



Board of School Directors Committee Meetings Minutes Wednesday, November 6, 2019

Generated by Renai Cardillo on Thursday, November 7, 2019

Members present: Nicholas Braccio, Janet Flisak, Ken Keith, Stephen Nelson, Donna Scheuren, Courtney Barbieri

Members absent: Bill Brong, Matt Holliday and Tom Kwiatkowski

Others present: Nate Bender, Michelle Clauz, Frank Gallagher, Josh Klimovich, Tom Moll, Katie Kennedy-Reilly, Tom Overberger, Brian Pawling, John Page, Ginny Perry, Adam Tucker, Sam Varano, Geri Wilkocz, Kim Wilson, and Megan Zweiback

1. Education-Personnel Committee

1.1 High School Program of Studies

Mrs. Barbieri called the meeting to order at 6:38 P.M. announcing that the agenda this evening was a discussion of the High School Program of Studies. Mrs. Barbieri noted that she is currently the Board representative to the Curriculum Council and attended the recent meeting where this information was presented to various district stakeholders.

Dr. Gallagher praised the new course offerings and introduced Director of Curriculum, Instruction & Assessment, Dr. Kennedy-Reilly. Dr. Kennedy-Reilly noted that each course would come through the Board for individual approval as curriculum was written. Dr. Kennedy-Reilly introduced High School Principal Dr. Varano who led the discussion and introduction of courses.

Dr. Varano noted the addition of Mandarin Chinese which had been approved several years ago, but time was needed to create the curriculum. He also noted that Mandarin Chinese 1 would be replacing German and would be available to 9th grade students.

Technology teacher Nate Bender explained that changes to the Tech Ed courses including the creation of the Engineering Capstone course which will be a project-based course that will add closure to the high school engineering experience. He also spoke about the addition of Introduction to Coding, which will encompass learning web design through HTML and CSS. This course originated as a STEM option at the middle schools.

Several other Technology courses have undergone name changes for consistent naming sequences.

High School Guidance Counselor Mr. Overberger spoke about the deletion of the Professional Development course, as its contents have been absorbed into the Pathway 360 Program. The creation of the work study program will complement the Pathway program by creating opportunities for students who wish to engage in meaningful job opportunities prior to graduation. The work study program would be overseen by Business teacher Mr. Darcy and Mr. Overberger. The expectation of the student would be to participate in an approved employment opportunity in which the employer would train and provide feedback to the student. It would promote learning beyond a mentorship.

High School Science teacher Mrs. Wilson spoke about the addition of Principles of Agriculture - Science Plants course. This course will utilize the greenhouse as a classroom for hands-on learning. Mrs. Wilson said the course will be lab-intensive, studying horticulture, agriculture, botany and plant use.

Dr. Varano noted that the High School maintains eight active English quarter courses which are rotated to better respond to students' interests. The proposal suggests tabling "Money, Power & Social Justice" and rotating in "Women's Literature." Dr. Varano also noted a name change in FCS course, Clothing & Textiles 1 & 2 to Sewing 1 & 2.

Assistant Principal, Mr. Klimovich spoke briefly about the creation of Math Lab. This course is currently a pilot course and has been very effective. This course will run every other day, the same semester as Algebra I, building on Math skills to support students who may be struggling in Math.

High School librarian and AP teacher, Mr. Moll, explained the creation of the Research Seminar course. He stated that it will introduce students to research skills in preparation for more rigorous coursework, and how to organize their learning process for presentation purposes. This course will be geared toward 9th & 10th grade students.

Music teachers Mr. Tucker & Mrs. Clauz spoke about the creation of the Rock Ensemble course. Mr. Tucker explained that the course is an outgrowth of the popular club activity Rock Band. The course will give opportunities to students who are not naturally performing arts students, and will include students who do not necessarily read or play music. The course will include instruction in all aspects of the arts and entertainment industry.

High School Art teacher Mrs. Perry spoke about the addition of Advanced Drawing. This course was recently approved by Montgomery County Community College as a dual credit course and is for students who are interested in pursuing a career, minor or major in art and/or design. It is designed as a hands-on course to include study of animation, architecture, fashion, interior design, scientific and medical drawing as well as the creation and preparation of a portfolio.

Dr. Varano noted that he was proud to present the Program of Studies stating its inclusion of innovative and creative courses that will ultimately benefit students. Mrs. Barbieri thanked the Administration and the teachers for the amount of research and work to add the new course offerings.

