

# BIG SPRING SCHOOL DISTRICT

Newville, Pennsylvania

## COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE OF THE BOARD MEETING MINUTES

TUESDAY, APRIL 6, 2010

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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 7:04 P.M. with President Wilbur Wolf, Jr., presiding. Four (4) directors present: Wilbur Wolf, Jr., President; William Swanson, Vice President; Kingsley Blasco; and Richard Norris.

William Piper joined the meeting in progress at 7:34 P.M.

Robert Lee Barrick, Secretary; Terry Lopp, Treasurer; Tarin Houpt; and Richard Roush were absent.

Others in attendance: Richard Fry, Superintendent; Jeanne Temple, Assistant Superintendent; Kevin Roberts, Director of Curriculum/Instruction and Educational Technology; Steve Smith, High School Principal; Rob Sellers, McKissick Associates; Denny Clopper, The Valley Times-Star; and Brenda Line, Board Minutes. Also present: Sarah Kar, April Messenger, and Matthew Sweigert.

### II. PRESENTATIONS

#### A. High School Reform – Steve Smith, High School Principal

Mr. Smith addressed the Board and noted that the administration began assessing the high school schedule in November 2009 after spending six months in high school reform work. Mr. Smith offered the attached PowerPoint presentation entitled "Daily Schedule Plans, 2010-2011, Big Spring High School," dated April 6, 2010.

Mr. Smith reviewed the essential question: What bell schedule will best meet the needs of our students?

A key parameter in answering this question is as follows: Place student needs first, schoolwide effectiveness foremost.

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**II. PRESENTATIONS (Continued)**

**A. High School Reform (Continued)**

1. Mr. Smith reviewed the following slides and answered questions:

- a. Merenbloom's factors for restructuring.
- b. Program priorities to maintain, add, or delete that affect student achievement and meet student needs.
- c. Input from faculty through departments.
- d. Faculty Advisory Committee priorities for daily schedule development.
- e. Mr. Fry's parameters for daily schedule development.
- f. Opportunities for year-long classes.
- g. Year-long options within a 4 x 4 block schedule.
- h. Options for faculty consideration.
- i. Enhancement period, 50+ minutes.
- j. 2010-2011 schedule draft, semester block with period of 2/45s.
- k. Benefits of semester block with period of 2/45s.
- l. What bell schedule will best meet the needs of our students?

Please refer to the attached hard copy of the presentation for details.

2. Mr. Smith noted the following items not included in the PowerPoint material:

- a. The bell schedule refers to the length of class periods.
  - b. Twelve department chairpersons and Mr. Smith met regularly to address the items outlined in the PowerPoint. There are 78 teachers in 12 departments at Big Spring High School.
  - c. The State requires only three units of high school math. Students have the potential for entering college, not having had a math class for nearly two years. Staff members are brainstorming ways to keep this from happening.
  - d. 700 of the 1000 high school students participate in a club.
  - e. An effort will be made to ensure that a consistent time for student announcements would occur daily. An effort will be made to avoid interfering with instructional time for daily announcements.
  - f. The enhancement/previewing period is not a study hall. Teachers would use this time for students to make up work, work on difficult concepts, or preview future concepts (especially learning support students).
  - g. While some courses are best offered in 80-minute periods half of the year, other courses work best when offered for shorter periods of time all year long. The key is to establish what works best for each course and offer those courses in appropriate time slots.
3. The following schedules were considered, and the staff members decided that the "Semester Block with period of 2/45s" (left) would work best for Big Spring

Semester Block with period of 2/45s	Semester Block with an A/B period
1 <sup>st</sup> period – 81 min/sem	1 <sup>st</sup> period 84 min/sem
2 <sup>nd</sup> 45 min/year; 5 min/pass	2 <sup>nd</sup> 84 min A/B (A day)
3 <sup>rd</sup> 45 min/year	2 <sup>nd</sup> 84 min A/B (B day)
4 <sup>th</sup> Ch3/*SSR/Enhancement 50 min/year	3 <sup>rd</sup> Ch 3/SSR/Enhancement 52 min/year
5 <sup>th</sup> 81 min/sem (lunches)	4 <sup>th</sup> 84 min/sem (lunches)
6 <sup>th</sup> 81 min/sem	5 <sup>th</sup> 84 min/sem
8 credits/year	8 credits/year

