

**Boyertown Area School District
Curriculum Committee
September 22, 2015
Minutes**

Mr. Elsier called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. in the Earl Elementary School library.

Board members in attendance: Ms. Neiman, Mrs. Usavage, Mrs. Dennin, Mr. Landino, and Mr. Elsier

Administration in attendance: Dr. Miller, Dr. Woodard, Mr. Scoboria and Dr. Faidley

BASD Staff in Attendance: 0

Members of the Public: 2

Everyone recited the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag and observed a moment of silence.

The minutes from the May 12, 2015, meeting were accepted.

Public Comment

There were no public comments.

Presentation/Discussion

Impact of New PSSA - Dr. Greg Miller

A change took place last year that impacted the PSSA assessment. The majority of slides are from a presentation that was done for the PSBA by the PA Department of Education. Changes on the assessment stem from the changes to the curriculum which is the change to the PA Core. Prior to the PA Core being implemented, we were following the PA Academic Standards as part of Chapter 4 requirements.

Dr. Miller reviewed the timeline of changes. In 2010, there was a national movement to Common Core. In 2013, Pennsylvania made adjustments to the National Common Core and adopted PA Core standards. In spring 2014, the state field tested a few PA Core-aligned items on the traditional PSSA but we were still held accountable to a PSSA that was aligned to the PA Academic Standards.

We started curriculum alignment changes but since the state didn't change the PSSA we lived under two worlds – Academic Standards and PA Core. We had to prepare students for the PSSA aligned to PA Academic Standards while changing the curriculum to align with PA Core.

In spring 2015, the PSSA was aligned to the PA Core. The state fully recognizes that what students are assessed on changed within one year. The challenge was that we couldn't start instructing to the PA Core while we were still responsible for the PA Academic Standards. Also, some of the content was pushed down by a full year so it was difficult to prepare students. The name of the assessment has not been changed even though the assessments are totally different and cannot be compared. Student score reports will be mailed in late September.

PSSA testing includes ELA, math and science. There are no current changes to the science exam. The new PSSA reflects the PA Core standards which were developed to better prepare students to be college and career ready when they graduate.

Standard setting was the process the state went through to determine scores that correspond to the proficiency levels (advanced, proficient, basic, below basic). This consisted of identifying content standards, developing assessments, and setting the standards. The state has compared the results of the two PSSAs. A comparison of ELA grade 8 results for the state is as follows: 2015 PSSA Advanced – 14.6% compared with 2014 PSSA Advanced – 54.7%. Test questions are more rigorous but the cut scores were also changed so we are seeing the difference in two ways. Keep in mind that we are comparing apples and oranges because the questions are different and the cut scores are different.

Reviewing the math assessment comparison information, there is even more inconsistency. There is a significant change in the number of students performing in each of the categories based on cut scores. When looking at grade 8, many students who scored in the proficient range in 2014 have scored in the basic or below basic range in 2015.

As a result of not being able to compare the 2014 and 2015 PSSA test results, the state has decided that schools who administer only the PSSA will not receive a School Performance Profile (SPP) score for this year. Schools will be assigned an SPP score after the 2016 assessment.

Mrs. Dennin commented that we are at ground zero and should not be conducting any comparisons. Dr. Faidley indicated that we have measures that are aligned internally to the PA Core to observe growth and help us make comparisons of our students' learning. Dr. Miller stated that one example is that we are administering CDT (Classroom Diagnostic Tests) to a greater degree across numerous grade levels (grade 6-high school) and this will help us monitor a student's growth internally.

Mrs. Dennin can attest to the fact that expectations are more rigorous because she substituted a lot in grade 3 last year and saw how rigorous assessment questions were. She inquired as to whether teachers have seen or taken the PSSA tests themselves. Dr. Miller stated that we are not allowed to review the test items even from prior tests.

Mr. Elsier understands that this makes it almost impossible to compare from a growth standpoint but he likes the idea that it is more rigorous. We can still compare ourselves to other districts and we can still identify how many students were in each category. We can identify who needs remediation and extra help. He pointed out that what has happened with the PSSAs is basically life. There will always be change, new baselines, and adjustments that need to be made.

Mrs. Dennin agreed that it is important to have the information and rigor. She is hopeful that the 2016 assessment will be a similar test with similar cut scores so that comparisons can be made. If they keep changing the target, it will continue to be difficult to make comparisons.

Dr. Miller stated that PVAAS growth data is still expected to be released. There are statistics that will allow the state to release valid growth scores for our students even though the assessments are different.

