

BIG SPRING SCHOOL DISTRICT

Newville, Pennsylvania

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE OF THE BOARD MEETING MINUTES

MONDAY, DECEMBER 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 7:02 P.M. with President Wilbur Wolf, Jr., presiding. Five (5) directors present: Wilbur Wolf, Jr., President; William Swanson, Vice President; Robert Lee Barrick, Secretary; Tarin Houpt; and Richard Norris.

William Piper joined the meeting in progress at 7:06 P.M.

Terry Lopp, Treasurer; Kingsley Blasco; and Richard Roush were absent.

Others in attendance: Richard Fry, Superintendent; Kevin Roberts, Director of Curriculum/Instruction and Educational Technology; Richard E. Kerr, Jr., Business Manager; Steve Smith, High School Principal; Christopher Boyd, Assistant High School Principal; and Brenda Line, Board Minutes. Also present: Mallory Cohick, Judy Creps, Charlene D'Amore, Erica Dolson, Abby Leonard, Sherisa Nailor, Cherie Powell, Steve Smith, Jean Wadlinger, SaraBeth Wanbaugh, and Peggy Wolf.

II. PRESENTATION

High School Restructuring Update – High School Faculty and Administration

The following staff members were present and offered information regarding the high school restructuring process:

Judy Creps, Sherisa Nailor, Mallory Cohick, Cherie Powell, Jean Wadlinger, Abby Leonard, Beth Wanbaugh, Steve Smith, and Christopher Boyd.

The staff members offered a PowerPoint presentation entitled "High School Restructuring Update, December 21, 2009." Please refer to the attached hard copy of the presentation.

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II. PRESENTATION (Continued)

High School Restructuring Update – High School Faculty and Administration
(Continued)

Mr. Smith reviewed the essential question for high school restructuring: How Can We Improve Achievement at Big Spring High School?

In response to a question from President Wolf, Mr. Smith indicated that he considers the definition of achievement “students focused on growing and meeting their potential weekly, monthly, and year by year.” Mr. Smith added that one goal of the restructuring is to ensure that students are focused and moving in the direction of their greatest interest, and he added that a District goal is to prepare the students as well as possible for their pursuits after graduation.

A. High School Restructuring

The following items were noted in addition to the PowerPoint presentation:

1. One IEP subgroup failing to meet adequate yearly progress (AYP) causes an entire school to fail to meet AYP.
2. The SAT scores listed are based on the 1600-point SAT, not the 2400-point SAT.
3. President Wolf requested information regarding the percentage of students who are eligible to take the PSAT compared with the percentage of eligible students who actually took the PSAT.
4. Superintendent Fry indicated that any dropout rate percentage is too high, and he added that Big Spring’s 4.4 percent dropout rate was the highest in the intermediate unit that year.
5. Director Norris indicated that it would be interesting to compare the number of students who are eligible to take the AP examinations and the number of students who actually take the AP examinations. Mr. Fry responded that the AP students must take the AP examinations in order to earn the weighted grade.
6. The greatest professional development comes as the result of teachers working with teachers and teachers sharing with teachers.
7. A goal of the District is to continuously set higher goals and make efforts to improve in all areas.
8. In response to a question from Director Piper, Mr. Smith indicated that he could provide SAT breakdown data for the Board. The SAT scores outlined in the attached document include the national average for critical reading and math added together. Mr. Fry noted that the administration could provide as much detailed information as the Board requests.
9. Director Piper questioned whether Big Spring’s PSSA and SAT test scores would be similar. Mr. Smith indicated that, although the group of students tested would be different, he would hypothesize that the trend would be the same. Mr. Smith indicated that the administration could provide that information.

B. Pathways

The members of the Board of School Directors were provided with copies of a 13-page document entitled “The 6 Pathway Options.” Please refer to the attached document.

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II. PRESENTATION (Continued)

High School Restructuring Update – High School Faculty and Administration

(Continued)

B. Pathways (Continued)

The staff members reviewed the document and answered questions. The following items were noted:

1. The six pathways help students focus their education in areas of interest as follows: Arts and Communications; Business, Finance, and Information Technology; Engineering and Industrial Technology; Human Services; Science and Health; Career and Technology.
2. The pathways educate students regarding what type of training is required for a career and the courses that are required at each grade level.
3. Sustained reading includes the reading of a textbook, magazine, or novel of the student's choosing.
4. The high school restructuring committee established the needs of the students before moving forward with any proposed changes to scheduling. Mr. Fry indicated that after 13 months of hard work, the staff members have a "great plan" to move forward.
5. The pathways equip students to be career ready when leaving high school, and they challenge students who are bound for higher education.

Mr. Fry concluded that he is pleased with the progress staff members have made, working collaboratively toward the restructuring goal.

President Wolf encouraged staff members to review the careers in the pathways information to ensure their accuracy. For instance, "forest conversationalist" should be "forest conservationist." In addition, Mr. Wolf encouraged the staff members to ensure the accuracy of the education required for a given career.

Ms. Creps responded that the pathways list presented this evening contains sample careers, and she added that the corrections would be made in the final document.

Superintendent Fry noted that the careers listed are "tied to what the State mandates," and he indicated that the staff could "Big Spring-ize" the careers so that the careers would align with actual positions available in this area. Mr. Fry noted that it is important for the District to have certain language in place to qualify for federal and state grant programs.

Mr. Boyd indicated that a committee of businessmen and businesswomen would be consulted to ensure that the careers "relate to the real world" and ensure that the language used is relevant locally.

Mr. Smith indicated that the administration is attempting to prepare a student as early as possible to choose a pathway that fits that particular student. The pathways would be introduced in Grade 8 to ensure students select classes in Grade 9.

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II. PRESENTATION (Continued)

High School Restructuring Update – High School Faculty and Administration
(Continued)

B. Pathways (Continued)

President Wolf indicated that the pathways are a “great improvement” compared with what was available four or five years ago; however, some finetuning is necessary for the pathways.

Mr. Fry indicated that an assessment component of the agriculture program in the future would be the National Occupational Competency Testing Institute (NOCTI) exam. This would be reflected in the catalog and would help the District when applying for grants.

C. Conclusion

Mr. Smith thanked the Board for the opportunity to offer a presentation regarding the high school restructuring progress and the pathways information.

President Wolf thanked the staff members for their work on the high school restructuring and for their informative presentation this evening.

III. PREVIEW OF THE AGENDA

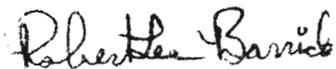
Combine and Address

President Wolf requested that the Board address XIII., NEW BUSINESS, A., PERSONNEL CONCERNS, Items A-1 through A-7, as a single action item and Items C and D as a single action item.

IV. ADJOURNMENT

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

The meeting was adjourned at 8:15 P.M.



Robert Lee Barrick, Secretary