



## Board of School Directors Committee Meeting Minutes

**Wednesday, February 14, 2024**

Generated by Renai Cardillo on Thursday, February 15, 2024

**Members present:** William Brong, Janet Flisak, Andrew Landis, Ken Keith, Stephen Nelson, William Formica, Kimberly Wheeler, Michael Barnacz

**Members absent:** Nicholas Braccio

**Others present:** **John Franzen**, Frank T. Gallagher, Sue Hadfield, Felicia Hall, Brianna Hampson, Christopher Hey, Katie Kennedy-Reilly, Megan Moran, Matt Montagna, Ryan Pongras, Lynne Stauffer, Dan Stover, Lisa Stover, Michael Taylor, Sam Varano, Renee Wagner, and Megan Zweiback

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

#### 1.1 Approve Curriculum Revisions and Updates

Mr. Landis called the E-P meeting to order at 6:35 P.M. announcing the curriculum revisions; elementary music, Low Incidence Curriculum and updates to the Reading and Writing Program.

Director of Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment and Technology Dr. Kennedy-Reilly stated that the team is excited to share what team has been working on and introduced Supervisor of Curriculum, John Franzen. Mr. Franzen stated that the department has been working to revise the K-5 music program. West Broad Street Elementary School Principal, Mrs. Hadfield introduced elementary music teacher, Lisa Stover. Ms. Stover spoke about the revisions to the program that include making it more modern and student centered. Ms. Stover indicated that the last update to the K-5 music program was in 2011. She indicated that concepts will be revisiting as well as building depth as students grow through the program. She also stated that elementary music teachers have the unique opportunity to see students for six years and watch them mature and grow their interest in music.

Ms. Stover noted that instruction of the recorder occurs in third grade and the ukulele in fourth grade. This instruction introduces students to the possibility of playing an instrument as well as working and playing together in an ensemble. Ms. Stover stated that the entire elementary curriculum provides basic understanding and enjoyment of music.

Several Board members indicated that they were in attendance at the Curriculum Council meeting and were excited to see the updates to the elementary music curriculum.

Mr. Keith asked about the changes in last decade, and Ms. Stover commented that assessments are observable instead of paper and pencil.

The Committee agreed to move forward for approval.

Dr. Kennedy-Reilly introduced Special Education Supervisor, Mr. Matt Montagna, who introduced the special education teachers from the high school who have been instrumental in developing and implementing the Low Incidence Curriculum at the High School level. Mr. Montagna introduced Megan Maran, Special Education teacher in the Multi-Disabilities Class; Lynne Stauffer, Special Education teacher Life Skills; Felicia Hall, Occupational therapist; Brianna Hampson, Speech and Language Therapist; and High School Transition teacher, Renee Wagner.

Ms. Wagner spoke about the STARR (Students Transitioning to Adult Roles and Responsibilities) program and how the high school is meeting the needs of its special education students, as well as preparing to give them opportunities beyond high school.

Ms. Hall spoke about the PAES Lab which is learning environment that gives students with IEP's, real-world experience in several different employment areas.

Ms. Wagner noted that the STARR program, as it is known, will be in existence for ten years this year and throughout the years teachers have observed changes in student needs and abilities. Speech and Language Therapist, Ms. Hampson spoke to new structures and teaching that helps to increase students strengths and social skills, therefore allowing them to participate in new experiences and opportunities.

Special Education teacher Ms. Stauffer spoke about the grouping of instruction based upon student abilities and needs. Previously instruction may have occurred in a singular classroom, the new teamed approach allows students the opportunity to change classes and receive instruction from several different teachers, as well as integrate with regular ed students in the hallways. Ms. Stauffer also spoke about the Apartment Life program and the shared skills that are taught within this particular program; grocery shopping, cleaning, cooking, laundry, social skills, skills for daily living.

Dr. Kennedy-Reilly noted that the team approach of the department has been to create curriculum that serves students. Mr. Landis asked about how many students are impacted and the team responded approximately 40 students at the high school are in the program, at some level.

Ms. Wheeler commented on the team's desire to support students based upon their individual abilities. Mr. Keith praised the team for desire to change and develop as needed. Mrs. Flisak thanked everyone for their work and asked about the age that students no longer receive services from the school district and Mrs. Wagner noted it is currently age 22.

