



Board of School Directors Committee Meeting Minutes Wednesday, November 8, 2017

Generated by Renai Cardillo on Friday, November 10, 2017

Members present: Nicholas Braccio, William Brong, Janet Flisak, Matt Holliday, Scott Jelinski, Thomas Kwiatkowski, and Donna Scheuren

Members absent: Jill Basile and Ken Keith

Others present: Todd Brown, John-Paul Fanzen, Sharon Furhman, Frank T. Gallagher, Christopher Hey, Raymond Kase, Katie McCoy, Jeff Pammer, Dave Purnell, Katie Kennedy-Reilly, William Stone and Ellen Sykes

1. Education-Personnel Committee

1.1 Middle School Math Update

Mr. Kwiatkowski called the meeting to order at 6:33 PM.

Dr. Gallagher introduced the administrators in the audience.

Dr. Gallagher announced the agenda item commenting that the middle school Math scores were low and that a lot of analysis and focus is taking place to determine the reason.

Dr. Kennedy-Reilly reviewed the presentation which outlined the standards for Mathematical practice by grade level. Dr. Kennedy-Reilly reviewed the standards and discussed the matching of curriculum content to standardized testing. Dr. Kennedy-Reilly also noted that there are some indications from PDE that there will be a reduction in standardized testing going forward.

Dr. Kennedy-Reilly commented that analyzing specific score information allows us to determine how we are performing by grade level and in what areas we need to concentrate our focus of instruction.

A discussion ensued within the Committee about our current instructional practices. Dr. Kennedy-Reilly responded that our instructional practices have always been in-line with recommendations from the National Council of Teachers and Mathematics, however updated methods are being implemented to yield better results. Dr. Kennedy-Reilly noted that the five critical features of Math teaching today include student development of conceptual understanding and procedural skills, communication with peers about mathematics, developing perseverance and practice of mathematics, teacher and peer feedback to learn from mistakes, and student use of technology to support learning.

Dr. Kennedy-Reilly stated that in August we implemented Professional Learning Communities (PLC's) where all Math teachers come together to focus on student data and specific areas where we need to focus instruction. The PLC's are composed of administrators, teacher leaders, grade level math teachers and learning support teachers. They meet monthly for half day sessions and additional time is scheduled on in-service days. The four critical questions guiding the PLC teams are:

- What do we want all students to know and be able to do (Essential Learning Standards)
- How will we know if they know it (Assessments)
- How will we respond if they don't know it (Formative Assessments and Intervention)
- How will we respond if they know it (Formative Assessments and Enrichment)

Dr. Kennedy-Reilly noted that during year one of the PLC's we have been developing units that have high leverage tasks, creating common assessments, and discussing instruction strategies. We are also utilizing professional development time for specific Math development and providing more structure and support with the assistance of Solution Tree. Goals for years two and three include the continued evaluation of unit assessments, creating different benchmark systems and additional group feedback.

Mr. Jelinski commented that we are aware of test content, yet there appears to be a decline in scores. Mr. Jelinski also expressed concerns about teaching to the test. Dr. Gallagher commented that we are looking at the possibility of utilizing another type of standardized testing to show where our students are in their learning process, however because of the multiple levels of mathematics, it is not a simple process. Mr. Jelinski also inquired about intervention or remedial math. Indian Crest Middle School Principal Mrs. McCoy noted that students are receiving intervention in a 5th block class and also in a small group option after school.

Indian Valley Middle School Principal Mr. Pammer said that the amount of dialogue that is occurring has prompted not only a change in instruction, but also the demonstration of different variations of how to solve problems. Mr. Jelinski also asked about homework and intentional practice. Dr. Kennedy-Reilly acknowledged that independent practice (homework) is an important component to student achievement. Mr. Brong also commented on homework and the importance of reinforcement.

Mr. Kwiatkowski asked if the educational system is making the problem more difficult than needs be with the constant changes to the PSSA, creating a waste of resources trying to continually keep up. Mr. Kwiatkowski asked about assessments and how it measures the skills that are being taught. Dr. Gallagher acknowledged that in some circumstances, we are playing catch up as we are instructing new content. Mr. Kwiatkowski asked how do we know that we are assessing the correct items and that we are identifying struggling students. Dr. Kennedy-Reilly responded that it is critical, to make sure that all teachers are giving the same assessment in all grade levels. Based on the assessment, the data is reflected upon in order to target the intervention. Indian Valley MS Principal Mr. Pammer also reinforced the importance of immediate assessment review in order to provide timely intervention. Dr. Kennedy-Reilly also noted that the learning management software program Schoology has a dashboard structure that allows teachers to visually review and archive the results of assessments.

Mr. Brong asked about the teaching process and if No Child Left Behind killed the learning process and Dr. Gallagher said that it was not the NCLB in theory, it was the implementation thereof. Dr. Gallagher also commented on the improvement feedback that has been received from the teachers. One of the primary pieces of input that the teachers have asked for is less disruption to their classes and the need for consistent attendance by students during the first nine weeks of school.

Mr. Braccio asked about the PSSA test results and Dr. Kennedy-Reilly acknowledged that the test has changed drastically. The current test requires high-level thinking and does not isolate any one skill and that much more application and procedural knowledge is required. Mr. Braccio said that he views testing as an identifying tool and Dr. Kennedy-Reilly agreed. Mr. Holliday asked about the score comparison with other schools in the county and Dr. Kennedy-Reilly noted that this is a topic of discussion with all of the Curriculum Directors throughout the county. There is some discussion that elementary students have three years to learn and two years to reinforce, where as middle school students are being taught more content in less time. Dr. Gallagher acknowledged that Math instruction needs additional scheduling at the middle level.

Mrs. Scheuren asked about the timeline of score reporting and corrective measures that are being undertaken for improvement. Dr. Kennedy-Reilly responded that the actual work for improvement began last year. Mrs. Scheuren asked about the specific challenges that teachers are experiencing. Dr. Kennedy-Reilly said that our teachers are given new instructional strategies to explain and teach material.

Mrs. Flisak commented that the Commonwealth bears some of the responsibility of our results because of the constant changes made to the standardized testing.

A member of the public asked about the scheduling component at middle school and if block scheduling at the middle level would allow more freedom for teachers to pace their instruction. Dr. Gallagher acknowledged there is current discussion related specifically to middle school scheduling.

Mr. Kwiatkowski announced that because the committee ran long, other E-P items will be postponed.

Education-Personnel Committee Meeting was adjourned at 8:00 P.M.

1.2 Schoology Update

The discussion on Schoology was postponed.

1.3 Science Pilots

The discussion and report on the Science Pilots was postponed.

2. Finance Committee

2.1 Approve 2016-2017 and 2017-2018 Budget Transfers

Mrs. Scheuren called the Finance Committee Meeting to order at 8:07 P.M.

Mr. Stone announced that there were two sets of budget transfers; the 2016-2017 final audit transfers and the second set are for 2017-2018 to reflect actual spending for summer maintenance work.

The committee agreed to move forward for Board action.

2.2 Approve Act 1 Opt-Out Resolution

Mr. Stone announced that the Act 1 index for the 2018-2019 budget year is 2.4%, noting it is slightly down from last year.

A committee discussion occurred regarding the resolution and Mr. Holliday inquired about the consequences of ridding ourselves of the option should potential funds be needed. Mr. Holliday asked to be reminded why we opt out. Mrs. Scheuren commented that it presents a positive message to the community that the Board is in control of spending. Mr. Stone noted that not opting out significantly expedites the budget process to the point of having to prepare a budget in December based upon assumptions. By approving the Opt-Out Resolution, budget development can occur at a less accelerated pace.

Mrs. Flisak said that she feels confident to opt-out knowing that the budget is in a good place. Mrs. Scheuren commented that it is important to note that in the last five years, we have never gone near the index limitation. By approving or adopting the opt-out Mrs. Scheuren said that it keeps the administration and the Board grounded. Dr. Gallagher noted that there could be circumstances that would necessitate a school district to go above it, in the event of new building construction, but at this time, we are not one of those districts.

Dr. Gallagher commented on state education funding and expressed confidence on the information that is being shared from legislative association projections. Mr. Brong expressed concerns about making a decision on the assumptions of the state funding. Mr. Kwiatkowski asked administration about their confidence to create a budget within the resolution and Mr. Stone and Dr. Gallagher each responded positively.

