



**BOARD CURRICULUM COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
MONDAY, JUNE 14, 2010**

Members of the Board Curriculum Committee met on Monday, June 14, 2010, in the Dining Room at the Education Center. The following Board Members were in attendance: William Burkhardt, Michele Cann, Michael Faccinetto, Irene Follweiler, Loretta Leeson, Eugene McKeon, and Aurea Ortiz. Absent: Rosario Amato and Judith Dexter.

Also in attendance were Dr. Thomas Persing, interim superintendent of schools; Dr. Margaret K. Barilla, educational consultant as assistant superintendent for curriculum and instruction; Thomas Washington, assistant superintendent for human resources; Frank Arbushites, director of technology; Iris Cintron, supervisor of minority affairs/governmental programs and grants; Dr. Dean Donaher, director of student services; teachers, and representatives of the press.

In the absence of Director Dexter, Director Follweiler called the meeting to order at 6:07 p.m.

COURTESY OF THE FLOOR

No one addressed the Board of School Directors.

CURRICULUM REVIEW – DR. BARILLA

Dr. Barilla explained that Mrs. Bast, coordinator of literacy, was unable to attend the meeting because of a previous commitment. She recommended communication with her by email or telephone if the board had any questions.

Dr. Barilla introduced Julie Victory, supervisor of mathematics, who brought attention to the disc provided to the board and explained that Scope and Sequence documents were addressed. She stated that depending on the grade level, the eligible content with regard to PSSA testing was indicated on the documents. She added that the Scope and Sequence documents are dynamic and changed according to year. She also mentioned the timeline of the PSSA test administration with next year's test scheduled for March so the Scope and Sequence documents have been adjusted.

Director Follweiler asked if the Scope and Sequence documents would change if the Keystone Examinations were more influential in the future.

Mrs. Victory pointed out that the Scope and Sequence documents have been changed. The algebra and geometry topics have been built into the document, which addressed the Keystone Examinations. Mrs. Victory brought attention to her attendance at a recent seminar covering the Keystone Tests, and pointed out the Scope and Sequence documents and the curriculum have been adjusted. She commented that the Keystone Examinations will be more difficult than the PSSA.

Director Leeson addressed the exam criteria with regard to the traditional algebra course and if they were going far enough in the current scope and sequence format.

Mrs. Victory replied that the program will be altered for the next school year. She also commented on the number of interpretation questions with difficulty graphing linear inequalities.

Dr. Barilla commented that they were possibly addressing the 8th grade Algebra I Keystone Exam being administered in the 9th grade year. The students will still have to take the 8th grade PSSA examinations because the Keystone Exams will be counting for 11th grade AYP. She added that Mrs. Victory was focusing on getting the curriculum in place in addition to professional development for Algebra I teachers.

Director Leeson addressed the amount of time available for the courses and she thought they needed to look closely at the high school time blocks. She thought it might be difficult to get through the material.

Mrs. Victory pointed out that the Keystone Examinations were scheduled for May so it gave them more time than for PSSA testing. She believed the state planned to replace 11th grade PSSA testing with Keystone Exams by 2013 or 2014 for both AYP and graduation proficiency.

Director Burkhardt asked how much Algebra I was taught at the middle school level.

Mrs. Victory estimated that less than 20 percent of students took the course at the middle school.

Director Burkhardt asked if there was concern about the instructors with regard to the material and what was being done as far as support for those teachers.

Mrs. Victory replied that two workshops had been provided which addressed Algebra. She added that she had Algebra II teachers from Freedom and Liberty working with ten middle school teachers this week. She explained that the real target was the course work beyond Algebra I.

Director Burkhardt asked if all non-certified math teachers were taking advantage of the offered enrichment courses.

Mrs. Victory stated many were attending but she could not make them attend the sessions.

It was noted by Dr. Barilla that most of the instructors attended sessions through TDAs.

Director Leeson addressed having a certified high school level teacher instructing the course even though it was taught at the middle school level.

Mrs. Victory explained the state allowed a teacher to be highly qualified through Praxis.

Director Leeson replied that she thought they made the determination that a high school level course should be taught by a certified teacher as if the student took the course at the high school.

