



## **Board of School Directors Committee Meeting Minutes Wednesday, June 7, 2023**

*Generated by Renai Cardillo on Thursday, June 8, 2023*

Members present: Nick Braccio, Bill Brong, Janet Flisak, Ken Keith, Tom Kwiatkowski, Andrew Landis, Stephen Nelson

Members absent: Courtney Barbieri

Others present: Tessa Colucci, John Franzen, Jill Funk, Frank Gallagher, Katie Kennedy-Reilly, Fran Masin-Moyer, Katie McCoy, Brian McKeever, Carolyn Rosenberger, Michael Taylor, and Sam Varano

### **1. Education-Personnel Committee**

#### 1.1 Curriculum 1st Grade Play shop

Mr. Kwiatkowski called the Education Personnel meeting to order at 6:30 PM.

Dr. Gallagher indicated that the Play Shop curriculum is being expanding to first grade and introduced Director of Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment & Technology, Dr. Kennedy-Reilly.

Instructional Coach, Mrs. Rosenberger, explained that 1st Grade Play Shop is a theme based student-centered program focusing on guided play. Instructional Coach, Mrs. Colucci, stated that the guided play is the subject that the teacher has crafted, giving the students the opportunity to learn the subject in a hands-on environment.

West Broad Street ES first grade teacher Mrs. Funk spoke about a Play Shop learning activity focused on the local community and the businesses within our community. Rules of a community and how it all works together were cited. Students learn about mapping and geography. A Play Shop Zoo unit focuses on animals and their interactions. A Camping unit includes science standards of the sun and the moon, night and day and light and sounds.

Dr. Kennedy-Reilly noted that she was present during the curriculum writing and development of Play Shop units as well as the positive reflections from students on how much they have enjoyed the Playshop unit. Dr. Kennedy-Reilly noted that Science and Social Studies standards are also built in to the program and the PA STEELS (Science, Technology & Engineering, Environmental Literacy & Sustainability) standards are touched upon.

Mr. Kwiatkowski inquired about the assessments and growth of the Play Shop program and Mrs. Rosenberger responded that much of it is observational by the teacher. Mrs. Rosenberger also noted that the assessment part is being developed. Instructional Coach Mrs. Colucci said that student performance can be measured by giving students the option to show their learning in different ways. A brief discussion occurred about evaluation and assessments.

Dr. Kennedy-Reilly stated that the first and second grade Play Shop will continue to grow through fifth grade as it engages students. Second and fifth grade curriculum is scheduled for next year and third and fourth the following years. Mr. Keith expressed his appreciation of the program which allows one to witness learning in action.

Dr. Gallagher congratulated Mrs. Rosenberger on her upcoming retirement.

The Committee agreed to move the 1st Grade Play Shop curriculum forward for Board approval.

#### 1.2 High School Red Zone

High School Principal Dr. Varano gave a brief over view of the piloted program called Red Zone. He explained the revised schedule which begins with the first 40 minutes of each school day. This specific time period gives all students access to their teachers, allowing them to seek help, complete lab work, finish homework or participate in a club or school activity. Dr. Varano mentioned that a similar program had been experimented with last school year under the name Lunch and Learn, from which Red Zone derived. Dr. Varano indicated that the time change of the program to morning has been much more effective and data has already shown more students are seeking assistance and participating in the morning program.

Dr. Varano stated that both student and teacher testimonials support the effectiveness of the program and an unexpected result has shown an improvement in school tardiness as well.

Administration is seeking approval to formally put the Red Zone schedule in place after Labor Day for the 2023-2024 school year.

Mr. Kwiatkowski asked how to measure the success of the program and Dr. Varano answered that while academic achievement was not measured, there has been a cultural shift allowing students to build relationships and seek additional help from their teachers.

Mr. Landis stated his support for students to seek help when needed and Mr. Keith indicated his appreciation of the program offering flexibility to students. Mr. Keith also expressed concern for students not seeking assistance when needed and Dr. Kennedy-Reilly responded that the High School Guidance Office makes sure that students have a plan to utilize Red Zone effectively. High School Guidance Counselor, Mr. McKeever also spoke about students who need assistance, meeting with those students, holding them accountable and making parents aware.

Mr. Brong expressed concern about the change to the daily schedule and the loss of instructional time.

Dr. Gallagher indicated that the flexibility of Red Zone will also allow students to seek guidance and counseling in a one-to-one environment if needed.

Mr. Braccio commented on the positive aspects of Red Zone with its socialization component and other benefits.

A member of the public commented on the Red Zone program stating that she is the parent of a high school student and her child has utilized the Red Zone effectively. Other public comments included a concern of wasting unstructured time and Dr. Varano noted that it is not a problem as both the school security team and teachers are monitoring it. Another comment noted that student representatives have previously reported that Red Zone is positive.

The Committee agreed to move forward for approval.

