

February 24, 2014

School Board Education Committee

Centennial Administration Building Board Room

**Minutes**

**PRESENT:**

**Committee Members:** Mrs. Betty Huf, Mrs. Schrader Lynch, Mr. Mark B. Miller,  
Mr. Charles Kleinschmidt

**Board Members:** Mr. Michael Hartline

**Staff:** Dr. Joyce Mundy, Dr. Jennifer Polinchock, Mrs. Christine Matik, Mr. Dennis Best, Mrs. Paula Voshell, Mrs. Cathy Perkins, Mr. Michael Johnson, Mr. Michael Donnelly, Dr. Bucky Clark, Dr. Susan Klyman, Ms. Erin Cuttle, Ms. Maria Ansanelli, Ms. Denise Quinn, Mr. Fred DiChiara, Mrs. Keely Mahan, Mrs. Carolyn Fisher, Mrs. Mary Ellen Donnelly, Ms. Karen Adams, Ms. Rita O'Brien, Ms. Tia Moody-Ali, Ms. Kathleen Pisauro, Dr. Al Catarro, Ms. Tina Cornish, Mrs. Anne Van Zelst

**Community:** Mr. Robert Shaffer

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 p.m. There was an introduction of all in attendance.

Dr. Polinchock stated that the presentation on the 3-D printer has been moved to the March 24 Education Committee meeting.

A motion was made to approve the minutes of January 27, 2014 by Mr. Miller, seconded by Mrs. Schrader Lynch. The motion passed 3-0 to approve the minutes.

**Social Studies Textbook Adoption**

Mr. Dennis Best, principal of William Tennent High School, introduced Mr. Fred DiChiara, social studies teacher at William Tennent High School. Mr. DiChiara began by discussing the work of the committee and the rationale for the purchase of a new social studies textbook for the high school. Mr. DiChiara explained the history of the process and noted that two years ago purchases were made for the Advanced Placement and elective social studies courses. Mr. DiChiara explained the selection process and said that the recommended textbook would be used as the primary text for the course and the major delivery system for self-guided readings and homework. The recommended book is titled, United States History – Modern America by Pearson-Prentice Hall with a 2013 publication date. Mr. DiChiara said one of the reasons why they selected this textbook is because the last few chapters of this book are very modern and up to date.

Mr. Miller stated that he would like to see the notes and comments from the social studies selection committee. He also asked what digital components are available for each book considered. He asked if any research was done on surrounding school districts and if any feedback was received from districts that are using this textbook.

Mr. DiChiara responded that many notes were taken three years ago when this process was started. Dr. Polinchock noted that a review rubric was used by the committee. Mr. Miller stated that the Board has had much more involvement in the past and that he, like Mrs. Schrader Lynch, is very interested in the digital capabilities of each of the books that were reviewed. He requested information about why the committee excluded the books that were not selected. Mrs. Schrader Lynch requested information about what social studies textbooks other school districts in the area are using.

### **Middle School Instructional Time Task Force Update**

Dr. Polinchock, Director of Teaching and Learning, provided an update on the work of the internal task force for the middle school program. She met with the initial stakeholders and they are doing a preliminary gathering of information. Mrs. Huf asked if Board members have been invited. Dr. Polinchock responded that not yet, it is just the internal task force and she shared the dates they have met. The task force is developing a priority needs list. The guiding question is: What does our middle school program need to support the goals of all students' learning and growth?

Mrs. Schrader Lynch noted the Log College parents are upset about this and asked what we could do about parents who might not be able to get to one of the meetings. Mrs. Schrader Lynch asked that we schedule the parent forums at the convenience of the parents and there should be one forum for Klinger and one for Log. Dr. Polinchock stated our hope is to have a preliminary proposal soon to present to parents to alleviate some of their concerns. Dr. Mundy noted that increasing rigor in our instructional program is at the heart of what we are trying to do and it is part of her entry goals.

Mr. Miller asked about the results of the meetings of the internal task force. Dr. Polinchock responded that she shared the feedback with the teacher teams at the middle schools and she explained that what she is sharing tonight is part of that feedback. The feedback involves concerns about teaming in 6<sup>th</sup> grade, honors/advanced course offerings and scheduling of performance music.

Mr. Miller noted that there are parents in the Klinger community who have expressed concerns. They are happy with the way the curriculum is structured at the present. He stated we have to be able to demonstrate that any changes would have a positive effect on student achievement.

Mrs. Schrader Lynch asked how many parents had attended the parent forums. Mrs. Polinchock said it was about 16 parents. Mrs. Schrader Lynch asked if the principals will be sharing the changes with the Home & School Associations. Dr. Polinchock said yes,

that would be done. Dr. Polinchock spoke about the priority needs and the desired needs and the differences.

Mrs. Huf asked Mr. Miller if he would like to serve as the Board member on the committee. He agreed. The next meeting is February 26.

Mrs. Schrader Lynch stated the average student is a vital group and she is concerned about this group of students. She asked if this group of students will be helped by the proposed changes to the middle school program. Dr. Polinchock said yes, they will because by having an academic and honors section for certain courses, the students who are ready to move forward can and the teacher can spend more time with the average student to motivate them and help them succeed.

