

Harrisburg School District

Act 141 Advisory Committee Meeting

December 8, 2022

5:00 p.m.

Minutes

Attendees: Doug Thompson Leader, Melanie Cook, Dr. Andria Saia, Beth Light, Eric Turman (via Zoom), Dr. Marisol Craig, Dr. Sieta Achampong, Eugene Spells, Michele Rolko, Adam Nornhold, Dr. Travis Waters, Dr. Lori Suski

Minutes from the November 10, 2022, meeting were distributed.

Dr. Waters reviewed the priorities for Pillar #2 – Academic Achievement – from the Exit Framework draft which were determined by the internal Act 141 team. Dr. Waters asked Ms. Light to share the discussion her pair had at the previous meeting.

Additional language was recommended (in red).

| Desired Outcome 2: All students reading on grade level by 3 rd grade | |
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| Obstacles: Students enter HSD already far behind academically; District has a limited number of pre-K slots; students enter HSD with mental health and behavioral issues; teacher turnover; ineffective instruction. Buy-in and having everyone do extensive differentiation; data meetings must be a ritual; getting parents to understand what their children need to know (not a babysitting service); academic rigor in Head Start programs are not as rigorous as our K-5 classes; | Key Strategies: Evaluate student progress throughout the year; improve teacher onboarding and training; utilize existing assessments that connect back to existing curriculum; give students eligible grade content for their levels; improve school readiness through parent outreach and improved pre-K offerings. Need smaller class sizes; WIN groups; development of K-5 Assessment given at K-5 registration. Head Start starting at ages 1 & 2. Pre-K for ages 3 – 5; push in for younger grades; how do we create foundation for larger scale implementation of Head Start types of programs? |
| Measuring Progress: How many students at the District are currently reading at grade level by 3rd grade? What annual targets seem reasonable? | |

- Recommended use of a Collective Impact Model
- Raising funds for Imagination Library and language groups in Dauphin County Libraries – parents participate. Multi-national studies show that having books in the home is a game changer. This is research-based. Partner with Joe Bedard? What are some concrete things we can do now to put books in the hands of students?

- Shows importance of early childhood. We support the hiring of a director. City of York SD – First 10 – Flexible grouping is a barrier because it's a paradigm shift; Standards-based Report Card
- Skill deficits should be looked at instead of ability; coming full circle with what we used to do years ago in HBGSD; What are we doing to fill that gap? K-5 rooms need to be vibrant; developmentally appropriate practices; CV uses Mastery Connect which drills down to standards
- Grades are not given in K-2 in HBGSD. We are still dealing with poverty. Same discussion happened here in the 70's (Mr. Spells will provide article at next meeting). Same conversation in 2022. What are the consistent things we need to do instead of pockets of change? It's a little more complex than saying do what SciTech and MMSA do. Intrinsic motivation plays a role. Need to change mindset of parents about education. The District failed many families. Build more trust with families in community.
- Literacy – Kellogg grant – Kohn days – look at trend. 2012 was super class (Harvard, MIT)! Wherever we start we must be patient and consistent, focused and invested!
- There is no silver bullet but there were things that were working. Literacy was the common theme – they were well-trained. There is data to prove it. Penn State did a study.
- It takes 3 – 5 years to see change. We don't give things an opportunity to see if it works.
- It was about instructional approaches. Writing was also a focus, but Math lagged.
- Anything that works is damaged. 2009 when Mayor's office changed. Scholarly culture! Look at India, Africa, and China. They are poverty-stricken and outscoring us. All kids hear is that they are disadvantaged, traumatized.
- Early childhood and literacy should have been a "sacred cow."
- It's a different culture.
- Top-performing schools spend less time in front of kids.
- They have tracks in Japan.
- Other countries are not as diverse as USA. Cultural expectation and respect for teachers is valued there.

- NCEE doesn't look at the "downside" – 'drill and kill' kids.
- Nigerians are top-performing kids
- \$300 gives kids books from birth to age 5. Do we have \$400/day for ½ day of training all week to train teachers this summer – Afghan Refugee Grant. Can HBGSD send teachers to the training? Can't admire the barriers. Find the action-oriented steps we can take.
- Write action steps
- There are already several things in process, so we need to look at as those things were working – like the Welcome Center
- There are long-term things, but short-term steps need to be put in place.
- Expectations that Special Ed kids can learn.
- Students who have IEPs. She is hearing we are going to lower the standards. We cannot do that.
- It's a bias. It's based on assumptions.
- Cultural proficiency is important for HBGSD. Need to treat kids with respect. Do all principals know who their IEP students are? Accommodations need to be made. Just best practice!
- PLC – How do we teach our ELs? She does it for all – not just them. I'm trying – giving my best. Reads template; she knows behavior. Talked about ADHD – color-coding – relates to students. You either want to be successful or you don't?
- How do we define success for students? Not just sports.
- Teach them to be respectful to people trying to help them. Lack of respect for teachers. HBGSD needs to recognize in a concrete way the people who are doing all the things. There is not enough recognition to the extent of people being recognized for what they do.
- It's a culture change.
- Kids think they are being respectful.
- Relationships are important!
- Expectations and consequences

- Share with kids about student behaviors – breaking the law – School Code – attendance, lack of disruption. It's about educating the kids.
- Teach expectations
- Tier I PBIS
- Some of our schools don't have it.
- Need to teach behavior.

Dr. Waters indicated that the group would continue conversation at the next meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 6:12 p.m. The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, January 12, 2023, from 5:00-6:00 p.m. in the Lincoln Administration Building Board Room.