Mrs. Victory said she would like to have that happen.

Mr. Arbushites reviewed the academic integration curriculum, which was previously addressed at the April Board Curriculum Committee Meeting. He pointed out that the recent revisions to the academic integration curriculum and the middle school technology curriculum were contained on the provided CD. He said the elementary academic integration students met for 45 minutes per week throughout the year. The technology classes at the middle school level met for 45 minutes over a 30-day period.

Mr. Arbushites stated the curriculum was approximately 90 percent complete with some discussion pending with the elementary and high schools to ensure the content fits together going from the elementary to middle school and then on to the high schools.

Mr. Arbushites also reviewed the requirement of E-Rate reimbursement, which was to offer courses such as internet safety, responsible use of information, and appropriate behavior in social networking/email. They were also working on media literacy skills such as using the internet for research, citing sources of information appropriately and learning how to evaluate the quality of information observed on websites. He also pointed out that many teachers were uploading handouts into TechPaths and sharing their resources because they taught from a common curriculum.

Mr. Arbushites noted the podcast, digital photo, and specific websites connected to classroom curriculum were added to the current curriculum since the previous meeting.

Director Leeson addressed multimedia from 8th into 9th grade with some teachers feeling somewhat restricted with some projects they could assign to the students such as the creation of a movie. She asked if the students would be able to create a movie by the time they reach grade 9.

Mr. Arbushites replied that the students were actually starting to acquire the basic skills in grade 5 and work on it each year. He noted the students worked on the skills in other classes and not only taught in technology class.

Director Leeson questioned the current 9th grade course being taught and asked if it would be necessary or would they test students in 8th grade.

Mr. Arbushites stated they would continue to test the students but they had to meet with the high school teachers to determine the future direction for the 9th grade course. His current understanding was that the course focused on Microsoft Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Access, and Publisher.

Director Burkhardt inquired about middle school certification with regard to the technology teachers.

Mr. Arbushites replied that they should be certified in Business K-12.

Mrs. Karen Aulisio, principal at Thomas Jefferson Elementary School and the elementary social studies curriculum administrator, reviewed the elementary social studies curriculum framework for grades 3, 4, and 5, which was based upon the SAS (Standards Aligned System). She noted the four areas addressed which were civics and government, economics, geography and history. She explained the main aspect addressed was to transfer over to a teaching for understanding as opposed to just teaching factual concepts.

Mrs. Aulisio pointed out that the present document was updated from the CD presented to the board members. She expressed that she hoped the idea was to have the program updated on a continual basis as the teachers become familiarized with the Standards Aligned System.

Dr. Barilla noted that the program formatting could also be realigned, if necessary, to the TechPaths system because of the existing similarities.

Director Leeson inquired about Pennsylvania history in third and fourth grade. She asked the extent of local history in those grades.

Mrs. Aulisio expressed that the Bethlehem community was a focus in grade 3 with Pennsylvania history seen throughout grades 3, 4, and 5 with the updated standards.

Director Burkhardt inquired about the frequency of the course during the year.

Mrs. Aulisio replied that the curriculum was roughly based upon a 90-day cycle with each school varying the schedule. The document was designed so teachers would not be locked into a specific schedule.

Director Burkhardt asked if there was a method to monitor the program that would ensure the standards aligned system was being met.

Mrs. Aulisio referenced the Standards Aligned System, noting there was some available detail.

Dr. Barilla noted there were assessments, videos, and lesson plans which addressed the standard on the Standards Aligned System website used by teachers across the state.

Director Burkhardt commented that the more the skills were integrated the better the students will learn and he hoped the staff had some input regarding the reinforcement of the standards in the curriculum.

Mrs. Aulisio said that they would be gathering information from the teachers throughout the school year as well as the end of the year to review useful resources and to clarify the program.

Mrs. Beth Guarriello and Mr. Eric Baltz were present to discuss two new high school science courses. Mrs. Guarriello addressed the honors physics curriculum at both high schools. She explained it actually followed the AP Physics-B curriculum currently taught at both high schools. There were common assessments for all units including common labs for both schools. Mrs. Guarriello added that the courses were aligned with the standards assigned system with the exception of the last two units because there were no Pennsylvania standards assigned to those areas. She added that the teachers expressed interest in covering those areas if possible.

