

## BOT Meeting Thursday November 21, 2024 Minutes

Board Members in Attendance: Jim Sander, Robert Ansbro, Lucas Doe, Ted Francavilla, Thomas Gorrell, Christopher Brignola, Sean Blackwell

Administrators in attendance: Norma Hurwitz, Leena Thomas, Eddie Kubina

Meeting Called to Order by Jim Sander 6:33pm

### I. Approval of Minutes

Robert motioned to approve the minutes, Ted seconds, all in favor

### II. Education

ELA and math assessments are created and designed by administrators, they are based on old state exams. For period one we are generally looking at the 50% and above to gauge student performance. The kindergarten did fairly well, as did the first and second grade. For period 2 there will be a big change as the students will have to read the exam on their own. It is read to them for the first period since they are just starting. We usually see a decline when they have to read the questions on their own. We need to then adjust to help them reach the level where they need to be. The third through eighth grade did decent in literacy. There was a noticeable struggle in math. We give them the full year curriculum on the first period test, so it is expected that the scores will not be as high. It gives teachers the chance to see what students already have a clear handle on and what they do not understand. They can then spend more time on the topics that are a challenge and less time on strands the students already understand. Social Studies and Science tests are created by classroom teachers to focus on the content that was covered and reviewed by administration to make sure the test is neither too easy nor too difficult. Mrs. Parker is doing very well. We put her into eighth grade and it has worked out well. The students are performing well and she is doing fun projects with them. In the 3-8 add my summary

In 6th grade, Topal is struggling with reaching the students, he tends to lecture more because he has more experience with the high school and college level. Adam has a much larger class to relieve some of the strain.

Topal seems to be very enthusiastic about being with the students and he is a mature, respectful person who will put his best foot forward.

Charline is in her first year in third grade. She needs a bit of help. She will most likely make the progress that is needed. Steven is a seasoned teacher and he will get students to be where they need to be.

Jim expressed a concern about 7th and 8th grade because they need to be prepared for our high school. We have to start thinking about the regents. We have to make sure they are ready to take the exam in ELA, Algebra, Earth Science, and American History.

Our 8th graders are very happy about the new building. They visited. The 7th grade will visit as well. It will help us retain them. We are also having a luncheon for the 7th and 8th grade families. This will help convince parents to leave their children with us for high school.

We are having an open house on the 3rd and 4th for families that are not currently with us. They can see our building and the students at work. This will help us secure more students as well.

We will see about a dedication for the new building that can serve as a recruitment tool. We can also have a blue ribbon logo on the front of the building.

We are having an all star volleyball game on Saturday and will publicize our school and give materials to representatives of other schools to attract their 8th grade students. There will be representatives from about twenty different charter schools.

We are sending out our mailing to districts 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 to attract students for our high school. We are looking to increase the number of students in our kindergarten program as well. The mailing will likely go out after the holiday. The cost is a bit high because we are sending the mailing out to various districts now instead of just one. Eddie and Leena are moving on attracting the high school students. They have split the K-8 schools to get responses and be able to go in and provide information about our school. It takes time. It will probably take a few weeks. Our operations staff has also been very active in trying to attract younger students for kindergarten. They will also be in the area for the K-8 schools to attract students. Lourell and Parker are very personable and they are able to represent our school well. We are also open to suggestions because we may not have thought of everything. We are also communicating with News 12 to run a commercial which has been good for us in the past. We have an ad on instagram, and we will also be looking to put an ad on tik tok. Lucas added we should put an image of the building and of the classrooms on the ad. Robert adds we should also include the cafeteria.

We have been advertising for teachers. We have looked for people to also fill the AP role. The standards that the teachers are holding in the middle school are so high, it is hard to find someone who will meet it part of the way. The professional demeanor, the manor they conduct themselves, we have not seen applicants that are strong. It shows that other schools are likely struggling and settling.

We have a new teacher, Brandon, who has a variety of skills. He is versed in music and acting. He has knowledge of literacy. He needs to work on some basic management skills. However, his sense of engagement was very promising, he does a good job of interacting with the students.

Chris asked about the math program we are using. We are using Savvas, along with Go Math, and the common core clinics books to build a foundation. We also make use of iready. He mentioned that students in the school he works with are able to get a reward for completing iready, they can go to Dave and Busters. They will also be able to go to an escape room. Teachers are incentivized by getting extra preps. If the kids reach their projected goal, they are more likely to perform better on the state exams. He also wants to know if the tests are on the computer.

We take the six week assessments on paper. However, quizzes and other assignments are done on the computer. Students spend time typing responses on the computer.

Chris mentioned the June instructional report analysis will tell you where students are leaving points on the table. Are we analyzing the standards and the weight on the state exams? He can help us understand how to analyze the data. For schools that perform well, it is easy to find how to improve even more by analyzing the data and trends. We probably have student profiles to make growth. It would easily improve the percentage points.

The analysis sounds interesting to Norma, but does not know how to, so it would be very helpful to get on a zoom meeting with Chris and learn how to analyze the data effectively.

