

ACADEMIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, January 5, 2022

1. Opening Exercises

A. Pledge of Allegiance

B. Call to Order

C. Roll Call

Jeremy Glausch- PRESENT
Richard Beltz-ABSENT

Additional attendees:
Joy Beers, Board President
Stephen Ebbert
Timothy Tkach
John Corby
Rebecca Karpowicz
Amanda Citro
Lauren Cortright
Aaron Sebelin
Suzanne Howland

2. Academic Affairs Review

A. Winter Credit Recovery

S. Howland reviewed the winter credit recovery procedures, due the COVID failures there are now fall, winter and summer sessions. 30 hours are required to earn the credit recovery credits and students must be present. J. Beers asked if the courses are set. S. Howland explained that the guidance counselors assess the individual student's needs and select the most appropriate course.

B. LAVA (K-12)/Cyber

S. Howland reviewed the LAVA program which is an online learning platform run by June Potts. J. Beers asked if these are prerecorded courses. S. Howland explained that the students work at their own pace on the computer. T. Tkach explained that the courses are tailored to the students needs. S. Howland reviewed that at the end of each semester, student success and struggles are reviewed. Currently, there are 13 students who they are recommending to return from LAVA back to the brick and mortar as they are not successful in the LAVA platform. J. Beers asked if S. Howland has noticed if male students struggle more than female students. S. Howland stated that she has not noticed this.

C. High School Curriculum/Scheduling

S. Howland prepared her presentation to propose a career pathways learning model and schedule revision for the Lehigh Area High School. J. Beers asked why the High School has block scheduling. S. Howland stated that this change was made approximately 20 years ago when she was first hired and cannot answer why. T. Tkach explained that some positives were that block scheduling reduced staff and supplies needed by almost half. Block scheduling looked good on paper but did effect curriculum and it was a lot of information to instruct in a 90 day time period.

J. Beers asked if metrics had been tracked. T. Tkach explained that he did notice that the students struggled more when they transitioned to a block schedule in 9th grade.

S. Howland reviewed that during the 2019-2020 school year, a drop schedule was implemented. Due to the logistics of COVID, the block schedule was brought back last school year. The drop schedule that was implemented in the 2019-2020 school year was reviewed by S. Howland. Due to COVID and the resulting shut down of schools, there is not much data as to the success or downfalls of the drop schedule that was implemented.

S. Howland discussed that in order to form these schedule revisions, the input of teachers, parents and students was sought.

S. Howland presented the first of two schedule revision options. The first option is a 7 day rotation of days on a rotating drop with an enrichment period. J. Beers noted that the schedule seemed confusing and wondered if the schedule days could be kept on the same day of the week rather than on a rotation. S. Howland and A. Sebelin noted that this has never worked in the past as students usually miss or have the same days off and those classes would be missed more often. S. Howland did note one concern with this schedule in that during one rotation day there is an 88 minute enrichment. Her suggestion to fill this length of time was tutoring, learning loss and different activities.

J. Beers asked what the earliest lunch the current High School schedule has. S. Howland answered 10:35 a.m.

S. Howland then presented the second option for the schedule revision. This option is a traditional schedule with a daily 30 minute IE schedule and 7 periods. S. Howland has confirmed that this schedule would meet state requirements as far as

hours. One concern she noted was the increase of supplies that would be needed. For example, she noted that the math department has requested text books in the Spanish language. Another concern is the teacher's contract in that they can only have a coverage duty for 45 days in a school year. This would not give enough coverage to meet the High School's needs.

S. Howland asked that a schedule be approved so that the High School's Program of Study can be finalized and Board approved.

J. Corby asked if the schedule revision can be accomplished with the current number of teachers at the High School. S. Howland responded that yes, it can. However, currently the High School is down to five math teachers and could use one more, no matter what schedule is implemented. She noted that there are approximately 32-34 students in each class. T. Tkach stated that another math teacher is in the budget for next year. J. Corby noted that he is concerned that a new schedule will be approved and then there are not enough teachers to implement.

J. Beers asked if a decision needs to be made right away or if the matter can be tabled. S. Howland explained that a decision would need to be made in order to create a master schedule and schedule the students into the individual courses. J. Corby agreed that a master schedule needs to be built which does take time.

J. Beers noted that the High School's plans are moving in the right direction but has more questions. She wondered why there has to be three split lunches. S. Howland explained that it is due to the size of the student body and the fact that the cafeteria does not hold that many students. Three lunches are required. In the past, the High School had tried having two lunches and it did not work, three were needed.

J. Beers wondered why the High School couldn't have the rotating schedule on the same day of the week and why the block days are back to back. S. Howland noted that yes, they could mix the days.

S. Howland then noted that she had the High School faculty vote today and 87% chose the traditional 7 period day with enrichment at the end of the day and she is hoping that a decision could be made in the next few weeks.

T. Tkach noted that the more time the students see their teachers on a daily basis, the better.

S. Howland stated that when the High School moved to a drop schedule, the student feedback was that homework drastically increased.

T. Tkach then mentioned LAVA. Currently, there are 65-70 students in the LAVA program. June Potts runs the program and S. Howland is the principal. T. Tkach noted that the program has more benefits than out of District cyber schools as there is more tracking and accountability. It also saves the District money. He noted that the academics are better and fits the student needs. Students are provided with internet and a computer. He did note that some students do not return their devices and equipment and those students are billed. T. Tkach noted that June Potts is very successful and has been used as an example for other Districts. S. Howland pointed out that Ms. Potts is very busy as she is also the Librarian for the High School. S. Howland also noted that they are looking into creating a possible hybrid schedule for the students, they would come into the building to work on certain days.

D. Middle School Concerns

S. Ebbert reported that he most immediate concern of his was that they are short teachers. They have had numerous teacher resignations and his concern is that their positions won't be filled in time for the second semester. He will not be able to run certain classes if there isn't anybody hired to instruct. J. Beers asked if the Middle School was preparing other options. S. Ebbert responded in that yes, he is preparing to move some teachers around but that his teachers are already maxed out as far as their contractual 45 day coverage allotment and beyond that he would have to start paying the teachers on an hourly basis. J. Beers stated that if it has to be done, to pay the teachers to fill in. S. Ebbert brought up another option of removing one period from the school day. This would be creative arts. S. Ebbert also noted that the Middle School is sharing teachers with both of the other buildings. They do not have their own music teacher and lost their Family and Consumer Science teacher to the High School.

J. Corby asked the building principals to let him know what their staffing needs are so that this matter can be addressed. J. Beers asked the building principals to come up with a list of their needs so that she can address.

E. Elementary Center Concerns

A. Sebelin noted that their Elementary Center's schedule is a lot simpler than the High School and Middle School schedules. The Elementary Center's schedule is a basic schedule with lunches being served by grade level. There is an 8 day schedule for courses such as library, music and technology. They are not looking at making any major schedule changes.

F. Summer School

T. Tkach noted that due to time constraints, this topic will be discussed at a future meeting.

3. Communications

A. Public Comment

There was not public comment.

B. Next Meeting Date: Wednesday, February 2, 2022

C. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned.