

**MIDDLETOWN AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT**  
**Academic Affairs Committee Meeting**  
**December 8, 2015 – 7:45 p.m.**  
**MINUTES**

**Members in attendance were:** Newton Davis and Linda Mehaffie

**Members not in attendance were:** Mike Corradi

**Non-Voting Members in attendance were:** Mel Fager and Jennifer Scott

**Staff/Public in attendance were:** David Franklin, Brianna Miller, Chris Mostoller, Lori Suski and Jody Zorbaugh, District Administrators, Faculty and Staff.

Opportunity for  
Public Comment

No one addressed the committee at this time.

Communications

**Presentation of Dissertation Research:** Dr. Miller reviewed her dissertation study on “Making the Case for STEM Integration at the Upper Elementary Level: A Mixed Methods Exploration of Opportunity to Learn Math and Science, Teachers’ Efficacy and Students’ Attitudes.” Dr. Miller noted that her study included the survey of teachers and students in the upper elementary grade levels in the District. Dr. Miller discussed the findings and conclusions of her study, which indicated a need to improve Science instruction and offer STEM-related professional development. Dr. Suski said that some of Dr. Miller’s recommendations were incorporated into the District’s comprehensive plan. Mrs. Mehaffie asked about the amount of time that is set aside for professional development. Mrs. Mostoller said that the teacher contract includes 10 days that are set aside for professional development. Mrs. Mostoller explained the types of professional development activities that occur. Mrs. Mostoller said that the District’s Science scores are higher than the state average, so there hasn’t been as much focus on professional development in that area given the need to focus attention on improving Math scores.

**Discussion Item – Request from Penn State University:** Dr. Suski reviewed a request from a Math professor at Penn State to assist a graduate student by granting permission to survey parents of students in Grades 6-12 regarding the use of mobile technology in Mathematics classrooms. Mrs. Mehaffie asked whether the results of the survey would be provided to the District. Dr. Suski said that the data is generally provided to the District when a survey is done. The committee expressed no concerns about the survey.

Employment

**Action Item – Mentor:** Dr. Suski reviewed the request to have Stacy Herlocher serve as the mentor for Kyle Dayhoff. The committee recommended that the employment be moved to the Board agenda for approval.

Curriculum

**Information Item – Sports Nutrition Course Proposal:** Mrs. Mostoller reviewed a proposal by Mrs. Holtry to write a half credit sports nutrition course at the High School to be included in the course catalog for the 2016-2017 school year. The committee supported the addition of the course.

**Information Item – Classroom Diagnostic Tool (CDT):** Mrs. Mostoller provided a

handout regarding the Classroom Diagnostic Tool. Mrs. Mostoller proposed that this diagnostic tool be used at the Middle School and High School levels. Mrs. Mostoller said that teachers have expressed frustration with the timeliness of data that is provided back to them by the state after the PSSA tests. Mrs. Mostoller said that the CDT can be taken on a mobile device so the iPads can be used, and the tests can be done in a very short period of time with immediate access to the data. Mrs. Mostoller said that the tool could also help with analyzing preparedness for the PSSA exams. Mrs. Mostoller said that this should replace the use of the Study Island program, which will result in some cost savings since the CDT is currently available for free through the PA Department of Education.

#### Field Trips

**Discussion Item / Possible Action Item – Field Trip:** Dr. Suski reviewed a request from Mrs. Holtry to take students in her Creative Living class to Penn State University’s solar energy house in State College on December 14, 2015. Dr. Suski said that Mrs. Holtry would use a District van and the only cost would be for the substitute teacher. The committee recommended that the field trip be moved to the Board agenda for approval.

#### Policies

**Discussion Item – Committee Meeting Calendar:** Mr. Davis said that the discussion started at the Board meeting the previous night. Mr. Davis said that he spoke with Mr. Corradi and they discussed the need for a distinction between action items and information items on the agenda. Mr. Davis said that the handout that Mrs. Mostoller provided for the CDT discussion is a great example of how information items can be presented in less time. Mr. Davis said that there is also a need to balance the extra work that might occur for the administrative team in preparing handouts to explain information items versus presenting the information orally at the meeting. Dr. Suski suggested that information items could be produced in advance of committee meetings and distributed to the Board members to allow time for questions to be posed that can be responded to at the committee meeting. The committee stressed that they don’t want Dr. Suski to be the one who is responsible to write all of the information items as that would take too much of her time from other work to be done. Dr. Suski said that there is a need to understand the process in which information is going to be disseminated to the Board. Mr. Davis said that it is going to take time to ease into a new process. Mrs. Scott said that this will also help the administrators to not feel like they are on the spot to answer questions as they will have time to know the questions and be prepared to provide a response at the committee meetings. Mrs. Mehaffie said that she would like to see the Executive Session held before the first committee meeting begins and after the second committee meeting ends so that there isn’t a period of time when the public is asked to sit in the lobby during an Executive Session. Mr. Davis asked whether there will be a problem to have three committee meetings in one night. A Board member commented that since it is usually late when the second meeting concludes, it is probably not a concern to add a third meeting to one of the nights because it is too late to do anything else.

#### Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 9:07 p.m.