

BIG SPRING SCHOOL DISTRICT

Newville, Pennsylvania

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE OF THE BOARD MEETING MINUTES

MONDAY, JULY 22, 2013

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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. *Eight (8) directors present: Wilbur Wolf, Jr., President; William Swanson, Vice-President; Robert Lee Barrick, Secretary; David Gutshall, Treasurer; Richard Roush, John McCrea; Richard Norris; and William Piper.

Kingsley Blasco – absent.

Others in attendance: Richard W. Fry, Superintendent; Jeanne Temple, Assistant Superintendent; Kevin Roberts, Director of Curriculum & Instruction; Richard E. Kerr, Jr., Business Manager; Brandie Shatto, District Educational Technology; April Messenger, and Carol Kuntz, Board Minutes.

II. PRESENTATION

A. Full-Day Kindergarten – Mr. Kevin Roberts, Director of Curriculum & Instruction and Mrs. Jeanne Temple, Assistant Superintendent. Mr. Roberts and Mrs. Temple are here to talk about Full Day Kindergarten.

School Board Presentation

Specific questions regarding tonight's presentation:

1. Mr. Wolf asked if this was a small sample of students. It is not the whole group.
2. Mr. Fry replied that it is roughly 180 students. This group is the current fourth graders. We invested a lot of money in this program. We just want to see where we stand. We wanted to give them two years of PSSA testing.
3. Mrs. Temple stated we are not just comparing the 4th and 5th grade groups. We are comparing so much more.
4. Mr. Fry informed the Board this is not just a presentation on full day kindergarten. We did a lot of work around full day kindergarten.
5. Mr. Wolf noted that they all declined. Is that because of harder testing?
6. Mr. Fry replied that is a great question. We think the level of the test has something to do with that. The way Pennsylvania standard are moving it will become more interesting. Fifth grade is a bump in the road and it is a tougher test.
7. Mr. Norris asked if you can follow the cohort by going diagonal.
8. Mr. Roberts replied that is correct.
9. Mr. Wolf asked if this is the total students in the district.
10. Mrs. Temple stated it is just elementary grades three through five.
11. Mr. Fry stated that you might be wondering what we have accomplished. Please watch these slides closely just to see how far we have come. We have done a lot of training with our staff. You are seeing the investment from our staff. This is not front page news at Big Spring but we are moving in the right direction.
12. Mr. Fry stated that we are seeing progress without a doubt. It is still early. Our poverty level has doubled in the last several years. Our students are more needy. As you can see with the needier children, we are still making progress. We still have higher achievement scores.
13. Mr. Barrick had a question for April Messenger, Teacher at Oak Flat. How long does it take you to determine what every student in your classroom needs?

14. April Messenger replied at the beginning of the school year it takes me two or three weeks. After that period, you can start to see the separation begin. You can see who is getting it in Math. Reading is harder to judge. Our groups are flexible. My mid-year it is pretty set with just small changes in groups
15. Mr. Barrick asked if she used tests to see what I need.
16. Mrs. Messenger replied yes little pre-test, bell ringer work, and small groups work. This helps me see what areas students are weak in. The curriculum has been a lot of work but has made positive changes to our classes. I would say the curriculum is working. It has made me a better teacher.
17. Mr. Fry told the Board that we do survey our teachers at the end of the year. Teaching is a tough profession. It gets harder every year.
18. Mr. Piper asked about the site words for our District. Does it change and are they just site words for our District?
19. Mr. Roberts replied they are just for our District. We have a list of site words. It used to be 40 words for kindergarten. Now it is 100 words.
20. Mr. Fry stated the first few years we went to visit other districts to see what they were doing. Now other districts are coming to us to see what we are doing and what is working for us.

III. PREVIEW OF THE AGENDA

President Wolf requested that the Board address XII. NEW BUSINESS, A., PERSONNEL CONCERNS, Items A-1 through A-11 as a single action item.

Reviewed some discussion from earlier Buildings and Property Committee, specifically on the Drive-it at the front of the Middle School.

IV. BUILDING & PROPERTY COMMITTEE

No discussion.

V. FINANCE COMMITTEE

No discussion.

VI. DISTRICT IMPROVEMENT COMMITTEE

No discussion.

VII. BOARD POLICY

No discussion.

VIII. ITEMS FROM FLOOR

1. Mr. Wolf questioned what the Aspen contract is.

Mr. Fry replied that Mr. Roberts would address your questions. Aspen will be the replacement for Power School but it will start during the 13-14 school year. This is the contract for the new system. This is a student information system. In time, Aspen will end up costing us less than PowerSchool.

Mr. Roberts explained the Aspen system and how we would implement it.

Mr. Fry informed the Board that we will be the first school in Pennsylvania to go with Aspen. Aspen is out of Chicago. They have a lot of schools in Maine, New York and Massachusetts.

2. Mr. Wolf questioned the high school student handbook. It talks about asking people for their photo id and then holding their id.

Mr. Fry replied that we hold their id until we get their visitor's badge back.

Mr. Wolf questions the wording "may be" asked for your id.

Mr. Fry replied that it is more for people we do not know. Some people we see on a regular basis so we don't ask them for their id.

3. Mr. McCrea stated that he noticed in the hand book the corrections that were noted on page 31 and 32. Mr. Smith had a typographical error concerning the grading system.

Mr. Fry stated that we noticed it as well. We fixed it and corrected it in the handbook as well.

4. Mr. McCrea questioned the new grading system and the weighing that would be placed on the honor courses. It is a much higher weighing for honor courses.

Mr. Fry informed the Board we had a committee in the high school reviewing this for the last year. This is what the committee recommended. We have doubled the number of AP test taking this year. We will have a presentation for the Board in about a month from now. We just got the scores back. We have doubled the numbers and our scores went up.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Norris to adjourn, seconded by Swanson to adjourn. Roll call vote: Voting Yes: Roush, McCrea, Norris, Swanson, Piper, Gutshall, Barrick, and Wolf. Motion carried unanimously 8 – 0.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:05PM



Robert Lee Barrick, Secretary