



**BOARD CURRICULUM COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 14, 2011**

Members of the Board Curriculum Committee met on Monday, February 14, 2011, in the Dining Room at the Education Center. The following Board Members were in attendance: Rosario Amato, William Burkhardt, Michele Cann, Michael Faccinnetto, Irene Follweiler, Loretta Leeson, Eugene McKeon, Aurea Ortiz (arrived at 7:04 p.m.), and Benjamin Tenaglia.

Also in attendance were Dr. Joseph Roy, superintendent of schools; Dr. Jack Silva, assistant superintendent for education; Dr. Dean Donaher, acting director of human resources; Richard Agretto, director of special education; Janet Tate, supervisor of grants; Vivian Robledo-Shorey, supervisor of minority affairs and governmental programs; principals, teachers, and representatives of the press.

Director Burkhardt called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m.

COURTESY OF THE FLOOR - None

ESOL POPULATION AT SECONDARY LEVEL – Mrs. Correll

Dr. Silva introduced Mrs. Doris Correll, Coordinator of English Acquisition, who provided an overview of the program, which included addressing the placement of district students at specific locations. She provided a distribution list of district English Language Learners which categorized the students among five different levels. She explained that the majority of the students attended their home-based schools with the exception of Broughal Middle School and Liberty High School. These particular schools housed the Level 1 and 2 students because of their ability to provide concentrated courses in core subjects for beginner ESOL students who have minimal receptive language skills. Mrs. Correll pointed out that the concentrated programs could not be provided at the students' specific home school. She stressed the need to keep the rigor high, but yet provide the necessary support for the students.

Director Leeson inquired if the students' test scores were associated with their home-based schools or with their schools of attendance.

Mrs. Correll replied that in previous years, the students' PSSA scores would be attributed to their home-based schools, but during the last two years the students' scores remained with their building of attendance, which was dictated by the Pennsylvania Department of Education.

Mrs. Correll pointed out that the Special Education students' scores were attributed back to their home-based school unlike the ESOL students.

Director Leeson inquired about the number of Level 1 students required to take the PSSA.

Mrs. Correll stated if the students were in the district less than a year, they would not have to take the reading portion. She offered to research the exact number of students and provide the information to the board. She commented that the majority of the Level 1 students sat for the assessment.

Director Leeson reviewed that those students who had a very basic understanding of the language were required to take the PSSA in math and science and the scores were counted against Liberty High School and Broughal Middle School but not against the other schools.

Mrs. Correll replied affirmatively and stated the scores were not calculated into the AYP if the student enrolled after October 1.

Director Leeson also commented about Level 2 students and their level of English language comprehension. She inquired about how many students were needed to create a co-hort for a school.

Mrs. Correll stated that 40 students were necessary. She noted that Liberty High School never had a co-hort in Grade 11. She added that Broughal Middle School always had a co-hort and would have one even if they moved students from their building.

Director Ortiz commented about the possibility of creating an atmosphere within the schools where the students are not clustered and speaking their own language. She thought there could be better balance in the situation.

Mrs. Correll explained that all ESOL instruction was delivered in the English language. She said the students could clarify in Spanish but the majority of language spoken in the classroom was in English. She pointed out there were 49 different languages so the teacher could not instruct the class in Spanish. She added that the students were also mainstreamed into other classes such as health, gym, and family/consumer science.

Dr. Silva said the PSSA was non-forgiving when assessing the ESOL student and noted the student could be exempt from the reading portion during their first year of school. He said they had to sit for the math portion as soon as they entered the school system.

Director McKeon inquired about a student who entered the district from Africa and had no English or Spanish language background.

Mrs. Correll said they used the English language approach regardless of the student's home language. She stated the teachers were very attuned to certain strategies in teaching those students. She referred to using language guides as tutors until the students learned enough of the English language so they could become immersed into rigorous content.

