

CENTRAL BUCKS SCHOOL DISTRICT
Curriculum Committee Notes
April 14, 2016

MEMBERS PRESENT

Sharon Collopy, Chair
Karen Smith, Member
Dennis Weldon, Member
Jerel Wohl, Member

OTHER BOARD MEMBERS AND ADMINISTRATORS PRESENT

Beth Darcy	Dr. David Weitzel	Judy Siegle
Paul Faulkner	Dr. David Bolton	Suzanne Dailey
Glenn Schloeffel		Elaine VanVreede
Meg Evans		

PREVIOUS MEETING NOTES

The meeting notes were not available at the meeting. The March notes will be reviewed at the May meeting of the Curriculum Committee.

INFORMATION/DISCUSSION

Dr. Weitzel, Superintendent, Dr. Bolton, Assistant Superintendent, Suzanne Dailey, Staff Developer, Judy Siegle, Elementary Teacher, and Elaine VanVreede, Elementary Teacher presented on standards-based assessment, the history of the current Elementary Reporting Document, and a proposal for changes over the next two school years (2016-2017 and 2017-2018).

Dr. Weitzel began the presentation by providing the timeline of the current document. Planning began during the 2011-2012 school year with the first year of implementation during the 2014-2015 school year. Dr. Weitzel also shared the numerous resources that are available on the district website for parents and community members.

Ms. Suzanne Dailey continued the presentation by discussing the philosophy and impact of standards-based instruction. Ms. Judy Siegle, first grade teacher at Doyle Elementary, and Ms. Elaine VanVreede, sixth grade teacher at Titus Elementary, then presented their perspective on standards-based instruction. They mentioned that the language is clearer to the students and that feedback is more frequent and focused. Students are learning that "Everything Counts" and that they are able to demonstrate their understanding of a standard during every part of a lesson and not just on a test or quiz.

Dr. Bolton presented the opportunities for feedback that were available to both parents and teachers. This feedback was utilized to develop themes that have helped determine adjustments to the current document and formulate the proposal moving forward.

Dr. Weitzel finished the presentation by stating the goals of the proposed revisions and the two year proposal for the development, communication, and adoption of a new Elementary Reporting Document. For the 2016-2017 school year, the number of Success Standards and Learning Indicators will be reduced. In addition, letter grades would be incorporated into the current document for grades 5-6. Grades K-4 will continue to utilize the current system for one more year.

Dr. Weitzel proposed utilizing the existing Reporting System Achievement Advisory Team to develop recommendations for the 2017-2018 school year. He also asked that trimester reporting (3 times a year) be considered at the elementary level. This process will include continued communication with the community and professional development for the teachers.

PUBLIC COMMENT

David Garcia, Bill Senavaitis, Noelle Nero, Caitlin Jackson, Michelle McGrogan, Dana Hunter, Teri Windisch, Julie McCormack, Lynn Mills, John Cohan, Patti Jincot, and Jim Moleinari all spoke on the elementary reporting system.

BOARD COMMENT

All Board members participated in a lengthy discussion regarding the presentation, proposal made for the 16-17 and 17-18 school years, and information from public comment.

Mr. Weldon thanked the teachers and administration for their work. He feels as though the purpose of the reporting document is to communicate to a parent how their child is doing and that many parents do not understand what the terms Exceeding, Meeting, Approaching, and Limited Progress mean. He proposes including grades for grades 4-6 moving forward.

Ms. Collopy agreed with Mr. Weldon. She also stated that lessening work for the teachers is a good thing. She does not feel as though the document provides a clear picture of a child and she would like increased parent participation/feedback moving forward. She also wants letter grades for 4-6 and is not in favor of the trimester proposal.

Ms. Evans indicated that she is appreciative of the added detail on the new document but that it is hard to interact with. She likes the added continuum for marking periods 1 and 3 but feels that the range for Meeting has been too broad. She asked if the report has been utilized long enough to truly evaluate and would be in favor of letter grades for 5-6.

Ms. Smith feels as though there is not uniform understanding of the indicators and would like additional information on trimesters before forming an opinion.

Mr. Wohl thanked Dr. Weitzel for developing the proposal and sees it as a true compromise. He also thanked the union, faculty, and administration for working together collaboratively on this endeavor. He recognized that the teachers indicated that this is consistent with their teaching methods and that should remain a focus of the conversation, in addition to the document. He feels as though the document does address the emotional concerns of our students but further review needs to take place so parents can better understand the entire system. He recommends additional parent education in the future.

Ms. Darcy stated she was sad that the teachers present felt as though their work was disrespected/dismissed. She would like all stakeholders to contribute to the decision and wants parents to be involved in rich conversations on this topic so that they can better understand their child's strengths and needs. She believes that adding grades is a good step and recognizes that there are still multiple practical issues that need to be addressed. She is concerned for the grade 5 and 6 teachers who have to do both standards based and letter grades under the proposal. She would also like to determine how best to include parent voices in any proposal moving forward.

Mr. Faulkner likes the goal of easing data entry for the teachers and would like to respect the teachers by maintaining the good portions of the document that relate to the classroom and their instruction.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The next scheduled meeting is May 11, 2016 at the Administrative Services Center (20 Welden Drive) beginning at 7:00 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

Notes submitted by Dr. David A. Bolton, Assistant Superintendent for Elementary Education