

October 20, 2014

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: Mr. Steven Adams

Staff: Dr. Jennifer Polinchock, Dr. Joyce Mundy, Mrs. Christine Matik, Mr. Michael Donnelly, Mrs. Keely Mahan, Mrs. Cathy Perkins, Dr. Dennis Best, Mrs. Judith Hengst, Mr. Raymond Kase, Mr. Jim Ford, Mr. Dan Julius

Community: Mrs. Leigh Lieberman

The meeting was called to order at 6:05 p.m. There was an introduction of all in attendance.

A motion was made to approve the minutes of September 25, 2014 by Mrs. Schrader Lynch, seconded by Mr. Kleinschmidt. The motion passed 3-0 to approve the minutes.

Elementary and Middle Levels 2014 Student Assessment Report

Dr. Jennifer Polinchock, Director of Teaching and Learning, spoke about PSSA results for the elementary and middle school students. The Keystone and Algebra 1 results for the high school students will be presented in November.

Dr. Polinchock said the administrative team focused on PVAAS since this is a component of the School Performance Profile for each school. The principals analyzed the results for their building, looking at building initiatives and areas of growth, and needs for improvement.

For elementary and middle school math scores, the number of students in the Advanced Proficient range increased. For elementary reading scores, we remained fairly steady with a slight decrease in Advanced Proficient. There is a concern about why the growth is stagnating with the elementary reading scores. For middle school reading, there was an increase in the number of students scoring in Advanced Proficient. For the middle school Algebra 1 Keystone exam, there was a 1% increase in Advanced Proficient. The increase of the number of students scoring at the Basic level is a concern.

With grade 4 science, there is an increase in the number of students scoring at the Basic level. This can be attributed to students moving from Below Basic to Basic. For grade 8 science, there is a much lower number in Advanced Proficient than in grade 4.

Writing scores have consistently been less than favorable. There was a significant decline in proficiency and an increase in the number of students scoring at the level of Basic and Below Basic. Grade 5 writing is a particular concern. Grade 8 writing scores are better, but still declined.

When Dr. Polinchock finished with the overall data presentation, Mrs. Keely Mahan, principal at McDonald Elementary School, explained the value added growth for the math PSSA scores. She also explained the math sequence analysis. The principals found that Everyday Math is helping students to make progress. The use of data teams is also helpful to target what skills the students need to master to be successful.

Mr. Jim Ford, Assistant Principal at Klinger Middle School, spoke about the middle school math scores. He explained the PSSA grade 8 math scores could be attributed to lack of exposure to eligible content.

Mrs. Christy Matik, Supervisor of Curriculum and Instruction, explained the value added growth trends for grades 4-8. She explained that this year we put in place some common assessments for all students. These common assessments provide for frequent check-ins to see how students are progressing. The District also has a reading pilot this year and we are focusing on the analysis of fiction and non-fiction texts. This is an area of need for the students.

Mr. Jim Ford explained that science scores for middle school students have been consistently good. He said the alignment of the science curriculum has helped the student scores. He mentioned that collaboration between teachers and between buildings has greatly increased and improved.

Mr. Michael Donnelly, principal at Willow Dale Elementary School, explained the correlation between RELA (Reading, English, Language Arts) and writing. A team attended a training last year to learn ways to infuse writing in their building across the curriculum. For Willow Dale, as well as the other elementary buildings, writing is one of their academic goals. All teachers are doing writing in their classes, including art and digital literacy classes.

Mrs. Cathy Perkins, principal at Log College Middle School, spoke about the middle school reading scores. The students exceeded the growth scores and she said it is because they implemented reading every day. Grade 6 and grade 7 students used to have reading every other day, but that is now every day. They also had 3 pilots last year at Log and the supports provided to the students through the pilot courses impacted student growth scores in reading. At Log College they are doing a school-wide reading and writing prompt for all students in grades 6-8.

Dr. Polinchock spoke next about focus areas for improvement. The Reading, English and Language Arts curriculum will work on alignment with a focus on text dependent analysis. Other areas of focus are common curriculum-based assessments, and vertically articulated curriculum.

Mr. Miller asked for a breakdown of all PSSA reports by school, showing bar graphs with the percentage of change in the scores.

Mrs. Schrader Lynch said she is disappointed in the reading scores and said we need help in writing. Mr. Kleinschmidt said he does not need additional details at this time. Mr. Adams asked if the ESL students take the same assessment. Dr. Polinchock responded that yes they do after they have been in this country 3 years or more. The percentage of special education students in our district is high compared to other school districts in Bucks County.

Anticipated Curriculum Initiatives/Approval for 2014-15

Dr. Polinchock gave an overview of the program areas currently under review. We plan to visit school districts using the same pilot reading material that we are using this year, Journeys and Wonders.

Dr. Joyce Mundy announced the next Education Committee meeting has been changed to Monday, November 24 at 6:00 p.m., not November 17. They will be sure to advertise the change in date.

A motion was made by Mrs. Schrader Lynch, seconded by Mr. Kleinschmidt, to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed, 3-0 and the meeting adjourned at 7:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by,

Dr. Jennifer A. Polinchock
Director of Teaching and Learning