Director Burkhardt said the ESL students were some of the best students in the school rather than students who were bringing down district scores. He said the students from another sub-group within the high school, who had serious learning deficits, had a negative impact on scores. The students came from dysfunction, poverty, and environments where education is not a priority. He commented that it was like the United Nations at Liberty High School and there was a difference in students with language barriers and students with serious issues.

ESOL SCHOOL-TO-WORK PROGRAM UPDATE – Mrs. Correll

Mrs. Correll reviewed the School-To-Work Program, which was a partnership with St. Luke's Hospital and Health Network for the past 13 years. She explained the program gave ESL students the opportunity to explore a variety of health careers. Victoria Montero, Assistant Coordinator of St. Luke's Career Mentoring Program used a PowerPoint presentation to provide an overview of the program. A retired Liberty High School ESL teacher, George Maunz, shared the history of the program. He also pointed out how the program assisted in increasing the graduation rate for ESL students, improve acquisition of the English language, reduce absenteeism, and increase the number of bilingual and bicultural healthcare professionals in the Lehigh Valley. Susan Hanson, a former community fellow at Lehigh University, stated she was placed in the St. Luke's Community Health Department to complete her research practicum for her Master of Arts in Sociology. She shared data associated with her study which revealed that at-risk academic students responded in a positive manner with the direction of the program. She also stated that 48 percent of students credited their decision to pursue higher education because of the school-to-work program.

Director Leeson inquired about the cost of the program and was informed that the only expense involved transportation of the students to the hospitals and back to the school for their rotations.

ROADMAP TO EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE – FOLLOW-UP – Dr. Roy/Dr. Silva

Dr. Silva addressed placing more measurable goals in the areas of core and stretch learning, student engagement, and personal skill development. He pointed out the areas which had the most stringent data indicators were the PSSA scores and having all schools making AYP. In addition he brought attention to the PVAAS goal of exceeding one year's growth in one year's time at all levels, the stretch learning for the Advanced Placement Excellence and Equity Index, and the AP and Dual Enrollment goals. He said they would continue to develop student engagement and personal skill measures through school improvement surveys.

Director Leeson commented about Restorative Practices being placed in the goals but the board did not receive a presentation about the concept to date.

Dr. Silva replied that it would be presented at the next meeting.

Director Leeson said she could not pass it until she had a thorough understanding of restorative practices. She pointed out the district was reluctant to tie discipline and referrals to a measurable goal because it would influence people to not report them in order to show lower numbers. She thought they needed a measure that was not necessarily tied to the number of infractions.

Director Leeson said that it would be very easy to show a lower number of infractions and really have a school that was not doing what they needed to do.

Dr. Silva said they needed to have the perceptions of the students, teachers, and parents, as far as a safer school climate so it was not just a question of consistent reporting.

Director Leeson commented that she was reluctant to have a measure that tied directly to infractions. She also noted that the administration also did not have a baseline either so nobody had a starting point.

Dr. Silva explained he supported incremental – three percent growth. He added that it would get harder as one gets better but if they achieved consistent three to five percent growth in the core learning areas and make AYP, the result would be significant school improvement.

KEYSTONE CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT/MATH UPDATE – Dr. Silva

Dr. Silva addressed the goal of the Pennsylvania Department of Education to incorporate higher standards with the Keystone Examinations and more rigorous content for students. He reviewed Dr. Barilla's plan to survey the department leaders and collect data to determine the district's readiness with regard to the curriculum alignment to the Standard Aligned System. He stated the department chairs and principals have used the system to develop curriculum aligned to the standards.

Dr. Silva reviewed the district's curriculum development process which met the more rigorous core state standards, Keystone Examinations, and graduation requirements. He pointed out that Algebra I students in Grades 7 and 8 would be sitting for the end-of-course Keystone Examination. He stressed the importance of teaching what would be assessed. He also stated that a good program provided interventions when a student did not perform well on a benchmark assessment. He said he would report back to the board after each team completed the necessary work in aligning the curriculum to the standards.

Director Cann inquired about the timeline involved with a student receiving a Keystone Examination result if there would be a need to repeat the exam.

