

Harrisburg School District

Act 141 Advisory Committee Meeting

March 14, 2024

5:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.

Minutes

In Attendance:

Committee Members: Dr. Sieta Achampong, Melanie Cook, Laura Harding, Michele Rolko, Susan Roth, Dr. Andria Saia, Dr. Marcia Stokes, Dr. Lori Suski, Jim Thompson, Doug Thompson Leader, Eric Turman

Staff: Adam Nornhold

- Dr. Suski welcomed everyone and shared that Dr. Waters was unable to be in attendance.
- Dr. Suski distributed minutes from the February 8th meeting and suggested that tonight's meeting pick up where the group left off in the discussion of Goal #1.
- **Goal #1** – *Establish comprehensive systems and processes to improve student achievement at all grade levels, including but not limited to using data-driven decision making, implementing standardized instructional practices across the District, using a standards-aligned curriculum, and providing safe and welcoming building climates that support and promote student learning.*
 - *Strategy 1 – Complete a curriculum audit.*
 - *Mr. Turman and Dr. Suski reviewed the scope of work and timeline for Chester County Intermediate Unit (CCIU) who was recently contracted to perform the curriculum audit.*
 - *Strategy 2 – Implement a standards-aligned curriculum.*
 - *Mr. Turman explained that recent feedback obtained from his listening sessions with teachers determined a need for more support for lesson planning. Therefore, next year, during the early release Wednesdays, teachers will meet by grade levels across the District to engage in common lesson planning development.*

- *Mr. Thompson Leader suggested that a document repository be established (perhaps in Microsoft Teams) for teachers to store lesson plans. With the transience in the District, this would be a valuable resource for new and/or emergency-certified teachers. He also recommended an overlay to capture congruence (or incongruence) in lesson planning and questioned how to approach those who do not demonstrate congruence.*
 - *Ms. Rolko stated that principals were “on their own island” in the past and “hung out to dry” on occasion. Curriculum that was written was often “trashed.”*
 - *Ms. Cook said that teachers take their knowledge with them when they leave the District, and meeting regularly will help support teachers.*
 - *Mr. Thompson Leader asked if the District has Teams groups and/or uses SharePoint.*
 - *Ms. Harding recommended that this could allow teachers to look at the gaps between years.*
 - *Mr. Thompson Leader expressed concern about the loss of time on professional development days due to travel between schools. Mr. Turman suggested alternating every other week to reduce travel.*
 - *Ms. Rolko recommended that training in Teams be conducted since many teachers are unfamiliar with that application.*
- *Strategy 3 – Tier I Instructional Model*
- *Dr. Suski defined the acronym G.L.E.A.M. as Grade Level Engaging Affirming and Meaningful Instruction.*
 - *Mr. Turman shared that many teachers view the materials as the curriculum and are not necessarily using the resources that have been adopted by the District. He explained the need to scaffold up grade level content to ensure that students are exposed to it prior to state testing.*
 - *Dr. Said asked if teachers can execute with the provided resources. “Do they know what to do?” Mr. Turman explained that a survey of needed support yielded only 30 responses across the District. Dr. Saia said it is important to identify who is good at using certain materials and having them serve as a resource for teachers. Dr. Achampong stated that it is a trust issue as many teachers don’t want to “look stupid.” Ms. Harding suggested a retreat to build trust. Dr. Saia emphasized the importance of training instructional*

coaches. Mr. Turman shared that Dr. Slaughter has four days planned for professional development and that the coaches will be deployed to buildings next year via the Office of Academics instead of by the building leaders. Mr. Turman also discussed the AIMS Institute's work on training regarding the Science of Reading.

○ Strategy 4 – Use of Educator Effectiveness to Ground Instructional Leadership

- Dr. Saia spoke about Charlotte Danielson's framework and the importance of providing stability for and intense support for teachers' progress.
- Mr. Turman noted that there are far less resignations now than there were two years ago and stressed the importance of marketing early. Ms. Rolko said that she has had zero coverages this year. Dr. Stokes said that our substitute teacher fill rate is in the 90% range this year.
- Mr. Turman shared information on the "grow your own" teacher program that the District is pursuing for next year, and the Penn State Harrisburg Fast Track program that should yield 30 – 45 new teachers from the Harrisburg SD in the next 3 – 5 years. Dr. Saia indicated that there are 10 paraprofessionals in the CAIU program to become certified teachers.
- Ms. Cook said that many paraprofessionals are working for agencies and may not receive emails from the District's Office of HR. She suggested that the District identify the agencies with whom the District contracts to see if their employers are willing to fund the program. Ms. Cook also suggested that the District hire high school students to serve as paraprofessionals through a work study program. Dr. Suski said that students could be paid minimum wage.
- Mr. Thompson Leader discussed the importance of exposing students to becoming teachers using an apprenticeship model. Dr. Saia said that Temple University has an early childhood program where nine (9) credits in early childhood education can be taken free of charge. She also recommended ECEPDO.org through Shippensburg University.
- Ms. Cook asked that this information be placed on the District website. Ms. Harding recommended that athletic training programs also be advertised, such as LVC and Central Penn College. Ms. Cook said that Mississippi is doing this, and it is a great stepping stone, but PDE is part of the problem in terms of creating barriers to certification. Ms. Cook asked what the next steps would be and explained why actionable steps are needed. One example is a ticker tape across the website. Mr. Nornhold shared that the current website does not have that capability, but the new website will be

next summer. Dr. Suski will follow up with Ms. Keys on adding these areas to the website now.

- *Ms. Harding asked if a journalism class/club is in existence at the high school. Students should be producing a District newsletter. Dr. Suski mentioned The Burg as a great partner for a future student internship opportunity. Someone suggested that students interview Mr. Turman as part of a podcast.*
- Dr. Suski noted that the group was out of time but had great dialogue around the first four strategies of Goal #1. She would recommend to Dr. Waters that the next meeting focus on Strategies # 5- 8.
- Dr. Suski also reminded the group of the [Google doc](#) that Dr. Waters developed to receive feedback/input on strategies of the new goals and asked that they feel free to add their thoughts outside of the meeting, if they desire.
- Dr. Suski reminded the committee of the next meeting scheduled for Thursday, April 11, 2024 at 5:00 p.m.
- The meeting adjourned at 6:02 p.m.