

Academic Affairs
Administration Building Board Room
Wednesday, April 7, 2021 5:45 p.m.
(Virtual) Minutes

In Attendance: Larry Stern, Rita Spinelli, David Bradley, Tim Tkach, Jonathan Cleaver, Jan Wentz, Lauren Cortright, Same Kistler, Mark McGalla, Melissa Volcskai, Aaron Sebelin, Sue Howland

- I.) Update on the SEL program initiative at the Elementary Center (Mrs. Kistler & Mrs. Cortright)
 - a. Mrs. Kistler gives a quick update on the progress of the SEL program and how we are getting this up and running
 - b. Guidance, school psychologists, social workers, EC principals, Mrs. Kistler and Mrs. Cortright
 - c. Broke teachers out in grade levels to complete a survey to get more information
 - d. Helping to create a focus area for when this will be implemented
 - e. Next step is to create a parent and community presentation about what SEL is, importance and parent roles, along with areas they feel need worked on
 - f. Mr. Tkach stated that there was a meeting at the EC, survey will be tallied correct
 - g. Mrs. Kistler – yes
 - h. Survey basically touched on the five core competencies what do they currently touch on how do they touch on and what the strengths and areas of need
 - i. Asked for a representative from each group
 - j. Mrs. Cortright stated that Mrs. Kistler touched on topic but felt that staff had a positive response to the ideas, and extends on the topics that Mrs. Kistler discussed
 - k. Mr. Tkach asked if there was a timeline
 - l. Mrs. Kistler would like to have that out within the next two weeks, next in-service day they will be looking at starting to plan the instructional areas
 - m. Begin for next school year but again not just throwing it in needs to be done effectively
 - n. Mr. Tkach we can send out an alert now in several ways once we are ready with the information for the survey
 - o. Mrs. Cortright making sure teachers are comfortable and on board, lot of thought going on behind this and a lot of planning
 - p. Mrs. Cortright thanks the team for getting this into place and we are on a great path to success
 - q. Mr. Bradley asks who on the board is attending these meetings- are any of the board members involved?
 - r. Mr. Tkach at this time none
 - s. Mr. Bradley then asks why not? Are they invited?
 - t. Mr. Tkach states that we could do that and will ask when the next meeting is and get that out there

- u. Mr. Bradley stated that in reference to the SEL framework – how are we working those angles as well
 - v. Mrs. Kistler stated that all of the core competences will be looked at and driven by community, teachers, etc. will look different depending on grade levels. Topics will vary into more advanced depending on grade level. Area of need and the maturity level of the audience you are working with
 - w. Mr. Bradley asked if we are planning on having each staff trained
 - x. Mrs. Kistler replies if it is something extreme we would look at a threat assessment; main focus is whole group instruction which can be implemented in the classroom
 - y. Mr. Bradley asks if the district has access to a Moxy
 - z. Mrs. Kistler asks if you could explain what that is
 - aa. Mr. Bradley stated it is a tool used help the individual child, has an interactive conversation with the child
 - bb. Mrs. Kistler looked this up and we do not have this- right now lessons in the classroom as a whole
 - cc. Mr. Bradley explains the Moxy a bit more and said maybe he would arrange to have access to one happen
- II. PA Assessment Update – PSSA’s Grs. 3-8 (Mrs. Volcskai & Dr. McGalla) & Keystones Gr. 8 & HS (Alg., ELA, Bio. Mrs. Howland & Mr. Brown)
- a. Mrs. Volcskai started by saying that June 1st will start the PSSA testing, explains the dates and sections
 - b. Mr. Tkach stated that this information will be on the website, and alert calls will go out
 - c. Mr. Bradley stated that the environment is difficult but is the stress level of the students and staff getting to a situation where interactions should take place. He is getting a lot of rumblings in the field of aggressive bullying type tactics from the staff to students who might not be conforming to what you are aiming for.
 - d. Mr. Cleaver stated the teachers are preparing our students and staff is working diligently and our students always work as hard as they can
 - e. Mr. Bradley stated that he was referring to the staff stress level
 - f. Mr. Tkach finishes his comment about how if a parent does not want their child to take the PSSA they just need to write a letter stating so. He continues to explain that these tests will not be used against them. Won’t be using this as any kind of growth measure. We can just use it to get an idea of where they are due to the conditions of the last year.
 - g. Mr. Bradley stated that he really was only referring to the staff/teachers as they get ready to prepare, hearing complaints of aggressive behaviors towards – might not be related to PSSA could just be aggressive behavior. Maybe Dr. McGalla could address this
 - h. Dr. McGalla talks about the PSSA and Keystones for the Middle School, starting in May
 - i. Dr. McGalla talks about the staff and not knowing what you are referring to, how the PSSA’s do not impact their evaluations this year
 - j. Dr. McGalla continues to explain how the Middle School PSSA’s will work this year

- k. Mr. Bradley states that he will reach out to Dr. McGalla about this and be more specific about this situation
- l. Mr. Bradley continues to state that he will reach out for privacy reasons
- m. Dr. McGalla replies that no staff has complained to him.
- n. Mrs. Howland talks about the Keystone Assessments – not much has changed from last month when we talked about them

II.) Kindergarten Registration – Mr. Sebelin

- a. Kindergarten registration is up and running
- b. Planning on having the testing in person in the first two weeks of May, following all the health and safety protocol
- c. Online process helps with registration
- d. Mr. Sebelin talks about the screening and how the process works
- e. Classes made from the screening, nurses and guidance there as well
- f. Information on the district website and the local news
- g. As of today 91 students are registered for kindergarten
- h. 21 of those students are from our Pre K class, showing their kindergarten readiness
- i. Mrs. Spinelli asks if the count of 91 is typical
- j. Mr. Sebelin explains that this is and we are still expecting many to continue to register
- k. Mr. Tkach talks about the Pre K open house and registration for April 15, 2021

III.) Good of the Order

- a. Mrs. Spinelli asks Mr. Bradley about the statement he made regarding staff stressed and wondered if there was something different about this year then past years.
- b. Mr. Bradley stated he received complaints about a staff member at the elementary center and that he was under the impression that Dr. McGalla had taken care of this and that he claims to not know the situation seems strange to him. He will talk to him privately
- c. Mr. Cleaver stated that Dr. McGalla is not at the Elementary Center but the Middle School
- d. Mr. Bradley was under the impression that the complaint had something to do with whipping them into shape for PSSA's, apparently it was not
- e. MR. Stern, thank you to all the presenters- question for the high school concerning the return of the students to the high school
- f. Mrs. Howland stated that the students are doing well, following all guidelines. Explains the spacing of students during lunches and classrooms. Great to see the students in the building, staff not complaining and things moving smoothly.
- g. Ms. Bowes asked a question about the virtual PSSA, does it include outside cyber
- h. Mr. Cleaver stated that the students we are testing are our LASD students not including students who are going to a non- Leighton Cyber school. They would have their own testing.

Next Meeting; Wednesday, May 5, 2021, 5:45 p.m., Virtual