Mr. Jelinski commented that if administration was making a recommendation for the opt-out and based upon the history of this Board, he is in favor of approving the opt-out.

A member of the public noted appreciation and the optics of approving the resolution presents to the public.

The committee agreed to move forward for Board action.

Mrs. Scheuren adjourned the Finance Committee Meeting at 8:28 PM

3. Operations Committee

3.1 Approve Change Orders for EMC Project

Mr. Brong called the meeting to order at 8:33 P.M.

Mr. Stone noted that in accordance with the change order authority motion previously approved by the Board, all change orders in excess of \$10K would require Board action for approval.

The first change order is a credit to the school district from Rampart Construction for unsuitable soils in the amount of \$42,037.30 based upon unused quantity of 1,121 cubic yds.

The second change order is related to the removal of the undocumented underground storage tank. Its excavation and removal, along with surrounding soils created a change order in the amount of \$30,746.54.

Upon reflection of all change orders to date, the General Construction Contract amount is increased by \$3,369.07 and the Electrical Construction Contract decreased by \$7,234.60.

The Operation Committee agreed to move these items forward for Board Action.

3.2 Approve Agreement for Environmental Consulting Services

Mr. Stone noted that upon the discovery of the underground storage tank it was determined that specialized guidance was needed for its disposal and remediation. Therefore, the Administration is recommending the approval of an agreement with Element Environmental Solutions (E2S), Adamstown, PA.

The remediation process for the tank requires a vapor mitigation system. Mr. Stone presented the work performed to-date, and noted that the District removed the tank and almost all contaminated soil. A small portion of soil could not be removed due to its proximity to the existing building and new footers. E2S oversaw excavation, tank removal and sampling.

Sampling was conducted in accordance with PaDEP guidelines, and indicated higher than allowable concentrations of certain volatile organic compounds in both the remaining soil and groundwater.

A discussion ensued regarding the E2S recommendation to install a vapor mitigation system and groundwater monitoring wells. Mr. Stone indicated that the cost estimate for the installation of this system would be \$75,000 to \$100,000. He briefly reviewed alternative solutions that were investigated, but noted that E2S's recommendation best achieved the administration's goals. It would provide a release of liability from PaDEP, was the most cost effective and would have the least impact on the construction schedule. Board members questioned specifics of the recommendation, including system design costs, the need for monitoring wells and the associated costs. The administration noted it would seek answers from our consultants and attorney. Mr. Stone also noted that because the slab has not been poured yet, we have the opportunity to address the problem now.

Operations Committee Chairman Mr. Brong discussed some of the specifics of the tank removal and soil remnants. Mr. Brong also reviewed the costs associated with the project.

Mrs. Scheuren asked for a breakdown of the environmental costs. Mr. Stone explained that it was a two-part process of excavation and soil disposal, which was performed by two different contractors.

Mr. Braccio asked about the groundwater level and the depth of the wells. Mr. Kwiatkowski asked about the construction schedule of construction since the discovery of the tank. Mr. Brong responded that work has ceased in that particular area. Mr. Kwiatkowski also expressed concern about the not to exceed costs on the proposal. Mr. Kwiatkowski also asked which contractor was making the recommendations for the vapor mitigation system, and Mr. Stone responded that it is E2S.

After some varied discussion, Mr. Stone suggested that the costs associated with the removal of the tank be approved for payment and the proposals for mitigation be tabled at this time pending additional detail and clarification. Mr. Kwiatkowski agreed to gather additional information. Mr. Brong also reinforced the suggestion that the work for the tank removal be approved for payment.

Mr. Brong made a recommendation to approve an additional \$11,500 to design the vapor system. The Operations Committee decided to hold off on any approvals of monies at this time.

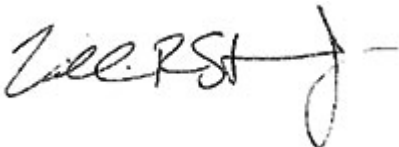
Dr. Gallagher suggested that this item be tabled until additional information can be provided.

3.3 Five-Year Capital Project Plan Update and Proposed 2018 Summer Projects

This presentation was postponed.

The Operations Committee was adjourned at 9:39 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,



William R. Stone
Board Secretary