\*SSR = sustained, silent reading

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**II. PRESENTATIONS (Continued)**

**A. High School Reform (Continued)**

**4. Additional items noted regarding schedules:**

- a. Period 5 would function as 81 minutes of instructional time with 30 minutes of lunchtime either at the beginning, middle, or end of the period, for a total of 111 minutes. This period would begin at 11:25 A.M.
- b. Approximately 120 vo-tech students will return to Big Spring to eat lunch beginning with the 2010-2011 school term.
- c. At the request of Board members, Mr. Fry indicated that he would provide information regarding the times of day for each period.
- d. Although the recommended schedule may sound confusing, similar schedules have worked successfully in the past and are not confusing to students once the routine is established.
- e. With the proposed schedule, the lunch period would begin an hour later (11:25 A.M.) versus the current lunch start time of 10:30 A.M. This is a positive change, especially for students who participate in after-school activities.
- f. Most classes would continue to be offered as block classes. With the proposed schedule, students would be offered the opportunity to take two year-long classes versus the one year-long class currently offered. This schedule would work well for students taking advanced-placement courses.
- g. Mr. Sellers suggested that the administration consider requiring students to take a math course in the senior year, regardless of the number of math courses taken prior to the senior year.
- h. This year was the first year counselors met face to face with every Grade 9, 10, and 11 student regarding scheduling
- i. The proposed schedule has no negative impact on dual-enrollment courses.
- j. Students prepare and offer the Channel 3 news and announcements. This is not news prepared by an outside network.
- k. High school reform began 18 months ago. Staff and families worked together to define the needs of the building before the schedule was addressed. This proposed schedule requires no additional staff; it simply "reconfigures the middle of the day."
- l. The proposed new schedule has been explained to students. Schedule information will be shared with families in a newsletter and on the District's Web site next month.
- m. An attempt is being made to increase the rigor at the high school.
- n. The proposed schedule requires no Board vote. Mr. Wolf added that the Board gives the administration the authority to arrange the instructional program to best meet the needs of the students.
- o. Matthew Sweigert, 2006 Big Spring graduate, commended the administration for modifying the use of the "former third period" that, in his opinion, was not used properly by students in the past.

**B. Newville Elementary School Update**

Mr. Rob Sellers, Field Administrator, McKissick Associates Architects, provided the members of the Board of School Directors with copies of a three-page document dated April 2, 2010, entitled "Project Status Report to the Big Spring School District: Newville Elementary School Addition & Renovations." Please refer to the attached document.

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**II. PRESENTATIONS (Continued)**

**B. Newville Elementary School Update (Continued)**

Mr. Sellers indicated that it is his job to ensure that the Newville project proceeds smoothly. To date, the project has gone smoothly and is approximately one week ahead of schedule.

Mr. Sellers reviewed the attached document and answered questions. The following additional items were noted:

1. Mr. Sellers ensure that contractors do not perform tasks that would distract students during PSSAs beginning April 8, 2010. The contractors have agreed to make up work on the weekends during that time period.
2. The contractors are aware of the time-sensitive nature of the project and are working diligently to ensure that the building is ready by the start of 2010-2011 school term.
3. The "loud part" of the well drilling has been completed. The wells still must be cased, grouted, trenched, and tied into the manifold.
4. The only surprise in the project thus far is that the project is a week ahead of schedule.
5. Soils were suitable for compaction, and no importing of soil was necessary. Site work is progressing well. Underground stormwater retention and pipes are intalled. That area should be stoned and covered by the end of this week.
6. The large retention system has been excavated and stoned on the west side.
7. A new stormwater system has been installed to the east and will tie into a new line across the front of the school. This work was to be done over the summer; however, contractors agreed to work on the weekends to complete this part of the project early.
8. There is a goal to complete as much exterior work as possible before summer so that the workers are able to concentrate on interior work in the summer months.

President Wolf thanked Mr. Sellers for his report.

**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-14, as a single action item.

**B. Agenda Item XIII., NEW BUSINESS, H., Proposed Updated Job Description for Department Chairperson**

In response to a suggestion from President Wolf, Mr. Fry indicated that he would ensure that the grammatical change "shall" would be made to Section 2.02.4(c) of the proposed updated job description for department chairpersons.

**IV. ADJOURNMENT**

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

The meeting was adjourned at 8:02 P.M.



Robert Lee Barrick, Secretary