Mr. Eric Baltz addressed the environmental science course for the non-honors 10th grade students. He noted it was aligned with the Standards Alignment System, actually taking the five units from the website. He stated there were common labs offered at both schools. The goal was to have more continuity between the schools and among teachers.

Director Cann questioned when other students learn the environmental science curriculum besides the non-honors students.

Mr. Baltz noted that it was revised in the honors 9th grade biology curriculum. He said it was difficult to decide what to keep and what to eliminate. He stated that some of the standards with regard to the labs were incorporated into honors biology in order to have the environmental science background for the PSSA examinations.

Dr. Barilla said the students would also be sitting for the Keystone Examinations in 11th grade.

Mr. Baltz stated they would be looking at the Keystone Examination standards while they were creating assessments for the biology courses.

Director Leeson noted the majority of schools were incorporating biology and chemistry into the environmental science curriculum. She asked if they went to Keystone Examinations and they did not require an environmental science test, she questioned if they would have to resequence the students.

Mr. Baltz explained that all students took Biology in 9th grade regardless so it was their foundation. He added that some students would be ready after 9th grade to take the examination. He pointed out the possibility of the students taking the environmental course as a ramp up or booster, before they took the Keystone Examination. He thought it was so early in the process at this point.

Director Leeson inquired about waves and optics with regard to physics and college preparation.

Mrs. Guarriello replied that it depended on the college and major but that it was at the far end of the academic spectrum. She noted that it was the reason why the state did not have the standards written.

Mr. Anthony Markovich discussed the psychology and sociology course offerings at the high schools. He explained the state requirements did not have standards for sociology or psychology so they aligned the curriculum rewrite to literacy and reading standards. He noted that an AP Psychology course would be offered in the upcoming year at both high schools.

Mr. Markovich also said the elective courses – AP Comparative Government and AP World History, would be offered in the 2011-2012 academic year. He brought attention to the book presented for adoption for the AP Comparative Government course.

Director Burkhardt asked about the sequence of social studies courses at the high school level.

Mr. Markovich reviewed the course sequence for the 2011-2012 school year would begin with U.S. History II, which covered 19th Century history with 20th Century History offered to the 10th grade. The 11th grade program would offer the World History program, which was currently being written with an emphasis on current day and a more global prospective. He concluded that the 12th grade offering would be U.S. Government Economics, which included ties to the global perspective.

Dr. Barilla mentioned that the middle school science curriculum was being re-evaluated and was being modeled after the Broughal Middle School science curriculum. It would be presented at a future meeting.

ELEMENTARY SOCIAL STUDIES TEXTBOOKS PURCHASE

There was a general consensus by the Board of Directors in support of approving the item to be listed on the agenda for the June 21, 2010 Regular Board Meeting.

FREEDOM HIGH SCHOOL TEAMING PRESENTATION

Mr. LaPorta, the principal of Freedom High School, presented an overview of teaming at the school. He reviewed the history, preparation and selection process, operation, goals and accomplishments of the program. He explained that it originated out of the student task force, which was a group of students, parents, and teachers, who produced the Getting Results Document. It was run through the Project 720 initiative, which revolved around the small learning community concept. He also noted that it was also a directive from Dr. Lewis to formulate small learning communities/teaming at the high school. The student achievement task force, through the corrective action plan, looked at data, test results, and had numerous meetings with representatives of the Freedom High School community. The document was board approved and then submitted to the Pennsylvania Department of Education. Mr. LaPorta pointed out there were sub-committees formed to address certain concerns such as scheduling and organization of students. He also reviewed the educational conferences provided as a result of the Project 720 initiative, which provided staff resources to improve student achievement. He said the 9th grade was a concentrated focus with small learning communities and had a goal to remain budget neutral.

Mrs. Kim Harper, assistant principal at Freedom High School, said they received input from the task force and input from the department chairpersons with the consensus to focus on grade 9 for the teaming process. She described the results of a meeting held in April 2009 where discussion took place about the benefits of teaming for both students and teachers including the components of a successful team. A common goal was to have balance within the team structure.

