



**Monday, January 12, 2015  
Education Center, Edgeboro Room**

## **Agenda**

### **Board Curriculum Committee Meeting – Dr. Silva**

1. Courtesy of the Floor (15 minutes allowed)
2. Full Day Kindergarten (Plan and Program Evaluation)
3. Fall 2014 Dual Enrollment Update (Stretch Learning)
4. High School Online Courses 2015-2016 (Stretch Learning)
5. **Budget Process and Future Planning Overview**
6. Information Items
7. **Agenda Items for the January 26, 2015, Regular Board Meeting**
  - A. Program Change Petition, Full-Day Kindergarten
  - B. Impact Aid, Section 8003
  - C. Community Service Agencies
8. Courtesy of the Floor (15 minutes allowed)
9. Open Forum

**BETHLEHEM AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT  
EDUCATION CENTER**

**BOARD CURRICULUM COMMITTEE  
MEETING MINUTES  
MONDAY, JANUARY 12, 2015**

Angela Sinkler, Chairperson, called the meeting of the BASD Board Curriculum Committee to order at 6:50 PM.

Present were School Directors Basilio Bonilla, Michele Cann, Michael Faccinetto, Craig Neiman, Roy Ortiz, Sudantha Vidanage. Also present were Dr. Joseph J. Roy, Superintendent, Dr. Jack Silva, Assistant Superintendent & Chief Academic Officer, and representatives from the press.

COURTESY OF THE FLOOR - None

Dr. Silva reviewed the Board Curriculum Committee Meeting Agenda with the Committee.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

**Full Day Kindergarten (Plan and Program Evaluation)**

Dr. Silva opened the meeting stating his “full-throated support” for a plan to implement a district-wide Full-Day Kindergarten (FDK) program in the 2015-2016 school year. He stated that the cost of not having a FDK program now outweighs the cost of implementing a FDK program. Dr. Silva compared establishing a universal FDK program to “securing the foundation” of the BASD academic program, and providing fair and equitable access to crucial early learning opportunities for all students.

The proposal of a district-wide, universal FDK program has been a topic of discussion over the past several years/months among the Board, district staff, community members, and state and national elected officials. Dr. Silva noted that action was needed more than continued discussion. The Administration is requesting approval to alter the existing BASD educational program by abolishing the BASD’s Half-Day Kindergarten program and establish a universal Full-Day Kindergarten program for all BASD Kindergarteners in all 16 elementary schools starting in the 2015-2016 school year.

Dr. Roy spoke in support of the FDK plan and explained that the expenses related to the universal FDK program will be included in the Preliminary District Budget to be proposed by the Administration and reviewed by the Board in the coming weeks.

The overwhelming body of research supports that children in FDK achieve better educational outcomes than children in half-day programs. Dr. Silva explained how a BASD Full-Day Kindergarten

program will promote students' cognitive learning, creative problem-solving, and social competence. With this adoption, the BASD's FDK program will move toward closer alignment with the PA Core Standards and national standards. Dr. Silva noted that, most importantly, FDK will support improved reading outcomes by the end of Grade 3—a key indicator that correlates with future school success.

*A Full-Day Kindergarten Program Evaluation Plan* was presented for the period January 12, 2015 through September 9, 2019. The program evaluation included a Grade 3 End-of-Year target matrix that will track achievement and school engagement data for the Class of 2028. The administration will monitor the progress of the FDK students to ensure that the FDK program is providing the necessary components that lead to student/program success.

The BASD is currently running 14 FDK classrooms for at-risk students (only) at 10 of 16 BASD elementary schools. With the implementation of a universal full-day Kindergarten program, curriculum will be revised and facilities prepared as necessary. Support departments, such as Transportation, Dining Services, and Childcare have been informed of modifications needed in their departments to achieve universal FDK in the district. Mr. Giordano will be monitoring staffing needs, with a preliminary estimate of twelve additional professional personnel needed to instruct the additional Kindergarten. The final FTE hiring impact to the budget will likely be less than 12 with details forthcoming as enrollment and retirement information becomes known. Staffing costs will be reviewed at upcoming budget discussions.

Dr. Roy requested preliminary approval from the Board of School Directors to include a Full Day Kindergarten program revision in the 2015-16 Budget.

School Director Bonilla is in support of the FDK concept, but was concerned about committing monies to a Budget not yet reviewed. School Director Faccinnetto also supports the program change and feels that the commitment should be given with the intent that the budget be adjusted to accommodate the revision. School Director Ortiz thanked the administration for all their diligence and persistence in bringing the proposal the Board. School Director Vidanage supported the FDK proposal.

Mrs. Sinkler and the Directors supported placing a Program Alteration Request item on the January Regular Board Agenda.

### **Fall 2014 Dual Enrollment Update (Stretch Learning)**

As part of the *BASD Roadmap's* Stretch Learning Goals, a Dual Enrollment option is offered to BASD high school students to complete college course work during their high school careers. Dr. Silva presented program guidelines and a list of courses completed by Freedom and Liberty students in the Fall 2014.

Dual enrollment is a key strategy in support of career pathways and more personalized learning. Dr. Silva would like to increase the availability of courses, and expand the list of universities and colleges offering dual enrollment courses. He is interested in partnering with these institutions for potential job shadowing and internship opportunities, as well. Dr. Silva would like to see the students take advantage of these courses during the regular school day, as well as after school and evening hours.

