

Educational Programs and Services
Board Committee Meeting
January 28, 2015

Minutes

EPS Committee Members: Caroline Doherty, Marc Whichard, Mary B. Williams

Present: Caroline Doherty, Benjie Forrest, Marc Whichard, Mary B. Williams

Staff Members Present: Dr. Ethan Lenker, Cheryl Olmsted, Shawnda Cherry, Bill Frazier, David Jenkins, Brock Letchworth, Lisa Tate, Shannon Wainright, Wynn Whittington, Robin Wright

Ms. Doherty declared a quorum present and called the meeting to order. She asked for a motion to approve the December EPS minutes. With one correction noted, Ms. Williams made a motion to approve the minutes as amended. Ms. Doherty seconded the motion, and the minutes were approved.

Driver's Education Current Status

Ms. Doherty called on Ron Butler to give an update on Driver's Education as was requested by Board Member, Walter Gaskins. Mr. Butler shared a brief history on the funding of Driver's Education in North Carolina, explaining that Driver's Education is currently funded through the Highway Fund. Beginning with the 2015-16 school year, it will no longer be funded by the state, and the funding will be the responsibility of local school boards. The ruling from the General Assembly states local school boards may charge students a fee of \$65.00, with the remainder to be covered by the local school board. We currently charge a fee of \$40.00 per student. This year, the state allotted Pitt County Schools \$430,151.00; we trained 1,801 students at a cost of \$274 per student. Mr. Whichard mentioned there is talk that the state is working to find a way to continue funding Driver's Education.

Ms. Doherty asked Mr. Butler if he knew of any counties drafting resolutions to request that the state continue funding Driver's Education. Mr. Butler said he is aware of some counties who are making this request. Mr. Whichard stated he was in favor of drafting a resolution urging the continuation of funding, not only to provide a sound education for our students, but also for the general good of the population in terms of insurance rates.

Bullying Update

Ms. Cherry, Student Services Lead, shared a brief overview and handout of "Bullying Prevention Activities" in our schools for the 2014-15 school year. PCS contracts with the Mediation Center of Eastern NC to provide services for our schools in conflict resolution, peer mediation and bullying. Pitt County Schools and the Pitt County Sheriff's Office declared October as Bullying Prevention month for the eighth year in a row. Desha Lane, the Schools Programs Coordinator with the Mediation Center, is available as needed in our schools throughout the school year. Ms. Lane has been called to work with small groups of students in our schools when a bullying situation has occurred. Since September, Ms. Lane has presented in 17 elementary and middle schools, reaching over 7,000 students and 400 staff and faculty, as well as two high schools reaching almost 300 students.

Ms. Williams shared her concern regarding a recent phone call she received from the grandmother of a middle school student. She wants to ensure all Board Members know how to direct parents should they receive such calls.

Mr. Frazier, 9-12 Director, shared some PowerPoint slides of bulletin boards in our schools addressing how bullying can affect a child. He also shared several ways our high schools are dealing with the issue, including creating an environment where students feel they can safely report bullying without any repercussions. One high school created a Google Doc so students can report bullying while retaining their anonymity. Ms. Williams wants to ensure we are offering advice to parents on how they can protect their children from being bullied. Mr. Whichard shared some ideas he has implemented in his school. He also voiced his concern that parents need to be aware of the role social media plays in perpetuating the problem; this piece requires parent intervention.

Ms. Wainright, 6-8 Director, and Lisa Tate, K-5 Director, shared an online resource file that was developed by the K-8 counselors during their monthly meetings. They formed grade level PLCs to create lessons they can use within their schools. These resources are now readily available for their colleagues across the district to use. Ms. Wainright shared the various types of bullying and how different schools are addressing the issue. Several schools have student pledges vowing they will not tolerate bullying.

