

Big Spring School District

Newville, Pennsylvania

DIG Committee Meeting Minutes

April 14, 2025



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The Disenrollment Investigation & Grievance Committee Meeting met April 14, 2025, 6:00 pm, in the Middle School Commons. The meeting was called to order @ 6:00 p.m.

Present: Julie Boothe-chair, Seth Cornman, Lisa Shade, Dr. Guarente, Kendra Shaffer, Kathy Livengood Absent: Patricia Johnson

Members of the public: 1 present, Mallory Farrands

Welcome by Committee chair, Julie Boothe with update on last meeting's motions forwarded to the board

1st Public Comment Time: none

1. Continued Items of discussion:

A. Approve the committee minutes from 4/7/25

Motion: Mrs. Shade

2nd: Mr. Cornman

Vote: All in favor

B. Any Old Business? none

2. New Items for Discussion:

A. School Performance Snapshot Staff Survey: Seth and Kendra presented survey as developed.

Open Discussion held. Revisions were discussed in depth on each section and revisions were made to document as agreed to by group. Need for separating data into buildings was discussed, and agreed upon as the favored way to have meaningful, actionable results. Discussion on need for an opening statement of guarantees for anonymity and uses of the data to reassure staff as they consider taking the optional survey was had. Mr. Cornman and Dr. Guarente will work together to balance the needed reassurances and the logistics of the survey tool to create an opening statement, or acknowledgement for the survey. Concerns were raised about certain questions, if answered poorly, could point to a certain, or a few individuals responsible for those tasks and responsibilities. Mrs. Boothe reassured that the aggregate data would only be used for the board and administration's purposes to understand where staff sees need for improvements. This will be handed over to the board, and not intended for digestion and breakdown in depth by this committee. Discussion on differences in education level of paraprofessionals vs. professional staff lead to potential need to limit questions received by paraprofessionals to items in their purview. Dr. Guarente will offer recommendations on which questions to eliminate for the paraprofessionals through talks with administrators, and the plan will tentatively be to keep paraprofessionals data in a different data set. No motions were made to complete this task. More work will be done and survey progress will be presented at next meeting for decisions.

Next steps: Dr. Guarente will share with building administration for additions, feedback, and limited paraprofessional version. Mr. Cornman and Dr. Guarente will work on opening statement.

- B. **Bullying/Discipline Action Plan and tipline/ website recommendation:** Lisa presented ideas as she had discussed with Dr. Guarente. He is looking into a customer service platform to improve accessibility and offer ways for both parents to raise concerns and questions and administration to address and quantify the concerns. This will help with decision making for items like policy updates, staff education opportunities and draw attention to overlooked issues. More information will be coming to the board on this topic in the near future. In the meantime, Mrs. Shade recommends a basic reporting outline of how to address problems be made available on the “parent” tab on the website.

Next step: Dr. Guarente will form a basic explanation of ways to report and handle issues with Dr. Sanders’ assistance and report back.

3. **Future Item for Consideration:**

- A. **CAOLA Performance and Satisfaction Survey, and cost evaluation-**Discussed need for this in this committee. Dr. Guarente offered the idea that the administration has begun looking at the possibility of starting our own Big Spring cyber option. Many details need worked out, but this would be an in-house alternative and possibly be open to students outside the district. Currently, he estimates that CAOLA costs the district about 1/10th of the tuition paid to cyber charter schools, but many families are choosing other options. There have been considerations of changes, like changes in function to the collective bargaining agreement to accomplish this with our current staff, as well as lowering the graduation requirement to the needed 24 credits rather than 28. Mrs. Boothe mentioned that this could be a good way to keep staff as classes are emptying due to disenrollments, save money on cyber expense and possibly turn it into some income if we develop a sought after program. Due to this realization and movement by the administration, the committee will consider our work on this area complete, and remove this item from the future items list, unless motion is made for taking action on it in the future.
- B. **DIG Webpage update-** will keep on the list for when survey is being distributed after board approval.

4. **New Items / Motions for Discussion:** Mrs. Shaffer had several questions. She asked if we know the bullying reported happened in-person or in cyber. Mr. Cornman answered that the responses were answering questions about bullying that happened in the building experience. She also wanted to know the progress with monitoring disenrollments. Dr. Guarente said they have begun to track the disenrollments. He has been giving numbers of students each month to the board. He does receive withdrawal slips from the staff when a student withdrawals, and though they cannot reach out to the parents then, he often hears reasons that are suspected reasons for withdrawal from staff, which is considered and kept confidential. Mrs. Shaffer also questioned Dr. Guarente about kindergarten registration level at this point compared to normal. Dr. Guarente feels the numbers will grow to an estimated 160-170 class size, and that this registration is on track with other years, but cannot know for sure. Additionally, she asked about the plan to incorporate cursive handwriting into next school year’s curriculum, and he confirmed that it is planned in several grades at elementary level.

2nd Public Comment Time: Mrs. Farrands had several questions and comments about the staff survey. These concerns were discussed, and included in discussion notes under that section.

Motion to Adjourn? Motion: Mrs. Shade 2nd: Mrs. Shaffer Vote: all in favor
Ended @7:35

