

UPPER PERKIOMEN SCHOOL DISTRICT

Education Center

2229 E. Buck Road Pennsburg, PA 18073

Curriculum & Instruction and Pupil Services/Special Education Committee Meeting

February 22, 2021

Ex-Officio: Mrs. Melanie Cunningham, President

Superintendent – Dr. Allyn J. Roche

Assistant Superintendent – Dr. Andrea Farina

CHAIR: Dr. Kerry Drake, Curriculum & Instruction MEMBERS Curriculum & Instruction: Dana Hipszer, Peg Pennepacker

CHAIR: Mrs. Judy Maginnis, Pupil Services/Special Education MEMBERS Pupil Services/Special Education: Kerry Drake, Mike Elliott

Director of Curriculum & Instruction–Kimberly Bast

Assistant Director of Special Education–Carol Giblin

Curriculum Supervisor – Sarah Rothermel

Special Education Supervisor – Amy Coyle

This is a joint committee meeting with Curriculum and Instruction and Pupil Services/Special Education. Motion to approve January 2021 C & I and Pupil Services Committee meetings, both approved.

Special Education Update: Beginning on 8/31/20, we had 60 special education students attending in person, 4 days per week for 3.25 hours per day. Beginning 11/9/20, we had 87 special education students attending and students were at their home schools. Beginning 12/7/20, we had 97 special education students and beginning 1/19/21, we had 160 and they attend 4 full days. Also, K-3 special education students were recommended to attend 4 full days. Students attending Wednesdays, October through December, attended for progress monitoring and interventions for 3.25 hours. The numbers of students attending increased due to the data showing that those students needed more assistance to make progress on their goals.

Hybrid, UPOLA, Full Virtual: Hereford currently has 245 hybrid students and 111 in UPOLA. Marlborough currently has 229 hybrid students and 98 in UPOLA. At the 4/5 Center there are currently 339 hybrid students and 115 in UPOLA. At the MS, there are 504 hybrid students and 276 in full virtual. The HS currently has 526 hybrid students and 431 fully virtual.

Looking forward, we believe there will be a population who would like to continue the cyber/virtual model after this school year. We are currently working on a plan to develop this platform.

Wednesdays: Based upon feedback from parents, there has been a concern that virtual Wednesdays aren't working. We have been offering students at the MS and HS an opportunity to touch base with their teachers on Wednesday mornings. The elementary students will begin to have that opportunity as well. This is a time for support and/or interventions. Also, creating a time at the beginning and end of instructional time to meet with groups of students. Teachers are keeping track of visits with students as well.

We are looking at tweaking our surveys to target specific grade levels so that we can make adjustments where necessary.

Peg Pennepacker asked what Wednesdays look like for teachers. Kim Bast stated that each teacher has a morning meeting, like they do every other day, and they discuss what independent Wednesday will look like. Then K-8 there is an intervention hour. The remainder of the day is planning and meeting time for K-5 (triad planning, committee meeting, faculty meeting, data review). At MS and HS the planning time is structured a little differently. Mr. Fowkes, teacher at the MS, spoke about intervention time. During this time, he goes between in person students and Zoomers. The collaboration on Wednesdays has been key to developing and improving the delivery of the curriculum in this teaching model. It also provides time to discuss specific students and their progress across subjects. Mrs. Hower, teacher at the 4/5, also stated how important the collaboration time is so that the in person learners are learning at the same pace as the Zoomers. Students are shared with 6 different teachers so Wednesdays are vital for the success of the hybrid program. Mrs. Austin, teacher at the HS, stated that for students in AP classes, she utilizes the time to provide remediation and check-ins with students who need assistance with college applications or just want to talk. Special education students may also be checking in, especially for executive function skills. Mrs. Salmons, K teacher at Marlborough, said planning is done by the Kindergarten team. If a student needs to quarantine and

switch to UPOLA, they will have a different teacher so it is imperative that the pace is the same in every Kindergarten class. The intervention time with students occurs on Wednesday mornings.

Dr. Drake asked if the “problem” from the teaching perspective is that they need more time for planning and the “problem” from the parent perspective is that students need more intervention time. Opening an hour for intervention on Wednesdays is the solution that was developed and started on 2/24 for K-8. Keeping logs of student attendees and length of time needed will assist with determining how this new process is working. Kim Bast spoke about the Connections Coordinators that provided that connection to students and families during our virtual learning in the fall. Once we went to hybrid, the teachers filling those roles went to teach in person and we no longer have the Connections Coordinators. It is possible that parents are missing this as there were weekly newsletters and encouraging emails and a list of happenings. Kudos to all who provided this function.

A resident asked about UPSD’s civics curriculum. Kim Bast addressed the PA Standards and said that in each grade there is a civics and government curriculum. There is also a Civics and Government class in high school, for students who choose to take it. We give a civics exam in 8th grade, which is a state mandated test.

The resident then expressed his view that all students should go back to school.

Jennifer Moran, a parent, expressed her gratitude and stated that Wednesdays are different for each of her students who attend 3 different schools. Her students are fully virtual and suggested that a liaison between schools and virtual students may be a good idea to provide information and assistance.

Allison, a parent of a 2nd and 4th grader, stated that her children miss live gym classes and live SEL classes. She suggested that perhaps there could be a “live” virtual specials class once a month or once every few weeks so that students can feel connected.

Mary, a parent, has found the transition to hybrid has been successful and thanked the teachers. Would like to see the students go 4 days. She asked about implementing the target time again for students. Kim Bast said they will look at it again.

Summer Programming-Dr. Farina addressed the plan for summer programming. Through grant opportunities, we are able to extend our ESY program an extra week and an extra hour per day for a total of 76 hours. Students have to meet eligibility requirements to qualify for ESY and it is for special education students. We weren’t required to provide additional days and hours, but we believe it is in the best interest of our kids. We will also have 2 programs for students this summer. Ready to Learn camp is for students who will have completed Kindergarten and first grade this year. The focus will be on literacy and math. The camp will run from 8/2-8/19. The Power UP camp will be for students in grades 3 and up who qualify based upon data and recommendations. This camp will run from 6/28-7/15. Teachers will start looking at data beginning in March. Transportation is provided for all students and if qualifying, parents will receive an invite. The grant covered transportation and staff, but we still need to look at curriculum and materials to make sure those are intact and ready. Snacks and cleaning are other logistics we need to work out.

Full Day Kindergarten-Curriculum, personnel, facilities and other costs will be addressed at the Board Workshop on February 25th. Renovations and furniture purchases will be discussed at the Facilities meeting on February 23rd.

Class Rank Policy and Procedures-There has been a discussion at the Policy Committee meeting to revise Policy 214 regarding the use of class rank. A full presentation will occur at the March 25th Board Workshop meeting. The Policy Committee will review at the April meeting.

MTSS update: Motion made to move the update to the March meeting. Motion approved.

Judy Maginnis expressed her thanks for everyone’s participation in the meeting. Dr. Drake thanked Judy for chairing the meeting. Dr. Drake expressed his gratitude for everyone working together and having a discussion for a common goal.

Meeting adjourned.