

**Boyertown Area School District  
Curriculum Committee  
October 2, 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, Mr. Lewis and Mrs. Dierolf, Mr. Boyer, Mr. Foose

**Administration in attendance:** Dr. Bedden, Dr. Woodard, Mr. Stoudt

**BASD Staff in Attendance:** 2

**Members of the Public:** 1

**Presentation and Discussion**

Mrs. Dennin shared tonight's meeting will have two presentations from Dr. Woodard and Mr. Stoudt, the first presentation is an update on cyber enrollment. The second presentation will provide updates on the BASH learning academics as well as future items for discussion.

**Berks Online Learning Cyber Update**

Dr. Woodard welcomed everyone to tonight's meeting and shared this meeting will be discussing trends in enrollment as well as an update on our BASD cyber program. Boyertown Area School District has partnered with Berks Online Learning for the past few years after working with various other vendors. Dr. Woodard shared the previous vendors were lacking support to both our students and staff. The trend across Berks County schools was to partner with Berks Online Learning which are servicing more and more students within local districts every day. By partnering with Berks Online Learning it allows us to customize learning opportunities for students, but they can still take advantage of our BASD events since they are still students of the Boyertown Area School District. Berks Online Learning also offers a wider catalog of online courses to meet student demands.

Mr. Stoudt shared Berks Online Learning offers services for full-time and part-time students, homebound students, students with IEPs/GIEPs, accelerated learning, and students in alternative education. Berks Online Learning offers PA Core aligned courses, hybrid/blended learning, progress reports for each participating student, along with a broader variety of course options, as well as AP courses and electives. Mr. Stoudt stated the greatest trait is that students remain enrolled in their local school district, which allows students to participate in the same sports and activities as the brick and mortar students. These cyber students also graduate and earn a diploma from BASD and can attend career and technology centers. Mr. Stoudt shared one change from last year is we decided to team up with Lincoln Learning for our elementary students. In the past we only used the vendor K12, which does not offer a lot of flexibility to meet the needs of our students. Mr. Stoudt stated majority of our secondary students access their curriculum through Edgenuity, which has been in place for a long time and allows for a very flexible schedule. The counselors at the secondary level have aligned their course catalog with

Edgenuity so if a student ever moves from brick and mortar into cyber, the course is pretty similar.

Dr. Woodard shared the current enrollment trends over the past 8 years in outside cyber/charter schools. In 2010-2011 we had 129 students enrolled, with a sharp increase the following year to 185 students. From 2013 to 2017 we saw a marked decrease in enrollment. Dr. Woodard stated in 2017 to 2019 we have seen increases in enrollment. Dr. Woodard shared the reason for the increase is unknown, it could be families who currently are homeschooling could be choosing to enroll in cyber for more structure.

Dr. Bedden asked if we have done any marketing to try to bring these students back. Mr. Stoudt responded, yes and from what was gathered, there does not seem to be a willingness for these families to come back to BASD. Mr. Stoudt shared this is something we want to look at in the future and discuss things we can do to make it better. Dr. Woodard shared we sent post cards, made phone calls to the parents and held informational meetings throughout the school year but have not been successful in bringing any of those students back to brick and mortar. Mr. Stoudt stated last year we invited 139 of our cyber students to the informational session and only 1 parent attended. Mr. Stoudt stated he would like to reach out to other districts to discuss how they market and see how we can get these students back into our brick and mortar.

Dr. Woodard shared looking at the enrollment of our in house cyber schooling provided by Berks Online Learning we have a marked increase, more than doubling last year. At this point in time we have 77 students enrolled which is the largest amount we have ever had. Dr. Woodard shared several years ago we had an extreme fluctuation in the numbers, however that is less likely now that we have aligned our courses to Berks Online Learning and request that students only enroll at the start of the school year or mid semester. This is a positive number because we are still responsible for the education of these students. The students may not be taught by our teachers or be using our curriculum but we know exactly what and when they are learning. Dr. Woodard stated every Monday Mr. Stoudt receives a report on the student's achievement and performance which is also shared with the counselors. This allows us to bring students in for interventions if needed. Dr. Woodard expressed the negative to this number is these students are not brick and mortar, so we are paying additional funds to get these students educated through Berks Online Learning. Mr. Stoudt shared Mrs. Rothermel at the Boyertown High School does an amazing job monitoring the students who have IEPs or special needs, making sure team decisions are met to benefit the student.