Mr. Letchworth mentioned that the actual reporting of bullying has been one of our greatest obstacles and much of the time, bullying threats go unreported. We hope we've removed this roadblock in Pitt County Schools by establishing a hotline for each school that allows students and parents to make these anonymous reports of bullying.

Ms. Cherry mentioned a program, entitled "TRP – Totally Responsible Person", and is being piloted at C.M. Eppes and our alternative programs. This program teaches students how to respond to any situation by choosing their emotional response, and choosing not to have a victim mentality. We may expand this program into other schools if the pilot is successful.

Ms. Wright, Director of Exceptional Children's Programs with Pitt County Schools, shared that the EC Parent Liaison created training modules for parents focused on recognizing the warning signs that may indicate their child is being bullied.

Ms. Doherty would like to review our policy (10.200) regarding bullying, to ensure it reflects the General Assembly's recent legislation dictating that some type of communication from the principal to their students, teachers and parents be sent out at the beginning of the school year. She would like for the Board to look into available resources from the state level. Although North Carolina does not, some states have a state mandated anti-bullying program. Within the state, some districts have recommended programs at each grade level. Whereas, within Pitt County, such programs are chosen and implemented at the discretion of each principal. Ms. Doherty would like to maintain data tracking the number of calls made to our new school hotlines and bullying reports at our schools so we can better determine the extent of the problem. She went on to say that it is imperative that we understand exactly what is happening and where it is occurring in order to tailor our interventions and resources appropriately. Ms. Olmsted said we will need a firm definition of bullying in order to do so. There was discussion as to how bullying incidents will be clearly identified in this data.

Ms. Doherty asked that we continue with this subject at the next EPS Board Committee meeting. She would like to discuss our efforts to address bullying, how the data will be tracked, compliance documentation, and what type of training our principals and assistant principals are receiving. Mr. Whichard added that the most important component to bullying prevention is the relationship our principals and assistant principals have with their students; in addition to the environment they've created in their schools to make students feel safe.

Dual Language

Beginning with the 2015-16 school year, we will have two dual immersion kindergarten classes at Belvoir. We have contracted with VIF (Visiting International Faculty) to assist in locating and training our teachers. Ms. Olmsted is planning a trip in February to Wake County to visit a Global and Immersion magnet school and a school that is in their first year of immersion.

Pitt County Early College

Wynn Whittington, newly hired principal of the Pitt County Schools Early College High School (PCSECHS), shared a brief presentation that will be shown to students and parents in recruiting rising 9th graders. Students will be provided with the opportunity to earn a high school diploma and two years of college credit or an associate's degree at no cost to the student. The rubric that will be used to select students is geared towards targeting first generation college students, at-risk students and those coming from low socioeconomic backgrounds. PCSECHS will be held in a modular unit on the Pitt Community College (PCC) campus. The presentation outlined the academic goals and how PCSECHS will differ from a traditional high school. PCSECHS will follow the PCC calendar, not the PCS calendar. Along with employing the AVID strategies, students will be offered various opportunities for job shadowing and internships.

Mr. Whittington explained that, although some students will graduate in four years, all early colleges operate on a 5-year plan. In order to graduate, a student must earn the minimum number of credits necessary to obtain a high school diploma. Additionally, they may earn the required number of credit hours for an associate's degree. Students may earn dual credit for some courses. Through the Transfer Assured Admissions Policy (TAAP), PCSECHS students have the guarantee that credits earned at PCSECHS are transferable to any of the 16 UNC institutions. Mr. Whittington is working on guaranteed admission to East Carolina University for all PCSECHS graduates.

Mr. Whittington addressed measures that will be taken to ensure our high school freshmen are safe on the PCC campus. For the most part, students will spend their day in the PCS modular unit on the PCC campus. Student restrooms are located in the modular unit, student lunches will be brought in from SCHS so students will eat in that modular unit as well. A bus will transport students from their home high school to the PCC campus.

