



Board of School Directors Committee Meetings Minutes Wednesday, May 10, 2023

Generated by Renai Cardillo on Thursday, May 11, 2023

Members present: Bill Brong, Janet Flisak, Ken Keith, Tom Kwiatkowski, Andy Landis, and Stephen Nelson

Members absent: Courtney Barbieri, Nick Braccio and Donna Scheuren

Others present: Todd Burns, John Franzen, Frank Gallagher, Christopher Hey, Katie Kennedy-Reilly, Josh Klimovich, Michael Taylor, Sam Varano, Kim Wilson, and Megan Zweiback

1. Education-Personnel Committee

1.1 Curriculum Revisions & Update

Mr. Kwiatkowski called the meeting to order at 6:32 P.M.

Dr. Gallagher announced the Education-Personnel meeting agenda noting the revisions to High School Science Curriculum, a change to High School graduation requirements and revisions to the Program of Studies for the 2024-2025 school year.

Dr. Kennedy-Reilly, Director of Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment & Technology explained that the new sets of **STEELS** (**Science, Technology, Engineering, Environmental Literacy & Sustainability**) standards will be fully integrated into classroom instruction by the 2025-26 school year. Dr. Kennedy-Reilly also noted that the last time this curriculum had been updated was 2002 and school districts will have 3 years to re-align their curriculum to meet the standards.

Dr. Kennedy-Reilly reviewed the acronym STEELS, defining the Science units; Life Science, Physical Science and Earth & Space Science. The Technology and Engineering unit will focus on the interaction among technology, engineering, society and the environment. The Environmental Literacy and Sustainability will focus on practice, ecological processes and systems that comprise the environment, including human social systems and influences.

Dr. Kennedy-Reilly introduced high school Environmental Science teacher, Mrs. Wilson who spoke to the new activities within the Environmental Science that has students outside on the high school campus, exploring the pond and areas around the campus to search for bees, birds and food chains. Mrs. Wilson also spoke to the unit on energy with a focus on energy usage in the home, building realization of energy consumption. The earth and space unit includes a soil study and students are encouraged to design their own organic garden using local resources.

Mrs. Wilson stated that she has been teaching this course for 7 years and the student engagement and enthusiasm for the course continues to grow. A brief discussion occurred about text book use and Dr. Kennedy-Reilly explained the cross-over learning giving the class relevance. Dr. Kennedy-Reilly also noted that the new STEEL standards will most likely be met prior to 2025 as the school district has been proactive in its instruction for several years.

A member of the audience asked if an economic component had been added to the program and Dr. Gallagher responded that economics is addressed in the business/math classes.

The Committee agreed to move forward for Board approval.

The second item for the Education-Personnel is the recommendation to remove the Scholars Diploma from the high school graduation requirements. High School Principal Dr. Varano explained that upon its original implementation it was intended to encourage student participation in internships. However Dr. Varano noted that students are achieving mentorship experiences in larger numbers, without the scholars diploma.

The Committee agreed to move forward with the removal of the scholars diploma.

The third item on the Education-Personnel Committee Meeting is an update to the Program of Studies for the 2024-2025 school year.

High School Principal Dr. Varano spoke to the proposed changes at the high school which will add a Dual Credit option to the AP Biology course. A change to the Math curriculum will add AP Calculus C, eliminating the redundancy in AB and BC selections. The Video Production Applications course will be discontinued and a Film Production 1 and Film Production 2 course will be added, giving students the opportunity to learn and practice film editing without a television (broadcasting) focus. Dr. Varano noted that this course is the outgrowth of student participation in film club with students seeking to learn a different expertise.

Dr. Kennedy-Reilly also noted that future curriculum revisions will be forthcoming for middle school technology education and art programs as well as revisions to 2nd and 5th grade Science, Social Studies and music programs.

The Committee agreed to move forward for Board approval.

2. Finance Committee

In the absence of Finance Committee Chairperson Mrs. Scheuren, Mr. Kwiatkowski called the meeting to order at 7:06 P.M.

2.1 Approve Fox Rothschild as District Solicitor for 2023-2024

Dr. Gallagher stated the agenda items as annual approvals of the district's legal services.

The Committee agreed to move forward for Board Action.

2.2 Approve Sweet Stevens Katz & Williams as District Special Education Counsel for 2023-2024

The Committee agreed to move forward for Board Action.

2.3 Approve 2023-2024 Special Education Shared Service Plan with MCIU

Dr. Gallagher noted that the MCIU cost plan is an annual estimate of services.