Dr. Woodard shared enrollment numbers comparing Boyertown High School, Middle Schools and Elementary Schools. The enrollment numbers also incorporate full and part time students. A part time student could take as little as one course or several courses, just not a full course load. An example of a part time student could be a student athlete whose training schedule is more demanding so they need the flexibility, but they want the BASD diploma. There are also students who have jobs working 20+ hours a week which take care of their family and this allows them the flexibility to continue their education. Dr. Woodard also shared we have a few students who attend BCTC during the day but are interested in taking a world language course, this allows them the opportunity to take a world language course and maintain the other school requirements.

Mr. Stoudt shared an overview on what each enrolled full time student would cost per year along with what it would cost per course for a semester. In the middle school and high school it cost \$5060.00 annually for the student to be enrolled in a cyber school. BASD has worked with Berks Online Learning that students have a 14 day window of trial, if the student drops within that trial period and does not want to continue the district will not be billed. Mr. Stoudt stated it's a nice three week trial period for the students to try it out and see if they will be successful.

Dr. Woodard shared a slide on cost breakdown and potential savings for Boyertown Area School District. The average yearly cost for an outside cyber charter school is \$13,733.14, the average yearly cost for Berks Online Learning is \$5060.00 which is a savings on every student of \$8,673.14. This is a savings if the student were to choose BASD Berks Online Learning verses an outside cyber charter school. Dr. Woodard stated if we look at the 77 students we have enrolled, it's an estimated \$667,831.78 savings based on current enrollment numbers.

Mr. Stoudt shared a slide on what BASD is doing to market the cyber program for students. Mr. Stoudt expressed in the three years he has been the liaison administrator he has been attending the meetings at the BCIU to talk to other districts about what they do, trying to model what they have done. Our district has been providing informational family nights each spring, making phone calls and sending out mailings to each family trying to provide information about our program. Mr. Stoudt expressed the interest to look outside the box for more ways to promote the cyber program, as we are continuing to grow the program but we are not bringing our own people back. For every new enrollee to an outside cyber program, we make a phone call to the family and they usually do not know that Boyertown Area School District has a cyber program. With that being said, the district does market but maybe we are not marketing strong enough.

Mr. Stoudt shared a slide of the district's role and responsibilities of our cyber students. Across the district we try to maintain consistency with our cyber and brick and mortar students. The district determines and monitors graduation requirements and guidelines. We also provide technology equipment and support for all students. The district also ensures IEPs, GIEPs, 504 plans and other special education accommodations are being implemented. We also enforce the attendance policy and issue our own report cards. The BCIU's role and responsibility is to serve as a liaison between the district and the families. Mr. Stoudt stated the BCIU is a very effective and helpful resource. Dr. Woodard shared, Marcel is the first communicator from BOL to speak to the parents. This year because we had such a large number of BOL students the BCIU came down to the Boyertown High School to hold an orientation for families and answer any questions they had about the program, which made it very accommodating. When students were asked by Marcel, why they choose BOL cyber instead of Brick and Mortar some students responded it was because of the flexibility, others stated they choose cyber because of the lack of the diversity in the district.

## Questions

Mrs. Dierolf asked what the cost is per student at the BCIU. Mr. Stoudt responded for an elementary student its \$5060. Mrs. Dierolf wondered what happened to the program that we started with our own teachers when they created the courses. Dr. Woodard shared most the courses were never finished, we have ten courses created and in the program of study with the hope of taking them online and in school but there was never enough interest. Mr. Stoudt added Bridges Academy which we also used fell through and just wasn't successful.

Ms. Neiman requested for the 145 students that are not enrolled in our cyber program, she would like to see a questionnaire go out to them and their parents to see what we can do to pull them back in. Mr. Stoudt agreed that would be a great idea as it would also gather data on things we are not providing.

