

Director Burkhardt said the scholarships were previously posted every week in the senior homerooms.

Director Cann believed the cap and gown situation was being handled differently at the high schools. She thought it was part of the student dues at Freedom High School. She said the students received a brochure from a company at Liberty High School and had to hand in a check to the guidance office. She heard that many people said their checks were not cashed and they had concern about confirmation. Director Cann was concerned about students not having a gown for the ceremony.

Dr. Barilla asked Mr. Gilliland if he had knowledge about the graduation arrangements.

Mr. Gilliland replied that he was responsible to keep within last year’s budget.

Dr. Persing asked Dr. Donaher to obtain a written report for the board and him from both principals regarding the cap and gown situation.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:05 p.m.

Minutes prepared by:

Donna L. Wenz
Confidential Secretary – Department of Curriculum and Instruction