Mr. Nelson acknowledged his attendance at Curriculum Council and gave genuine praise for the program and thanked the teachers for their work. Mr. Brong also praised the transition program for allowing students to get out into the community. Mr. Formica and Mr. Barnacz also praised the teachers for the program and commitment to student success.

Mr. Barnacz asked about benefits of program and Mrs. Wagner noted that the change of classes and interacting with more teachers and students. Ms. Hampson commented on the increase of variety of educators and peers that students are now engaging with has been very beneficial. Mrs. Wagner spoke briefly about the challenges to parents who are navigating post high school career options for their students.

Mr. Landis commented about other schools asking to see our program. Ms. Hall responded that other schools have been in contact with our district to learn about our transition program. Dr. Gallagher noted the participation in Unified Sports and the high school being the first in the state to implement the program.

Dr. Gallagher praised Mrs. Zweiback and Mrs. Stauffer for their intuitiveness in creating a program that serves the whole child. Mrs. Stauffer commented that the Souderton community, and local businesses have been supportive.

A member of the public cited experience working with special needs students, noted the improvement and support over the years.

The Committee agreed to approve the Low Incident Curriculum.

Dr. Kennedy-Reilly stated that the district's English Language Arts program is standards-aligned and grounded in the convergence of research that supports best practices on what matters and what works to develop competent, confident readers and writers. She stated that instruction is a combination of explicit, systematic, intensive, responsive, and multimodal instruction focusing on students and their development of a lifelong passion for literacy.

Dr. Kennedy-Reilly stated that the next steps include the anticipated launch of new ELA resource that will support student literacy. Dr. Kennedy-Reilly also gave an update on Performance Matters - which streamlines the assessment process to support informed teaching and efficient learning. Dr. Kennedy-Reilly noted that it offers digital measures for student achievement. Dr. Kennedy-Reilly also noted that PSSA's, Keystone Exams, PSAT's and SAT's are all administered digitally. In addition, the Advanced Placement exams will be digital in 2025.

Dr. Kennedy-Reilly gave an update on the Elementary Progress Report and the committee that is working on the format and revision.

Director of Pupil Services, Mrs. Zweiback stated that student enrollment and registration will be offered online this year. The online registration will open in a few weeks for kindergarten registration for the 24/25 school year. Mrs. Zweiback noted that paper packets will still be accessible if on line if not suitable.

Mr. Landis adjourned the Education-Personnel Committee Meeting at 7:37 P.M.

## **2. Policy Committee**

### 2.1 First Reading of Policy 006.2 - Broadcasting Board Meetings

Mrs. Flisak called the Policy Committee Meeting to order at 7:38 P.M.

Assistant Superintendent Dr. Hey reviewed the Policy 006 from the year 2007. The recommended changes include recording of all open meetings; including all committee meetings. The current policy states that video is retained for 30 days before destruction. The new policy will revise the video to be retained for one year. Dr. Hey stated that the official record of all meetings are the minutes. Video does not constitute official record.

Dr. Hey noted that a second reading of the policy would be waived, allowing the Board to approve and adopt the Policy at its February 22nd action meeting. This waiver would permit the recording of the March 13th Committee Meetings.

A brief discussion occurred about the reconfiguration of the room set up to properly allow for recording of committee meetings.

Mrs. Flisak reiterated that this change is a request from the public. Mrs. Flisak also stated that the room set up will allow for public comment. Mrs. Wheeler asked about live streaming and Dr. Hey said that at this time, because of limited resources, the administrative recommendation is for recording only.

A member of the public commented on the length of time to archive video, suggesting it should be maintained forever.

A member of the public thanked the Board for adding video of committee meetings, but also requested live streaming. This member also noted that one year storage of meeting videos seems short sighted.

Another member cited the expansion of committee meetings to video, and requested that videos be maintained beyond one year.

Another thank you for recording committee meeting minutes.

The Committee agreed to move forward for approval and action.

### 2.2 First Reading of Policy 102 - Academic Standards

Director of Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment & Technology, Dr. Kennedy-Reilly stated that the first reading of this policy is at the suggestion of the Pennsylvania School Boards Association. The current policy was last reviewed in September of 2000. Dr. Kennedy-Reilly noted there are no changes to the procedures or academic standards, only updating the language.