Mr. Foose shared he is very interested in the topic of marketing cyber. Mr. Foose understands we may be limited on the amount of students we are able to pull back from cyber, when looking at the corrective and preventative actions. Every year students are looking for cyber programs so how do we get them to look at us first. Mr. Foose added when looking at the 145 students who are not enrolled in our cyber program it's almost 2 million dollars, so anything we can do to bring that down would substantially help our district. Mr. Foose was curious about the AP classes for cyber students and what the barriers are for students being able to take additional AP courses as they could be more appealing. Mr. Foose asked what the cost would be to start a new AP course. Dr. Bedden shared when an AP course is new, the largest part of your expense is training your teachers. Dr. Woodard stated other districts have used BOL for summer work, not for remediation but for advancement. It's the responsibility of the family to pay for the cost of the course. Dr. Woodard also shared we would then we utilizing teachers outside of our association to teach courses that we may or may not offer.

Mr. Stoudt shared in his home district they employ an administrator to oversee and basically do what BOL is doing. There is a cost to employ that administrator but I don't know what that contract looks like. The IU cost is built into our pricing. It truly would be a Boyertown program with our own administrator overseeing the program and we could certainly look at the cost compared to what BOL offers us.

Mr. Foose feels this is an attractive thing for the district because there is not a huge risk of losing students from brick and mortar. With the social skills you learn from attending a brick and mortar school and the trend in wages over the past 30 years, people need to work and you can't have a parent home who can stay with these cyber students. Mr. Foose asked if cyber is integrated with our academies. Dr. Woodard responded provided they have the appropriate coursework to fulfill the requirements of the academy and they are also taking part in the academy events required each year there is no reason why they couldn't. Mr. Foose feels this could be a selling point to students attending other cyber charter schools, if you come back to Boyertown Area School District you can graduate with distinction in one of our academies. Mr. Foose asked if any of the 77 students we have participate in extracurricular activities. Mr. Stoudt responded that at the elementary level some of the students participate in music, however he is uncertain on how many actually participate in extracurricular activities like sports. Mr. Foose asked if we have ever used our Bear Essentials newsletter to highlight some of those students that are involved in this program so that people in the community know that we have students doing this and it's a great thing our district offers. Dr. Woodard responded that we have not done that but it would be an excellent idea.

Mrs. Usavage stated in her opinion brick and mortar is by far the best option for a large majority of our students however there are certain situations where a cyber charter education might be the best option for part or all of a student's education. Mrs. Usavage thinks it's great that we offer this along with all the services and activities that come along with Boyertown Area School District as it provides so much of an advantage over a strict cyber charter school. Outside cyber charter schools performance scores have been abysmal historically and much of their intent is

about profit and not about education. Mrs. Usavage feels the state is failing us with these outside cyber charter schools as there is no accountability so she is really glad that we provide this Boyertown option and hopes we are communicating all these advantages. Mrs. Usavage asked what we know about the performance of our students in these outside cyber charter schools. Mr. Stoudt explained it would be very hard to pull that information. Dr. Woodard stated the last time they did this presentation she shared the updated and current achievement data but because we don't have that yet for last year she was unable to provide it at this time. Mr. Stoudt did share that he does monitor the progress notes that come in on all the students to stay on top of particular situations that may arise with a student's achievement. Mrs. Usavage stated it sounds like the BCIU provides us the framework, the oversight and administrative oversight. Mr. Stoudt responded yes, Marcel Magee will be calling you if your child is not doing what is expected of him/her.

Mr. Elsier thanked everyone for their hard work on this. Mr. Elsier stated when talking about students going into the real world its common in corporations for updates and learnings to be web-based online, so offering it internally is to better prepare our students. Mr. Elsier asked when looking at the 145 students we don't currently have enrolled in our program, are we telling families about the great things Boyertown has to offer, for example: do the families know that our music program has won national awards. Mr. Elsier asked if we are alerting new families that move into the district that Boyertown offers its own cyber charter school. We could provide this information to local realtors as well. Mr. Elsier added if we could also provide families with a percentage of graduates who go on to continuing education this would be helpful in marketing.

Mr. Foose asked if students enrolled in Boyertown cyber charter are able to attend trips like the Spain trip and the World War II trip. Dr. Woodard responded yes.

Mrs. Dennin thanked everyone for their presentation. Mrs. Dennin shared after talking with parents out in the community she was surprised as the two parents she spoke with said their children were in outside cyber programs. Mrs. Dennin agrees with Mrs. Usavage that the state is failing us. Outside charters that are almost \$14,000 a year and 145 of our parents are convinced there getting the better deal plus they're not paying for it, so why would they come back to Boyertown cyber charter for \$5,000 per year when they can get something for \$14,000 per year and not pay for it. Mrs. Dennin feels we need to go to our state legislators about this issue. We understand school choice but we don't pay to send our children to private school or parochial schools so why are we paying for children to go to an outside cyber charter school that is failing.