Dr. Silva said it was stated they would receive the results within ten days prior to the end of the school year. He pointed out the benefit of having a local assessment was having better control of the turn-around time. He said they had to use the state's first three Keystone Examinations as the state administers them for AYP purposes.

Director Leeson reflected on the past practice of having specific teachers in the district trained to correct benchmark assessments so they had an earlier assessment of certain students.

Dr. Silva said one of the drawbacks was the need to pay the teachers to correct the assessments but if it was considered an important strategy for the ten courses in the improvement process, then they could include it in the budget.

Director Leeson inquired if Dr. Silva would proceed with the teacher survey composed by Dr. Barilla.

Dr. Silva replied that he preferred to establish relationships with the department coordinators so he was meeting with them directly to have more defined discussion.

Director Leeson asked about the progress of curriculum development.

Dr. Silva suggested focusing curriculum on the areas of the Standards Aligned System and Keystone Examinations for graduation requirements as a first priority.

Director Leeson asked if they could review their progression as to their current status.

Dr. Roy stated that the priority should be the curriculum where students would be assessed by the Keystone Examinations.

Director Leeson expressed concern about the curriculum in the middle schools. She thought they would also be addressing the writing of curriculum.

Dr. Silva said the first step was in developing the final examination but the development of the curriculum would follow.

Director Leeson commented on the varied curriculum at schools in the district and the goal was to have a coordinated school system rather than a system of schools.

Dr. Roy addressed the need to assess the budget to determine if the curriculum writing could be done. He also noted there was an often a challenge associated with finding the staff to accomplish the task.

Director Leeson pointed out there was money set aside to accomplish the curriculum writing this year.

Director Cann reflected that Dr. Barilla said she uncovered some areas of the curriculum in need of immediate attention. She asked that they review the areas in need of attention.

HIGH SCHOOL MATH UPDATE – Dr. Silva

Dr. Silva reviewed the high school math improvement strategies at both schools in the district. He said there was much effort being put into the infrastructure of curriculum alignment such as the Roadmap to Educational Excellence, the Standards Aligned System, and composing 30-Day Plans for Algebra and Biology. He also asked both schools to summarize their efforts in professional development. The following data was provided by both high schools:

Freedom High School

- Professional Learning Communities
 - Review of Individual Student Data
 - Review of SAS with teachers
 - Implementation & Integration of Technology into Math Instruction
- Classroom Instruction That Works
 - Strategies to Use: Cornell note-taking and lesson planning
 - Sessions were facilitated by building administrators, Intermediate Unit
 - Math Experts, and departmental leadership

Liberty High School

- PSSA Math Performance Review
 - Presentation to department on improvement with open-ended items, weakness in measurement, and probability items
- 4Sight Test review
 - Item analysis with departments during PLC time. Specific math strengths and weaknesses identified and discussed on a regular basis

Dr. Silva commented on Freedom High Schools creation of a Data Wall to support precise Administrator-Teacher-Student conversations and action plans which resulted in:

- Comparison of all Grade 11 students 8th grade PSSA results to their September 4Sight results and December 4Sight results
- Prescriptive instructional interventions that stretch the learning levels of all learners from below basic to advanced

Dr. Silva reviewed Liberty High Schools efforts with regard to Instruction and Supervision:

- Efforts were made to maximize the number of students enrolled in Algebra and Geometry before the second semester of junior year
- A comprehensive review of formulas used on the PSSA and use of PSSA toolkit for all math students during the first semester with an emphasis on Grade 11 students
- Grade 11 “bubble” students were moved to an intervention course called RISEM
- Increase co-teaching opportunities on all math classes at all levels resulting in decreased number of learning support sections
- Special Education Teachers teaching Algebra to learning support classes using regular education curriculum and materials
- Creation of the Math Lab – Students experiencing difficulty are sent to lab to obtain assistance from math teacher

Dr. Silva also brought attention to the creation of a chart by Jennifer Hilton, Liberty High School Assistant Principal, titled “PSSA Attack Plan,” which listed student levels of proficiency and revealed areas in need of concentration and intervention. He also noted there were approximately 45 students at the school who were utilizing a growth assessment program titled, Study Island, which was supported by TIPS funding.

