

BIG SPRING SCHOOL DISTRICT

Newville, Pennsylvania

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE OF THE BOARD MEETING MINUTES

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 21, 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 7:03 P.M. with President Wilbur Wolf, Jr., presiding. Five (5) directors present: Wilbur Wolf, Jr., President; William Swanson, Vice President; Robert Lee Barrick, Secretary; Richard Norris; and William Piper.

Terry Lopp, Treasurer; Kingsley Blasco; Sandra Rosenberry Deaver; and Richard Roush 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; and Brenda Line, Board Minutes. Also present: Brandie Shatto.

II. PRESENTATION

Update on 2008-2009 Student Achievement Results

- Mr. Kevin Roberts, Director of Curriculum/Instruction and Educational Technology
- Ms. Brandie Shatto, Technology Instructional Support

Mr. Roberts provided the members of the Board of School Directors with hard copies of a PowerPoint presentation entitled "District Achievement Results, 2008-2009," dated September 21, 2009. Mr. Roberts reviewed and explained each PowerPoint slide and answered questions. Please refer to the attached document for charts and graphs of the District's achievement data.

II. PRESENTATION (Continued)

Update on 2008-2009 Student Achievement Results (Continued)

The following additional items were noted:

- A. All schools and the District met adequate yearly progress (AYP) in 2009, an improvement when compared with 2008.
- B. An IEP subgroup at Oak Flat Elementary School and math at the high school did not make AYP the prior year; however, it took just one year to recover from that status.
- C. Any change of greater than three percentage points is statistically significant.
- D. Members of the administration and staff are using the achievement data to pinpoint areas of weakness and implement instruction based on students' needs.
- E. Last year the K-12 language arts curriculum was revised to support standards-aligned instruction. Mr. Roberts is anxious to review the 2009-2010 PSSA scores in light of the curriculum revisions.
- F. In 2008 Big Spring ranked academically fifth of seven neighboring Districts. In 2009 Big Spring ranked academically third of seven neighboring Districts. Refer to Page 5 of the attachment.
- G. DRA is the acronym for Developmental Reading Assessment. Refer to Page 7 of the attachment. Using a checklist for DRA, students are monitored individually using a comprehension rubric. Every child from kindergarten through Grade 2 has a DRA assessment two times a school year (once near the beginning of the school year and once near the end of the school year).
- H. At the end of 2007-2008 (half-day kindergarten), 76.33 percent of kindergarten students were testing at the proficient level on the DRA. At the end of 2008-2009 (first full year of full-day kindergarten), 84.27 percent of students tested proficient on the DRA. This is an 8 percent increase in DRA proficiency when comparing half-day and full-day kindergarten. There were also gains moving students from proficient to advanced -- 50 percent advanced in 2007-2008 to 70 percent advanced in 2008-2009. Refer to Page 7.
- I. Mr. Fry noted that, overall, students' readiness skills at the beginning of kindergarten appear to be declining. Many students are entering kindergarten less prepared than in past years.
- J. Benchmark assessments are given to ensure instruction is meeting students' needs. The District uses several tools to give snapshots of data so it can be evaluated and used to improve instruction.
- K. Building improvement teams are proving effective at enhancing the curriculum.
- L. The District is using consistent and pervasive researched-based instructional practices, determining what works and continuing to use that.
- M. Reading is being taught across all subjects at the high school. This collaborative approach ensures that students do not slip through the cracks. Every student is every teacher's responsibility.
- N. The District has made strides in using the data collected from benchmark assessments. The benchmarks are given four times a year in Grades 3 to 11.
- O. High school restructuring will include revised pathways, curriculum relevance, internships, and expository classrooms (online Chinese, etc.).
- P. Plato (secondary) and Odyssey (elementary) self-directed remediation programs are not yet available for home use.

II. PRESENTATION (Continued)

Update on 2008-2009 Student Achievement Results (Continued)

- Q. Performance Tracker is used for students in kindergarten through Grade 12 to aggregate and disaggregate state, national, and local assessment data (PSSA, Benchmark Assessments, DRA, etc.). Teachers input some data, while other data is scanned or downloaded to the computer, depending on the data's format. Once the test scores are known, it could take a teacher approximately 20 minutes to enter those scores into Performance Tracker for one classroom of students.
- R. Any student's progress can be evaluated using Performance Tracker. This software is helpful in ensuring the District meets NCLB requirements. Administrative teams were trained in creating focus groups based on subgroups and monitoring those students to see how they are performing on assessments.
- S. The administration uses the Pennsylvania Value Added Assessment System (PVAAS) to disaggregate data and determine how a student has grown in one year. In addition, the tool allows the District to view the performance of entire classrooms and entire grades to see their growth. The tool provides a prediction of how those students might score on assessments in the coming years. This enables the administration to identify students who may be on a path to failure and ensure those students receive appropriate academic support for success. The Ninth Grade Transition Committee will use PVAAS to aid in restructuring student pathways. Refer to Page 11.
- T. Districts are permitted to claim successful AYP based on PVAAS data.
- U. The administration is encouraging teachers to collaborate to improve the curriculum based on the data from the software tools available in the District. Based on the data, teachers can now spend time on areas that need improvement and not waste time on areas the students have mastered.
- V. Teachers have been trained in using Performance Tracker and are using it effectively and efficiently to improve classroom instruction.
- W. The high school restructuring team continues to find ways to improve instruction at the high school, including literacy, pathways, scheduling process, and ninth-grade transition. Concrete items have been implemented. A Reading I course has been implemented at the high school based on a recommendation from the Literacy Committee. The Pathways Committee has made great progress establishing pathways at the high school that are solid recommendations to improve achievement.

Director Piper commended the District for implementing the DRA concept, noting that his daughter's reading comprehension problem was identified and remedied in third grade. Mr. Piper indicated that it is critical to get students the help they need early in their school career.

III. PREVIEW OF THE AGENDA

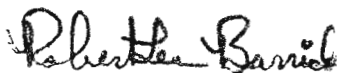
Combine and Address

President Wolf requested that the Board address XIII., NEW BUSINESS, A., PERSONNEL CONCERNS, Items A-1 through A-10, as a single action item, and Items E and F as a single action item.

IV. ADJOURNMENT

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

The meeting was adjourned at 7:59 P.M.



Robert Lee Barrick, Secretary