Mrs. Dennin shared she also heard from parents of cyber students who were having issues at the school particularly in the middle and high school level. These students were having anxiety issues, felt they were being bullied or they were part of a population in our district that was diverse so they felt that cyber was a better option for them.

Mr. Stoudt added the interface the parents access the curriculum from is often the same so there really isn't any difference. It's just the title on top of the program will be different depending on who the institution is.

Mrs. Dierolf commended Mrs. Dennin on her comments on cyber charters schools and feels she should put her knowledge and experience to work.

Mrs. Dennin thanked Mrs. Dierolf for her kind words. Mrs. Dennin shared she is on the Legislative Advisory Council for the PSBA and this is one of the issues they have lobbied on, but the reality is there is so much money in cyber charter schools that we just don't have the lobbying power.

Mr. Elsier asked if a student at Boyertown cyber charter can get lunch at one of the cafeterias. Mr. Stoudt responded yes, some students have also come for recess as well to add the social component to their day. Mr. Elsier asked if a student can do a few classes of cyber and a few brick and mortar classes. Dr. Woodard responded yes, that would be part-time enrollment. Mr. Elsier suggested having a student panel of all current cyber students during open houses to help market our Boyertown cyber charter program. This would allow parents to ask questions to current students.

### **Boyertown Learning Academies Update**

Dr. Woodard shared the current enrollment of sophomores who as freshman have identified with a specific learning academy. We have 31 students in Health and Human Sciences, 20 students in STEM, 22 students in Visual, Performing and Fine Arts, 7 students in Global, Community, Business Leadership and 91 students in Berks Career and Technology Center. The students in the BCTC academy may also be part of another academy depending upon their program of study. Dr. Woodard stated Health and Human Sciences is the most popular academy, unless you take BCTC as a whole. Dr. Woodard explained she just met with the Business Education Department Leader and the Lead Teacher about better ways to market the Global, Community and Business Leadership academy as this appears to be the least popular. A total of 171 students have identified within one of these academies which represents approximately 31% of the current sophomore class. Only last year students were introduced to the academy idea, so this is just the first go around.

Dr. Woodard shared there are a large group of teachers who come together monthly at the high school for work in the development of the learning academies. We also have academy leaders Mrs. Shumock in HHS, Mr. Roth in STEM, Mr. Frunzi in the Arts and Chief Peterson in Global, Community and Business Leadership. These leaders have volunteered to be the liaisons between their departments and the teachers that have identified with participating in an Academy.

Dr. Woodard shared a slide on opportunities for students in the academies. There is a Guest Lecture Series and academy sponsored or approved events. Students are required to attend four events per year. Some events may take place at the BASH campus and others are located across the county. The student must complete a reflection form after each event which will be housed within their electronic portfolio. The student will then use this information down the road when creating their career portfolio. Some examples of events a student might be attending are: the Annual Berks County Regional College Fair, Science Technology & Math Open House at Kutztown University, Reading Hospital Medical Explorers Program, and PA Academy of the Fine Arts College Fair.

Dr. Woodard shared all current 10<sup>th</sup> grade students are continuing to be presented with opportunities to join an academy through school counselors and teacher/advisors. Recently, 4 new academy students joined this school year. We have an Academy Day scheduled on October

10<sup>th</sup> where all 9<sup>th</sup> grade students will be introduced to the idea of academies. Dr. Woodard shared our target date for our first learning academy career fair is November 2019.

Dr. Cooper, Dr. Foley, and Dr. Woodard have been approved to present a featured Breakout Session at the PDE SAS Institute highlighting our Career Learning Academy and our experiences with the Academy. Dr. Woodard emphasized that BASD is in the infancy stages of this process, and the planning stage has taken multiple years. PDE stated this is exactly the information that other district's need to hear this and it does not happen overnight. Dr. Woodard will also be sitting on a panel with the BCIU and Berks Career Pathways during the conference. The BASH Learning Academy was contacted by the National Center for College and Career Transitions (NC3T) to be profiled as a spotlight as an innovated and varied approaches to career-connected learning. Dr. Woodard addressed that some teachers and staff ask when we they see results. Dr. Woodard stated it takes time and the planning process so very important. If we do not take the time to think things through, it will not result in full implementation. At this point in the planning process, we are right where we need to be. Dr. Woodard looks forward to see where we will be in 2020/2021 as the program grows across the board and revolutionizes what our students can be a part of.

