



POTTSGROVE SCHOOL DISTRICT MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

Meeting Held February 24, 2015

Summary of Key Discussion and Actions Taken:

The Pottsgrove School District Board of Directors held its twice monthly meeting on Tuesday, February 24, 2015 at District Office.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Superintendent Shellie Feola reported on Friday, February 20th members from Neshaminy School District faculty and administration including teachers, librarians, technical support and their Middle School principal visited Pottsgrove Middle School to gather information about our 1:1 iPad implementation. Neshaminy is looking to implement an iPad 1:1 in their 5th grade (Middle School). Teachers from Neshaminy visited our classrooms to see iPads in use while the librarians met with our librarian to discuss positive changes to the media center as a result of the 1:1. The director of technology and a tech support staff member met with the PGSD tech team to discuss infrastructure, implementation logistics and other “behind the scenes” topics.

The last portion of the visit consisted of an open discussion about what they observed, and time for them to ask any questions they may have. When their tech director asked the teachers what they had seen during their visit, some of the comments were:

- “We saw enthusiastic teachers and engaged students”
- “We saw well behaved students”
- “Kahoot is a hoot!”
- “We saw teachers using differentiated instruction”
- “We saw students using iPads as a tool in addition to books and paper”
- “It wasn’t all iPad all class period. They used the devices when it was appropriate”

Also noted was the wealth and detail of information found on our website relative to the DiLE initiative. They indicated that the website was one of the reasons they selected our district as a site to visit.

It’s also interesting that some of the things they mentioned were certainly not things that we expected to hear less than four months into this initiative. #PottsgrovePride

POTTSGROVE ATHLETICS

Superintendent Feola shared the following from the Athletic Department:

Congratulations to our HS Boys Basketball team, who last night, defeated defending District One AAA Champion Holy Ghost Prep by a score of 52-48. Our Falcons will now travel to Harriton High School on Wednesday evening for a semi-final match up against top seeded Octorara beginning at 7:30 pm. NOTE: Last night's game was the FINAL home competitive event that will ever be contested in our High School Gymnasium – a nice way to close the gym with a playoff victory.

Congratulations to both Evan Weneck and Chris DeFrancesco, both wrestlers will be advancing to this weekends PIAA Regional Championships at Oxford High School. Both wrestlers will begin their final quest for a berth in the prestigious PIAA Championships held in Hershey, PA the following week.

Congratulations to senior hurdler Devon Fink who qualified for this weekends Indoor Track and Field State Championships at Penn State University.

Finally, the Ms. Feola wished our swimmer best of luck, as they qualified for the PIAA District Swimming Championships this week at LaSalle University. Pottsgrove is taking a record 15 swimmers to our District Championships.

Best of luck to all of our Winter Athletes as they continue into the Post-Season.

POLICY COMMITTEE

Dr. Bill Shirk, Assistant Superintendent, and the Board Policy Committee discussed proposed revisions to the graduation requirements in Policy 217, as they need to be updated to comply with recent changes in Chapter 4 of Pennsylvania School Code. There were other changes related to district-defined requirements. Dr. Shirk recapped the Board’s roundtable discussion of these changes from last month and reported to the Board about additional meetings and surveys conducted at the high school, specifically related to the recommendation to remove the graduation project as a requirement after the Class of 2016, as now permitted in the revised school code. Mr. Shirk explained



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that participants included the high school leadership team, counselors, and students. The proposal draft will be available on the District's website for public review.

OPERATIONS COMMITTEE

Mr. Jim Hanna, Project Manager, provided the Board with an update on the high school renovation. He discussed progress on the gym and the adjacent spaces, office, team and fitness rooms. He also provided pictures of progress being made that in the music wing. The cafeteria addition work was slowed by the weather but the contractors are still confident that phase will be completed on schedule.

Mr. Hanna discussed the next phase including the main classroom wing scheduled for renovation this summer.

Mr. David Nester reported that Lower Pottsgrove Township is holding approximately \$198,000 in escrow for the Ringing Rocks project. In order to release the funds, their engineer is requiring a survey of the property and the installation of monuments defining the property boundary. We received a proposal from Terraform Engineering, Inc. to provide these services at a cost of \$13,800. This survey will also document the High School portion of the property. Hopefully, this will reduce the amount of work at the end of that project.

The administration will be seeking approval to enter into a contract for these services at our March business meeting.

FINANCE COMMITTEE

As part of the Superintendent's goals for the current year, Ms. Feola and Mr. Nester provided a more transparent and detailed explanation of the budget. This overview will be followed up with department budget discussions during our March 24 committee meeting. The entire evening will focus on Finance Committee discussions.