Mr. Whittington shared a PCSECHS timeline outlining the student application, selection and orientation process as well as hiring and training of faculty. Beginning February 10th, Mr. Whittington and Tim DeCresie will hold parent nights at each of the six high schools; Mr. Whittington will present PCSECHS and Mr. DeCresie will present Pitt County Schools Virtual Academy (PCSVA). During the school day, Mr. Whittington and Mr. DeCresie will present to the students at each of our middle and K-8 schools.

Mr. Forrest asked who pays for the college level classes. Mr. Frazier advised that the state will cover that cost. Although, sports will not be available to PCSECHS students, Mr. Forrest asked if any other extracurricular activities will be offered. Mr. Whittington said they will have a year book and prom, but clubs will be student driven. PCSECHS students will have access to clubs associated with PCC. Ms. Doherty asked if PCSECHS will be allowed to participate in any district-wide clubs, such as Pitt Robotics. Mr. Whittington said it seems reasonable that they would be allowed to participate at their home high school; he and Dr. Lenker will discuss this subject and make a decision.

School Performance Grades

The 2013-14 School Performance Grades will be made public on February 5, 2015. Mr. Jenkins shared a handout showing how the School Performance Grades are determined using 80% of a school's proficiency score and 20% of their growth score. The letter grade is then assigned on a 15-point scale. Next year, the School Performance Grades will be determined using a 10-point scale.

The School Performance Grade will be included on the School Report Card snapshots that will be distributed to Pitt County families on February 9th. Ms. Doherty asked Mr. Letchworth if he had prepared something to help the Board Members answer questions they might receive regarding these grades. Mr. Letchworth said he has prepared a packet that he will distribute to the media when scores are revealed on February 5th.

STEM Initiative

Ms. Wainright shared that the STEM labs at Ayden Middle, C.M. Eppes and E.B. Aycock are up and running well. Equipment for E-Steam studios in several of our schools has been ordered and those labs will soon be fully functional. The goal is to have STEM labs in all of our 6-8 schools by the beginning of the 2015-16 school year. Next year, all K-8 schools will have e-Steam satellite studios housed in a designated space within their schools. At this time, we are rolling out e-Steam satellite studios at Chicod and Pactolus. E-Steam and STEM labs are being offered as summer camps to teachers and students.

Ms. Wainright met with Mr. Harris at Wellcome Middle to review DPI's STEM implementation rubric. They discussed the process of incorporating STEM activities in his building as well as professional development on project-based learning. Ms. Wainright stressed that the move to making Wellcome a STEM school is a transformation that will continue.

Ms. Doherty asked if e-Steam and STEM are basically interchangeable. Ms. Wainright explained that art is a component of the STEM curriculum, the extent of that involvement will depend on the willingness of the art teacher. Mr. Langley at C.M. Eppes and Mr. Cannon at E.B. Aycock are redesigning their media centers so students will have spaces to work in collaborative groups. Once science, technology, math and art are infused into the STEM curriculum, Mr. Forrest asked if we can request a waiver from EOGs for participating students. Ms. Wainright explained that teachers use current standards from the state and create lessons to incorporate those standards.

Ms. Wainright is planning a trip to the Goldsboro School of Engineering and the K-8 STEM school in Lenoir County. Ms. Doherty would like to accompany Ms. Wainright on her trip to Goldsboro. Ms. Doherty added that she is glad we are rolling out the STEM curriculum at

schools across the district as opposed to just one school. This plan allows us to provide more students with the opportunity to participate. Ms. Wainright plans to invite Board Members to visit the STEM labs once they are fully functioning.

Ms. Doherty asked if there were any other questions or comments. There being none, she asked to confirm that the meeting time change of 4:00 is agreeable with the committee members. It was agreed upon and we will ensure all calendars reflect that change.

Ms. Doherty asked if there were any additional questions or discussion. There being none, she asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Motion to adjourn was made by Ms. Williams with a second by Ms. Doherty. Meeting was adjourned at 5:35 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Cheryl Olmsted