

Boyertown Area School District
Curriculum Committee
May 28, 2013
Minutes

Mrs. Semmens, Curriculum Committee Chair, called the meeting to order at 5:33 pm in the Boyertown Elementary Library.

Board members in attendance: Mrs. Dierolf, Dr. Christman, Mrs. Hartford, Mr. Crossley, Mrs. Usavage

Administration in attendance: Mr. Scoboria, Dr. Amuso, Mr. Szabloski, Mrs. Woodard, Mr. Miller, Dr. Cooper and Mrs. Petri

Members of the Public: 6

Everyone recited the pledge of allegiance to the flag and observed a moment of silence

The meeting minutes of the April 16, 2013 Curriculum Committee were approved.

Public Comment

There were no public comments during session one.

Presentation and Discussion

Mrs. Semmens began the meeting by welcoming everyone and then introduced Mrs. Woodard.

Mrs. Woodard also welcomed everyone to the meeting and began by sharing some of the background on the Educator Effectiveness model. Mrs. Woodard shared the state is changing the way in which we evaluate teachers and that, during the evening's first presentation, she and Mr. Miller would be sharing the details of the plan.

Mrs. Woodard began the presentation by discussing the fact the state is initiating this change to help ensure that there is a highly effective teacher in each classroom. She also shared a little background about our present system. Mr. Miller was next introduced and began to share the specific details of the new plan. He shared that this new system will involve a four year rollout in which during the first year the observation process changes as well as the addition of the Pennsylvania School Performance Profile. In year two, there is the implementation of the Student Learning Objectives which are a locally created set of goals with pre and post data used to measure student growth. Finally in year four, those teachers who teach a course that is aligned to a state assessment will receive a three year average of their PVAAS (Pennsylvania Value Added Assessment System) score. This score will be based on either the PSSA or Keystone Exams and will provide a numerical measure of the growth rate of the individual teacher's students. The combination of all four of these areas will be used to generate an overall score which will serve as a teachers overall rating for the year. Mr. Miller and Mrs. Woodard explained that they have been presenting at the different buildings to ensure all of the teachers

are fully aware of the changes. Additionally, they shared the trainings which are scheduled throughout the summer to specifically focus on the new formal observation process which is significantly more reflective and offers more feedback than our traditional system. Finally, Mr. Miller and Mrs. Woodard explained that, due to the time constraints of the new formal observation process, the state has suggested districts create a three to four year differentiated supervision system. While Boyertown does have a differentiated model there will be some changes to increase the rigor of the differentiated options to meet the state guidelines. Additionally, the teachers' ability to choose a formal observation in consecutive years will no longer be allowed to ensure administration can meet the significantly increased demands of the new formal observation process.

Mrs. Woodard next transitioned to her presentation on the high school academy structure which is being considered for implementation. To begin the presentation, Mrs. Woodard shared the elements commonly found in successful high schools. These elements included: developing and implementing challenging classes, offering personal attention to all students, bringing the real world to the classroom, and providing the necessary technology resources to the students and staff. She explained that school reform efforts have concentrated on preparing students for college and careers while ensuring all students are exposed to a curriculum of high quality and rigor.

Career academies have been in existence for over forty years and have been integrating academic and vocational learning around a specific focus. Mrs. Woodard explained that over 4800 high schools nationwide reported having at least one career academy. In addition, she shared that well-designed career academies base voluntary recruitment and enrollment of students on their interest in a career theme. She reiterated the importance of creating a "school-within-a school" environment to help foster relationships between students and teachers and among students with similar interests. She also commented on the need to develop close relationships with the employers in the local community to provide career awareness and internships.

Mrs. Woodard presented the benefits of the academy model which include the development of 21st Century skills of collaboration, teamwork, and reliability while placing an emphasis on personalized learning. She also explained that a number of research studies have identified positive impacts on academic outcomes including an increased attendance rate in both high school and postsecondary institutions, an improved graduation rate, and an increase in earned credits upon graduation.

To help illustrate successes in specific high schools across the country, Mrs. Woodard shared a video of a high school employing the academy concept. She also shared statistics of several schools that resulted in an increased number of students taking the AP tests (and passing them). Ultimately, several schools reported the greatest strengths were the sense of community that was created by the implementation of the academy framework and the work-based learning component.

The following questions were asked related to the academy structure:

Mr. Crossley asked how rigorous could the academies be if students are able to complete two or three of them? He went on to question if our standards should be higher.

Mrs. Dierolf asked what happens to the students when they go to college when they are in much larger college courses, will they be prepared?

Mrs. Woodard shared that in college many of the focused courses have much smaller numbers.

Dr. Christman asked whether departments will be working together?

Mrs. Woodard answered that she believes the departments would need to combine and work collaboratively to some degree to make things like the rockets and go-carts happen (referencing the videoclip that was shared). I think this is the strength of what happens in the business sector that we need to consider.

Mrs. Semmens next explained that, due to the scheduled Board meeting, there would be a need to postpone questions to ensure they would have enough time to finish this meeting. She went on to suggest that they address any additional questions at the next curriculum meeting.

Mrs. Dierolf suggested they e-mail any questions to Mrs. Woodard.

Mrs. Woodard responded by agreeing to answer any questions that are e-mailed to her.

Public Comment

Mr. Haddad, Acting President of the Boyertown Rotary Club, shared that he would like to invite everyone to the dedication of the mile walking trail, 18 hole Frisbee golf, and the exercise areas located at the Boyertown Community Park on June 1st. He went on to explain that this was a joint project by the Rotary club and Lions club.

Announcements

- The next curriculum committee meeting will be held on Tuesday, July 16 at 5:30 PM in the Board Room.

Mrs. Semmens adjourned the meeting at 6:57 pm.