## **Questions**

Mrs. Usavage congratulated the district on the recognition and asked what the PDE SAS Conference is. Dr. Woodard explained the conference is sponsored by the Pa Department of Education (PDE) and Standard Aligned Systems (SAS). SAS has a site on the PDE website for resources. Each year, PDE/SAS has a conference held each December in Hershey, from Sunday – Wednesday. This year's theme is Career Pathways. It is attended by PDE staff from the Bureau of Assessment and Accountability, Curriculum, as well as school officials across the state.

Mrs. Usavage asked how the 31% of sophomores in the Academy met expectations. Dr. Woodard explained it was a long process between the School Counselors and teachers engaging in conversations with students. Mrs. Usavage asked how the community is made aware of the Guest Lecture Series, 9<sup>th</sup> Grade Academy Day, and Career Fair events. Dr. Woodard stated the Academy Leaders are responsible to communicate this information. Dr. Woodard also mentioned if any community member is interested in offering services, please reach out to the members mentioned in the presentation. Dr. Woodard also mentioned that Career Ready Berks is creating a platform for anyone who is interested in mentoring, job shadowing, etc. This platform is currently under construction and more information will follow.

Mrs. Usavage asked if the district has collaborated with universities or corporations in the area. Dr. Woodard stated we have affiliations with New York University and Temple University (Art), Kutztown University (Physics/Astronomy), Drexel University (STEM). We are currently in meetings with Penn State Berks and Reading Area Community College as advisors to coursework we want to develop allowing a smooth transition to college. Mrs. Usavage mentioned that some degree programs will take more than 4 years to complete and asked if we are addressing that issue. Dr. Woodard stated we address the 2 year, 4 year, 6 year, etc. degree programs, keeping in mind what is needed locally.

Mr. Foose asked if we have a Career Fair in the district. Dr. Woodard stated Dr. Cooper is currently working on this and if not this year, we will have one next year. Dr. Woodard invited members of the Board to the Senior Portfolio Career Presentation next Wednesday, October 10<sup>th</sup> from 12:30 pm – 3:00 pm at the high school. This is a required component for graduation where seniors are assigned rooms and present to the K-12 faculty their resumes, college visits, experiences, and plans for the future. The faculty then provides feedback. Mr. Foose asked if students in the Academy are eligible for Dual Enrollment, AP Classes Internships, or must they choose one or the other. Dr. Woodard stated students do not need to choose one or the other as an AP class counts as a requirement in the Academy. Internships could cause an issue since the Internship counts as a half of a credit, where the AP course increases your GPA and class ranking making it a difficult decision for the student. Mr. Foose stated he supports the Academy and suggested we interact with other school districts for the Guest Lecture Series. He also thanked Dr. Woodard for her hard work and wished Mr. Stoudt good luck as her replacement.

Mrs. Dennin also thanked Dr. Woodard for her years of service.

### **Public Comment**

Ms. Curry asked if there was an option for a student to complete Cyber School earlier than expected and if the student can attend graduation. Mr. Stoudt stated there have been conversations concerning this, however, we currently do not have anyone interested in this. Dr. Bedden added the social emotional aspect, intellectual vs. developments issues of the student will also be a part of the decision process should this arise. The student would be able to attend graduation.

Ms. Curry asked the percentage of the administrative fee the BCIU charges for Cyber School as she believes it is 20%. Mr. Stoudt will look into this.

Mrs. Dierolf had computer issues and wanted to publicly thank Debbie Missimer and Sherry Marshall from the IT Department for their quick response in resolving her issues. Mrs. Dierolf also stated the Millionaires Club was called BESS. It was an entrepreneur club at the High School.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:27 p.m.

### **Upcoming Meetings**

October 9, 2018 – Facilities Meeting – Education Center

October 9, 2018 – Board of School Directors Meeting – Education Center

October 16, 2018 – Facilities Meeting – Education Center

October 23, 2018 – Board of School Directors Meeting – Senior High School