Director Leeson inquired about why some students showed improvement after one month. She was curious if those students had a “gap” in math instruction and then after a refresher they were having more success. She also wondered if they were in the middle of a course when assessed and therefore were not as far along in the course to be properly assessed in the material.

Dr. Silva said he believed it was a disadvantage to achievement to equally divide the school year into segments.

Director Faccinetto expressed gratitude for the detailed document because it provided an good understanding of progress at both high schools.

STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT UPDATE – Dr. Donaher

Dr. Donaher stated the process related to the Code of Conduct was ongoing with continued refinement. He reflected on significant progress made relative to increased communication between administrators, students, teachers, the BEA, and the central administrative office. He also noted there was greater consistency from building to building and level to level. He pointed out a major concern last year was the challenge associated with inputting information into eSchool with teachers not having the ability to see the outcome of a referral. He reported that after working with Mr. Arbushites and Ms. Bachman, they presently had the ability to generate the information. Dr. Donaher stated he had a few concerns brought to his attention by the president of the BEA, which were quickly addressed. He shared that he still had a few concerns including the elementary schools having a defined behavior management program. He said all elementary schools had programs to assist students with behavior management, which could eventually dovetail into Dr. Silva’s enrichment programs as part of the Roadmap to Success.

Dr. Donaher shared mid-year review data and pointed out the difficulty in evaluating the information. He stated the data appeared somewhat similar to where they were last year. He commented that if the referrals increased, there might be a thought that the teachers were not enforcing the code and if the referrals decreased; there might be a thought that the teachers were not “writing” up the students.

Director Leeson commented that Dr. Donaher expressed that he was having problems with eSchool at a previous meeting. She asked if he had the ability to review incidents and the coding process so there was consistency and fairness but also an individual approach with every student.

Dr. Donaher responded that he had the ability to see the data. He said he felt more confident as compared with last year. He reflected on the inservice provided at the beginning of the year and said it has provided a focus for people with regard to consistency.

Director Follweiler inquired about areas on the provided chart which stated “in process” or “ongoing.” She said she would like to see an actual timeframe versus “ongoing” or “in process.”

Dr. Donaher stated there was an end-date for each item, which would either be the end of the school year or the beginning of 2011-2012 school year. If it stated “ongoing,” and addressed with the dress code or the administrative/teacher’s handbook, it was being considered for implementation during the 2011-2012 school year. If it were teacher based, it would be finished before the end of the school year.

Director Leeson asked if there would be a teacher survey at the end of the academic year to see if there was an impact from the retraining.

Dr. Donaher expressed he would prefer to do the survey earlier in the spring to evaluate the data.

Director Leeson inquired a plan for the training of incoming teachers.

Dr. Donaher explained that he presented earlier in the year during the induction program. He said he would address a more structured program at the building level. He noted there was a code of conduct review done with new teachers at the beginning of the year.

Director Follweiler addressed proper training for coaches and other people who had exposure to the students.

Dr. Donaher said the athletic directors at the middle and high schools met with their coaching staff every season and reviewed discipline codes and expectations. He said he would make note to address the code of conduct with other non-teacher advisory positions.

BETHLEHEM HEALTH NETWORK PARTNERSHIP – Mrs. Halkins

Mrs. Halkins discussed the current health challenges associated with students in the district. She reflected on the services provided to the district last year, which included the dental health initiative, which also provided the dental health students from Northampton Community College with clinical experience. She also spoke about the vision initiative, which provided a screening process for the students in the district. She noted that many students received eye examinations by the Vision Van. Many families were provided with vouchers to obtain eyeglasses. She provided statistical data that supported the relationship of health services to higher success in reading and math.