Mrs. Harper also reviewed the results of a 2-day workshop held at Lehigh University, where discussion was held about the roles and responsibilities of team members, expectations, protocols and available interdisciplinary connections. She also brought attention to the Ropes Course taken by the team teachers, which focused on trust, communication, cooperation, and goal setting/attainment. She commented that the teachers went above and beyond their expectations. Mrs. Harper gave all of the credit to them for the success of the program.

Ms. Jaime Jarosz, assistant principal at Freedom High School, made comment about beginning the school year prepared for flexibility and working together as professional community in support of the students. She further explained the team schedules, which involved regular meetings during planning time. The teachers also met with administration and/or guidance staff in order to be proactive and look at the student concerns, including academic progress and needs, mental health, discipline and behavioral concerns, and necessary interventions.

Ms. Jarosz introduced Mrs. Jamie Ott as one of the teachers involved in the teaming process, who offered a further description of the program benefits.

Margaret Wimmer, another teacher from Freedom High School, spoke about the service learning grant, which permitted the students to be involved in a science program and culminated in a water testing activity/community clean up at Sand Island. She pointed out the ability to incorporate history, science and math standards in the field trip. The students also had to write their reflections regarding the impact of industry to the local water resource. The teaming approach was very successful and fostered a sense of community in the students. Ms. Wimmer emphasized that it was her most enjoyable year in her teaching career because of the positive student results.

Ms. Jarosz introduced two freshman student participants, Joshua Young and Taji-Nae Curtis, who participated in a leadership program sponsored through a grant from Dale Carnegie. They also shared their positive experiences by participating in the team teaching process. Joshua pointed out that many teachers were available to assist him before the school day began.

Ms. Jarosz commented that the overall culture of the school improved as the program grew throughout the year.

Mrs. Karla Young, Joshua's mother, shared her opinion that the teachers and administrators had heartfelt commitment to the program. She felt their energy and zeal was contagious. She referred to Mr. LaPorta, Mrs. Harper, and Ms. Jarosz as an "A" Team and in addition, the teachers involved were amazing. She felt the adjustment from 8th grade to high school would be a huge adjustment for her son and the team approach helped to make his transition a success.

Mrs. Young pointed out that the teaming approach created and fostered the most conducive environment for student success. She commented that the team worked hard as a unit to make sure they pulled all of the children as far along as their potential allowed. She said she could not be more grateful for the experience. She wished the program would continue and would remain in place for her other children.

Ms. Rebecca Favretto spoke of her son's struggle throughout the history of his education, noting that he finished the first marking period with failing grades and by the middle of the last marking period, his grades elevated to two B's and an A. She pointed out the ongoing and prompt communication from all members of the team. She expressed hope that the team approach would remain intact and her son would have the same positive experience next year.

Mr. LaPorta commented that the approach has created a level of capacity that was not previously seen along with an improved level of communication.

Director Follweiler complimented the students on their impressive performance in front of the group this evening.

Director Ortiz complimented the program and thanked the team. She thought the program should stay intact if it was working and it could be shared with Liberty High School.

Director Cann inquired about how the blocks were used for the student schedules. She asked how many teachers were involved in the team. She asked if every 9th grade student was involved.

Mrs. Ott commented on the arrangement of the scheduling. She stated there were four teachers on four teams. In addition, three of the teams also had a special education teacher and the remaining team also had an ESOL teacher. She thought the change in the environmental structure was important with the ability to open the classrooms to permit co-teaching, such as English and history, allowing for two subjects to be evaluated and monitored by two teachers.

Director Cann inquired about the future of the program with regard to the complication of student scheduling.

Mr. LaPorta said that the program was used as a segue for middle school students entering the high school level. It was used as a way to acclimate the students to the high school environment. He brought attention to the dramatic change in building population for a student coming from the middle school to the high school. He also noted research about the potential for losing a student in 9th grade and the goal to increase the graduation rate.

Director Faccinnetto inquired about the honors students and the impact on them.

Joshua Young commented that his team worked together by alternating homework assignments so the honors students would not be overwhelmed.

Director Leeson addressed the disposition of the accelerated students with regard to the teaming process.

