



Centennial School District Education Committee of the Board

Meeting of October 22, 2008

Minutes

Attendance:

Board

Thomas Hezel**
Betty Huf
Mark Miller
Michael Monaghan
Cynthia Mueller
Andrew Pollock***
Thomas Reinboth
Jane Schrader-Lynch*
Joseph Simpson**

Administrators

Michael Devitt
Jennifer Foight-Cressman
Lisa Follman
Sandy Homel
Maryanne Ormsby
Eileen Poroszok

Staff

Mary Corcoran
Deborah Freedman
Judy Hoffman
Shannon Martin
Heather Stek

Community

Leigh Lieberman
Robert Shaffer

* Chair

** Committee member

*** Alternate committee member

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Mrs. Schrader Lynch called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. and welcomed all in attendance.

Mr. Simpson moved to approve the minutes from September 22, 2008. Mr. Hezel seconded the motion. The minutes were approved in a vote of 3-0.

WTHS PROGRAM OF STUDIES 2009-2010

Dr. Foight Cressman presented the new or adapted courses recommended for inclusion in the 2009-2010 Program of Studies. Each year, the high school publishes a Program of Studies that our students and families use to select courses. Changes to course offerings are brought before the Education Committee and School Board for discussion and approval.

There was extensive discussion of the new courses proposed in each discipline. Dr. Foight-Cressman presented the new courses recommended as part of the secondary English, Reading, and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) curriculum renewal process. As a result of conversations with experts in gifted education at the Pennsylvania Department of Education and various intermediate units, as well as in keeping with direction issued from the 2008 PDE Gifted Audit, it has been recommended that the district provide multiple opportunities across the curriculum for gifted students to pursue challenging coursework. Dr. Foight-Cressman advised that the Education Committee consider providing gifted English electives in grades 9 and 10 and then encourage gifted students to take advanced placement courses in grades 11 and 12.

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Mrs. Mueller and Dr. Pollock expressed concern about the delivery of gifted education at the middle school and requested that their concerns be addressed as part of the curriculum renewal process. Because gifted students receive a different curriculum from the general student population, concern was expressed that gifted students are not benefitting from the general education focus on writing and mastery of grammar and conventions. Under the new WTHS Program of Studies, students in grades 9 and 10 would be required to take English Honors in addition to the gifted English electives.

Directors reviewed the new reading courses that provide courses in grades 9-12 for those students who have not yet demonstrated mastery of Pennsylvania reading standards. Dr. Foight-Cressman recommended that an extended school day and year be considered for those students, particularly students who attend MBIT, to obtain additional reading instruction. Dr. Pollock suggested that children be required to demonstrate reading proficiency at each grade level before being promoted to the next. Mrs. Homel commented that any summer offerings would need to be tuition-free with transportation at district expense. The reading courses were approved with a change in language from "highly recommended" to "required."

Dr. Foight-Cressman presented the proposed ESOL course offerings, which are now in keeping with PDE's basic education circular (BEC) recommendations based on amount of time needed for English language acquisition. Based on individual need, English Language Learner (ELL) students are currently scheduled into the most challenging content area coursework possible. School Board Directors were very pleased with the new ESOL offerings and the sensitivity to the needs of English Language Learners demonstrated by faculty and administration.

Two mathematics courses were brought before Directors for consideration: Algebra 1 Honors and AP Calculus and Analytic Geometry BC. Directors approved the Algebra 1 Honors course with a change in language from "Honors" to "Accelerated". Education Committee members also endorsed the AP Calculus and Analytic Geometry BC course. Directors commended Mrs. Shannon Martin, who was praised for the consistent and extraordinary performance of her Calculus students on the AP examination.

The following courses were approved and moved to the full School Board for approval and inclusion in the 2009-2010 WTHS Program of Studies. A motion was made for approval of each course by Mr. Hezel and seconded by Mr. Simpson. All courses were approved 3-0.