Mrs. Halkins also spoke of the asthma initiative, currently in its thirteenth year, which continued to provide support and health instruction for one of the most common chronic childhood conditions. She brought attention to the adolescent health initiative at Liberty High School which was currently in its twelfth year. She stated the program had also expanded to Freedom High School, Northeast Middle School and Broughal Middle School. The program provided free onsite medical services for teenagers. The resource room at Liberty High School was an outgrowth of the program and provided students with services to promote personal and academic success. Mrs. Halkins also recognized Maternal Child Services, which provided young women with supportive parenting and prenatal services. She provided statistical data associated with the district's flu immunization program. In conclusion, Mrs. Halkins encouraged board members to review the Bethlehem Partnership for a Healthy Community Annual Report, which was included in their packets for more information.

AGENDA ITEMS FOR FEBRUARY 28, 2011 REGULAR BOARD MEETING

Director Burkhardt received board approval to list the following agenda items for the January 31, 2011 Regular Board Meeting:

A. Roadmap to Educational Excellence for 2010 - 2014

The mission, school improvement framework and performance goals, including education program goals, as discussed with the Board of Directors at the January 24 and present meetings.

B. Highmark Healthy High 5 School Challenge Grant – Farmersville Elementary School

Dr. Silva explained that the grant supported programs to improve student fitness, increase physical activity, improve eating habits, and promote lifelong wellness activities. Farmersville Elementary School planned to use the funds to implement a series of six-week, one-hour workshops on nutrition conducted by the Weller Center.

C. Supplemental Educational Services Agreement – Sylvan Learning Center

Dr. Silva explained the option for a low-income parent with children in a Title I school that is in School Improvement II, Corrective Action, or Restructuring, who do not opt for transfer to a higher performing school. The school district is required to fund the services, which are provided outside of the regular school day and may use a portion of its Title I, Part A funds. The agreement for supplemental educational services would be made with Sylvan Learning Center.

D. Contractor Services Agreement

The funding from two 21st Century Community Learning Center grants supported after school programming at the four middle schools. The grant guidelines required a yearly external program evaluation. Dr. Carol Turoczi has been the external evaluator for these programs and has prepared detailed reports as mandated by the 21st CCLC grants. The agreement approved compensation at a rate of \$75 per hour not to exceed \$20,000 per contract year.

Director Leeson said she would prefer to hear from Restorative Practices prior to approval of the agenda item. She asked if the goals associated with the roadmap were the goals of the district or the superintendent. She noted that it was a four-year document and assumed they would have an annual review and adjustments.

Director Faccinnetto expressed that he would prefer to wait until the March meeting to move forward with Roadmap to Educational Excellence because he wanted more information on Restorative Practices.

Dr. Roy agreed with Director Leeson in that the roadmap would be reviewed annually. He explained the purpose of the roadmap was to provide a framework for direction and goals at the district level. As a school system, every school could set their goals in alignment with the district. The model would accommodate all of the schools but it was critical for the district to have a common district direction and goals. He hoped to present it during the second semester as they visited schools and met with community and grant contacts.

Director Leeson also addressed the financial goals of the district, which were very important with regard to the sustainability of programs.

Dr. Silva emphasized that the roadmap applied to educational goals.

It was agreed to place the item on the upcoming agenda.

COURTESY OF THE FLOOR

1. Stephen Antalics, 737 Ridge Street, Bethlehem

Mr. Antalics commented positively on the Roadmap to Educational Excellence. He said it could be fine tuned as they moved ahead. He thought it could assist the district in addressing the goal of meeting AYP. He encouraged the board to support the plan.

OPEN FORUM

Director Leeson referred to discussion she missed last week regarding the Martin Tower TIFF. She addressed an earlier agreement about the Martin Tower TIFF passing being contingent on city council in addition to approval of the agreement by the county. She thought the issues of which they were struggling were more involved with the city such as the density of the area and the type of homes planned for construction. She reflected on the two board members who were reconsidering the item and suggested that the developer visit city council to have the issues cleared up before bringing it back to the board. She shared her concern about the idea to revote on an item and the complexities associated with readdressing it. She asked if the administration recommended a re-vote on the issue.