### 1.3 Comprehensive Plan and School Improvement

Director of Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment and Technology, Dr. Kennedy-Reilly shared a presentation highlighting the Comprehensive Plan for years 2022-2025. Dr. Kennedy-Reilly reiterated that the Comprehensive Plan is a PDE requirement for all LEA's - requiring continuous planning to increase student performance. Dr. Kennedy-Reilly stated that the current SASD Comprehensive Plan identifies the following priorities:

- Cultivate belonging
- Strengthen mental health supports and services
- Provide strong education for all, giving priority to: academic growth and achievement and expanding opportunities

As Dr. Kennedy-Reilly reviewed the priority items of the plan, noting that action steps have already been implemented to support School Improvement and Additional Targeted Support and Improvement (A-TSI) as designated by PDE. She noted that consistent with ESSA requirements, Pennsylvania will use the same, basic three-step approach for CSI (Comprehensive Support and Improvement) to designate schools in which one of more students groups face both academic and student success challenges.

Dr. Kennedy-Reilly reviewed the designation for the Souderton Area High School as it relates to the graduation rate for English Learners and the designation of Indian Crest Middle School impacting growth and achievement for its Hispanic students and students with disabilities. Dr. Kennedy-Reilly acknowledged the designations stating the implemented resources and supports as well as the existing steps outlined in the Comprehensive Plan.

Indian Crest Middle School Principal Mrs. McCoy spoke to the purposeful intervention that is occurring and changes to teaching strategies across all disciplines. She noted that resulting data allows for support all learners.

A brief discussion occurred about differentiated instruction especially for students who may have had no formal education or have experienced an interruption to learning. Dr. Kennedy-Reilly noted that the Red Zone has been an effective resource for struggling learners.

Mr. Landis praised the curriculum department for their work and the early recognition of the issues in the established Comprehensive Plan.

Mr. Braccio praised the ELL instruction in the district.

A member of the public asked about the number of ELL learners and Dr. Kennedy-Reilly responded approximately 400 students. Supervisor of Curriculum Mr. Franzen spoke to the ethnic enrollment as it appears in the Future Ready PA Index.

Mr. Kwiatkowski adjourned the Education-Personnel meeting at 7:53 P.M.

## **2. Operations Committee**

### 2.1 Athletic Facility Feasibility Study Update

Mr. Brong called Operations to order at 8:37 P.M.

Director of Business Affairs, Mr. Taylor gave a brief update on the feasibility study being performed by ELA Sport. The purpose to study the soil, drainage and topography of the proposed site of a multi-purpose field on the high school campus. He noted that the study should be finalized shortly and an update would be given at the August Operations Committee Meeting.

Mr. Brong commented on a public event recently held at the high school and catered by Chartwell's. Mr. Brong praised Chartwell's for their service.

The Operations Committee Meeting was adjourned at 8:40 P.M.

## **3. Finance Committee**

### 3.1 2023-2024 Budget Update

Mr. Kwiatkowski called the Finance Committee Meeting to order at 7:59 P.M.

Dr. Gallagher stated that a lot of work has occurred on the budget since the May meeting. Departments continue to review and work together to close the budget deficit while maintaining programs. He indicated that work will continue and a budget will be presented for approval at the June 22nd Board meeting. Dr. Gallagher also stated that he was at the state capitol yesterday advocating for public education and feels confident that the school district very well may receive the amount of Basic Education Funding as originally proposed in the Governors budget.

Director of Business Affairs, Mr. Taylor reviewed a presentation of the budget update indicating that it current stands with a deficit of \$1.9M which would require a full Act 1 tax increase in the amount of 4.1%. He indicated that progress has been made with positive revenue adjustments including real estate tax assessments, Title II increase, ESSER III budgetary increase, and an increase in Access Funds and state subsidies. Mr. Taylor also reviewed expenditure adjustments to transportation, charter school tuition, equipment, utilities and contracted services. Mr. Taylor also indicated that there are a number of variables still outstanding - including additional retirements, additional state funding and charter school funding reform.

Mr. Taylor reviewed the adjustments since the May meeting with a review of each budget impact category. A slide showing debt service of 5 Year Actual's and 5 Year Forecast was shared as it relates to future capital improvements.

Mr. Taylor noted the next step will be to approve the Final Budget at the June 22nd Board Action Meeting. It was discussed that the Board does reserve the right to recess that meeting allowing time to gather additional information, as long as the passed is approved prior to June 30th.

Mr. Kwiatkowski inquired about the level of risk associated with district investments and Mr. Taylor expressed caution on the investments indicating that the district works with several different financial partners, however not all monies are accessible for investments.

A brief discussion occurred regarding PlanCon and Dr. Gallagher stated that there is not any concrete data available at this time. Mr. Taylor explained Plan Con (facilities and construction project reimbursement) and how it has been inactive in recent years for new projects.

Mr. Keith praised the work that has happened on the budget since the May meeting. Mr. Keith asked about the tax increase and Mr Taylor responded that even if the district gets all of the proposed Governor's budgeted amount of funding, it would not change the projected tax increase amount.

Mr. Brong asked for confirmation of the Act 1 Index and Mr. Taylor confirmed it is 4.1%.

As the Finance meeting was wrapping up, Dr. Gallagher stated that there are no program cuts and the Board may decide to hold a special meeting if deemed necessary to provide updated information on the budget.

The Finance Committee was adjourned at 8:36 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael Taylor". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

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