- English – Creative Writing
- English – Public Speaking
- English – Art and Literature
- English – Philosophy and Issues
- Reading – All proposed reading courses
- ESOL – All proposed ESOL courses
- Mathematics – Algebra 1 (Accelerated)
- Mathematics – AP Calculus and Analytic Geometry BC

WTHS administration requested consideration of the addition of a Spanish II Honors course. Dr. Pollock, Mrs. Mueller, and Mr. Miller all expressed concern that creating an honors section would privilege students taking Spanish over students pursuing study of French and German. The course was not approved in a vote of 3-0.

Discussion of the Dual Enrollment course agreement between BCIT department and Gwynedd-Mercy College was tabled until the next meeting in a vote of 3-0. Mrs. Homel expressed concerns regarding

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the legality of entering into such a partnership and informed the School Board that she would be seeking a legal opinion.

Dr. Pollock requested that Policy 5.7, Reporting Student Progress, be brought before the Education Committee on November 10, so that any changes might be voted upon by the full School Board at the November 25 meeting. Dr. Pollock requested that WTHS administration be present for any discussions with the School Board regarding this policy or changes to the high school schedule so that Directors might benefit from their perspective and advice.

WTHS CONTINUOUS SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2008-2009

Dr. Foight-Cressman provided an overview of the 2008-09 Continuous School Improvement Plan. She praised the WTHS administration and the School Improvement Planning Committee for their hard work in developing the document. Dr. Devitt was particularly instrumental in collecting the data and preparing the report.

The WTHS Continuous School Improvement Plan ensures a comprehensive approach to raising our students' PSSA reading and mathematics performance levels, particularly among our students receiving special education supports and services. Dr. Foight-Cressman informed the Education Committee that WTHS would remain in Corrective Action status for one more year, but had achieved Annual Yearly Progress—Making Progress status. Should the high school students make similar gains in 2008-09, the high school would move out of Corrective Action.

The 2008-09 Continuous School Improvement Plan combines the strengths of both 2006-07 and 2007-08 School Improvement Plans. A three-pronged approach that includes the continued implementation of Standards-based IEPs, Benchmarks, and Curriculum Mapping is outlined in the plan. Standards-based IEPs ensure that IEP goals are curricular based, tied to eligible content, and that we monitor and assess progress based on mastery of Pennsylvania standards. The employment of benchmark assessments is another key aspect of the plan. Using Study Island and 4Sight, the high school will administer three benchmarks a year, use that data to inform and change instruction, progress monitor students with IEPs and monitor progress of all students not yet demonstrating proficiency. In essence, the goal is to individualize every student's educational plan. Lastly, the mapping of curricular content through Curriculum Mapping ensures that eligible content is being covered across the curriculum in a systematic way in grades 9-12 and holds teachers, students and administrators accountable for student mastery.

Three items of the plan required School Board attention due to the fiscal notes attached. In order to create clear reports generated from the Skyward Student Information System data, Mr. Reed recommended that we purchase Crystal Reports. Recognizing that students sometimes need additional time in the school day or year to master Pennsylvania standards, WTHS administration and Dr. Foight-Cressman requested that the School Board consider an additional period in the school day and/or summer session. Several Directors also requested that administration revisit the idea of providing additional reading staffing to Middle Bucks Institute of Technology.

Dr. Pollock made a motion to move the above items to the next Finance Committee Meeting. The motion was seconded by Mr. Simpson. Mrs. Homel promised to revisit the suggested changes to the high school schedule at the next Education Committee meeting on November 10. At Dr. Pollock's request, Mrs. Homel also stated that she would include information in the next Friday Update regarding the fiscal note attached to a change in schedule.

Dr. Pollock made a motion to move the 2008-09 Continuous School Improvement Plan to the full School Board for approval on November 11, 2008. The motion was seconded by Mr. Simpson and passed 3-0.

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OTHER BUSINESS

Dr. Pollock requested that Policy 2.2, Professional Personnel Placement Assignment and Transfer, that governs the teacher transfer policy, be revisited at the next Operations Committee meeting on November 5, 2008. Dr. Pollock made the motion to move the agenda item to the Operations Committee and was seconded by Mr. Simpson. The motion passed 3-0.

Dr. Pollock made the motion to adjourn and was seconded by Mr. Simpson. The motion passed 3-0. Mr. Hezel thanked all in attendance for their attention and participation and adjourned the meeting at 9:20 p.m.

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