

**Boyertown Area School District  
Curriculum Committee  
August 21, 2018  
Minutes**

Mrs. Dennin called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm in the Education Center Board Room.

**Board members in attendance:** Mrs. Dennin, Mr. Elsier, Mrs. Usavage, Ms. Neiman (by phone), Mr. Lewis and Mrs. Dierolf, Mr. Boyer, Mr. Foose

**Administration in attendance:** Mr. Krem, Dr. Woodard, Dr. Cooper

**BASD Staff in Attendance:** 2

**Members of the Public:** 0

**Presentation and Discussion**

**Program of Studies Overview**

Mrs. Dennin shared tonight's meeting will have two presentations, the first from Mr. Steven Bleiler, our Boyertown High School social studies chairman who is seeking approval on a World War II trip. The second presentation will provide updates on the Pre-K counts program from Dr. Woodard.

**The World War II Experience**

Mr. Bleiler thanked the board for allowing him to present and seek approval for the World War II Experience allowing students to travel to Europe to visit some of the key sites. The mission of the Boyertown social studies department is to provide students with authentic experience that reinforce learning in the classroom. Mr. Bleiler shared a proposed itinerary with the board showing what each day would entail. Some sites they plan to visit are Amsterdam, Anne Frank House, Flanders Field, Normandy, Paris, National Gallery, Versailles, London and the Imperial War Museum. The trip is available to sophomores, juniors and seniors who are interested in World War II. This trip would be ideal for students who take social studies enrichment lectures during their flex time. Social studies teachers will need to approve students who request to attend the trip. The total cost of the trip is \$3950 which includes flight, lodging and meals. Fundraising will be available to all students who are interested. The current time frame is spring break of 2020. If the trip is successful, it would run on a three year rotation just like other trips throughout the district (i.e. music, world language). There is no cost to the district as the total cost to the student includes the cost of subs for each teacher needed to chaperone. This trip is custom made just for Boyertown Area School District students and the social studies department is very excited.

Dr. Woodard shared she would like to request board action at the September 11, 2018 board meeting to approve the educational trip for spring 2020.

Mr. Lewis commended Mr. Bleiler on what a great idea this trip is and what a good job he is doing.

Mrs. Dierolf asked what number of students are needed to run the trip. Mr. Bleiler stated 20 students are required with a maximum of 40 students.

Mr. Boyer thinks this trip is a great idea and thanks the teachers for all their work for putting this together. Even though the kids will be missing a few days of school the kids will be learning great things they would never learn by sitting in a classroom.

Mr. Elsier agrees the trip is fantastic, however if you have more than 40 students interested in the trip who will decide which students will go. Mr. Bleiler stated the students will be handled on a first come first serve basis. All of the funding for the trip is handled through the travel company using their online platform which is time stamped. So those students would be the first to go. Mr. Elsier asked if the Disney trip is in May. Mr. Bleiler said he believes it's in March. Mr. Elsier wondered how that will work with seniors who want to do both the Disney trip and the World War II trip. Mr. Bleiler said this year the Costa Rica trip and the Disney trip did not conflict so he does not see that being an issue. Mr. Elsier asked if parents could go on the World War II trip as a chaperone. Mr. Bleiler stated it is just school employees on the trip.

Mr. Foose asked if a student wanted to attend the trip but was struggling with fundraising and could not meet the price of the trip what would happen. Mr. Bleiler shared this travel company offers a discount to families whose income is below a certain criteria. He did not have that amount at this time. Dr. Cooper shared a lot of times the travel companies offer parents payment plans which give the families more flexibility whether it be lowering the payment or extending it beyond the trip. This allows the students to go even if they do not have all the funds they need at the time of the trip. Mr. Foose shared this trip sounds amazing and if he had to choose between this or Disney World he would choose this World War II trip. Mr. Foose asked if there are any grant opportunities available to fund any of these activities. Dr. Woodard stated the issue would be how to determine who to fund making grant opportunities hard to come by.

Mr. Boyer shared a story of when his wife was younger she was having trouble coming up with the money to go on her Europe trip so she went around to location community organizations like the Lion's Club, Rotary Club, churches, etc. who provided sponsorship for her to go on the trip. This may be another way for students to raise money who are unable to afford it.

Mr. Elsier asked if it's the spring of 2020 would that be the current 9<sup>th</sup> graders. Mr. Bleiler stated yes that is correct. Mr. Elsier asked what would happen if we would get 80 students who are interested, are we prepared to open up two sessions or run it for two years in a row. Mr. Bleiler shared if that problem would occur he would discuss with Dr. Cooper and come up with a game plan.