School Director Vidanage commented on the advantages dual enrollment provides to students in the area of early admission and financial savings for post graduation studies.

School Director Cann recognized the high school guidance counselors and their offices for their support of dual enrollment. She had first-hand experience with the benefits of dual enrollment and thanked the BASD staff and departments for making the most of the offering for our students.

There is no official Board action necessary for dual enrollment and/or its potential expansion.

### **High School On-line Courses 2015-2016 (Stretch Learning)**

Also part of the BASD *Roadmap's* Stretch Learning goals are high school on-line courses. Dr. Silva shared an informational brochure that highlights the benefits and requirements for students interested in the four courses provided in the on-line learning format.

Dr. Silva clarified the more commonly-used definitions (Cyber, On-line, and Blended/Hybrid) for Web-based educational programs. *Cyber* is a completely on-line instructional format, such as the BASD Cyber Academy, assisted by an outside organization (such as VLN). The BASD's Cyber Academy students can receive a BASD high school degree and remain part of the BASD student database, although all of their instruction is outside the BASD walls. *On-line* courses are Web-based versions of existing BASD courses available to LHS and FHS students and can be taken along with other BASD face-to-face (normal) courses. All BASD on-line courses are taught by BASD teachers. *Blended/Hybrid Learning* is when significant amounts of on-line content (i.e. a "flipped" classroom) is incorporated into existing courses. Mr. Frank Arbushites, the BASD Supervisor of Instructional Technology and the Technology Integration Specialists are charged with developing and implementing the BASD's growing Cyber, On-line, and Blended/Hybrid offerings.

There is no Board action required for this item.

### **Budget Process and Future Planning Overview**

The Board was presented with a PowerPoint describing the financial challenges of past years and highlighting the goals for the coming budget year. The slides provided a timeline for the budget process, as well as the conditions and projections that the administration is using to present a Preliminary District Budget for 2015-2016.

Budget reductions from 2009 to 2012 led to dramatic cuts of BASD staff and programs. With cautious spending practices and more efficient monitoring of all District programs and initiatives, the administration has been able to both "sustain" and "restore" many personnel and programs in the past two years.

Dr. Roy and Mrs. Gober detailed the structural budget issues facing the BASD. The Administration identified the most costly and problematic areas as the mandated retirement contributions to PSERS and the charter school tuition costs that have grown dramatically.

Mrs. Gober broke out how a “mill” affects BASD programs and staffing. One mill could provide for approximately 12.5 new teachers, or 1/3 of all BASD sports and activities, or 12 new buses, or 952 laptops, or 3,076 chromebooks.

Dr. Roy, Dr. Silva, Mrs. Gober reviewed slides related to budget goals, district assets, program initiatives, revenue sources, state funding, expenditure summaries, “shelf items,” PSERS and charter school costs, and local tax effort.

Currently, projected 2015-2016 revenues are \$11.6 million less than anticipated expenditures. The administration will present updates on revenue changes and expenditure reductions over the coming months’ budget workshops and Finance Committee Meetings. The Administration recommends that the Board, as its practice in past years, approve the allowable exceptions in the *Preliminary Budget* as to give itself flexibility throughout budget deliberations.

School Director Bonilla wants to remain mindful of the senior citizen population paying school district taxes. He would like to explore options to provide some tax deductions/relief to this subgroup of our community.

School Director Neiman asked if there are actuarial projections or annual updates that could be provided relative to the PSERS. Mrs. Gober confirmed that she does watch the numbers and projections provided by PSERS, as well as any legislation that may affect the way the district makes contributions to the fund. School Director Neiman wondered if there were other models available to offer staff toward retirement benefits. Mrs. Gober explained that the PSERS website is explanatory in the methods of calculations, contributions, required district reimbursements, and State mandates. School Director Neiman wondered how long ago the contribution percentage was readjusted and if alternatives and/or budgetary suggestions were given to districts at that time. Mrs. Gober and Dr. Roy shared that the offered “fix” was previously presented around 2012 and that incremental changes will not go away. Legislators are under the impression the “fix” has been given and districts need to implement it.

School Director Vidanage asked if investigation could be made into group rates for health care and life insurance, etc. Mr. Vidanage suggested that the district attempt to find as many avenues as possible with discounts and rebates to help contain on-going contractual budgetary expenses.

The Administration will continue to apprise the Board of School Directors on the development of the 2015-16 BASD Budget.

INFORMATION ITEMS - None

## AGENDA ITEMS

The following agenda items were presented to the committee and will be included in the January 26, 2015 Regular Board Meeting Agenda:

- A. Program Change Petition, Full-Day Kindergarten

- B. Impact Aid, Section 8003
- C. Community Service Agencies

**COURTESY OF THE FLOOR**

Josslyn Tabler, 850 Clearview Lane, Bethlehem spoke in support of the adoption of a full day Kindergarten program. She felt that she was speaking on behalf of many other parents in the community who feel that their children would definitely benefit from this program revision. She asked the Board to support the Administration's proposal.

**OPEN FORUM**

School Director Vidanage asked that the district considering offering before and after childcare at the expense of the district to help parents in need. Dr. Roy and Dr. Silva clarified that the district has been and will continue to offer before and after school day care as a self-sustaining program; which is how it currently operates.

Mrs. Sinkler adjourned the meeting at 8:31 PM.

Minutes prepared by:

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Charisse M. Pfeiffer, Administrative Assistant to the Assistant Superintendent for Education