

Boyertown Area School District
Curriculum Committee
May 12, 2015
Minutes

Dr. Christman called the meeting to order at 6pm in the board room of the Education Center.

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

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

BASD Staff in Attendance: 0

Members of the Public: 0

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

The minutes from the April 14th meeting were accepted.

Public Comment

There were no public comments.

Presentation and Discussion: Master Teacher Concept

Dr. Woodard started by sharing an overview of the Master Teacher Concept, a systemic process of growing and refining our staff. A powerpoint presentation was shared and included background information.

The purpose is to validate the importance of teacher experts and give identified and motivated teachers a chance to serve as leaders. The responsibilities of a master teacher would include:

- Organizing and assisting in professional learning opportunities in the schools and for the district.
- Manage and help facilitate the induction program for new teachers (year 1, 2, 3).
- Serve as mentors for year 1 new teachers and support year 2, 3 teachers.
- Help facilitate the writing and rewriting of curriculum.
- Act as leaders for various committees.
- Make an effort to conduct action research, seek feedback and initiate activities to contribute to the profession.
- Attend various professional learning opportunities after school and during the summer.

The process to determine a Master Teacher can take anywhere from 4-5 months and will be handled by the Office of Teaching and Learning. Applicants will need to submit the following:

- A portfolio which includes documentation of rubrics, observations and examples of how they contributed to teaching.
- A letter of recommendation from an administrator.
- Have at least 5 years teaching experience, 3 years in the BASD.

- BASD will annually nominate a master teacher as its representative for the PA Teacher of the Year designation.

Once the documentation is submitted the candidates will receive a site visit and observation by an internal team of administrators. The term for a master teacher would be 3 years with an annual stipend.

Dr. Woodard explained how she consulted with the Colonial School District which has been offering a similar Master Teacher Concept for the past 20 years. They have been very satisfied with their program.

Questions:

Mrs. Usavage shared that it sounds great. She asked how many master teachers we would have. Dr. Woodard responded, at this point we don't want to say we will start with 8, instead we would like to identify those that meet the high criteria. We believe 3 or 4 for the first cohort would be a success.

Mrs. Usavage asked how we will make sure they are delivering on the expectations. Dr. Woodard explained they would be evaluated through our own district supervision and evaluation process.

Mrs. Usavage shared we need to think about implicit and extrinsic benefits and the retention of teachers. Perhaps this may become part of the teacher salary schedule in the future which would give us an opportunity to help retain teachers.

Dr. Faidley shared that there are many items that could be incorporated into a collective bargaining agreement. Adding this into their salary can be discussed.

Mr. Landino asked how we avoid role and responsibility confusion between the lead teachers, coaches, and master teachers. Dr. Woodard shared a brief example of the difference between the three roles.

Dr. Faidley shared this is an example of how to build the capacity within the system without overburdening the system. One example would be to utilize the master teachers as mentor teachers, taking it to a new level. This would eliminate the current mentor teacher stipend.

Ms. Neiman asked what the cap would be of master teachers. Dr. Woodard explained they would serve a three year term with at most 10 per year knowing that the first few years the number would be much lower.

Mrs. Dennin wondered why only a 3 year term. Dr. Woodard shared this would help to grow the capacity across the entire district over time. It will open up opportunities to other teachers who may not have been ready for this role in past years.

Mr. Elsier asked that we ensure clarity between the master teacher and lead teacher. He shared that he saw first-hand during the Tech Fest two individuals that certainly shared some great learning procedures and tools.

Ms. Neiman asked if this would all be done in the evening and on weekends not impacting school time. Dr. Woodard shared that other teachers could visit and learn from the master teacher's modeled classroom. Their primary focus would be in the classroom, but they would still be required to attend professional learning meetings after school and a few days in the summer. Miss Neiman wondered when implementation will begin. Dr. Woodard said she is currently looking for grant money and awaiting the governor's budget. We would like to see this start in the 16-17 school year but possibly not until the 17-18 school year.

Mr. Stengle shared that he likes the concept and recognizes that there is a lot of work that needs to be done. He would like to see a complete listing of the different teachers and what each role supports. Additionally, how the principals fit into the support of teachers. In special education the principal is the most important in ensuring quality programs are being implemented effectively. Mr. Stengle would like to see a comprehensive program that limits the number of different people providing support.

Dr. Christman shared that we would like to see how this would all fit together to ensure that the different roles are not stumbling over each other.

Mrs. Usavage agrees she would like to see the comprehensive plan for teacher support. She would love to take advantage of these master teachers and video tape their lessons to share with everyone.

Mr. Elsier shared that we need subject matter experts to draw from. We can't have too many resources available.

Mr. Stengle shared that he would like to see us spend more time talking about what we are doing to support students that are struggling instead of supporting teachers.

Dr. Faidley shared we could, in the future, talk about our co-teaching model as well to help understand the supports of our students.

1:1 Initiative Update

Dr. Miller shared an insurance option will be available to all students to help offset liability. Those students who currently have free and reduced lunch would also be offered a free or reduced insurance premium. The current premium of \$50.00 is a benchmark and will be adjusted in future years based on data.

Questions:

Mr. Stengle asked if students have to take the school district laptop or may they use their own device. Dr. Miller responded they may use their own device, however the features may not be the same. We are giving parents an option to keep the laptop at the school and the student may check it in and out of the library on a daily basis.

Mrs. Dennin asked what would happen if the laptop is stolen from within the school. Dr. Miller explained this would be handled as a police matter.

Mr. Elsier wondered how many other districts had lost, stolen and damaged laptops. Dr. Miller shared the data was much smaller than expected.