Mrs. Harper explained that they worked the schedule around a block math schedule. If the team had a math section, the accelerated students would take their gym or health class. Mrs. Harper further explained the detail of the accelerated student scheduling. She added that the math schedule was the biggest conflict so it drove the team assignment.

Director Leeson inquired about statistical data to support the program. She asked what they would be using to assess the program.

Mr. LaPorta replied there was not data presently available but referred to Code of Conduct data that would be evaluated in addition to attendance data. He thought it would take some time to see the students' progress. He reviewed that the program was driven based upon the AYP status of the school.

Ms. Jarosz said there were a number of variables that needed to be analyzed. She commented that the retention rate was being observed in addition to attendance data and discipline referrals would need to be evaluated. She also noted that it was the first year without the Career Academy, which was a significant lost intervention. She pointed out that many of the freshman discipline referrals were handled in-house and discussed weekly during team meetings. She suggested a two-year analysis.

Dr. Barilla commented that she was not a part of the teaming process but applauded their accomplishments. She said they could compare Liberty High School students not involved in the program with the current students involved in the Freedom High School teaming approach. She also brought attention to the Scantron assessment system and a common math assessment. She said the system may also encourage the students to stretch and grow by taking advanced classes. She also mentioned observing honor roll data for academic progress. She suggested another method of teaming for 10th through 12th grades, which involved a core of students that looped with their teacher. The students stayed with the core English and social studies teacher for a half-day and then also had art, music, and industrial technology on a cycle to provide extensions and enrichment. The art teacher would discuss how art was related to a period of history. Dr. Barilla said the results of the program were very successful, having a positive impact on the retention and graduation rate. She encouraged looking beyond the Code of Conduct.

Director Leeson asked for a copy of the data after it is acquired. She also reviewed that the program should have been brought before the board before it was initiated.

Director Follweiler recommended a metric before they start the program next year in order to have expectations. She noted they needed to have a goal before they start a program.

Director Ortiz commented that she was also a "metric" person because she wrote grants. She understood the need for the information before the program began but she said that certain things that could not be measured such as ongoing email communication between the teachers and parents in order to assist the students with success.

One of the parents in attendance echoed Director Ortiz' opinion.

Director Follweiler said that she was not questioning the commitment or success but they needed the supportive data in order to ensure a future program in addition to making changes or improvements to the program. She said that it was the board's job to look at the programs and ask the tough questions. She concluded that she would like to know what they learned from the program and what needed to be changed for the next academic year.

Ms. Jarosz suggested that parental involvement would influence the program in the future. She said if a parent wasn't on the other end of an email or telephone call, then the student is negatively impacted.

Mr. LaPorta stated from an operational standpoint he felt there needed to be more opportunities for team communication and as they moved forward they will look at doing that.

Director Burkhardt inquired if all four teams were successful in their approach for the year.

Mrs. Harper commented that each team worked through the program differently but they all came out in a positive manner in the end.

Mr. LaPorta said there were times when the teams struggled but it was expected. There were suggestions specific to the level of involvement with the scheduling process to levels of communication.

Ms. Jarosz commented that each team had a specific set of challenges. She pointed out there were unique sets of challenges with each group with some groups having a greater degree of challenged students.

Director Burkhardt commended the group on their endeavors and noted that he thought they would be finding positive results with the program. He also recommended performing a comparison study between the two high schools to ensure they were doing the best for all students at both schools. He personally thought that the teaming approach would come out high and the organizational structure was good for the 9th grade year. He agreed with Mr. LaPorta about his comment that 9th grade was the high risk group where the students could "be lost." He hoped whatever evaluation measure they chose would be used to look at both of the schools.

HIGH SCHOOL PROGRAM OF STUDIES

Dr. Barilla stated she was presenting the high school programs of studies, which were highlighted with changes. She pointed out that she typically reviewed the programs in November with recommended changes brought to the board for approval by the principals for the following year. She noted the fact that it was after the end of the school year but she asked the principals to attend the meeting to field questions. She stated that if the board did not have questions, she could wait and provide the information to her successor for review in November.

Director Leeson suggested a tickler file for November.

Director Leeson inquired about the Ilick's Mill proposal and said she was still somewhat confused. She said it was her understanding that it was currently a half-year program and they would currently offer English and an elective through the Ilick's Mill Program. She inquired if she was correct about her assumption.