Mr. Miller asked if we are going to establish some benchmarks. He wanted to know if we have the tools to track progress. Dr. Polinchock stated that this goes along with our data warehouse and RFPs that went out recently. Mr. Miller also wanted to know if we are going to measure principal effectiveness. Dr. Polinchock replied that yes, this will be rolled out next year by PDE. The second domain is focused on instructional leadership. Mr. Miller asked for a presentation of where we are going with principal effectiveness and where we are now in the process.

Mrs. Schrader Lynch asked how many other schools in Bucks County are going through this. Dr. Polinchock noted that Central Bucks is, and many districts are looking at teaming. Mrs. Schrader Lynch asked if this program is modeled on something that has been done in another district. Dr. Mundy replied that we are taking our current middle school schedule and working on priorities.

### **Report Card Task Force Update**

Mrs. Christine Matik, Supervisor of Curriculum and Instruction K-12, explained the progress so far of the report card task force. She noted that we have put together a group of 21 teachers who have met once per week. They had a parent forum as well. The task force set a goal to create a report card that reflects the leveling options within skill indicators that are aligned to PA standards. They plan to have a trial run of the new report card in the fourth marking period, with a draft ready by the end of April. From the parents' and teachers' perspective, the PSSA language is confusing. The task force wants to set the language to read: exceeds, meets or below grade level. There was a brief discussion of portfolios of student work. Both the parents and teachers decided that we need to align to the standards instead of the programs. The indicators should reflect the level of understanding.

Mr. Miller wanted to know when the Board approved the A, P, B, and BB designations presently being used on the elementary report cards. Mr. Hartline said this revision pre-dates Dr. Turnbaugh's tenure with the District. Mr. Miller also asked for a review of Policy 5.7, Reporting Student Progress. He also asked for a copy of the present elementary report card for tomorrow's School Board meeting.

Mrs. Christine Matik continued with her explanation of the work of the task force. She mentioned the reading levels on the report card are confusing to parents. We want to make sure the parents can understand what their child's reading level is.

Mrs. Mahan, principal at McDonald Elementary School, said they have a handbook that is given to parents with the report card and the handbook provides an explanation. We have been hearing from parents that they wanted something that is more user friendly so parents could look at their child's report card and understand it without a handbook.

Mr. Donnelly, principal at Willow Dale Elementary School, spoke about utilizing data to report growth. They would like to modify the report card and replace it with clearer language. They want it user friendly for the parents. Mrs. Voshell, principal at Davis, added that most of the parent teacher conference time is used to explain the report card.

### **9th Grade Ambassadors Program**

Mr. Dennis Best, principal at William Tennent High School, explained the newly formed 9<sup>th</sup> Grade Ambassadors Program at the high school. This year they put the 9<sup>th</sup> grade students through a rigorous screening process and attempted to match them up with similar 8<sup>th</sup> grade students. They have received positive feedback from both parents and students, including from some private school students considering William Tennent. This has been a good promotion for the building and eases transition for incoming 9<sup>th</sup> grade students. They hope as many students as possible can take advantage of it.

Mr. Miller asked how we would track this. Mr. Best said there is a link on the high school web page where our students list their community service hours. Mr. Miller asked if we could recognize some of the students who have participated in this program later on this school year.

### **English Language Learners Mentoring Program**

Dr. Susan Klyman, Director of Student Affairs, stated she wanted to say thank you to Carol Quinlan, social worker, and Colleen Buckley, transition coordinator, who were instrumental in organizing this program. Dr. Klyman acknowledged Mrs. Keely Mahan, Dr. Bucky Clark, Mr. Dennis Best, and Dr. Al Catarro for their work with the English Language Learners Mentoring Program.

Ms. Maria Ansanelli and Ms. Erin Cuttle, teachers at McDonald Elementary School, explained they started the program because they found that some of their 4<sup>th</sup> grade students needed role models to help them develop their social skills. The mentors help the 4<sup>th</sup> graders make appropriate choices and become successful students. The program will start in March and go until the end of the school year. The success of this program will be evaluated at the end of June.

### **Summer Enrichment Program**

Dr. Jennifer Polinchock, Director of Teaching and Learning, spoke about the plans for a summer enrichment program during the summer of 2014. The goal will be to provide opportunities for students to explore creative and performing arts as well as STEM and STEAM areas of the curriculum.

With regard to the topics for the camp, Dr. Polinchock explained she is doing a survey to see what teachers are interested in offering. The camp would be structured as week-long camp sessions by topic for students entering grades 4-9. It would run from July 7 through August 11 at McDonald and William Tennent High School. Parents would provide transportation. The camp would be staffed by Centennial staff and funded through a grant from the Centennial Education Foundation.

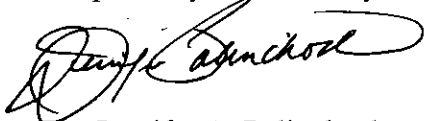
Advertising and communication to parents will start once the approvals are completed.

### **PSSA Testing Window Update**

Because of the snow days throughout this winter season, an extended window is available for testing. The revised schedule shows the common dates that Centennial schools will be administering the tests in grades 3-8. These dates are on the school calendars and the District calendar. Mr. Hartline asked for an e-alert to be sent out regarding the changes to the PSSA schedule.

A motion was made by Mrs. Schrader Lynch, seconded by Mrs. Huf to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed, 3-0 and the meeting adjourned at 9:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by,



Dr. Jennifer A. Polinchock  
Director of Teaching and Learning