Director of Pupil Services, Mrs. Zweiback explained the agreement which outlines costs associated for the Montgomery County Intermediate Unit to provide special services to our students. Mrs. Zweiback explained that the cost of services has been fluctuating due to recent supply and demand of personnel. Mrs. Zweiback also noted the M.C.I.U. addition of high quality programs that we have not been able to serve in district. Mrs. Zweiback cited the increased need for emotional support programs for younger students with behavior issues and the M.C.I.U. has offered safe alternatives for these children.

Mr. Kwiatkowski noted that the cost plan is based on current registered students and those receiving services from the M.C.I.U., noting that the costs could change as enrollment changes. Mr. Taylor indicated that costs have almost doubled in the last couple of years.

Mrs. Zweiback indicated that the cost plan covers students receiving services both annually and individually. Mr. Nelson noted the detail and improvement on the M.C.I.U. cost program and Mrs. Zweiback indicated that student evaluations fosters communication allowing for better assignment for services to meet students needs.

Mrs. Flisak expressed concerns about the enrollment of students needing services and Mrs. Zweiback explained cost effectiveness of outsourcing these special services rather than increasing staffing for services that could be ever changing. Mr. Brong inquired about M.C.I.U. resources for GIEP students and Mrs. Zweiback answered that those are met with in-house resources. Mrs. Zweiback also noted that the M.C.I.U. offers training and support to our teachers for students with GIEP's.

The Committee agreed to move forward for Board action.

2.4 2023-2024 Budget Update

Dr. Gallagher noted that progress has been made on reducing the deficit within the budget and also noted that as of this time, no programs are being cut and no staff or faculty are being furloughed. Dr. Gallagher noted that the school district continues to review its revenue and organizational efficiencies. Dr. Gallagher also noted that the state budget approval is expected to be delayed.

Director of Business Affairs, Mr. Taylor reviewed the adjustments since the April meeting indicating an increase in real estate tax assessments and a 50% increase in Basic Education and Special Education subsidies. He noted that while the actual state

revenue is still unknown, the district has added in half of governors proposed budget. Mr. Taylor also projected revenue adjustments in Title I funding and an increase to ESSER III Budgetary revenue. These adjustments resulted in a deficit of \$4.5M.

Mr. Taylor shared a slide that depicted the impact of millage rate increases.

A slide outlining Local Revenues was reviewed noting increased revenue from real estate taxes including interims and earned income taxes. Mr. Taylor projected that per capita taxes will remain static.

Mr. Taylor reviewed State, Federal and Other Revenues indicating that operating costs continue to increase and revenue sources are decreasing.

Additional slides were reviewed showing the budget expenditures by function and by object. These depictions allow for comparison of budget demands from previous years expenses to projected expenses. A Five-Year History of Special Education expenditures was reviewed indicating the ever increasing costs associated with special education.

Mr. Kwiatkowski thanked Mr. Taylor for the presentation noting the significant demands on the budget, while continuing to deliver effective programs.

Mr. Nelson expressed concern about the budgeted interest earnings and the possibility of the district increasing its budgeted investment income. Mr. Taylor indicated that investments are always being looked at for possible increase on its returns, however he noted that it remains a balance not to jeopardize or put those investments at risk.

A brief discussion occurred about grant funding and it was explained that while the district does seek out many grant opportunities, those awards often come with stipulations of services and the end use of awarded funds is often restricted.

Mr. Keith reiterated the material that was covered this evening noting that on average the school district has been able to maintain its programs, as well as add full-day kindergarten with an average tax increase of 1.5%. He stated that the district has maintained a tax for what you need mission, however as the economy has changed the realization of a larger increase may be needed.

A brief discussion occurred about the use of the fund balance and the Act 1 Index. Mr. Taylor indicated that early IFO projections for next year's (2024-2025) Act 1 Index is 4.5%.

A brief discussion occurred about special education costs and Mrs. Zweiback confirmed that as the district graduates its members of the senior class, the new enrollments are showing many more Early Intervention students. Mr. Brong reiterated the burden to taxpayers with unfunded mandates; requiring school districts to provide services without adequate state funding.

Staffing and personnel was discussed and Director of Human Resources, Dr. Hey explained that as retirees leave - new hires do create a salary disparity which reduces expenditures in the budget. Dr. Hey also explained that an annual staffing review occurs across the district in all positions, to evaluate personnel needs based upon enrollment.

A member of the audience asked for more transparency on the budget and each of its line items. Dr. Gallagher responded that members of the public may come into the office and review the budget by making an appointment with the Business Department.

Mr. Kwiatkowski adjourned the Finance Committee Meeting at 8:11 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,



Michael Taylor, C.P.A.
Board Secretary / Director of Business Affairs