Mrs. Durante stated that at this point, going into next year, there was an English class and the mill project class.

Director Leeson asked if the changes would take place for the following year and if they would see anything prior to November.

Mrs. Durante commented that she and Dr. Donaher met with the Illick's Mill Board last week and she also met with Mrs. Dolan last week. She said she gave Mrs. Dolan a deadline of Halloween to make changes or to revisit the particular item.

Dr. Barilla stated that Halloween 2010 was the deadline for the 2011-2012 school year.

Director Burkhardt asked, "Is the mill project no longer?"

Mrs. Durante replied that it was but as an elective. There are only two sections.

Director Follweiler inquired if the one-half year was English and the other half-year was the elective.

Mrs. Durante responded that last period was English all year and one period was the mill project all year.

Director Leeson commented that it was not a half-year; it was a full-year. She inquired how they could have two English courses. She asked if a student only took it for a half-year and then another cohort would take it for the second half.

Mrs. Durante replied affirmatively and added the next period they would take the mill project.

Director Follweiler stated she visualized that the same students might have one-half year of English and the other half be the project. She asked for clarification.

Dr. Barilla referred to the program of studies book, noting the Community Project English Grade 11 for one credit, one block, and 90 minutes for half a year. She also noted Community Project English 12, which was for one credit and one block for half a year.

Mrs. Durante said the mill project was the elective part and she did not believe it was in the program of studies.

Dr. Barilla commented that they needed to be careful about not listing the courses. She explained that by state code the curriculum should be available for every class approved by the board.

The course name should also be listed in a board approved document on an annual basis, which was basically the program of studies. The course should not be offered if there was not evidence in the three documents. Dr. Barilla reviewed that another local district was fined in the past for not having appropriate curriculum documents supporting the course offerings. She emphasized that nothing should be offered if it was not listed in the program of studies. She further explained that if a teacher was providing course instruction for a non-approved course, the teacher could not be cited if there was not an existing document to support non-compliance. The district needed to be in compliance.

Director Leeson questioned if the course should be offered in the upcoming year if it was not listed in the course offering book.

Director Cann commented that it would then not be eligible.

Director Follweiler inquired if it could be looked into to see if it could be fixed before September so they would be in compliance.

Dr. Barilla said she communicated with the high school principals that the course offering needed to be listed and described in the course book.

Director Leeson asked if there were any other programs of concern.

Mrs. Durante stated that she felt the Illick's Mill Project was like an orphaned child with closure not being sought in any way. She said it was done on a basis of numbers of what was needed at the mill. Mrs. Durante said she met with Dr. Donaher and they thought they would be making a presentation for the mill project this evening. She viewed the mill project in the same way as she viewed the Banana Factory project or some other partnership. She thought the program was in place for twelve years and the mill project portion was involved in middle of the road meetings with no finalization. She pointed out that the president of the United States had just acknowledged the organization and there was dispute as to whether the course should be offered. She noted that she was running out of time because she needed it in place or not in place for September. She requested that it be placed on the next curriculum meeting agenda and have Karen Dolan from the Illick's Mill Project here to find out exactly what was needed in place to have the course for next year or not have it.

Director Follweiler agreed with Mrs. Durante in that it was discussed many times and they thought they had it defined. She suggested placing it on the agenda to straighten it out.

Director Cann inquired if the district was permitted to add amendments to the program of studies.

Director Burkhardt commented that it only needed a blurb for the book.

Dr. Barilla said that the October date was just a deadline she used for budget purposes.

Director Cann asked if was not in the 2010 book could there be an amendment and be offered in September 2010.

Director Leeson clarified that they wanted the course offerings completed by November so the students could sign up for the courses in January.

Dr. Barilla stated that she was not aware that anyone was to speak on the Illick's Mill Project this evening and it was not placed on the agenda. She reiterated that a course should not be taught or offered if it was not listed in the board approved document. It would be very difficult to go back to the students and say that they allowed it and were taking it away.