Mr. Landino shared he likes that we are offering the free and reduced lunch students a free or reduced insurance premium.

Ms. Neimann wondered how we will handle so called “lemon” laptops. Dr. Miller explained if the laptop problem is consistent we would not charge the student and would push the manufacturer for a replacement.

Mr. Stengle is excited for the cost savings related to the cost of textbooks, etc. He would like to see the savings information when it’s available.

Hanover Research Company

Dr. Miller shared an overview of the Hanover Research Company, who conducts research on items in the best interest to the district. These items could include: re-districting, re-organization of grades, financial analysis along with a look and internal and external practices. Dr. Miller shared a brief example of the type of research they perform. During the 1 year contract the research company will work on one project at a time, however there is no limit on the amount of research requests from the district.

Questions:

Mr. Stengle would like to know what this research company does. Dr. Faidley stated they will look at multiple scenarios, our financial implications, cost factors such as utilities, etc. They will then present this research and data to the district for the board to make a decision. They will not offer a recommendation.

Mr. Dennin stated one of the things he likes is the information comes to us with facts and figures in an unbiased way. It would be money well spent. He asked what the district envisions obtaining research on during the first year. Dr. Faidley would like to see as many things we can get through in one year.

Mrs. Usavage feels the contract is written very strange with the per project time restriction and we will need to prioritize our research list.

Mr. Landino shared I think this is a great idea and I think this is an independent resource we can use to make the right decisions as a district.

Mr. Elsier feels this is great and will save us money as a district.

Dr. Miller shared we will also gain access to research topics done by other districts. This may also be helpful to us.

Mr. Stengle is happy it is already included in the approved budget but wondered how this is different from other projects that need approval. Dr. Faidley shared that since the funds were already allocated in next year’s budget there is no need for the board to approve. The board would only need to approve if the budget was adjusted.

Dr. Christman has mixed feelings. Dr. Faidley assured him this is an evidence based research company and they will show us what works. After discussing the types of research Dr. Christman felt better about the purchase.

Mrs. Neiman asked if they will provide pros and cons to the research. Dr. Faidley stated yes, they will provide us with evidence based research on both sides.

BASD Cyber Update

Dr. Woodard shared the current BASD cyber enrollment numbers. As of May 7th 2015 we have 23 full-time students in BASD cyber. Back in September 2014 we had 28 students enrolled in our cyber program. During the year, 13 additional students were added. Of those 41 students who were on our roster during different parts the year, 18 students left the cyber program but went in different directions: returned back to formal school, left the district, alternative placement and drop out. Looking at the bigger picture there appears to be a loss of students; however it's a gain because a majority of the students came back to BASD brick-and-mortar.

Mrs. Usavage wondered if the 13 students added to our cyber charter during the year were from another charter school or brick-and-mortar students. Dr. Woodard shared that some of the students were from other charters and some from our brick-and-mortar. Mrs. Usavage feels the best path would be if they were from an outside charter, they came to our BASD charter and then became so comfortable with our district they entered our brick-and-mortar.

Dr. Woodard shared the outside trends show a decrease each year in students enrolled in outside cyber charters.

Mr. Landino shared what a great idea by the previous board to start this cyber charter. Every single student in our cyber charter would have been someplace else and we would have been paying for it if we didn't have our own cyber charter school. We pay less in our own cyber charter then we do for those outside services which is a big savings for our district.

Dr. Faidley shared the average cost to send a regular student to an outside cyber charter is \$9,300. The average cost to send a special education student is \$19,000. Looking from past years having a BASD cyber charter is a great savings for the district.

Ms. Neiman asked how many of the 55 students already graduated and would not benefit us. Dr. Woodard could provide that information at a later time with some research.

Mr. Stengle asked what the cost to educate a BASD cyber student is. Dr. Woodard shared we have different pricing for each student and provided some rough numbers to the committee.

Mr. Stengle would like to see a budgetary breakdown for the cost per student and wondered if there is a point enrollment drops that we will stop providing cyber school.

Dr. Faidley shared we will continue to offer our cyber charter school based on what is allowed in the budget.

Mrs. Dennin shared that her understanding is that we do not need to make adjustments to the budget when a new student enrolls in cyber charter. We need to remember we are not a business and we are here to educate every student that comes in the district.

Mr. Stengle feels cyber school is great but would like to see it marketed better if we can get a better picture of the cost benefit. Dr. Faidley shared they analyze the savings from the cyber charter each year and can share these savings with the board.

Mr. Elsier shared the overall objective of the cyber charter school is to bring students back to our district. Looking at it from a dollars perspective, we as a district have exceeded the break-even point of savings. Looking at it from an academic perspective, it has provided another vehicle for students to learn.

Ms. Neiman shared that even if half of those students graduated we wouldn't have those cost savings.

Mrs. Usavage feels we have a great belief that we are saving money. We need to track the student's journey to show the true savings. We can give those students a better education in our cyber then an outside cyber because we have the best resources.

Dr. Woodard shared we are providing flexible opportunities for these students. We are trying to meet each individual student's needs which make it more appealing for families to stay at BASD cyber.

Mr. Stengle would like to see more of our special education students come back to Boyertown Area School District rather than paying other schools.

Committee Comment

No comments

Public Comment

No comments

Announcements

May 26, 2015 Finance Committee, BES– Library, 6:00 p.m.

May 26, 2015 Board of School Directors, BES– Multi-Purpose Room, 7:00 p.m.

June 2, 2015 Board of School Directors, JHE– Auditorium, 7:00 p.m.

June 16, 2015 Board of School Directors, Education Center – Board Room, 7:00 p.m.

Dr. Christman adjourned the meeting at 8:22.