Mr. Foose stated that when presenting this trip to parents, there may be some sticker shock. Be sure to include the benefits and fundraising opportunities. Mr. Foose shared we should engage Ms. Parkes when different fundraising opportunities are going on so the community can get involved.

Mr. Krem asked if the student is required to have an academic standard to attend the trip. Mr. Bleiler shared students must be in good academic and social standing to attend the trip. Mr. Krem hopes this does not become a mutually exclusive trip for wealthy students. If you have a

high standing academic student who can't afford the trip but wants to go, the Boyertown Foundation may be a helpful resource. There may even be some wealthier parents in the community who would offer to pay for another student's portion if asked.

Mrs. Dennin thought Mr. Krem had a good point. The Board will move forward with a vote at the September 11<sup>th</sup> board meeting. Dr. Woodard commended Mr. Bleiler on his presentation. Mrs. Dennin thinks this is a wonderful opportunity to enhance the education of our students in Boyertown.

### **Pre-K Counts Update**

Dr. Woodard shared access to high quality pre-kindergarten programs is a fundamental building block of our state's education system. It helps ensure our students are ready and prepared for kindergarten. Many students across the state and locally in our region, do not have access to these programs due to cost. Dr. Woodard shared a chart showing the earlier the investment, the greater the return. Studies have shown that access to pre-kindergarten can reduce grade retention down the road. Students who attend a high quality pre-kindergarten programs are less likely to drop out of school, more likely to finish school, and attend post-secondary education. High quality child care programs can also help with behavior issues at a young age.

Dr. Woodard shared a slide from OCDEL, if you invest into early learning, and teachers/staff it will lead to students building workforce skills. This will attract new businesses, build quality labor supply, and bring more jobs. Dr. Woodard shared high quality pre-kindergarten classrooms do positively impact all students, but they most affect those students who come from lower socioeconomic families which is why the Pre-Kindergarten Counts grant is dependent on eligibility. In order to qualify, your income must not exceed 300% over the poverty line.

The Boyertown Area School District Pre-K Counts program would like to provide high quality, comprehensive services to all enrolled children and their families. By forming a partnership with parents, staff, and community members, we offer services designed to promote the healthiest, safest environment in which children and families can thrive to reach their full potential. Part of the requirements of the Pre-K Counts grant was to establish strong relationships and connections with our local daycare and preschool providers. Dr. Woodard shared she meets with the local preschool directors and teachers who service the local Boyertown area twice a year. During these meetings we are able to collaborate to make everyone's programs stronger. Dr. Woodard stressed there is not a competition among Pre-K providers in our own district, the Pre-K counts program is ideally designed for those kids who are not receiving any formal preschool. Dr. Woodard shared some data from 2016, according to the state, 42.3% of children residing in the Boyertown area between the ages of 3 and 4, would be eligible for this program. There are 12.7% currently enrolled children in quality pre-kindergarten, therefore 87.3% of eligible children are unserved. Dr. Woodard stated when looking at those statistics, it's hard to argue a pre-kindergarten program is not needed here in our district.

Dr. Woodard shared the goals of the Pre-Kindergarten Counts program. These goals are to prepare and teach preschool children the school readiness skills needed to be ready for school success and foster his or her intellectual, social, and emotional growth, provide opportunities for children and families in our program that will help prepare them for future school and life

successes and increase the chance of doing well in school, attending college or trade school, and having a successful career.

Dr. Woodard shared the Boyertown Pre-K Counts program is designed for children who are 4 years old and the entry age for kindergarten. The program is free to eligible families and is funded through Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts. In order to qualify your earnings must not exceed 300% of the federal poverty level. Unfortunately, a few applications needed to be denied as these families income amount exceeded the income requirement.

Currently Boyertown has three pre-kindergarten classrooms, one AM and PM class at Colebrookdale Elementary and one PM class at Washington Elementary. Washington Elementary will have one part time teacher and one part time paraprofessional for the PM session. The classes at Colebrookdale Elementary will have one full time teacher and one full time paraprofessional who will work during both sessions. Since each section can have up to 20 students in the classroom we felt it was essential to have both a teacher and paraprofessional in the classroom. Since we did not receive award notification until July, the start date for students will be a little later than the rest of the district. The projected start date is September 10, 2018 which will give pre-kindergarten students 172 days of school. The timeframe will run the same as our Kindergarten students. The AM session runs from 8:45 AM until 11:25 AM and the PM session starts at 12:50 PM and departs at 3:25 PM.