Dr. Roy replied that it was not the administration's recommendation to reconsider a vote. He said board members raised the question. He pointed out that the issue of vote reconsideration raised concerns with regard to organizational efficiency. He explained that if it were to frequently occur, it would be difficult to move ahead. If something had changed as far as a material fact and it was a "new decision," then his concerns regarding organizational effectiveness would go down. He said there were political, philosophical, and financial issues involved.

Director Leeson said that if they had approvals (from the other entities) it might be able to return as a new issue. She thought the board might consider allowing city council to review the density concerns and then have it readdressed by the board if necessary.

Director Burkhardt commented that he thought it went back to Directors McKeon and Ortiz.

Director Leeson stated that it was the majority of the board.

Director McKeon said if they supported the TIFFF in the fall, it appeared they would have been bound to the terms and conditions without having legal review. He asked if they should look at it in advance of reconsideration.

It was noted that Attorney Spry reviewed the resolutions.

Director Burkhardt commented that if they waited until it went through city council, they would be reacting to what they decided.

Director McKeon said there were different contribution rates and he was not satisfied with their rate. He added that he did not have an understanding about procedure, but he would want to renegotiate a district-approved document.

Director Ortiz said she had the understanding that the administration supported the TIFFF in the beginning.

Dr. Roy replied that the original TIFFF was supported but voted down by the board.

Director Ortiz said she wanted it to be as clear as possible. Her main goal was to obtain revenue to benefit the district. She said it was a complex situation.

Director Amato recalled that five members voted to support the TIFFF. He said if the county and city agreed with it, then if the contributions weren't to their liking, then the board could deny it. If the contributions weren't to their liking, they could negotiate or deny it.

Director Follweiler said she could not find discussion within the Lehigh County Commissioner minutes. She didn't believe the formal TIFFF document had come up for discussion or vote in either of the other two governing bodies.

Director Tenaglia stated that it was discussed previously and the developer refused to go to the other governing bodies unless the district was in agreement.

Director Faccinetto spoke to the concern about the percentage.

Director Tenaglia said the percentage was not their only concern. He said there were more basic fundamental issues which influenced his vote.

Director Leeson agreed that the percentage was not the only factor among the board members. She said it could run concurrent with city council.

Director Cann said the only issue at the present time was the vote of the other entities. She thought it would help if they did not vote until the other two entities took action.

Director Burkhardt said they needed to decide if they should be the third voter rather than the first voter. He asked why they would put the other two government groups through the process if they would not be changing their vote.

Director Ortiz said she wanted transparency because there was a need for revenue and cited the Southside TIFF. She emphasized the need to be in agreement.

Director Cann said they needed to be clear that they weren't sending any signal. It would be up to the developer if they wanted to make the attempt on their own.

Director Burkhardt said it would send a signal if they voted to reopen the issue.

Director Faccinetto stated they would cost the other two governmental groups so they should have careful thought about readdressing the issue.

Director Leeson reviewed the impact of a possible precedent being set by re-voting.

Dr. Roy reviewed that the TIFF resolution, which was voted down in the fall would be re-voted on. He said the resolution stated the 75/25 split. He said it was a political and philosophical decision for the board and the financial impact on the district was not the only influence.

Director Cann reviewed they would be voting on the exact item as previously voted on. She said they needed to determine if there was a majority to revote on the item.

Director Tenaglia said it was up to the vote of the two people who changed their mind.

Director Burkhardt polled the board to determine if it would be beneficial to revote on the TIFF resolution with results as follows:

Yes – Directors Faccinetto, Burkhardt, Amato, and Ortiz

No – Directors Leeson, Tenaglia, Follweiler, McKeon, and Cann

Director Amato stated it would not be going on the next agenda so he suggested they move on.

Director Leeson suggested that further discussion be held between administration and the developer with regard to any future developments.

Dr. Roy reviewed that the TIFF was part of the county redevelopment authority and not the "county."

The meeting was adjourned at 7:58 p.m.

Minutes prepared by:

Donna L. Wenz

Confidential Secretary – Department of Educational Programs