

Boyertown Area School District
Curriculum Committee
April 29, 2014
Minutes

Dr. Christman, Curriculum Committee Chair, called the meeting to order at 8:00 p.m. in the Education Center Board Room.

Board members in attendance: Dr. Christman, Mrs. Dennin, Mrs. Hartford, Mr. Landino, Ms. Neiman, and Mrs. Usavage.

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

Members of the Public: 2

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

The minutes from the March 18, 2014, meeting were accepted.

Public Comment

There were no public comments.

Presentation and Discussion

Dr. Christman explained the focus of the meeting was to share information about the BASH Schedule Survey Results as presented by Dr. Cooper.

Dr. Cooper began the presentation with a review of the BASH mission, vision, values, and goals. The 4 goals are:

- Provide a safe school climate that promotes learning for all students.
- Provide collaborative opportunities for all students and staff.
- Utilize best practice teaching strategies that will allow for the success of all students.
- Provide appropriate academic and social interventions for all students.

Dr. Cooper continued by defining what the FLEX period is. FLEX period is available to all students at the middle of the school day and includes multiple opportunities for students:

- Intervention opportunities for students (more heavily focused)
- Enrichment (started approximately half-way through the school year)
- Open Campus
 - Old Auditorium
 - Off Campus Lunch Privilege (seniors and some juniors who meet minimum GPA)

Participation in surveys: Approximately 40% of students (773 students) participated in the survey, 67 staff members completed it, and 223 parents completed the survey. Multiple items on each survey had open field comments, producing nearly 3,000 responses.

Approximately 65% of students reported disagreeing or strongly disagreeing to the schedule. More of the upperclassmen reported disliking or strongly disliking the schedule.

According to the survey results, regardless of where the students were located during the FLEX, about 65% of students disagreed or strongly disagreed with the schedule.

It was evident from the surveys that staff members, students, and parents believe it is necessary to provide smaller, quieter alternatives to the large group FLEX situation.

A sampling of comments provided by survey participants, both positive and negative, was shared.

Data supported the return of a daily homeroom period.

Extended period related comments were shared. Over 500 comments were made regarding the extended period, the majority of which were negative.

Approximately 20% of the students participating in the survey reported receiving some type of intervention. According to the results, 55% of students stated that FLEX is beneficial for them. Of the students who specifically received intervention services, 62% report that FLEX is beneficial for them as opposed to 47% of students who take advantage of the lunch privilege or 56% of the students who are assigned to the old auditorium during FLEX.

Initial reactions to the data were shared. It is obvious that the schedule needs to change. Extended periods are not popular, FLEX is beneficial but does need revisions, and students and staff would benefit from a daily homeroom.

The next steps include forming a volunteer group of staff members to make recommendations on changes to the schedule and FLEX. Recommendations from the volunteer group will be communicated to the staff during the June faculty meeting. Changes will be made for the 2014-2015 school year.

Mrs. Usavage commented that FLEX time is serving a limited percentage of the students and is not serving a large majority. Dr. Cooper indicated that it serves approximately 15-20% of the students.

Mrs. Usavage asked for clarification on the changes that were made halfway through the year to serve enrichment students. Dr. Cooper explained that we wanted to focus on the neediest students first. During the second quarter, the structure to support students was altered a bit and the teachers became more content-based. This allowed some students to receive more enrichment

through related studies and other courses. We have recognized the need to extend enrichment opportunities to better service all students.

Mrs. Usavage asked about the next steps regarding the formation of the volunteer teacher group. What parameters will they be working within? Dr. Cooper explained that it will be based on the input of the members of that group and what the group determines. Dr. Cooper's job is to make sure they are aware of all the things that pull on the schedule.

Mrs. Hartford had some questions and concerns regarding FLEX:

- Clarify what FLEX is: FLEX is a 30 minute block of time against a lunch period.
- How many students are in the old auditorium during FLEX?
 - 4 FLEX periods (ideally 400 students earmarked for each FLEX period)
 - Earlier in the year identified 400 to receive intervention
 - Some students exercise the off-campus privilege
 - About 200-250 students in old auditorium (some go to library)
- What do they do in the old auditorium? They do work if they can, some talk, and some use electronic devices.
- Are there other options for these students? We have cyber courses on the books but they are not currently running.
- If we are providing intervention support to 15% of our students, then it seems that the other students should receive educational support. The FLEX period has been revised at least three or four times since the beginning of the year. The core team continues to look at how we can better serve the students.
- Mrs. Hartford stated participation on the survey from the faculty was lower than expected. Dr. Cooper disagreed stating that the typical return rate is 25% but we have over 50% faculty respond.

Mrs. Dennin thanked Dr. Cooper for creating the survey and spending the time to get the results and had the following questions and comments:

- What reasoning was behind the teachers, students, and parents having to include their names on the survey? It allows the principal to follow-up on the information/concerns/issues provided.
- Is there across the board, a common comment? Dr. Cooper stated that he selected random comments to share in the presentation.
- When you say changes to the schedule, are you still looking at the modified block? We are open to what the committee comes up with after the data analysis.
- For the 10-15% who had no choice and had to go to intervention, when they went for that half-hour, what went on there? Students reported to a classroom and used research-based programming to receive more practice and re-teaching. Teachers developed authentic materials for practice items related to specific deficiencies.
- In response to Mrs. Hartford's comments about FLEX, she doesn't think students will take advantage of additional enrichment opportunities unless it is a structured time assigned to students.

- Regarding the comments made by staff that with modified blocks students are tired at the end of the day and it is difficult to fill the 80 minutes. Research indicates that in order for teachers to teach in an extended setting successfully they need professional development which we did not provide. From her child's perspective, some teachers did well in that setting while others didn't.
- As a parent, she is not thrilled that her child is spending 3 ½ hours per day not having core content areas taught.
- If a student can't get an elective, a student gets assigned a study hall. That is okay except if that is on a FLEX day and then you have 1 ½ hours.
- Overwhelmingly, students, parents, and teachers are not happy with the schedule. We need to tweak it, but a professional development plan also needs to be developed.

Mr. Landino commented that not all of the classes are receiving benefit from the extended periods. Some classes such as honors courses get great benefit from extended period, but other classes have very uneven experiences as far as their ability to fill that time and keep students engaged. Is there a way to not have the extended periods but allow the students to use the FLEX time to get additional time with the courses that would benefit from extended periods?

Ms. Neiman raised a concern about how we can be accountable for students who are out to lunch. Dr. Cooper explained that students swipe in during FLEX and out for lunch and off campus privileges. Information gets downloaded into a spreadsheet. If they are not being compliant, the staff needs to find where they are at. If a student wants to take advantage of the lunch privilege, parents must sign a form providing permission and students exit the building at an assigned location.

A comment was made by Mrs. Dennin that we are doing a really good job of keeping track of where students are supposed to be. We police that very well to ensure that students are not using cars during the school day.

Mrs. Usavage added statistical insight into the name being included on the survey. It probably didn't deter positive comments but possibly deterred negative responses.

Dr. Christman requested that volunteer group members be comprised of all content areas.

Committee Comments

No comments

Public Comment #2

No comments

Announcements

June 3, 2014 Board of School Directors, BASH – New Auditorium, 7:00 p.m.
(Adoption of Final Budget)

June 10, 2014 Facilities Committee, Ed. Center – Board Room, 6:00 p.m.

June 17, 2014 Board of School Directors, Ed Center – Board Room, 7:00 p.m.

Ms. Neiman and Mr. Landino adjourned the meeting at 9:04 p.m.