

**Boyertown Area School District
Curriculum Committee
November 18, 2014
Minutes**

Dr. Christman called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm in the Education Center.

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

Administration in attendance: Dr. Miller, Dr. Woodard, Mr. Scoboria, Dr. Faidley, Mr. Szablowski, Mr. Katch, and Dr. Foley

BASD Staff in Attendance: 9

Members of the Public: 1

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

The minutes from the October 28, 2014, meeting were accepted.

Public Comment

There were no public comments.

Presentation and Discussion

Comprehensive Plan Support - BASD Cabinet Members

Members of cabinet shared a presentation related to the comprehensive plan. The presentation highlighted the need to create a plan for continuous improvement both to meet the requirements of PDE and to lead the district in school improvement. The associated costs for the consulting services from Partnership for Excellence would be \$21,000. While the money is unbudgeted, it can come out of our current budget by redirecting our priorities through budget transfers. Finally, Dr. Faidley asked the curriculum committee to provide direction related to whether or not we should bring a formal recommendation to a future board meeting to move forward.

Questions:

Dr. Christman asked for clarification related to how we would be paying for the consulting services. Mr. Szablowski stated that we will redirect money from another priority and no new budget dollars need to be approved.

Mr. Stengle asked what priority we would be changing and transferring the money from. Mr. Szablowski stated that we don't have the specific budget lines identified yet and the cabinet will need to meet to decide.

Mrs. Usavage shared that we would need this to continue to move the district forward. She recognizes that strategic planning is a complex process and that we did a good job developing the current plan. She asked whether the scope of the consulting services includes a communication plan as well as an implementation plan. Dr. Faidley shared that yes it does. Additionally, Mrs.

Usavage asked if we could receive additional consultation services after October 1. Dr. Faidley shared that the process can continue for an additional cost, but probably not at the same scope.

Mrs. Dennin asked how many years out the plan is for. Dr. Faidley shared that the comprehensive plan required by the state is a six year plan but that by utilizing this process we would enhance our plan by including more than is required by the state, such as a long term financial plan as well as a personnel plan, etc. Additionally, Mrs. Dennin asked if the consultant would consult on how to get more stakeholders involved or if they would actually facilitate the process. Dr. Faidley shared that the consultant would train a large group of people on how to do it and would then come back to help assemble the inputs into priorities.

Mr. Elsier shared that execution diminishes greatly without a solid plan. Ultimately you know you have a good plan if you continue to succeed even when the players change. He went on to ask what percentage of the professional education services budget is the \$21,000. Mr. Szablowski stated that the professional education services budget is roughly a million dollars.

Mrs. Usavage asked if we have any concerns related to accomplishing the special education plan by May. Dr. Faidley shared that we will have no problem completing the special education plan by May.

Mr. Stengle shared that he is sure that the money can be found in our current budget. He went on to ask if there will be opportunities to discuss additional educational initiatives that have not been considered in the past, such as pre-k, extended school year, extended school day, scheduling changes, etc. Dr. Faidley shared that the stakeholder groups will identify the priorities which we would include in our plan. Mr. Stengle followed up by sharing that he believes most people in the district want their kids to have a better educational outcome for preparedness for their future. If the community wants better outcomes, then what are the things we can do to move us beyond other school districts and have better outcomes?

Mrs. Usavage shared that she thinks it is important to constantly challenge the status quo and expects that this strategic planning process will bring about opportunities for such input.

Dr. Christman asked the board if they would like the administration to bring a recommendation to work with the Partnership for Excellence to the December 9 board meeting. The decision of the group was to proceed.

2015-2016 Program of Studies/Curriculum and Instruction Overview

Dr. Woodard, Lead Teachers and Instructional Coaches

Dr. Woodard shared a quick overview of what the board would be hearing related to the 2015-16 program of study. The lead teachers, instructional coaches, as well as the BASH administration provided an overview of the changes in the 2015-16 Program of Studies. The changes include:

- The layout is different than in the past. The changes were made to help streamline the information.
- The computer requirement has been removed due to it being an outdated requirement. Students are using computers and technology in all of their classes.

- In the past we've had a lot of prerequisites for classes. In 2015-2016 we will be changing from required prerequisites to recommendations so that students have an opportunity to challenge themselves if they want to.
- Changes to the math sequence:
 - Switch the sequence of algebra II and geometry for struggling learners.
 - Advanced math students will have the option to take geometry and algebra II concurrently so they can take higher level courses throughout high school.
- Technology Education will be renamed to Technology and Engineering Education.
- A new technology education course in multimedia.
- 12th grade English is returning to a full year course.
- New course in concurrent enrollment in US history for grades 11 and 12.
- Embedding a historical novel within the Social Studies curriculum during the school year instead of as summer reading.
- Splitting the choral groups into a 10th grade mixed choral ensemble and a combined 11th and 12th grade concert choir.
- There will be a new Music Theory I class added.
- A new course is being created on Music Production.
- New textbooks for 1st level World Language courses including the incorporation of technology.