A brief discussion from the Board included positive comments that reflected an obvious growth in opportunity for our students. Questions on course costs were answered that many will simply require curriculum writing, while greenhouse hardware improvements should be minimal and covered by IVEF donations to the project.

Mrs. Scheuren noted that practice audiences could be found in our local senior living communities. Mrs. Scheuren also inquired about day-to-day instruction of current business course offerings and specific levels of instruction to support student skill set. Dr. Kennedy-Reilly noted that our Microsoft partnership will support some of those specific concerns. Mr. Braccio praised the identification of student need and developing the response. Mr. Nelson also praised the innovation and asked about the work study course and guidelines for progress. Mr. Overberger responded that the course will be a negotiated effort between teacher and student and the employer. Mr. Keith inquired if this course will overlap with NMTCC offerings and Mr. Overberger replied that the course would be for the student who had not elected to pursue a career path at NMTCC.

Mrs. Barbieri thanked everyone for their presentation and adjourned the Education-Personnel Meeting at 7:27 P.M.

2. Finance Committee

2.1 Multi-Year Financial Update

Mrs. Scheuren called the Finance Committee meeting to order at 7:32 P.M.

Dr. Gallagher noted that this update includes audit results from the 2018-19 school year, a recap of the 2019-20 budget along with an update on the 2020-21 process. Dr. Gallagher introduced Director of Business Affairs, Mr. Pawling.

Mr. Pawling noted that this presentation was a high level overview and proceeded to review the Financial Update slide presentation. The first slide highlighted 3 years of financial data - showing the activity of years being monitored and due dates of subsequent reporting. Mr. Pawling explained the 2018-2019 Financial Summary and Financial Highlights. The 2019-20 Budget was reviewed in revenues and expenses.

A budget timeline was presented for the 2020-21 school year including budget creation and the December expectation to adopt a preliminary budget or opt out of Act 1. The Act 1 Index for the 2020-2021 school year has been set at 2.6%. Mr. Pawling indicated that he feels comfortable in projecting that the Souderton Area School District could pass a budget within the 2.6% index. Mr. Pawling also noted that additional finance information would be presented at the December Finance Committee Meeting.

Mr. Pawling also reviewed a History of the Act 1 Index and a Tax Rate History in the Souderton Area School District. Mr. Pawling noted that the real estate tax millage would be determined during the budget process. Current indications reflect a slight growth in assessed value, earned income and transfer tax and an increase in regular ed and special ed subsidies (based on prior increases).

Mr. Pawling reviewed the budget cost drivers, including a PSERS Rate History and Forecast, Charter School costs, Special Ed costs and debt service.

Mr. Pawling distributed a 2019-2020 Budget Book that includes detailed information including 3 prior year history, prior year budget, 19-20 budget and 3 year projections. The book will be submitted to ASBO (Association of School Business Officials) for a meritorious budget award. An electronic version of the budget book will be posted to the school district website shortly.

Mr. Pawling also gave an update on ESSA (Every Student Succeeds Act) Reporting. He stated that the reporting requires building-level reporting identifying the federal, state and local dollars spent on personnel and non-personnel costs for every building. The data will be sent to U.S. Department of Education. Mr. Pawling noted that there are no benchmarks, that it is just a reporting requirement. Mr. Pawling also indicated that work is currently underway for the AFR (Annual Financial Report) and data will be shared upon completion.

Mrs. Scheuren thanked Mr. Pawling for his update.

A brief discussion occurred regarding the budget process and specific details contained in the report. Mr. Nelson suggested that the Special Ed chart reflect the actual number of students receiving services. Mr. Nelson also asked for additional talking points on charter school costs and special education unfunded mandates. He expressed concern to make sure that information is regularly communicated to the public. A suggestion was made that a quarterly form of communication be made to the community.

Mr. Keith suggested a Town Hall Meeting to distribute information to the public.

A member of the public, Mr. Page asked for an explanation on the charter school costs as it relates to the cost per student. Dr. Gallagher responded that a per pupil cost would be difficult to calculate as students are classified into separate categories for both the brick and mortar charter school and cyber charter schools. Dr. Gallagher reiterated the importance of reforming the current Charter School Funding Law.

Mrs. Scheuren adjourned the Finance Committee Meeting at 8:50 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,



Brian R. Pawling
Board Secretary/Director of Business Affairs