

# BIG SPRING SCHOOL DISTRICT

Newville, Pennsylvania

## COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE OF THE BOARD MEETING MINUTES

MONDAY, OCTOBER 19, 2009

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### I. CALL TO ORDER

The Committee of the Whole of the Board of School Directors for the Big Spring School District met in the Big Spring High School Large Group Room, Room 140, at 7:00 P.M. with President Wilbur Wolf, Jr., presiding. Seven (7) directors present: Wilbur Wolf, Jr., President; Robert Lee Barrick, Secretary; Terry Lopp, Treasurer; Kingsley Blasco; Richard Norris; William Piper; and Richard Roush.

William Swanson, Vice President, and Sandra Rosenberry Deaver were absent.

Others in attendance: Richard Fry, Superintendent; Jeanne Temple, Assistant Superintendent; Kevin Roberts, Director of Curriculum/Instruction and Educational Technology; Richard E. Kerr, Jr., Business Manager; Stacey Kimble, Oak Flat Elementary School Principal; and Brenda Line, Board Minutes. Also present: Anthony Bavaria, Charlene D'Amore, Molli Davis, Bill Gillet, Kay Keim, Jenny Kump, April Messenger, Samantha Meyer, and Mary Wilhelm.

### II. PRESENTATION

#### Response to Intervention and Instruction (RtII) Committee

There are 15 elementary teachers, administrators, and DAO personnel on the RtII Committee. The following members of the RtII members were present this evening to offer the RtII presentation:

- Jenny Kump, Instructional Coach for Mount Rock Elementary School and Oak Flat Elementary School
- Kay Keim, Learning Support for Oak Flat Elementary School
- Bill Gillett, Special Education Director
- Stacey Kimble, Oak Flat Elementary School Principal
- Anthony Bavaria, School Psychologist
- Mary Wilhelm, Instructional Coach, Plainfield Elementary School and Newville Elementary School

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**II. PRESENTATION (Continued)**

**Response to Intervention and Instruction (RtII) Committee (Continued)**

Mr. Gillet explained that the RtII is the framework that connects the existing programs in the District, such as Learning-Focused Schools, special education, and remedial reading. Mr. Gillet noted that RtII is not a new program, but it is a new approach to connecting related services that the District provides for students.

The members of the RtII Committee offered a PowerPoint presentation entitled "Response to Intervention and Instruction (RtII)." The following items were included in the presentation:

- A. Essential Question:** How do teachers, principals, and instructional coaches work together to effectively use the RtII process?

The Committee members answered this essential question throughout the presentation outlined below.

**B. Response to Intervention and Instruction**

- RtII is a comprehensive early detection and prevention strategy that identifies struggling students and assists them before they fall behind.
- RtII systems combine universal screening and high quality instruction for all students with interventions for struggling students.

**C. Universal Screening**

- Schools screen students at least once a year to identify students at risk for failure.
- Students whose screening scores indicate potential difficulties with learning are provided with more intensive interventions.

- D. Students' responses** to the interventions are measured to determine the following:

- No longer need intervention
- Continue to need intervention
- Need even more intervention
- Need different intervention

- E. A three-tier system** has been implemented to determine student intervention levels as follows:

- Tier Three – Intensive, longer-term interventions (5% of students)
- Tier Two – Targeted interventions for at-risk students (15% of students)
- Tier One – Students on grade level (80% of students)

1. **Tier 1** - Encompasses general classroom instruction that is differentiated, research-based, and effective (instruction in the general education classroom).

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**II. PRESENTATION (Continued)**

**Response to Intervention and Instruction (RtII) Committee (Continued)**

**E. Three-Tier System (Continued)**

- 2. Tier 2** – Interventions provided to students who demonstrate problems based on screening measures or weak progress from classroom instruction. These students receive supplemental, small-group instruction aimed at the students' needs (instruction takes place in the classroom and/or outside of the classroom, depending on need).
- 3. Tier 3** – Interventions provided to students who do not progress after a reasonable amount of time with Tier 2 interventions and require more intensive assistance (typically takes place outside of the classroom).

**F. Monitoring Progress**

In each tier, student performance data is systematically collected and analyzed to identify areas of need and match these needs with research-based interventions.

In addition, the implementation of interventions should be monitored to ensure fidelity.

**G. Classroom Teachers**

- Analyze individual student and classroom achievement data and plan instruction
- Provide differentiated instruction to students
- Document student progress in differentiated groupings
- Team with grade level and support personnel to streamline interventions
- Collaborate with grade level colleagues, instructional coaches, specialists, and administration to outline instructional approaches matched to student need.

**H. Instructional Coaches**

- Work with teachers to analyze and utilize student achievement data for the purpose of instructional planning
- Help determine need areas of focus groups
- Enhance instructional practices at the classroom level by working with teachers (collaborating, modeling, observing, co-teaching)
- Assist teachers with monitoring progress to determine the effectiveness of the instruction
- Build collaborative relationships with teachers
- Provide teachers with research and materials that will lead to efficient implementation

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**II. PRESENTATION (Continued)**

**Response to Intervention and Instruction (RtII) Committee (Continued)**

**I. Principals**

- Participate in data analysis and planning meetings for groups or individual students
- Coordinate Tier 1 and Tier 2 support
- Facilitate paperwork and procedures for referral for special education
- Help facilitate grade level meetings when discussing student needs (pre-invitation)
- Communicate with District Office regarding instructional resources that may be needed

**J. Special Education Referral**

- Schools are encouraged to provide services to struggling students within general education before considering special education.
- Special Education would be considered for students who failed to respond to the correct interventions (specific intervention matched to specific area of need).

