

November 25, 2013

School Board Education Committee

Centennial Administration Building Board Room

Minutes

PRESENT:

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

Board Members: Mr. Steve Adams, Mr. Michael Hartline

Staff: Dr. Joyce Mundy, Mrs. Jennifer Polinchock, Mrs. Christine Matik, Mr. Dennis Best, Ms. Julie Henrich, Mr. Ryan Mulford, Mr. Bob Reed, Mr. Matt Tomlinson, Mrs. Cindy Wiegand, Dr. Susan Klyman

Community: Mr. Robert Shaffer, Mrs. Leigh Lieberman, Mr. Paul Cammarota

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

A motion was made to approve the minutes of October 28, 2013 by Mrs. Huf, seconded by Mr. Miller. The motion passed 3-0 to approve the minutes.

GPA/Class Rank Proposal

Mr. Dennis Best, principal of William Tennent High School, presented a proposal to amend GPA calculations. He stated they formed a committee and looked at eighteen local school districts for comparison. All of the districts surveyed, except Centennial, use a weighted formula for honors courses. Backup data from the various schools in Bucks and Montgomery counties was provided.

Mr. Best summarized the requests from the committee that studied this topic as follows:

1. Begin weighting honors courses at WTHS during the 2014-15 school year, altering the current GPA scale to give weight for AP and Dual Enrollment of +.5 and to give weight for honors courses of +.25.
2. To amend the current levels of reporting academic distinction at WTHS as follows: Summa cum laude 3.9+, Magna cum laude 3.6+, Cum laude 3.3+.
3. To provide class rank to students and families upon request.
4. To articulate WTHS students' GPA on quarterly report cards.

The intention of the committee is for these proposed changes to take place for the 2014-2015 school year.

Mr. Miller asked for a one page summary of the data that has been collected.

Mr. Adams noted that he wanted to say thank you for bringing this forward to the Education Committee since this needed to be done.

Mr. Hartline asked if anyone has checked with our technology department about reporting of GPA quarterly on the report cards. Mr. Best said that yes, this can be done.

A motion was made by Mr. Miller, seconded by Mrs. Huf, to move this request to amend GPA calculations to the full Board for review and approval. At Dr. Mundy's request, this item will be presented at the December 10 School Board meeting.

New, Dropped and Revised Course Proposals for WTHS

Mr. Dennis Best explained the changes requested. The high school administration is requesting the removal of Integrated Engineering from the WTHS Program of Studies, as well as B track courses. Mr. Best pointed out that the Board already approved the elimination of B track courses last school year. They are now ready to make the change to the Program of Studies and are asking for approval.

In addition, new course proposals and revisions were submitted. The request includes adding Spanish 2 Honors and AP Music Theory. The current Genetics and Biotechnology course would be changed to a new course titled Genetics of Cancer modeled after the Fox Chase Cancer Center Lab Immersion Program. For Algebra II/Geometry, the course sequence should be changed to better accommodate students in Keystone courses. The Graduation Project course has been rewritten to reflect changes approved by the Board in Spring 2013 based on new Chapter 4 guidelines. A rationale and budgetary implications were provided for these proposed changes.

Mr. Miller asked about what would happen to a student if a B-track course was eliminated. Mr. Best stated the high school is providing professional development for the teachers and they are preparing for this shift. Not all courses are tracked and the high school will continue with learning support classes. Mr. Miller also asked if we are using technology to provide diversified instruction and Mr. Best responded that yes, we are.

A motion was made by Mr. Miller, and seconded by Mrs. Huf to move the requested recommendations for new, dropped and revised courses for the 2014-15 WTHS Program of Studies to the Board. The motion passed, 3-0.

WTHS 2012-2013 Keystone, SAT and ACT Data Presentation

Mr. Dennis Best provided an overview of the following data with regard to student achievement: 1. Keystone Examinations – Winter and Spring Waves; 2. SAT; 3. ACT; 4. Advanced Placement. Mr. Best explained the bar graphs with the scores and also went over the differences between the ACT and SAT tests. He spoke about the PSAT and how this will help the 10th grade students.

CSSCA Data Presentation

Mr. Dennis Best presented a plan for improvement last school year. He is here to provide a quarterly update as requested. He noted that 74% of the CSSCA students are there for credit recovery. Progress is being made with student attendance rates and more than half of the students are passing 3 of 4 courses. Mrs. Huf asked about the number of staff working at CSSCA. Mr. Best responded they have 3 full time teachers, 2 half time teachers and the services of a guidance counselor, assistant principal and social worker. Mr. Miller requested that next time a report is made, Mr. Best should share information about students who may be excelling.

Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) Proposal

Mrs. Jennifer Polinchock, Director of Teaching and Learning, explained that MAP is a web-based interactive assessment that we want to implement in grades 1-5. She introduced Mrs. Christine Matik, Supervisor of Curriculum and Instruction, who presented details about the proposal.

Mrs. Matik explained that right now we are using Study Island. MAP will help our teachers better prepare our students. Mrs. Huf asked why this is better than Study Island. Mrs. Polinchock responded that this is much more dynamic and gives us more information. There is immediate feedback. MAP helps us to individualize instruction and helps our students to grow.

Mrs. Schrader Lynch asked about what are we going to do to help the students who need it. Mrs. Polinchock explained that the assessment is diagnostic so that we can make better use of the intervention period with students. We can also look at the instructional materials that we have and remediate the foundational issues that could be interfering with a student's learning.

Mr. Miller asked if the information will transfer over from Study Island. Mrs. Matik said yes, the teacher will start with the Study Island information, but that only gives us a score. MAP is skill based. Mr. Miller also asked what are other districts doing, how do the principals feel about MAP, how does it fit in the larger picture.

Mr. Hartline had the following questions: Can the data follow the student if they leave the district? Did we think about the procedures for collection of data? What about security breaches?

A motion was made by Mrs. Huf and seconded by Mr. Miller to table the MAP proposal. The motion to table passed, 3-0.

Instructional Time at the Middle Schools

Mrs. Polinchock explained the plan to form a committee of stakeholders to begin to look at the middle schools and the schedule. We would like to implement the recommended configuration from the committee for the 2014-2015 school year. There may be a need to use a professional consultant to help build a master schedule.

Mrs. Huf wanted to know what is wrong with the middle school that we need to do this. Why do we need a consultant? Mrs. Lynch said this came out as a result of the parent forums. This is how we can improve.

Mr. Miller stated that he looked at the timeline and he is requesting the information before March 2014. He noted that the School Performance Profile numbers are highest in the middle school. What was discussed at the parent forums? What do the principals feel about this? With regard to the Steering Committee, he wants parents, Board members and community members to serve on the committee.

Mr. Miller asked if there is a concern with what we are doing at the middle school. Mrs. Polinchock explained that some of the concerns are: heterogeneous grouping, not enough time for students to take art and music because they have to choose between going to tutorial and being a part of a music performance group. Another concern is there are not enough advanced or honors classes.

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

Respectfully submitted by,



Mrs. Jennifer A. Polinchock
Director of Teaching and Learning