

Educational Programs and Services
Board Committee Meeting
July 7, 2011
(Rescheduled from June 2, 2011)

Minutes

Committee Members: Marc Whichard, Benjie Forrest, Jennifer Little, Matthew Ward,
Christine Waters

Present: Marc Whichard, Benjie Forrest, Jennifer Little, Christine Waters

Staff Members Present: Cheryl Olmsted

Mr. Whichard opened the meeting. The minutes from the last meeting were presented and approved.

The first item on the agenda, Exam Exemption Policy, was presented by Ms. Olmsted. She presented a packet outlining a history of Pitt County Schools' exam exemption policy (see attached). She explained that the policy has not changed; the procedures have changed through the years. In 2005 exam exemptions were no longer allowed. Ms. Olmsted shared that Dr. Reep advised, at that time, students requesting waivers from the policy had become widespread. The Board was inundated with waiver requests and hearings. Mr. Whichard asked if we could consider a policy stating waivers would not be permitted. Ms. Olmsted reviewed the current exam procedure which includes a newly enacted policy stating students enrolled in an AP class are not required to take the College Board AP exam unless they are seeking college credit for the class. Discussion was had regarding this new procedure. If a student takes an AP course, passes the course, and passes the teacher made exam, they will receive the AP quality points. Whether they take the AP College Board or not will not factor into their grade or quality points. Mr. Whichard stated he is in favor of an exam exemption policy of some kind; however he is not in favor of requiring students to take the AP exam. Mr. Forrest stated he is in favor of exam exemptions as well. He went on to explain that the incentive to be exempt may result in a lower absenteeism rate. Ms. Olmsted shared exam exemption policies from other school districts, stating that in our research, we discovered very few counties around us are offering exam exemptions. Mr. Whichard stated he is in favor of a policy that counts all absences toward the exemption, regardless of whether the absence is excused or unexcused. He is not in favor of a policy that varies by grade level. All committee members were in favor of including a stipulation stating any suspension negates a student's opportunity to be exempt from exams. Ms. Little voiced her belief that students making a C or D should not be exempt. Mr. Whichard clarified for the committee that school-related absences would not count as an absence. Mr. Forrest made a motion that we re-enact the 1994 policy with the following revisions: students with a D are required to take the exam. Mr. Whichard added that we should include a statement advising that students will not be required to take the AP College Board exam in order to receive AP quality points. Mr. Whichard and Ms. Olmsted added that the policy should also include a statement advising all state mandated tests shall be taken; no exemptions. This will include

EOCs and VOCATS. Ms. Little seconded the motion. Prior to taking a vote, Mr. Forrest asked that the motion be read again. Mr. Whichard read the motion as follows: Student is exempt with:

A and 4 absences or less per semester

B and 3 absences or less per semester

C and 2 absences or less per semester

- Late enrollment - 4 days – students are required to take exam
- School sponsored events – not absent
- Religious holiday – absence will not count – no more than 3 absences per year

Additional bullets as follows:

- Students shall not be required to take AP College Board (ETS) exams.
- All state and/or federal mandated exams are to be taken with no possibility of exam exemption.
- No attendance waivers for purposes of exam exemption.
- An out of school (OSS) suspension, of any length, shall result in automatic loss of exam exemption privilege.

Mr. Whichard asked if there was any further discussion or clarification needed. None was requested. The motion had been made by Mr. Forrest, Ms. Little seconded the motion. The motion was carried unanimously.

Ms. Little presented the next item on the agenda: Senior Project. Ms. Little stated she has received numerous complaints and suggestions regarding Senior Project, as well as requests to eliminate Senior Project all together. She went on to explain that students have difficulty finding and keeping mentors. The scoring and grading is extremely subjective. Ms. Waters shared that Pitt County Schools initially implemented Senior Project because it was believed Senior Project would soon be a state graduation requirement. Although the state has never required Senior Project, Pitt County Schools kept it as part of English IV and as a graduation requirement. Mr. Forrest voiced his desire to eliminate Senior Project. Ms. Waters was in agreement. Mr. Whichard asked Ms. Olmsted for her professional opinion. Ms. Olmsted advised that today's Senior Project is far removed from what is outlined in the Senior Project manual. Teachers are requiring more and more additional components to Senior Project. Ms. Waters shared that she feels teachers spend more time on Senior Project than they do on the state mandated Senior English curriculum. Mr. Forrest made a motion that the committee recommend to the Board that Pitt County Schools eliminate Senior Project. Ms. Waters seconded the motion. Ms. Olmsted asked the committee if they would like to consider changes to the Senior Project instead of total elimination. The committee members maintained that they would like to present the recommendation to eliminate Senior Project to the Board. The motion had been made and seconded. All were in favor.

Mr. Forrest suggested an agenda item for the next committee meeting. He would like for the committee to find a way to formally recognize students for perfect attendance over the course of their 13 year school career. Ms. Little advised that perfect attendance is recognized in elementary school. Ms. Waters suggested that we recognize teachers with perfect attendance.

Mr. Forrest asked that Ms. Olmsted return some recommendations to the committee for the next meeting.

Mr. Forrest made a motion to adjourn; the motion was seconded by Mr. Whichard, and the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,

Cheryl Olmsted