PSSA is only one measure. We have numerous assessments that we use to measure the growth of our students, including CDT and benchmark assessments.

The data shows that we are above the state averages for percentage of students that scored proficient or advanced. While we can't compare results from 2014 and 2015, the basic difference between BASD and the state has stayed approximately the same. What we don't have is results to compare our scores with local districts.

Communication with parents is important because there are situations where students who scored proficient or advanced in 2014 may have scored basic or even below basic in 2015. PDE has released some documentation to help parents and the community better understand the changes to the assessment. In addition, Dr. Faidley has written a cover letter to parents to help explain the changes in PSSA and related results. We have also encouraged parents to call building principals if they have any specific questions related to their child.

Mr. Landino asked if we feel our curriculum is aligned to where it should be based on the standards set by the state and what will we do to continue to make the spread larger between our results and the overall state results. Dr. Woodard explained that we are continuing to align our pacing guides at the K-8 level in ELA and math. We also use quarterly assessments to show students how questions might be worded on the PSSA. We are also working on text dependent analysis (TDA) and recognize we have to improve our students' skills in this area. We are having ongoing job embedded staff development on TDA from September through March. Instructional coaches and reading specialists will be working with teachers on TDA. Putting an emphasis on TDA will lead to improved results on the ELA PSSA.

Mr. Landino stated that grade 8 math is an outlier across the board, both state results and Boyertown's results. Was it a shift in the test vs. the curriculum or did the rigor affect this grade most for some reason? Dr. Miller stated that the math PSSA is definitely rigorous and we are looking at it from the perspective of having baseline data. We are implementing CDT to monitor

student growth throughout the course of the year and not waiting until the next PSSA. The CDT is put out by the state and will identify where the gaps are and where teachers should focus their time.

Mrs. Dennin stated that a big piece of the puzzle is missing since we do not know what percentage of questions are used to determine whether a student is advanced or proficient. Dr. Miller explained that it is a scaled score and not a percentage.

Dr. Miller reiterated the importance of not comparing results from 2014 to 2015 and that the 2015 results are baselines. Dr. Faidley noted that we saw a similar initial decline in results during the last revision of the assessment.

Overview of the Comprehensive Plan – Mr. Scoboria

Mr. Scoboria gave a recap of the Comprehensive Plan process. 80-90 people participated in the process. He went on to share the Boyertown Priority Areas Document and the Executive Summary of the 2015 Comprehensive Plan. He shared that the work done on the Priorities Area Document led to the development of the 2015 Comprehensive Plan. Specifically, he highlighted the assurances in the areas of technology and professional education. Additionally, the new professional development requirements were included. The plan will sit for public review from September 28-October 27 both on the website as well in hard copy format at the Education Center. Mr. Scoboria went on to explain that we will be seeking board approval on October 27, 2015, and final submission to PDE will be on November 30, 2015.

Mr. Landino shared that there seems to be a disconnect between the one page Priority Areas Document and the Executive Summary of the Comprehensive Plan and questioned why they don't look more aligned. Mr. Scoboria shared that the state's system doesn't perfectly match to the work we have done. He went on to share that the comprehensive plan is a collection of assurances and that the priority areas will be entered into the system behind the scenes.

Dr. Woodard explained that it has been a challenge to merge the two documents together and address all of the priority areas. The state's comprehensive plan template focuses on assurances for learning growth, professional development and use of resources while the priority areas are what BASD is working on to make sure we meet the assurances.

Dr. Faidley shared that the state comprehensive planning tool has not been updated to meet the changing needs of school systems. Unfortunately, we still have to follow their document so we are pulling pieces from our plan to meet the PDE requirements.

Mrs. Dennin clarified that the Executive Summary is more specific than the Priority Area Document.

Committee Comment

No comments

Public Comment

No comments

Announcements

September 24, 2015	Policy Review Committee, Education Center – Board Room, 6:00 p.m.
September 29, 2015	Finance Committee, Education Center – Board Room, 6:00 p.m.
October 6, 2015	Policy Review Committee, Education Center – Board Room, 7:00 p.m.
October 13, 2015	Personnel Committee, Education Center – Conference Room A, 6:00 p.m.
October 13, 2015	Board of School Directors, Education Center – Board Room, 7:00 p.m.
October 20, 2015	Parent/Community/Intergovernmental Committee, Education Center, 6:00 p.m.
October 21, 2015	Parent/Community/Intergovernmental Committee, Education Center, 8:00 a.m.

Mr. Elsier adjourned the meeting at 6:56 PM.