The Committee agreed to move forward for a Second Reading.

### 2.3 First Reading of Policy 105 - Curriculum Development

Dr. Kennedy-Reilly reiterated that Policy 105 was last reviewed in May of 1998. There is only language update to the policy, no procedural change.

A member of the public requested that the Draft section of BoardDocs show the revisions to policy to the public.

The Committee agreed to move forward for a Second Reading.

Mrs. Flisak adjourned the Policy meeting at 8:01 P.M.

## **3. Finance Committee**

### 3.1 Approve Montgomery County Intermediate Unit Budget

Mr. Nelson called the Finance Committee Meeting to order at 8:03 P.M.

Dr. Gallagher indicated that this is an annual approval of the intermediate unit membership services budget. He explained that every school district in Montgomery County contributes to the membership services budget which supports the Office of Professional Learning, Office of Community and Government Relations, and Office of Technology Services. Dr. Gallagher stated that the Souderton Area School District calculated cost contribution is \$82,722. This cost is actually \$200 less than last year.

A member of the public asked for copies of the MCIU budget.

It was agreed to move forward for approval and board action.

### 3.2 2024-25 Budget Process - Expenditures

Director of Business Affairs, Mr. Taylor stated that the presentation this month would be to explain the budget expenditure process as it relates to the annual budget approval process. Mr. Taylor also indicated that this is a follow up to last month's meeting where the budget revenue process was presented.

Mr. Taylor reviewed slides that depicted school district expenditures by object code and percentage of each.

Mr. Taylor also shared a slide sourced from PASBO (Pennsylvania Association School Board Officials) which showed a ten-year change of expenditures to school districts in Montgomery County Pennsylvania. Mr. Taylor also shared a slide that showed the share of salaries vs. share of benefits statewide. He noted that salaries and benefits are two thirds of a school district budget. Several other slides depicted the growth of employee benefit costs, including the changes in the PSERS rate contribution.

Mr. Taylor shared a slide showing the impact of Charter School Tuition over a ten-year time span in Pennsylvania. Mr. Taylor briefly explained the charter school tuition calculation based upon district ADM (average daily membership).

Mr. Taylor reviewed slides showing the increases to special education instruction. Mr. Taylor reiterated the importance of knowing what drives a budget, being able to identify trends, and the ability to determine what can be controlled and what cannot.

Mr. Taylor reviewed the slides showing the current budget expenditures by object and with a ten-year comparison. He also reviewed slides that showed ten year comparisons of costs for Special Education, Benefits and Purchased Professional and Technical Services.

Mr. Taylor reviewed the current budget and the major revenue categories. He also presented the budget calendar noting budget presentations at the March 13 and April 10 Finance Committee Meetings. The Proposed Final Budget will be presented at the April 10 meeting.

Mr. Taylor reminded the Board of the current Act One Index which is 5.3%.

School Board Director Mr. Nelson commented on salaries and benefits as it impacts the school district and its community. He also noted that there is not a whole lot that the Board of School Directors can control.

Mrs. Flisak spoke about the PSERS contribution and the impact of the pension program on the annual budget. Mr. Taylor acknowledged that the program has changed but it will take time (possibly 10-15 years) for that change to positively impact school districts budgets.

A brief discussion occurred about the PSERS plan and its calculation.

Mr. Brong commented on the Charter School tuition and the inequity of special education funding between public school and charter schools.

A discussion occurred about cyber charter and bricks and mortar charter schools and the offerings that Souderton Area SD has developed to become competitive in a cyber environment.

A member of the public asked about a more astute calculation of charter school tuition rates.

Mr. Nelson adjourned the Finance Committee Meeting at 8:49 P.M.

## **4. Operations Committee**

### 4.1 Approve Proposed 2024-2025 School Year Calendar

Mr. Brong called the Operations Committee meeting to order at 8:50 PM.

Dr. Hey acknowledged the delay in the annual calendar approval. He mentioned that the Keystone testing days were under consideration for change which could have resulted in virtual instruction days for students not testing. However based upon parent surveys, there will be no changes to the Keystone testing dates and the calendar will be maintained as it. The administration is recommending it for approval and board action next week.

The Committee agreed to move forward.

Mr. Brong adjourned the Operations Committee meeting at 8:56 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,



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