In addition to the program of study changes, an overview of our current curriculum progress was given. Dr. Woodard also shared information about this year's Tech Fest which will be combined with the Media Fest and will focus on blended learning.

Lastly, Dr. Woodard and the instructional coaches shared information on the progress of instructional coaching in the district. As a district, we want to prioritize the impact coaching can have on the quality of instruction. Dr. Woodard shared the highlights of the 1:1 cohort coaching model being used within the district and the instructional coaches shared the projects they have been working on this year.

Questions:

Mrs. Usavage asked for an explanation of what project based assessment is. Dr. Foley explained that if a student does not get a proficient or advanced score on a Keystone exam in their sophomore year, they have two additional opportunities to take the exam. If they still do not pass, then they may complete a project based assessment instead. The district would like all students to pass the exam because project based assessments automatically count as basic for the school district.

Mrs. Dennin had several questions related to the Keystone exams:

- Do we have a choice to give students a diploma or not if they don't pass the Keystone exams? Since the Keystone exams are mandated by PDE, we do not have a choice. Students must show proficiency in Algebra, Biology, and English Literature.
- What is the timing of the Keystone exams in relation to taking the course? When they first came out, we weren't giving them immediately after the course finished and students were not doing well. Dr. Foley explained that we are now having students take the Keystones at the end of the related course.

- Will teachers know the material that will be covered on the exam? Yes, because it is based on common core.
- Is proficiency based on a certain percentage? Dr. Miller explained that it is based on a scaled score, similar to the PSSAs, and will change every year.
- Do all students take the same Keystone, even if they are taking honors classes? Dr. Foley stated that all students take the same Keystone exams.

Mr. Elsier asked whether the scoring for keystones is the same for all districts in the state. Dr. Miller stated that the scaled scores are the same for all districts in the state.

Mrs. Hartford asked when PDE will be able to look at the running record of an individual student's growth to determine what a district has done for a student. Dr. Miller responded that the Student Performance Profile has started to pull this component in for 40% of the scores. Mrs. Hartford also asked about graduation requirements. Can a student graduate before 12th grade? Dr. Foley shared that if a student is able to meet the graduation requirements before 12th grade then they can graduate early. Additionally, Mrs. Hartford asked if 8th grade students can take 9th grade classes. This does occur sometimes, mainly in math.

Mrs. Usavage asked about removing barriers for kids that have special interests. Historically, students had to take the regular or honors course prior to taking the AP version. Will this still be a requirement or will it be a recommendation? Dr. Foley shared that this is based on the recommendation of the college board but that it will depend on the student and teachers involved.

Mr. Elsier asked what soft skills are being taught in technology education. Mr. Kennedy shared that students are learning how to communicate and present information. Mr. Elsier also asked if any of our technology education courses are AP. There are no AP courses in technology education at this time. Mr. Elsier went on to share that he would like to see us pursue a concurrent enrollment course in technology education.

Mr. Stengle asked if we have looked into any apprenticeship or mentoring programs for technology education. Mr. Bliss shared that we are looking into those opportunities.

Mr. Elsier asked about which grades are involved in the 1:1 technology cohort. Ms. Johnson shared that the 1st cohort consists of 10th and 12th grade teachers. The 2nd cohort will be starting in January and the goal is to include teachers from more grade levels and content areas.

Mrs. Dennin shared that her son's teacher is teaching the class how to use both MLA and APA citations in research papers. APA is not part of the curriculum, so is there flexibility in what teachers can do in the curriculum? Ms. Johnson explained that there have been discussions about adding APA citing to the curriculum so students are better prepared to write research papers. Mrs. Dennin also shared that over the past seven to eight years she has seen a significant increase in the requirements and rigor in the high school English department and that we've come a long way in improving our English curriculum.

Mrs. Dennin asked if PE is required for 11th and 12th grades or if it is an elective. Mrs. Bergeyova shared that the PE courses are required. There is one course spread across multiple

teachers and students are grouped in electives within the course. This provides opportunities based on interests for students.

Mrs. Dennin asked whether the focus is on knowing how to use a word rather than how to spell it or if students need to be able to do both. Dr. Woodard explained that the focus would be the use and application of spelling and students can use technology to help learn the spelling. Dr. Christman asked how the parents are being informed about this change. Dr. Woodard stated that over the course of the 1st quarter, we have shared resources and tools pertinent to common core and made connections to changes in the report card descriptors.

Mrs. Usavage asked why some of the course sequences in the BASH program of studies are listed as K-12 and others as high school only. Dr. Woodard stated that she would need to check with Dr. Foley to obtain an answer.

Dr. Christman shared that we may need to expand our instructional coaching model to ultimately help our teachers and students.

Committee Comment

No comments

Public Comment

There were no public comments

Announcements

December 2, 2014 Board Reorganization, Education Center, 7:00 pm

December 9, 2014 Board of School Directors Meeting, Junior High West, 7:00 pm

Dr. Christman adjourned the meeting at 10:15 pm.

Motion to adjourn: Mrs. Dennin