Dr. Woodard shared initially transportation had been included in the grant, however that caused some issues. Since most of these students would be under five years old they would require a car seat and need to be transported by van rather than bus. Our Pre-K counts specialist did share that most other district programs do not provide transportation. At this time we are unable to provide this service to our Pre-K students. We did make it clear on the acceptance letters to families that transportation would not be provided.

As of today August 21, 2018 the program has 35 students accepted into the program. Families have been sent acceptance letters through email and the US postal service. Of those 35 students, we have 14 students who will attend the Colebrookdale AM session and 11 students in the PM session. There are also 10 students who will attend the Washington PM session. We had 4 applications that were completed and denied because they did not meet the income eligibility requirements. We also had one student who declined acceptance due to the location of the program as it was not located at their neighboring school.

Dr. Woodard shared the hiring process for the Pre-K counts teachers. Two rounds of interviews were held with Mr. Stoudt, Mr. Iacobelli and Dr. Woodard. The names of the teachers will be included on the September 11<sup>th</sup> board agenda for approval. One round of interviews was held to select the paraprofessionals for each classroom. The plan is to establish August 27<sup>th</sup> as the start date for the staff to prepare classrooms and start building curriculum. The Pre-K Counts Specialist confirmed the grant is at the beginning of a five year cycle but you have to renew annually. Our Human Resources department has worked collaboratively with the BAEA to formulate a Memorandum of Understanding related to the hiring of new teachers. The Pre-K Counts program must provide at least 3 parent engagement opportunities throughout the school year. The push for parent involvement/engagement is huge. These events will be held at both locations throughout the school year. Dr. Woodard shared the contact information for the Pre-K

Counts program. Applications will continue to be accepted until we reach maximum capacity in each classroom which is 20 students per session totaling 60 maximum.

Mr. Foose asked if the breakdown between Washington and Colebrookdale was geographic. Dr. Woodard responded yes, she tried to divide them based on the location of their home address. Mr. Foose asked if we needed to hire any more teachers if we continue to add more students. Dr. Woodard stated no, we are good up to 20 students per classroom.

Mr. Elsier thanked Dr. Woodard for all her hard work and research.

Mr. Lewis stated the federal poverty level for a family of 4 is 25,000 and for 1 person its 12,000. Mrs. Dennin shared 300% of the poverty level for a family of 4 is 75,000. Mr. Lewis asked if social media could be used to share this opportunity. Dr. Woodard shared Ms. Parkes has posted it on several social media outlets and we would like to create some flyers to post at the local library and other resources around Boyertown.

Mrs. Usavage stated this a great program and asked if the Pre-K Counts Specialist is paid for by the grant. Dr. Woodard responded yes, our district has no expense. The Department of Human Services allocates her to us. Mrs. Usavages wondered if there is an effort to make sure the three classes are the same. Dr. Woodard answered, yes they will be following the same curriculum and collaborating with each other as much as possible. Mrs. Usavage asked if there are any concerns about getting the rooms ready in enough time for the students to start. Dr. Woodard shared she is a bit nervous but we will make do with items from around the district until items get ordered and delivered.

Mrs. Dennin asked if the Pre-K supervisors will be principals. Dr. Woodard shared they will be observed just like our k-12 teachers, 2 times by the principals and a formal observation by an administrator.

Mr. Foose asked how the Boyertown Foundation is involved and can they help with the advertising and getting the word out. Dr. Woodard shared they support this program and use Ms. Parkes as well when reaching out to the community. The district and the Boyertown Foundation are collaborating together to run the program as Tessi Melchior has a lot of experience in preschool education.

Mr. Krem asked the board if they understood the return on investment piece. Across the k-12 educational life of the child, if you get all five years, your rate of return would be 22 million 500 dollars.

Mrs. Dennin thanked Dr. Woodard and Tessi for getting this program going. Mrs. Dennin shared future discussion will be on cyber school, BOL and what we can do to increase enrollment.

## **Public Comment**

**Board Comment**

Dr. Woodard proposes the next curriculum committee meeting for late September, early October.

Mr. Boyer wanted to commend all the teachers at Washington Elementary and Middle School East after having the opportunity spend some time there today.

Mr. Foose would like to add to the future topic, how the academies are coming along at the high school.

Mr. Lewis would like to add for a future topic, the discussion on online school during snow days.

Mrs. Dennin adjourned the meeting at 7:45 pm.