

April 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, Mr. Michael Hartline

Staff: Dr. Jennifer Polinchock, Dr. Joyce Mundy, Ms. Christine Matik, Mr. Michael Donnelly, Mr. Travis Bloom, Ms. Judith Hengst, Ms. Cathy Perkins, Mrs. Keely Mahan, Dr. Dennis Best, Ms. Shawanna Coles, Dr. Al Catarro, Mr. Ignacio Jayo, Mr. Keith Bellinger, Mr. Nick D'Andrea, Ms. Carol Brockman, Ms. Nancy Avery

Community: Ms. Margaret Yaure

Students presented their projects from the PETE&C conference in Room 16 prior to the Education Committee meeting.

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 February 23, 2015 by Mrs. Schrader Lynch, seconded by Mr. Miller. The motion passed 2-0 to approve the minutes.

Elementary Reading and Language Arts Program Proposal

Ms. Christine Matik, Supervisor of Curriculum and Instruction, briefly explained the work of the committee regarding the pilot and the selection process. The committee selected *Journeys*, published by Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, as the core instructional program for reading and language arts for students in grades K-5. Ms. Matik noted that one of the reasons *Journeys* was selected was the committee found it scaffolds learning better for our students. *Journeys* teaches reading, writing, grammar, and phonics and has technology embedded. It also includes authentic literature, and student response has been very positive.

Nick D'Andrea, 5th grade teacher at Willow Dale, said it was helpful for him to compare *Journeys* and *Wonders* with his grade level partner throughout the year. He noted there was a great deal of enthusiasm on the part of the students with the program. *Journeys* fits the needs of our students.

Carol Brockman, 2nd grade teacher at Willow Dale, said writing in the *Journeys* program was very structured. The students made a lot of progress this year and are very proud of their work.

Nancy Avery, kindergarten teacher at Davis, said the students like the stories in the program because they are relevant to their lives. She explained there is a new theme each week and said the scaffolding is great. She provided handouts of samples of student work for review.

Mr. Keith Bellinger, 3rd grade teacher at McDonald, said he taught *Wonders* this year and he liked both programs. The third grade students did amazing work this year under the pilot program.

A motion was made by Mrs. Schrader Lynch, seconded by Mr. Kleinschmidt, to move the recommended purchase of *Journeys* by Houghton Mifflin Harcourt to the Finance Committee and then to the full School Board for approval. The motion passed, 3-0.

Project Lead the Way

Dr. Jennifer Polinchock, Director of Teaching and Learning, explained the proposal, which includes the purchase of curriculum resources, supplies and training. If students complete the four year sequence of classes, they would receive a certificate.

A motion was made by Mrs. Schrader Lynch, seconded by Mr. Kleinschmidt, to move the approval of Project Lead the Way to the Finance Committee and then to the full School Board for approval. The motion passed, 3-0.

School Climate Perception Survey

Dr. Polinchock explained the purpose of the survey was to collect data about teachers' perceptions about building climate. The power point showed the results from the October 2014 and May 2013 administration of the survey. The principals were asked to review the data and see what areas they could address.

Dr. Dennis Best, principal of William Tennent High School, said it is important to create an articulated vision statement for the school. He also spoke about a core functional responsibility chart, which was done at the high school and at Willow Dale Elementary School. Restorative practices are also important.

Mr. Michael Donnelly, principal at Willow Dale Elementary School, spoke about taking the perceptions and making it a reality. He explained the structured meetings that are held with the staff on a regular basis to provide feedback.

Mrs. Schrader Lynch asked if Mr. Donnelly had noticed a difference at his building with the increase from a small building of about 400 students to a much larger building of 900

students. Mr. Donnelly said that, while he would love more support, each building is working very hard with all of their students to make sure they are successful.

Mr. Miller asked if there is a minimum number of meetings needed. Dr. Polinchock responded that she had put out a schedule of meetings during the summer and the meetings are staggered so they do not become burdensome. Mr. Miller asked if she is monitoring these meetings, and Dr. Polinchock said minutes are provided to her.

Ms. Cathy Perkins, principal at Log College Middle School, explained areas of growth. She noted the curriculum student liaisons meet once per week with building administrators to work on building initiatives.

Dr. Dennis Best spoke about the Academic Council and the opportunity it provides for interdisciplinary discussion. He also mentioned that doing the walk throughs has opened lines of communication with staff.

Mr. Travis Bloom, principal at Klinger Middle School, noted the importance of post-observation conferences. He said teachers value that feedback.

Mrs. Keely Mahan, principal at McDonald Elementary School, said finding the time to meet with staff is important. She emphasized the importance of consistent and timely communication. In response to a question from Mrs. Schrader Lynch, Mrs. Mahan said running the building is a team effort, with the need to prioritize during the school day.

Ms. Shawanna Coles, principal at Davis Elementary School, said they encourage teacher participation during faculty meetings and during Principals' Forums. This provides for shared leadership opportunities and direct conversations with faculty and staff.

Moving forward, Dr. Polinchock noted that administration will do the survey again in the fall of 2015 and possibly expand it to parents and students.

Mrs. Schrader Lynch asked if we can look at the large student population at the elementary schools and what see kind of a plan can we come up with to get them some help. Dr. Mundy said we should look at all of our data on a district-wide basis, not just at the elementary schools.

College & Career Pathways Task Force

Dr. Polinchock explained the need to begin a Task Force for college and career pathways. She outlined the goals of the Task Force and the composition of the committee.

Partnerships in STEM

Dr. Albert Catarro and Mr. Ignacio Jayo, teachers at William Tennent High School, provided details on the proposal. They said it is a "win win" for our students.

Dr. Best added they have had the greatest success with partnerships in the area of science. We want to add more opportunities for our students and create real world experiences for them. He noted they will come back to the Education Committee in May with a more formal proposal.

Preliminary Textbook Review Timeline

Mr. Miller suggested this item become a Read at Home item and Dr. Polinchock agreed.

College and Career Pathways Forum

This is a Read at Home item.

The next Education Committee meeting is May 18, 2015.

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 7:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by,

Dr. Jennifer A. Polinchock
Director of Teaching and Learning