Dr. Barilla said that she seriously thought the board was a voice for the community and the school district and therefore should be the ones who decided the course offerings that would be in the best interest of the children. If someone wanted to teach Japanese to the students next year, and as wonderful of an opportunity it would be, if it was not board approved, it should not be offered to the children.

Director Follweiler asked how the students could sign up for a course if it was not listed in the course selection book. She inquired how the students could even sign up for the course.

Director Burkhardt commented that someone screwed up because it used to be in there.

Director Follweiler asked how it could get on the schedule if it was not in the book.

Dr. Barilla expressed that was the reasoning why the three documents should be aligned.

Director Leeson stated that she was aware that they lost some of their processes along the way and said she appreciated Dr. Barilla's attempt to bring the processes back into alignment. She added that it didn't mean that they wouldn't work through the little glitches along the way.

AGENDA ITEMS FOR JUNE 21, 2010 REGULAR BOARD MEETING

Director Follweiler noted a general consensus from the board to place the following items on the agenda for the June 21, 2010 Regular Board Meeting:

A. USTA Middle States Program – Bethlehem Elementary Tennis Program

Director Leeson inquired about the location of the program and if it was a summer program.

Mrs. Cintrón stated that the program was slated for any child in the district and was to be held in the summer but it was going to be changed to a fall program because of a flyer distribution problem. The program was an introductory program to be held in the school gymnasium at Hanover and Spring Garden Elementary Schools. She explained that the entire program was covered by the grant.

B. Federal/State Program Budgets

Mrs. Cintrón reviewed the updated funding provided to the district for the dual enrollment program, Keystone Stars, and the Title I community-based program.

Director Leeson asked how they were spending the additional money for the federal and state programs.

Mrs. Cintrón replied that the 21st Century Community Learning Centers Program provided funding for the Cohort V middle school program, which was now included all four middle schools providing as ASPIRE type of after-school program. She added that the Keystone Stars had a budget associated with the day-care program to assist them in bringing the care level up to par. She pointed out there was a shortfall a few months ago associated with the Title I program so the additional funds assisted that program.

Director McKeon said he was unsure if his question should be for the business manager. He questioned the disposition of the additional \$53,000 for the Keystone Stars if the year was completed. He asked if it was reclassified to the general operating budget.

Mrs. Cintrón responded that the funds were provided in order to enrich the program and move it forward.

Director McKeon questioned the timing issue as they were looking at year 2010-2011. He asked if it could theoretically be carried over to the next business cycle.

Mrs. Cintrón replied affirmatively.

COURTESY OF THE FLOOR

Mr. Stephen Antalics, of 737 Ridge Street, Bethlehem, stated he had almost daily interaction with a visiting academic individual from a foreign country. He added that his colleague had a child attending this district. He found it fascinating that in a foreign country, students from elementary to middle school could be given a standardized test by the people administering the school programs and if the student failed they must repeat the year. He said it appeared brutal but it worked in other countries and as a result they had an excellent graduation rate at the end of the school year. He asked if there was a standardized test given at the end of the school year to assess students in the Bethlehem Area School District.

OPEN FORUM

Director Follweiler asked Dr. Persing if there was a standardized test given to each student to qualify for advancement into the next grade level.

Dr. Persing replied that there was not a specific test given but a series of tests administered throughout the year. He said that there would be a common assessment, which would begin in the middle and high level. He noted that it was a forerunner of the Keystone Examinations, which would be coming to the district in the future.

Dr. Persing said they planned to model their common assessment after the Keystone Examinations so they would not be duplicating but they did not have anything for grades 1, 2, 3, or 4.

Director Faccinnetto commented about the need in the future for the math coaches to support the math program in consideration of the impending challenges associated with the Keystone examinations. He noted that they took away some of the math coaches this year and he wondered if they could plan to assist the middle school teachers to be prepared so that their math program wouldn't be an issue in the near future.

Director Leeson added that the point of the board was the desire to have high school level teachers instructing high school level courses.

Dr. Barilla commented that Mrs. Victory's focus next year would be to support the middle school math program.

Dr. Persing said the district should only recruit math specialists who majored in college math. He concluded that in the future they cannot hire teachers who passed the Praxis examination and then expect them to teach a college level course when they did not have the background.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:18 p.m.

Minutes prepared by:

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