

January 20, 2015

School Board Education Committee

Centennial Administration Building Board Room

Minutes

PRESENT:

Committee Members: Mr. Mark B. Miller, Mrs. Jane Schrader Lynch, Mr. Charles Kleinschmidt

Board Members: Mr. Steve Adams

Staff: Dr. Jennifer Polinchock, Dr. Joyce Mundy, Ms. Christine Matik, Mr. Michael Donnelly, Mr. Travis Bloom, Ms. Shawanna Coles, Ms. Judith Hengst, Mr. Raymond Kase, Ms. Cathy Perkins, Ms. Allison Kuchler, Mr. Thomas Boyle, Mr. Keith Bellinger, Ms. Denise Andres, Ms. Regina Garrahan, Ms. Alexa Angelitis, Ms. Carol Brockman, Ms. Katie Maguire, Ms. Megan London, Ms. Susan Pearce, Mr. Rob Rothman

The meeting was called to order at 6:04 p.m. There was an introduction of all in attendance.

A motion was made to approve the minutes of December 15, 2014 by Mrs. Schrader Lynch, seconded by Mr. Kleinschmidt. The motion passed 3-0 to approve the minutes.

Elementary Reading and Language Arts Program Pilot

Ms. Christine Matik, Supervisor of Curriculum and Instruction K-12, spoke about the process of setting up the pilot for the 2014-15 school year. It involves teachers in grades K-5 in the three elementary schools and there are 24 participants. Both of the programs being considered, *Journeys* and *Wonders*, are being piloted in each grade level at the three elementary schools. She said they began last January by looking at teacher and student language arts material, with a focus on skill development along with a technology component. Members of the task force will be visiting other schools that use these programs and will present the results and their recommendation to the Education Committee in the spring. Ms. Matik noted that teachers are here this evening to provide more detail on the pilot programs.

Ms. Alexa Angelitis, 4th grade teacher at Willow Dale, and Ms. Carol Brockman, 2nd grade teacher at Willow Dale, spoke about program design. Ms. Denise Andres, 5th grade teacher at Willow Dale, Ms. Regina Garrahan, 1st grade teacher at McDonald, and Mr. Rob Rothman, kindergarten teacher at Davis, explained skill development. They noted there is a large amount of vocabulary embedded in each unit. There is a strong phonics component for the younger grades and good grammar and spelling units. This allows the

teachers to meet all the students' needs. Ms. Brockman handled out samples of student work done by second graders.

Ms. Brockman and Ms. Katie Maguire, 1st grade teacher at McDonald, explained the technology portion. They said the pilot program is easy to use at home, engaging for students to work with, and has many games that use vocabulary words.

Mr. Keith Bellinger, 3rd grade teacher at McDonald, talked about student growth. He said using the pilot program will create 21st century skills for our students, will increase their communication skills, and will help us to develop students' critical thinking skills. Since both programs revolve around the Common Core, every week the students are getting prepared for PSSA testing.

Mrs. Schrader Lynch asked how we would be determining the success of the pilots. Ms. Matik responded that the group meets every six weeks to look at planning, assessment and technology. They assess how the students are responding on a regular basis.

Dr. Polinchock, Director of Teaching and Learning, said that she wanted to thank Ms. Matik and the teachers and principals for their work on this. She noted there will be professional development to go along with whatever program is recommended in the spring.

Dr. Mundy also expressed her thanks to the teachers for their efforts.

Middle School Physical Education Class Pilot

Dr. Polinchock explained the proposal for a pilot course in physical education at Log College Middle School for students in grades 7 and 8. The focus is on life-long fitness activities. Information was presented on the equipment that would need to be purchased.

A motion was made by Mr. Kleinschmidt, seconded by Mrs. Schrader Lynch, to move this request for a pilot physical education course at Log College Middle School to the full School Board for approval. The motion passed, 2-0.

Kindergarten Program Update

Dr. Polinchock shared an update regarding the review of the current kindergarten program. A Kindergarten Review Team, headed by Ms. Christine Matik and Mr. Michael Donnelly, principal at Willow Dale Elementary School, was developed and kindergarten, first grade teachers, and reading specialists are the members. The Kindergarten Review Team has specific goals they are working on during this review process. For example, with regard to readiness, some of our kindergarten students have not had any pre-school experience, so the team is looking at this and how it impacts students. The list of scheduled meeting dates and the topics being discussed was shared.

Mrs. Schrader Lynch asked when the work of the Kindergarten Review Team would be complete. Dr. Polinchock said they would be preparing an action item for the April or May Education Committee meeting.

Middle School Skills for Success Pilot

Ms. Judy Hengst, Director of Special Education, explained this program was started last school year by Ms. Allison Kuchler, Special Education Supervisor. Ms. Kuchler said the program was started in response to the change in the middle school schedule. They developed a model for instruction that works on the areas of study skills, social skills, and explicit instruction.

Students meet with their special education teacher instead of one of their two exploratory periods. Ms. Kuchler met with the exploratory teachers ahead of time to explain the pilot program. Her role is that of a facilitator. She explained the special education students are receiving their instruction in a more focused manner instead of the informal way it was done in the past during the tutorial period. Two special education teachers explained in more detail how the pilot works.

Mr. Thomas Boyle, special education teacher at Log College Middle School, stated this is an IEP group decision. Students work in smaller groups and it helps them with organization and study skills. Ms. Megan London, special education teacher at Klinger Middle School, explained that with this new time block, the teachers have time to work specifically on social skills and there is also time for re-teaching if needed.

Office of Teaching and Learning Parent Forums

Dr. Polinchock noted the next two dates for parent meetings are January 28 and April 14.

The next Education Committee meeting is February 23, 2015 at 6:00 p.m.

A motion was made by Mr. Adams, seconded by Mrs. Schrader Lynch, to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed, 2-0 and the meeting adjourned at 6:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by,

Dr. Jennifer A. Polinchock
Director of Teaching and Learning