This evening, Mr. Nester reviewed a budget binder provided to each Board member including an executive summary and the budget organized by account level such as salaries, benefits, etc. The overview also included operating expenses for each school and district-wide departments. Mr. Nester shared information about grants and debt service. Mr. Nester discussed revenue projections, historical trends on both the revenue and expenditure sides of the budget

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Mr. Bill Parker commented on the discussion of the budget and asked the Board to look at a zero percent budget increase. Mr. Valentine responded that the Board does look at multiple scenarios over the course of the months of budget discussion. Mr. Faulkner, Mr. Rabinowitz Mrs. Gallion, Mr. Alexander, and Ms. Feola also responded. Mr. Alexander noted the difference between making cuts to reduce the budget deficit versus finding efficiencies. Ms. Feola noted that each department and building administrator was tasked to do that (ed. note: The process is ongoing) but also noted that the largest budget drivers were non-discretionary expenditures. Mr. Valentine concluded by appealing for community input.

Mr. Fred Remilus spoke to issues covered in both the policy and finance committee discussions including charter school tuition costs, graduation project completion rates, in addition to pending grading scale changes. He expressed the need to set the bar higher in Pottsgrove. Mr. Rabinowitz responded to the specific issue of the pending grading scale change.

CURRICULUM & ACADEMIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

The committee discussed the current online course opportunities available to students and the District vision moving forward.

Mr. Michael Wagman, Director of Technology and Communications, reported that we currently have eighteen students in Brandywine Virtual Academy, a consortium of public school districts from around the region coordinated through the Chester County Intermediate Unit. This is the district-sponsored cyber program. Nine students are taking a full course load. Nine have a blended schedule, some courses online and others in a traditional classroom.

He briefly described the levels of support in place for these students, both on the district and consortium side and the reasons students and parents cite for their interest in our cyber program.

Mr. Wagman explained that with the introduction of Schoology, our new learning management system, more of our course material is going online at the High School. We currently offer one completely online course, Anatomy, developed and taught by a member of the Pottsgrove



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High School faculty. We are building capacity to offer additional online courses over time.

Mr. Wagman also reported that on March 3, a small team of teachers from the Middle and High School will be participating with colleagues from around the region to begin building digital courseware for the iTunes University course platform, as part of the PA Learns Initiative. PA Learns is a collaborative effort between Apple and the Pennsylvania Department of Education to leverage Pennsylvania teachers in the development of a collection of online course resources for use in Pennsylvania schools.

Mr. Wagman stated that the longer-term vision for online education in Pottsgrove is to build internal capacity to offer our own courses fully online. Ideally, over the next few years, many of our current courses will have significant online components, giving most of our students the opportunity to develop the skills necessary to be successful in an online learning environment, an environment that is becoming more prevalent in higher education and workplace training.

Moreover, this vision extends to having our own professional staff develop electronic text and visual media resources to replace traditional textbooks in some courses. This would allow us to have materials more closely focused on our state and local standards, provide opportunities for teachers to work in the summer to train and develop these resources, and still save money that would otherwise go to textbook publishers.

Finally, Mr. Wagman reported that the administration is currently researching and developing policy language to govern the expansion of online instructional opportunities. The administration plans to bring a policy draft to the Board Policy Committee this spring.

UPCOMING DATES

- 2/25/15 PIAA District One AAA Boys Basketball Semi-Finals at Plymouth Whitemarsh @ 7:30 p.m.
- 2/26/15 HS Swimming PIAA District Swimming Championships at LaSalle University
- 2/26/15 NOPE (Narcotics Overdose Prevention & Education) Parent Community Presentation at 7:30 p.m. @ Middle School
- 2/27/15 End of 2nd Trimester (Elementary)
- 2/27/15 HS Wrestling PIAA Regional Championship at Oxford High School
- 2/27/15 HS Swimming PIAA District Swimming Championship at LaSalle
- 2/28/15 HS Wrestling PIAA Regional Championships at Oxford High School
- 2/28/15 HS Winter Track PIAA State Championship at Penn State University
- 3/2/15 Spring Sports Begin
- 3/9/15 Conferences, No Students
- 3/10/15 Board Meeting at 7:30 p.m. @ LPE

View the Comprehensive Calendar of District events at <http://www.pgdsd.org/Page/2>

Visit the Board website at <http://www.pgdsd.org/board>

For Renovation information, visit <http://www.pgdsd.org/facilities>

Board meetings are now recorded for viewing on PCTV twice weekly, Wed., at 6:30 PM, Sun., at 6:00 PM and on demand from the District website.