The analysis by standard, will allow you to assign lessons where students need the most help. It will be helpful. With the results of period 2, we need to talk about the test and analyze the standards. The teachers need to be comfortable with the standards. We do it generalized, but we need to do it with more care.

Jim asks for a specific example. They pull the report and have the three lowest standards from the test, they are assigned the lessons to complete, three intervention blocks, where students have to work on those lessons. The homework is my path. They are assigned specific to the students whatever their lowest standards are. The students are then working on different lessons in order to improve their weakest skills. My path can be assigned. There are also mastery tests. The teacher's role is to look at the data, they need to assign the lessons that will help them with their lowest standards. If they are in 5th grade, what are the lessons that would support them in 4th grade or 3rd grade? Chris monitors a lot of it. It should be done by grade level leaders. Chris can put it into a pdf to give suggestions. Leena adds we should familiarize teachers more with what iready can offer. Chris goes in with the principals to help new teachers to learn how to co teach with iready. The kids are getting just as much, if not more. It is taken seriously, parents have to sign progress reports. They need to have a certain amount of lessons done by a set date. They have iready cafe, kids who do not complete it, sit with a teacher to complete it.

We have made contact with some charter K-8 schools. We had Lourell and Mrs. Parker go to a fair hosted at Emblaze Charter School and they got contact information for thirteen parents interested in our school who will attend our open house on December 3rd or 4th. We have

dates set for December 2nd and 11th to go to Classical Charter School. They are giving us a period to present information about our school to their 8th grade students. We are hosting a luncheon on November 26, for our 7th and 8th grade parents. This will be used as a tool to entice them to keep their children in our school for high school. For Kindergarten students we have had our ops staff go to daycares and local businesses.

3-5 grade parents are very happy with the new building and they can be recruiters for us. Our students can also try to convince their friends to come to our school if they are not happy where they are. Parents were given flyers during ptc to give out to others. Staff recruitment is also very important. We are hoping to get a better batch of resumes, perhaps after the current semester is over, we can get some better applicants who are able to teach.

### III. Committee Reports

Lucas did not have a chance to look at the report sent by David Haller. We got a grant that is going to make up for a lot of the overdraw. Sean was able to look at the report, Con Ed gave a credit of about \$80,000. The final change orders should be paid attention to because the contractors might be looking to get extra money. Haller should provide a summary of what it will include. The punch list should be more or less done. It should be small things at this point and not cost a lot. Haller should be able to provide it for the next board meeting. Jim would be happy to contact Haller for the report. There are things that we would like for them to do, but first we want the punch list completed. Jim will send Haller an email to ask for a guesstimate for the board about what to expect for the final items. It would be nice to have it done by December.

Lucas wants to know if all board members get the financial statement. Jim will send it out as Ted and Thomas would like to see it. There is nothing new in the financial statement. Our medical costs were lower than what we budgeted for. Revenue was a little down. Other things were in line with what we budgeted for. Jim wants to know if we are treading water. We have about \$28 million and it is steadily growing. It is important to have the excess funds in order to plan for unexpected expenses.

If the DOE is closed, how will that impact us? Chris said it would not impact us any, because it is on a federal level. We will have the regular state budget. We would just not be eligible for federal grants. Jim adds that Linda McMahon has been in favor of charter schools, so that may benefit us. We receive just under \$18,000 for each student we enroll. High school students are given the same amount for charter schools. There are different allocations for students that could change the per student dollar amount. Republicans will generally give less federal funding for charter schools. With the democratic administration grants are given, that can be competed for. We got grants under Biden, that will not be there with Trump as president. We will have more offerings for high school students, so it seems as if there would be more funding given for running a high school. It is agreed that it is strange to set a flat rate, rather than give more for high school students. The state does not want having a pre k to be seen as an incentive.

It makes it difficult since we are a smaller school to have electives since we do not have a full program. It is also difficult because we have a longer day. The majority of our staff has been with us for 6 or more years. So we give them greater incentives. We will offer more money if it can get us a more capable teacher. Jim wants to attract teachers who are really caring and he feels when they see our teachers and students it will attract them.

#### Building and Development

We have a punch list and items have been addressed. They are not moving as quickly as we would like them to move. We withheld money from them last month. We are trying to make sure we stay on them and keep them moving. Our custodial staff makes note of anything that needs to be addressed. We do want certain things done, but they are giving egregious costs. So we will need to put aside some money and then look for contractors. It is difficult to find contractors since they are in high demand and short staffed as well. The current contractor gave an estimate so high it made it clear he did not want to do the work. Robert added that some things can be done without Signature. Sean offers his assistance, he is happy to help in any way he can. Norma says it would be helpful to find contractors in the city to get competitive bidding. We will have David Haller give assistance in finding a contractor. It is difficult to find one. Sean knows two contractors and he will give their information to us, along with David Haller. Norma would like to get Signature to finish their work, get them out of the building and then move on getting other contractors to come in and make adjustments.

Norma would like a brief email from Chris to get a sense of the analysis of June instructional reports and how to use iready data. She is not sure if we are really honing in on the strands that we need to focus on.

Meeting Adjourned 7:58 pm