**K. Summary**

The RtII Committee members offered examples from instructional coaches with regard to differentiated instruction and tiered assignments and answered Board members' questions. The following additional items were noted:

1. Remedial programs are implemented with the assistance of the teachers' aides. If they do not work for certain students, they are discarded and another program is tried.
2. A classroom of students would be offered the same whole-group instruction; however, differentiated instruction is used for students who are not achieving at grade level compared with students who are better achievers and are working on harder materials.
3. Students who are not achieving at grade level are identified and offered preview instruction on upcoming units in the curriculum.
4. Instructional coaches gather instructional strategies from teachers across the District, as well as in other school districts, who have had success with certain teaching methods and strategies. The coaches review the material and help teachers implement the strategies when necessary. Many times the strategies focus on improving reading comprehension.
5. Instructional coaches work with the teachers to teach them appropriate research-based strategies to use in the classroom.
6. Instructional coaches train the teachers' aides to use strategies with students to give them the extra help they need to succeed.
7. The instructional coaches help to bring the support needed into the classroom so that fewer remedial services are necessary outside the classroom.
8. Federal mandates have forced school districts to include instructional coaches as part of the special education program to ensure that learning disabilities are identified early and that the needs of students are met.

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**II. PRESENTATION (Continued)**

**Response to Intervention and Instruction (RtII) Committee (Continued)**

**K. Summary (Continued)**

9. The State of Pennsylvania has not mandated the use of instructional coaches yet; however, the State has mandated universal screening for all students. In addition, Districts must be able to show that research-based strategies are used in the classroom in order to defend against whether the District used due process in a student's education.
10. The instructional coach model is new to Big Spring, and teachers are just beginning to learn how to use the coaches. The instructional coaches help teachers learn how to implement instructional practices to solve problems in the classroom.
11. Instructional coaches can help solve instructional problems and share instructional practices in the classroom as well as do the outside research work that most teachers do not have the time to do.
12. Instructional coaches ensure that teachers are teaching at grade level and assessing at grade level. As expectations increase in the classroom, achievement increases.
13. Big Spring's two elementary school instructional coaches are full-time employees with degrees in elementary education, special education, and reading education, and both coaches were formerly instructional support teachers. Instructional coaches are provided currently for the Big Spring's elementary schools only.
14. Currently, universities are not offering certifications in academic instructional coaching; however, the Capital Area Intermediate Unit has started a program on instructional coaching.
15. Students are entering school with a level of need that is more challenging each year. Instructional coaches help to implement a consistent structure to support those needy students.
16. Although the instructional coaches could work with students, their role is to work with teachers and teachers' aides to implement strategies in the classroom that are appropriate for those students.
17. The building principal could resolve any conflicts that might arise between a teacher and an instructional coach.
18. Universal screening is completed using 4Sight benchmark assessments in Grades 3, 4, and 5, and DRA in kindergarten and Grades 1 and 2.
19. With the help of instructional coaches, students who need remediation are moved back into the regular classroom and are exposed to the entirety of the curriculum that they would not get in the remedial setting. Studies show that students who are exposed to the whole of the curriculum content are more successful than students who have been removed from the regular classroom and placed in a remedial setting.
20. The old model of pulling students out of the classroom for remediation has not proven to be effective. Those students are never caught up enough to be placed into a regular classroom setting.
21. Instructional coaches help teachers to "build a bigger bag of tricks" to help students succeed.
22. With progress monitoring, students are assessed at defined periods. If a particular strategy were failing, another strategy would be tried.

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**II. PRESENTATION (Continued)**

**Response to Intervention and Instruction (RtII) Committee (Continued)**

**K. Summary (Continued)**

23. A variety of teaching strategies can be implemented by setting up centers in the classroom where students are involved in various activities at one time, some students receiving one-on-one instruction, while other students work independently.

Mr. Fry's offered to demonstrate to Board members the instructional coaching and classroom centers in a District elementary school. Mr. Piper requested a demonstration.

President Wolf thanked the teachers and administrators for their informative presentation.

**III. PREVIEW OF THE AGENDA**

**A. Combine and Address**

President Wolf requested that the Board address XIII., NEW BUSINESS, A., PERSONNEL CONCERNS, Items A-1 through A-5, as a single action item.

**B. Agenda Item XIII., F., Proposed Updated Job Description for the Transportation Coordinator/Substitute Teacher Coordinator**

In response to a question from President Wolf, Mr. Fry indicated that he would make adjustments to Section 5024(b) of the job description for the Transportation Coordinator/Substitute Teacher Coordinator as recommended by Mr. Wolf and Mr. Norris.

**C. Agenda Item XIII., E., Help Increase the Peace Program (HIPP)**

In response to a question from Director Blasco, Mr. Fry indicated that the District would investigate the possibility of continuing the HIPP at a later time, possibly through the YWCA. Mr. Fry indicated that the program had been offered in the driver's education curriculum; however, the grant money has been withdrawn. If the funds could be acquired, there has been a consideration for including the HIPP in the health curriculum.

**IV. ADJOURNMENT**

Motion by Blasco, seconded by Lopp to adjourn. Roll call vote: Voting Yes: Blasco, Norris, Piper, Roush, Lopp, Barrick, and Wolf. Motion carried unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:49 P.M.



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Robert Lee Barrick, Secretary